

British American Presbyterian

Vol. 5—No. 31.]

TORONTO, CANADA, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1876.

[Whole No. 239]

Contributors and Correspondents

[For the Presbyterian.]

HISTORY OF THOMAS AQUINAS.

BY T. T. J.

The same year that Thomas made a public confession of his faith, he went with John, master of the Teutonic Order, to Paris, and thence to Cologne to hear the lectures of the renowned German theologian, Albert the Great, bishop of Regensburg, who taught in Paris and Cologne, and to continue his studies under his guidance. During his first year at this school he wrote his comments on the "Ethics of Aristotle," giving all his time to studies, and oftentimes retrenching on the hours allotted for rest.

By his humanity and reticent disposition he concealed his progress and deep penetration from his fellow students, so that no one dreamed of that latent fire which like a slumbering volcano was hidden within, and which one day would burst forth in all its grandeur, making him one of the greatest theologians of his school. They imagined that he learned nothing, because he never displayed his stores of knowledge whenever an opportunity afforded, (as some students are so fond of doing) but was always willing to listen and learn in silence. On account of his extreme shyness and reserve he generally left all controverted points for others to determine. Illustrative of this, an incident is related that on one occasion a student undertook to explain a difficult subject to him, to which he listened with the closest attention without uttering a word, and, although quite competent, young as he was,—to teach his instructor, thanked him kindly when he had finished for the information given which he knew before. The student nick-named him the *dumb ox*, or the *great Sicilian ox*, on account of his taciturn disposition, his tall frame, and massive proportions.

An opportunity soon presented itself, however, of showing how little he merited the reproach, and of showing at the same time the brightness of his genius, quick penetration, and deep learning, in spite of all his endeavors to conceal them.

Albert, the German professor, hearing how he had combated and silenced some of the students who had presumed to instruct him the day before, asked him to solve several knotty and obscure questions for the purpose of discovering his knowledge and worth.

His answer, which only a deep sense of the duty of obedience to his superiors could have extorted from him, completely astonished his audience, and won at the same time this honorable and characteristic eulogy from his master: "We call him the *mute ox*, but he will yet give such a hollow in learning as will be heard all over the world."

The general body of the Dominicans at a meeting held at Cologne in 1245, deputed Albert the Great to fill the theological chair in St. James' College at Paris, which the University of that place had given them at an early period of their history, and from which the members of that body were afterwards called Jacobins or Jacobites.

Here he taught for three years,—1245 to 1248, and during this time Thomas was his constant and promising pupil, obtaining the degree of Bachelor of Arts, when he was about twenty-three years of age.

He applied himself to his studies with increasing ardor, and Jesuit-like, held that obedience to his tutors was both right and essential at all times and under all circumstances. As an instance of this it is related that whilst reading in the classics one day, his tutor by mistake told him to pronounce a word with a false quantity; in it, which he readily did, although he knew it all the while. On being told afterwards that he ought to have given it the right pronunciation when he knew that the tutor was at fault, he replied,—"It matters not how a word is pronounced, but to practise humility and obedience on all occasions is of the greatest importance."

In 1248, when he was about twenty-three years of age, the Dominican Order honored him in a signal manner by appointing him to teach at Cologne, where he had formerly been as a student, and, at the same time, it had translated Albert the Great thither also,—for it was customary to change the professors from one school of learning to another as their services were required. Whilst teaching there Thomas began to publish the first of his writings,—his comments on the Ethics and Aristotles, and also comments on other philosophical works by the same author. He appears to have shunned all society, and shutting out the world from his mind, devoted all his energies, talents and time to his studies for the purpose of preparing himself for the assumption of the holy orders at no distant date. Although courteous and affable when in company, it was his principle to shun all unnecessary visits and social pastimes, employing his spare moments in redoubling his watchings, prayers and other spiritual exercises.

Students in all departments of learning, and young men generally, would do well to imitate, in some respects, the example of this devoted young man, for it is lamentable to think how much of their precious time is wasted in frivolity.

