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ART. I.—REFORMED SYNODS.

THE restoration of the Reformed, or—as it is commonly called—Presbyterian Church polity, is by many attributed to Calvin. This is correct only in part. The honor of having materially aided in its development belongs, no doubt, to him, but the first movement in that direction, and the first partial success in its restoration, belongs to Zwingli. Dr. Paul Henry, in his extensive and learned *Life of Calvin*, admits, that “the direction which Calvin took as a reformer, in matters of discipline, was that pointed out by Zwingli, and the opposite of that pursued by Luther.”*

Our present inquiry has reference to the rise and history of Synods and other ecclesiastical judicatories in the Reformed Church.

The first Synod in the Reformed sense, growing out of the new order developed by the Reformation, was, beyond doubt, the one held at Berne, Feb. 13th, 1528, six days after the close of the Disputation of Berne, when the ten Theses were signed. It was called with a view “to ascertain the sentiments of the congregations, through their delegates, with regard to the Reformation.” Whether this was designed to be the first of a series of permanent and regular Synods does not appear, but this is most likely. On account of disturbances which broke out in the Highlands, 1528, and also the religious wars of 1529 and 1531, what is usually called the first Synod of Berne did not meet till the 9th of January, 1532, continuing till the 14th.

* Vol. I, p. 367.

ART. VIII.—TERTULLIAN.

TERTULLIAN, the father of Latin theology and one of the most remarkable men of the early Church, was the son of a Roman officer and born about the middle of the second century, or fifty years after the close of the apostolic age, at Carthage in North Africa, the ancient rival city of Rome. Of his life we know nothing beyond what we can infer from his own works in connection with a few notices of Eusebius and Jerome. He received a liberal education; his writings manifest an extensive acquaintance with historical, philosophical, polite, and antiquarian literature, and with juridical terminology and all the arts of an advocate. He seems to have devoted himself to politics and forensic eloquence, either in Carthage or in Rome. Eusebius calls him "a man accurately acquainted with the Roman laws," and many regard him as identical with the Tertyllus or Tertullianus, who is the author of several fragments in the Pandects.

To his thirtieth or fortieth year he lived in heathen blindness and licentiousness. Towards the end of the second century he embraced Christianity, we know not exactly on what occasion, but evidently from deepest conviction and with all the fiery energy of his soul; defended it thenceforth with fearless decision against heathens, Jews and heretics; and studied the strictest morality of life. His own words may be applied to himself: "Fiant, non nascuntur Christiani." He was married, and gives us a glowing picture of Christian family life; but in his zeal for every form of self-denial, he set celibacy still higher, and advised his wife, in case he should die before her, to remain a widow, and he afterwards put second marriage even on a level with adultery. He entered the ministry of the Cath-

olic Church first probably in Carthage, perhaps in Rome, where at all events he spent some time; but like Clement of Alexandria and Origen, he never rose above the rank of presbyter.

Some years after (about 202), he joined the puritanic, though orthodox sect of the Montanists. Jerome attributes this change to personal motives, charging it to the envy and insults of the Roman clergy, from whom he himself experienced many an indignity. But Tertullian was inclined to extremes from the first, especially to moral austerity. He was no doubt attracted by the radical contempt for the world, the strict asceticism, the severe discipline, the martyr enthusiasm, and the millenarianism of the Montanists, and expelled by the growing conformity to the world in the Roman Church. This Church, we now accurately know from the *Philosophoumena* of Hippolytus, just at that period, under Zephyrinus and Callistus, openly took under its protection a very lax penitential discipline, and at the same time, though only temporally, favored the Patripassian error, which Praxeas, an opponent of the Montanists, brought to Rome. Of this man Tertullian therefore says, in his sarcastic way: He has executed in Rome two works of the devil, has driven out prophecy (the Montanistic) and brought in error (the Patripassian); has turned off the Holy Ghost and crucified the Father. Tertullian now fought the Catholics, or the psychicals, as he frequently calls them with the same inexorable sternness, with which he had combatted the heretics. The departures of the Montanists, however, related more to points of morality and discipline, than of doctrine; and with all his hostility to Rome, Tertullian remained a zealous advocate of the Catholic faith, and wrote, even from his schismatic position, several of his most effective works against the heretics, especially the Gnostics. Indeed, as a divine, he stood far above this fanatical sect, and gave it by his writings an importance and an influence on the Church itself, which it certainly would never otherwise have attained.

