

## Lecture 30 – “Faith & Learning”: Calvinism in Nineteenth Century America

“A church historian without faith and piety can only set before us, at best, instead of the living body of Christ, a cold marble statue, without seeing eye or feeling heart.” Philip Schaff

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.” 2 Peter 3:18

### Prayer

From Charles Hodge (opening prayer at the Evangelical Alliance, 1873)

“Come, Holy Spirit, come! Descend in all Thy plentitude of grace. Come as the Spirit of reverence and love.... We confess Thee before men; we avow our faith that God is, and that He is the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the World. We acknowledge that the God of Abraham and Isaac, and of Jacob is our God. We confess Christ as God manifest in the flesh, and as our only and all-sufficient Savior, who for us sinners died upon the cross, to reconcile us unto God, and to make expiation for the sins of men; and who, having died for our offenses, has risen again for our justification. We acknowledge him as now seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, all power in heaven and on earth having been committed to His hands. Thanks be to God, thanks be to God, that He has put on us, unworthy as we are, the honor to make this confession, and to bear this testimony to God and to His Son. O God, look down from heaven upon us. Shed abroad in our hearts the Holy Spirit, that we may be truly one in Christ Jesus.... To the Father, Son and Holy Ghost be glory, now and evermore. Amen.”

## “Faith & Learning”: Calvinism in Nineteenth Century America

### I. The New England Theology

- A. From the “New Divinity” (Samuel Hopkins [1721-1803]) to the “New Haven Theology” (Nathaniel Taylor [1786-1858])
- B. Harvard University
- C. Andover Seminary founded in 1809

### II. Mercersburg Theology

- A. German Reformed seminary in Pennsylvania
- B. John Nevin (1803-86)
  1. Revivalist—subjectivism—*The Anxious Bench*
  2. Sacramental theology—*The Mystical Presence*
  3. Revision of *WCF*
- C. Philip Schaff (1819-93)
  1. Church History—*History of the Christian Church* (8 vols.); ed. *The Creeds of Christendom and Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*
  2. Theory of development leading to an “evangelical Catholicism”

### III. The Princeton Theology

- A. The Princeton history
  1. The Log College (1735) and the College of New Jersey (1746)
  2. The Seminary (1812)—“piety of the heart” and “solid learning”
 

Samuel Miller address at the inauguration of the first professor (Archibald Alexander) on August 12, 1812: “We have more reason to rejoice, and to felicitate one another on the establishment of this seminary, than on the achievement of a great national victory, or on making a splendid addition to our national territory. It is the beginning, as we trust, of an extensive and permanent system, from which blessings may flow to millions, while we are sleeping in the dust.”

3. The first faculty—Archibald Alexander (1772-1851), Samuel Miller (1769-1850), Charles Hodge (1797-1878)
- B. The Princeton theology
  1. Reformed theology—Francis Turretin’s *Institutes* and Charles Hodge’s *Systematic Theology*
  2. Inerrancy of Scripture—*Inspiration* by A. A. Hodge and B. B. Warfield
  3. Piety and the Christian life—See *Piety and the Princeton Theologians* (1981) by W. Andrew Hoffecker
  4. Evangelism and missions—J.W. Alexander; student society of inquiry on missions
  5. Christian worldview
    - a. The Princeton journals (1825-1929)
    - b. Abraham Kuyper’s “Stone Lectures” (1898)
- IV. Southern Presbyterian Theology
  - A. Union Seminary in Virginia (1824)—Robert Lewis Dabney (1820-1898)
  - B. Columbia Seminary in S.C. (1829)—James Henley Thornwell (1812-1862) and John Lafayette Girardeau (1825-1898)
  - C. The Southern Presbyterian Review (1847-85)
- V. The Baptists
  - A. Calvinistic heritage
 

From the “covenant and articles of faith” of the First Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, adopted at its organization on January 1, 1848: “...The corruption of human nature and the incompetency of natural man to do any thing that is spiritually or morally good. The everlasting love of God to his people. The doctrine of eternal election. The covenant of grace. Particular redemption. Justification before God by the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed. Pardon and reconciliation through his blood. Regeneration and sanctification by the influence and operation of the Holy Ghost. The final perseverance of the saints in grace.”
  - B. The doctrines of grace which had established the Baptist churches in the United States “like a puff of smoke in a strong wind...vanished in American Baptist life” (Thomas J. Nettles).
  - C. Reasons for decline of Calvinism
    1. Campbellism (Arminian, anti-confessional church movement)
    2. Landmarkism
    3. Hyper-Calvinism

### Questions from Class

Where are the three Presbyterian seminaries today theologically?

### For Further Study

\**Piety versus Moralism: The Passing of the New England Theology* (1932) by Joseph Haroutunian

\**Princeton Seminary: Faith and Learning, 1812-1868* (1994) and *Princeton Seminary: The Majestic Testimony, 1869-1929* (1996) by David B. Calhoun

You should also read at some time during your seminary studies B. B. Warfield’s addresses to the Princeton students—“The Religious Life of Theological Students” and “Spiritual Culture in the Theological Seminary” in *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield* 1:411-25 and 2: 468-96).

\**Studies in Southern Presbyterian Theology* (1962) by Morton H. Smith

\**By His Grace and for His Glory: A Historical, Theological, and Practical Study of the Doctrines of Grace in Baptist Life* (1986) by Thomas J. Nettles