About this time he had occasion to visit Rome, and whilst there he had a private interview with the Pope, Innocent IV., about some ecclesiastical matters of great importance. Whilst they were thus engaged an official entered the audience chamber with a bag of gold which he had obtained by the sale of absolutions and indulgences. On receiving it the Pope turned to Thomas and said:—"You see, young man, the age of the church is past in which she said,—'Silver and gold have I none.'" "True, holy father," was the reply, "but that age is also passed in which she could say to a paralytic—'rise up and walk,' for he had an

abhorrence for the doctrine of indulgences. He believed that such would weaken the confidence of the people in the power of the church. After teaching at Cologne for four years he was translated back to Paris, where the reputation of his perspicacity and reasoning powers attracted in a short time great numbers to hear his course of lectures. When these were completed the Order bestowed the degree of Doctor of Divinity upon him, which, after great reluctance, he accepted on the 28th day of October, 1256, in the thirtieth year of his age.

King Louis IX. held Thomas in such high esteem that he often consulted him about the affairs of state, and generally informed him the previous night when important matters were to be consulted in the council, so that he might always be prepared when called upon to give his opinion respecting them. He was always willing to give such advice as he believed would be for the best, and his deliberations were characterized by a deep insight into secular affairs.

Although he was thus respected by the King, he carefully avoided the honor of dining with him as often as he could excuse himself, but when obliged to attend he was as calm and collected as when in his own lecture room or private apartment. The trouble was that his reticent disposition operated upon by severe and continued study was beginning to make him absent minded, for at this time of his life he indulged in silent contemplation to such an extent that frequently after he had risen from the table he could not tell what he had eaten, and in the midst of the most captivating society he oftentimes became completely lost to everything around him, but the one theme that seemed to engross his whole mental powers.

One day being present at a banquet of the King—greatly against his will, for he would have preferred spending the time with his Summa Theologica, in the writing of which he was then engaged. He took his seat at the table wholly absorbed with his own reflections, and altogether unconscious of those around him. At this time the subject that engaged his attention was the framing of an argument by which the subtle doctrines of the Manichees could be defeated, and, as one proposition after another was presented and weighed in the silent judgment hall of his own mind, the interest increased to such an extent that at last he brought down his clenched fist on the table, causing the dishes to clatter and the royal guests he started as he exclaimed:—"The argument is conclusive against the Manichees!" His prior, who sat next to him, seized his arm and reminded him that he sat at the table of his monarch—not in his own private study, and must be careful how he acted, which suddenly disturbed his deep and pleasant reverie. As the argument of the Manichees faded away from his mind, the fact of his having transgressed the laws of etiquette in the presence of his king, was forced upon his consciousness and painfully impressed itself there. He instantly begged his Majesty's pardon for what he had done in the most humble manner, and felt gratified to think that he had one subject at least upon whom the position and the presence of such distinguished guests had so little effect that they could not divert his thoughts from higher and more important subjects.

He was interested also in the discovered argument of the young divine, and, fearful that he might forget it, a secretary was ordered to write it down at once as it was dictated to him, a duty that Thomas would gladly have postponed at that place and time if it had been in his power.

It is remarkable how a meek disposition and an unruined temper can oftentimes overcome in the heat of a debate, when even the force of reasoning has failed to convince. A soft answer from one insulted turns away wrath, and such traits of character are well calculated to heap coals of fire on the head of the wrong doer. Such were indeed the characteristics of Thomas Aquinas, so that he generally effected peace and order amongst his pupils without dispute or the exercise of arbitrary power.

On one occasion a student, as conceited as he was ignorant, advanced heretical opinions in his theses on two different occasions, when, instead of severely reprimanding him for his presumptions, as was no doubt expected, Thomas calmly and gently explained to him his mistake, so that the student confessed his error, thus verifying the truth of that Bible proverb, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in baskets of silver."

In the year 1259, Thomas attended the thirty-sixth general assembly of the Dominican Order, which was held at Valenciennes, and took part in the business transactions and discussions of the meeting. Along with Albert the Great and three others, he was appointed to draw up rules for the studies of the Order, which are still extant.

In 1261, Pope Urban IV. summoned Thomas to Rome, and commanded the leader of the Dominicans to appoint him as a teacher in that great metropolis.

He also besought his great impetuosity to accept some ecclesiastical office, but he firmly refused all such honors. The Pope, having taken a fancy to him, arranged it that he should always be near him as one of his personal attendants, and in this way he preached and taught in Rome, Viterbo, Orvieto, Fondi, and Freggia—cities where the Pope resided during his stay with him. In addition to these he taught in the Universities of Cologne, Naples, Paris, Foggia, Pisa, and other places, wherever his services were required.

