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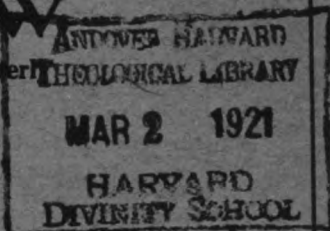


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JANUARY, 1921.

No. 2.

THE MYSTICAL PERFECTIONISM OF THOMAS COGSWELL UPHAM.

I. UPHAM AND HIS SECOND CONVERSION.

By REV. B. B. WARFIELD, D. D., LL. D.,
*Professor of Didactic and Polemical Theology in Princeton
Theological Seminary.*

A great deal of the perfectionism which vexed the American churches through the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century was mystically colored. There is no difficulty in accounting for this. The embarrassment rather is to select out of numerous accounts which suggest themselves, the particular one which was really determining in each case. In some instances no doubt the mysticism was self-generated. A doctrine essentially mystical spontaneously presented itself to the inflamed minds of fanatics, as the basis of their pretension to peculiar holiness. The assumption of possession by the Divine Spirit is made with great ease. Even the West African savages make it. Nineteenth century Americans, however, did not live in the isolation of West African savages. They could not escape from the currents of religious sentiment which came flowing down to them through the years, even if they would. We easily underestimate the force and persistency of religious tradition, especially among what we call the submerged classes; and very especially if the tradition be in any degree fanatical and if it has been distilled into the blood through the experience of some form of persecution. The English sectaries of the seventeenth century were still living beneath the skins of many nineteenth century Americans; and there could be found inheritances even from radical mediaeval sects, no doubt, if any one should dig deeply enough for them. Nevertheless, it was

UNITY AND UNION.

By REV. THORNTON WHALING, D. D., LL. D.,
President, Columbia Theological Seminary.

There is no more commanding theme in the Twentieth Century than Church Unity or Ecclesiastical Union. The Roman Popes, the Anglican Archbishops, the Conferences, Associations, Assemblies and Councils, all are weighing this mighty subject in the balances of the Scripture and Ecclesiastical Polity. The subject will not down. It will never become antiquated. It must be settled and settled right. The goal may be far off but it will be finally reached. The date of the full arrival may be when the Kingdom of Glory comes, but the aspirations of the saints and the prayers of the intercessors following in the train of the Great Mediator will never cease to strive for the coming of this "one far-off Divine event."

Unity is a necessary mark of the invisible Holy Catholic Church. This Unity is mediated through the oneness between Christ and His people, which His work involves. The Unity of Christ and Believers is variously represented in the Scriptures. The relation between the cornerstone and the building, between husband and wife, between Adam and his descendants, between a stalk and its limbs, between a vine and its branches, between the head and the members of the body, between the Father and the Son, are figures used to present different aspects of this Unity. This oneness between Christ and regenerate souls is spiritual, vital and organic, and results in a necessary oneness between those united together by being united to Christ.

The Westminster Confession speaks of this oneness of believers as the Communion of Saints, and it also is spiritual, vital and organic. It results in the possession of "the same mind" which theologians call *Communis Sensus*. It results in a common affection or love, represented in the new Commandment, the central ethical principle of the Church or the Kingdom of God, "A new commandment give I unto you that you

love one another as I have loved you." (John 13:34.) It results likewise in the possession of common aspirations and prayers, the chief of which is the glory of the Divine Lord and Redeemer. Ideally and normally this union is complete and perfect, and it will become so finally; for one day we shall "all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:13.) Meantime, this spiritual unity is imperfect and fractional because of the partial sanctification of even regenerate believers.