He labored in Carthage as a Montanist presbyter and an

author, and died, as Jerome says, in decrepit old age, according to some, about the year 220, according to others, not till 240. His followers in Africa propagated themselves, under the name of "Tertullianists," down to the time of Augustine in the fifth century, and took perhaps a middle place between the proper Montanists and the Catholics. That he ever returned into the bosom of Catholicism, as Hippolytus, according to the later story of Prudentius did, is an entirely groundless opinion. Nor has the Roman Church ever received him into the number of her saints and fathers.

Strange, that this most powerful defender of old Catholic orthodoxy and the teacher of the high churchly Cyprian, should have been a schismatic and an antagonist of Rome! But with the Roman spirit he united in his constitution the acerbity of the Punic character. The same bold independence played in him, in which his native city, Carthage, once resisted, through a more than a hundred years' war, the rising power of the seven-hilled city on the Tiber. But in this he truly represents the African Church, in which a similar antagonism continued to reveal itself, not only among the Donatists, but even among the leading advocates of Catholicism. Cyprian died at variance with Rome on the question of heretical baptism; and Augustine, with all his great services to the Catholic system of faith, became at the same time, through his anti-Pelagian doctrine, the father of evangelical Protestantism and of semi-protestant Jansenism.

Tertullian was a rare genius, perfectly original and fresh, but angular, boisterous and eccentric; full of glowing fantasy, pointed wit, keen discernment, polemic dexterity, and moral earnestness, but wanting in logical clearness, calm consideration, and symmetrical development. Like almost all great men he combined strong contrarieties of character. He reminds one in many respects of Luther; though the Reformer had nothing of the ascetic gloom and rigor of the African father, and exhibits in stead, with all his gigantic energy, a kindly serenity and child-like simplicity altogether foreign to the latter. Tertullian dwells

enthusiastically on the divine foolishness of the gospel and has a noble contempt for the world, for its science, and its arts, and for his own; and yet are his writings a mine of antiquarian knowledge and novel, striking, and fruitful ideas. He calls the Grecian philosophy the patriarch of all heresies, and scornfully asks: "What has the Academy to do with the Church? What has Christ to do with Plato? Jerusalem with Athens?" And yet reason does him invaluable service against his antagonists. He vindicates the principle of Church authority and tradition with great force and ingenuity against all heresy; yet when a Montanist, he claims for himself, with equal energy, the right of private judgment and individual protest. He has a vivid sense of the corruption of human nature and of the absolute need of moral regeneration; yet he declares the soul to be born Christian, and unable to find rest, except in faith. "The testimonies of the soul," says he "are as true as they are simple; as simple as they are popular; as popular as they are natural; as natural as they are divine." He is just the opposite of the equally genial, less vigorous, but more learned and comprehensive Origen. He adopts the strictest supernatural principles, and shrinks not from the "*Credo quia absurdum est.*" At the same time he is a most decided realist, and attributes body, that is, as it were, a corporeal, tangible substantiality, even to God and the soul; while the idealistic Alexandrian cannot speak spiritually enough of God, and can conceive the human soul without and before the existence of body. Tertullian's theology revolves about the great Pauline antithesis of sin and grace, and breaks the road to the Latin anthropology and soteriology afterwards developed by his like-minded, but clearer, calmer and more considerate countryman Augustine. For his opponents, be they heathens, Jews, heretics, or Catholics, he has as little indulgence and regard as Luther. With the adroitness of a special pleader he entangles them in self-contradictions, pursues them into every nook and corner, overwhelms them with arguments, sophisms, apothegms, and sarcasms, drives them

before him with unmerciful lashings, and almost always makes them ridiculous and contemptible. His polemics every where leave marks of blood. His style is exceedingly characteristic, and corresponds with his thought. It is extremely condensed, abrupt, laconic, sententious, nervous, figurative, full of hyperbole, sudden turns, legal technicalities, African provincialisms, or rather antiquated Latinisms, Latinized Greek words, and new expressions; therefore abounding also in roughness, angles, and obscurities; sometimes like a grand volcanic eruption, belching precious stones and dross in strange confusion, or like the foaming torrent tumbling over the precipice of rocks and sweeping all before it. His mighty spirit wrestles with the form, and breaks its way through the primeval forest of natures' thinking. He had to create the Church language of the Latin tongue.