He was very successful as a preacher. It is related of him that on one occasion his whole audience was melted to tears while he was discoursing on the love of God to man, and the gratitude we ought

to feel to Him for his infinite compassion and grace.

The same effect was produced when he was preaching shortly afterwards on the glory of Christ, and the happiness of those who rise by grace to glory.

Two Jewish Rabbies, one day, held a long conference with him at the villa of a cardinal, named Richard, and when they parted from him it was with the understanding that they would resume their discussion on the following day. Thomas spent a great part of the intervening night in prayer, and next morning the Rabbies came with others to embrace the Catholic faith.

In 1268 the Dominicans held their fortieth general council in London, at which meeting Thomas was present, having been appointed Provincial Definitor, or Visitor of the Order, for the province of Rome, and assisted in deliberating for the best interests of their common cause.

Pope Clement IV. in 1265, presented him with the archbishopric of Naples amongst the ecclesiastical honors, but he still continued to refuse every position of influence that was offered him. He seemed to have lived for some time after this at Bologna, for it was at that place he completed his "Summa Theologica"; however, his stay must have been short for he was soon induced to remove to Naples.

In 1272 the University of Paris, at a general meeting of the Order held at Florence, demanded his return to that place; but Charles, King of Sicily, would not allow him to be removed from the theological chair of Naples.

He gave Thomas a monthly allowance of one ounce of gold as a pension, but soon afterwards he handed in his resignation as theological teacher in the several seminaries of learning, and to his great joy, although after much opposition, he became once more a private Dominican monk.

(To be continued.)

THE MARITIME PROVINCES.

Will your correspondent be at liberty to call the attention of the brethren and people of the west, and the conveners of the Sabbath Committee in particular, to the frequent violations of the rest of the Lord's Day on the Government railways of these Provinces? It has been stated again and again apparently with authority, I think the statement was made on the floor of the Assembly as well as elsewhere, that the railway authorities desire to restrict Sabbath work within as small bounds as possible. Such a declaration as that does not of itself amount to much. At all events, experience shows that the principle (?) laid down is of an exceedingly elastic nature. So far as regular trains are concerned, none are dispatched on the morning of the Lord's Day, or indeed during the day. The night trains, however, are dispatched every night, Sundays not excepted. From St. John and Halifax the night trains go out seven times a week. Formerly, so far as I remember, one night was left out, none was dispatched on Sabbath night; this year we have got ahead of that, and what further advances are in store for us who can say. On the road between Moncton and Quebec there is one night's intermission, between St. John and Halifax there is none. So much for the application of the principle so ostentatiously put forth. When we come to irregular or special trains, the case assumes a more serious aspect. A few weeks ago Barnum, the Prince of Humbug, visited these Provinces by the sea. He closed his campaign in St. John on Saturday night, and the following week he was to spend in Nova Scotia. Accordingly about midnight or after two or three, trains left and they were on the road between there and Truro until near the evening of Sabbath. While these trains were on the road, Barnum himself, pious man that he is, having gone on before by the regular train, attends the Young Men's Christian Association in Truro on the afternoon of Sabbath, and gives an address, when he takes the opportunity of "pitching into" one of our venerable ministers who that morning warned his people from attending the circus. On the Sabbath following, trains were again placed at his disposal to enable him to reach Bangor for an exhibition on Monday night. A week or two after the pandering of our railway authorities to the great Yankee showman, a Romanist chapel at Campbellton is to be consecrated. The priest applies for a Sunday train to take the Bishop from Chatham to Campbellton, and also to take as many of the French and Irish co-religionists at excursion fares to the religious (?) celebration. And the train is granted. The head manager is a very pious and devoted Episcopalian, the sub-manager is a devoted and liberal-minded Methodist, he is in the habit of boasting of his liberality, but what of that? Barnum has had his trains, and why may not a priest have a train? Both claim to be great moral regenerators, the latter especially, and it is for good that the thing is done. But when so much is done, what is the good of having a Sabbath at all? If it be right to have trains to carry Barnum along, and to carry worshippers to the consecration of a chapel, why is it not right to run trains as usual?