There ought to be a visible union of the people of Christ which would manifest their ideal spiritual Unity. Visible Union ought to be the counterpart of invisible Unity, and this Union ought to be, while visible, vital and organic. The prayer of Christ for his people "that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me," (John 17:21), cannot be answered unless there is a visible manifestation of this oneness. The world could not see and believe unless the world had visibly and sensibly before it this external embodiment of the invisible spiritual Unity. Visible Organic Union is obliged to be the ultimate goal, and the aspirations and prayers of Christ's people ought to join hands for the attainment of this end. There are only two ecclesiastical polities which are capable of embodying visibly this spiritual Unity. The one is the Papacy, which reaches visible Union by an absolute monarchy or autocracy, requiring the surrender of the liberties and rights divinely conferred on Church officers and people. The other mode is through Presbyteries, rising in gradation through a series of appellate courts until finally the Oecumenical or General Presbytery or Assembly of the world is reached, which has a constitution given in the Scriptures limiting its powers, but realizing the Unity of the Church in this scriptural or *jure divino* polity.

The question of Union now is dependent upon the real amount of spiritual Unity which has been attained in the growth of the Church. This spiritual Unity has not been destroyed but has been marred and obscured by divisions, and is as yet imperfect and incomplete. The Calvinists and Ar-

minians are certainly not of the "same mind;" the Roman and Greek Catholics perhaps are lacking in love for one another, after the measure of Christ's love for them; and it may well be that the aspirations and prayers of Christ's people are discordant, as reflected in the prayers of some ardent Pre-Millenarians and equally stubborn Post-Millenarians; views of Church government also are quite divergent, and modes of worship incapable of harmonious Unification. The possibilities of Union, therefore, have to be studied in the light of these diversities.

There can be no Union which is not based on spiritual agreements. The Romanists and the Anglicans and the Presbyterians cannot get together yet; the *consensus* is too small and the *dissensus* too great. Our Northern General Assembly was perhaps premature in estimating the *consensus* between the evangelical denominations as being sufficiently great to justify Union. Co-operation may well be practiced when Union is barred. The question is a pressing one, whether the *consensus* between the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches is sufficiently great to justify Union; and if so, what kind of Union. There would doubtless be a unanimous agreement in the principle that there ought to be just as much visible Union as would be justified by spiritual Unity; but it may be that we shall have to graduate the amount of Union to the degree of Unity.

There is one Presbyterian Church which holds the doctrine of the spirituality of the Church as a supernatural and spiritual institute, estopping it from traveling the road of social, economic, industrial or moral reform. Other Churches hold the view, quite intelligently and persistently, that the Church has functions—civic, economic and social. It is easy to understand how some minds and some Churches occupy the one position and other minds and other Churches the diverging view. The practical question is as to how much Union can be secured between Churches occupying these different positions. Organic Union would furnish the opportunity for dynamite explosions in controversial debate and for lurid flames in the way of Dissents and Protests. The history of the Presbyterian Church is marked by phenomena of this kind

sufficiently, and no wise Presbyterian Church desires a multiplication of these or like exhibitions.

Federal Union, somewhat after the pattern of the Constitution of this great country, furnishes a model which points the way to the closest Union possible in this year of grace, 1921. On the Federal principle each Church will preserve its autonomy in the field where divergences appear and pool its agreements with its sister Churches in the realm where such harmonies are practicable, viz., in a Federal General Assembly. This measure may not satisfy the aspirations and prayers of God's people as an ultimate goal, but it is a forward step along a road which brings us somewhat nearer that far-distant goal.

Through what experiences and by what measures the great Head of the Church, through His Spirit, may lead His Church and people, no one can tell, but no obstacles paralyze His arm, no difficulties balk His wisdom, and no diversities amongst His people can permanently veto His plan, and His, as yet unanswered prayer, is as sure of fulfillment as that He sits upon His throne.

The views which are embodied in this brief article may seem to some, insufficiently informed in ecclesiastical history, to be too modern to be safe. The obscurantists may date them from *Gore Lux Mundi* or Briggs in Church Unity, but their adequate exposition may be found in Calvin's *Institutes*, Book IV, chapters 1, 2 and 4, and Augustine anticipates the Reformer's views in *De Civitate Dei*, and numbers of the Church fathers agree. Indeed, the same views are explicit in the Pauline epistles and implicit in the teachings of Jesus. This is the source of their unchangeable authority and binding force.