In short, we see in this remarkable man both intellectually and morally the fermenting of a new creation, not yet quite set free from the bonds of chaotic darkness in clear and beautiful order.

The writings of Tertullian are mostly short; but they are numerous, and touch almost all departments of religious life. They present a graphic picture of the Church of his day. The earlier ones which were written in Greek, are entirely lost, or extant only in Latin reproductions.

Most of his works according to internal evidence, fall in the first quarter of the third century, in the Montanistic period of his life; and among these many of his ablest writings against the heretics; while on the other hand, the gloomy moral austerity, which predisposed him to Montanism, comes out quite strongly, even in his earliest productions. His works may be grouped in three classes: apologetic, polemic or anti-heretical, and ethic; to which may be added as a fourth class, the expressly Montanistic tracts against the Catholics. We can here mention only the most important.

1. Pre-eminent among the apologetic works against

heathens and Jews is the *Apologeticus*, which was composed probably in the reign of Septimus Severus, about A. D., 200, and is unquestionably one of the most beautiful monuments of the heroic age of Christianity. In this work Tertullian enthusiastically and triumphantly repels the attacks of the heathens upon the new religion, and demands for it legal toleration and equal rights with the other sects of the Roman Empire;—the first plea for religious liberty.

2. His polemic works are occupied chiefly with the refutation of the Gnostics, particularly of Marcion (A. D. 208) and the Valentinians. In the ingenious and truly catholic tract "On the Prescription of Heretics," he cuts off all errors and neologies at the outset from all right of legal contest and appeal to the Holy Scriptures which belong only to the Catholic Church as the legitimate heir and guardian of Christianity. His forensic argument, however, turns also against Tertullian's own secession; for the difference between heretics and schismatics is really only relative, at least in Cyprian's view. Tertullian afterwards asserted, in contradiction with this book, that in religious matters not custom nor long possession, but truth alone, was to be consulted.

The works "On Baptism," "On the Soul," "On the Flesh of Christ," "On the Resurrection of the Flesh," "Against Hermogenes," "Against Praxeas," are concerned with particular errors, and are important to the doctrine of baptism, to Christian psychology, to eschatology and christology.

3. His numerous practical ascetic treatises throw much light on the moral life of the early Church, as contrasted with the immorality of the heathen world. Among these belong the books "On Prayer," "On Penance," "On Patience,"—a virtue, which he extols with honest confession of his own natural impatience and passionate temper, and which he urges upon himself as well as others,—the consolation of the confessors in prison (*Ad martyres*), and the admonition against visiting theatres (*De Spectaculis*),

which he classes with the pomp of the devil, and against all share, direct, or indirect, in the worship of idols (*De idololatria*).

4. His strictly Montanistic writings in which the peculiarities of this sect are not only incidentally touched, but vindicated expressly and at large, are likewise of a practical nature, and contend, in fanatical rigor, against the restoration of the lapsed (*De pudicitia*), flight in persecution, second marriage (*De monogamia*, and *De exhortatione castitatis*), display of dress in females (*De cultu feminarum*), and other customs of the physicals, as he commonly calls the Catholics in distinction from the sectarian pneumatics. His plea, also, for excessive fasting (*De jejuniis*), and his justification of a Christian soldier, who was discharged for refusing to crown his head (*De corona militis*), belong here. Tertullian considers it unbecoming the followers of Christ, who, when on earth wore a crown of thorns for us, to adorn their heads with laurel, myrtle, olive, or with flowers or gems. We may imagine what he would have said to the tiara of the pope at the height of his mediaeval power.

Mercersburg, Pa.

P. S.