The brethren of the West are not to suppose that we here have been silent while all this was going on. The Presbytery of Truro has been especially active all along, remonstrating, protesting, and petitioning. One point they have succeeded in gaining. An order came to the post-office of that town ordering Sabbath mails to be made up. So earnest and powerful was

the remonstrance that the order was revoked. The Presbytery of Miramichi happened to meet when a report went abroad that a train was to be put at the disposal of the Bishop and his diocesan, and at once the Moderator and clerk were instructed to remonstrate. The manager in chief after the deed was done, sent a courteous and somewhat apologetic reply. The gist of it was that he could not well refuse the train when a pastor requested it, and requested it for his fellow-worshippers. But the fact is, the train while given for a special purpose, was advertised to the general public, and particular attention drawn to the cheap fares, return tickets at single rates, and the opportunity thus afforded of seeing the splendid scenery of the Restigouche.

It is clear from all this that we must bestir ourselves, also the Sabbath of the continent of Europe will be upon us ere long. Public opinion must be levered, and we must carry the question to the polls if we will conserve our Sabbath. It is in sorrow more than in anger that I call attention to this invasion of our rest and quietness.

Progress of the Church in Essa.

When I became acquainted with this township, not quite eight years ago, there were but two Presbyterian ministers labouring within its bounds. One was the Rev. W. Fraser, who had the charge of First Essa in connection with his present charge of Bonhead. The other was Rev. J. K. Hielop, now of the Presbytery of Stratford, who had almost the entire township under his care. His charge so extensive was faithfully and well wrought. He had at least six congregations or stations scattered along the west, south, east, and I may add north, boundaries of the township. His self-denial, diligence, and success as a pastor are doubtless the causes to which we may in a great measure attribute the firm hold of Presbyterianism in the district, and the progress since made. Mr. Hielop enjoyed much of the confidence and esteem of his people, though there were some of another persuasion, who wondered that such a man was permitted in Divine Providence to run through the country "preaching such doctrines."

The two pastoral charges of that time had 207 members, and paid about \$1000 stipend.

Now there are five pastoral charges over ten congregations, including New Lowell in the Township of Sannidale, which is connected with Angus.

These have a membership of about 415, and promise to pay for stipends about \$8,100. Only two have at present pastors settled over them, namely, the charges of Townline and Ivy, and Angus and New Lowell. First Essa and Cookstown have called Mr. Stewart Acheson, probationer, and will be soon settled, as Mr. Acheson has signified his acceptance of the call. Alliston and Carleton have given a call to Rev. I. M. McConnell, of Teumseh and Adajala.

The remaining charge, of Burns' and Dunn's settlement churches, is two weak to support a pastor, and some rearrangement, connecting them with other congregations, may yet be found to be necessary. Meanwhile their position is satisfactory, notwithstanding the trouble and danger in which Burns' church was not long ago. A visit, made under instructions of the Presbytery, to the congregations of Burns' and Dunn's Corner's churches, suggested this article, and requires me to make more special remark about them.

The congregation of Dunn's Corners, nearly in the centre of Essa, was a preaching station opened by the Rev. Thomas McKee, while pastor of First Essa and Carleton, and ministered to by him until strong enough to warrant application to the Presbytery for organization. The application was granted, and in March last the congregation was formed with twenty-one names on the communion roll. During summer, Mr. W. Smith, a student-missionary, has been labouring in the two congregations with acceptance, as I believe, and with success. He has aimed not only at edifying them with the Word, but at getting them in working order, and at the establishment of sessions over them. The latter end has been attained.

By appointment of Presbytery, I ordained the elders elected—two at Dunn's Settlement and three at Burns' church—on Saturday, 19th inst., and preached preparatory to the Lord's Supper. The first duty of the newly-formed sessions was to receive applicants for membership. At the former place twenty new members were received—fifteen on profession and five from other churches. At Burns' church nine applicants were received on profession. It was interesting to observe that a considerable number of the applicants were young men and young women.

On Sabbath, 20th, the services were attended by a large number in each place, the Supper was administered to forty-six communicants at Dunn's, and to thirty-six at Burns' church.

Gratified by what I saw of present progress, and of good work being done, and having been led to make the foregoing comparison between eight years ago and the present time, it occurred to me that we can afford to disregard assertions of the kind made by a noted preacher of another body to this effect, that Presbyterianism is alien to the wants and feelings of the people of this country, and not adapted to keep pace with its development.

HARD, horny hands, embrowned by the sun and roughened by labor, are more honorable than white ones that never reached out to help a fellow creature, or added a dollar to the world's wealth.

[For the Presbyterian.]

Concert for Prayer.

Will it succeed? Quite apart from this consideration our duty is plain. Still the question is an interesting one. The elements of success in prayer are always worthy of attention, and may well receive our present consideration in view of the movement referred to in last issue. The

OUR POURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

is the object specially sought, and it is very definiteness of aim is an important element of success, judging from the records of Scripture. The cases of prevailing prayer were recorded are all marked by this characteristic. We have the further encouragement of knowing beyond a doubt that the blessing desired is

ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD.

None other is more distinctly, fully, and repeatedly promised in His word. Not only His willingness but His great desire that His people should possess and enjoy this precious gift are most impressively set forth. How comes it then, asks many a doubter and many a professional believer, that when these promises are so often repeated in private and public prayers, the results are so out of proportion to the promises? With the believer, one answer only is here possible, viz.: "Ye ask and have not, because ye ask amiss." In other words, the prayer which fails is not the prayer of faith which alone prevails, and to the success of which there is no limit but God's promises, so exceeding great and precious.

"ACCORDING TO YOUR FAITH."

is a law of the kingdom most directly applicable here, indeed the one which involves the settlement of the whole question. In the case of unsuccessful prayer faith is plainly defective in quantity or quality, or more probably both combined.

1. Faith may be of the right kind, yet being scanty its results are in proportion. True, God often graciously surprises His children with more than they asked or expected. Such may form apparent exceptions to the rule, but the principle revealed remains the same. Unbelief dishonors and limits the Holy One of Israel. If faith do not open wide the mouth, what wonder if it be not filled?

2. But faith often seems large in the estimate of ourselves and others from the great requests it makes and the great expectations it avows, only, however, to the disappointment and perplexity of all concerned. Why? Because the faith has not been intelligent, and has been vitiated in its working by a large admixture of presumption or superstition. Is it not always so where the

CONDITIONS OF THE PROMISE

are ignored or neglected? But let faith grasp the promise as the word of a Covenant God, and at the same time honestly seek to know and comply with the conditions appended, and the results will be as sure as the Divine Government is stable. It is just here that the great difficulty lies, and that many who are "at ease in Zion" shrink back into helpless and hopeless mediocrity, the stumbling-block of the enquirer, the excuse of the sceptic, the great obstacle to the Church's progress. I know that many, who would loudly disavow such a position, would still ask, Is it possible to comply with the conditions under which the promised baptism of the Holy Spirit is given? The extent to which this is within the reach of every believer would take too much time and space at present to discuss; but it will, I think, be hard to find one reader prepared to say that he or she has done all that might, and therefore ought, to be done in the matter, while many have never given the subject any special attention. I would like, next week, to present your readers with a powerful article on the subject by a distinguished divine and successful Christian worker, but meantime let me hint at some of the hindrances which seem at present to be preventing an abundant answer to our prayers for the Spirit. These are the prevalence of things which grieve Him. They may not be sins of the gross form the Apostle found it necessary to warn the Ephesians, in connection with the inspired charge, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit," "Be filled with the Spirit,"—such as, "bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking, with all malice," but subtle forms of selfishness and self-seeking which taint the motive for which pulpit power and pastoral success are sought. Have Christ's words no application to us when He attributes defect of faith to "receiving honor one of another, instead of seeking that honor which cometh from God only?" Or the cause may lie in the region of questionable pursuits or indulgences which, like "Tobiah's stuff"—whose children "could not show their father's house, whether they were of Israel"—crowd the temple of the Holy Ghost, where room should be jealously secured and preserved at all cost for His abiding presence. Or it may be something plainly allowable in itself but which, made too much of, has become a usurping idol. Whatever it be, is it not plainly our duty to search and find, and at all cost purge it out, "tare it from His throne?" We know from John iv. Christ's zeal in such matters, and may surely count upon His help, and may not the result at least be a "broken and contrite heart" where God promises to dwell? Some may think that there is too much legalism in such views—too much mathematical treatment of the ways of a Sovereign God. To such I would only say, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked, he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." W. M. R.

ALLENATION from the love of God leads to alienation from the love of man; hence fallen men are described as "hateful, and hating one another."