

THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY.

VOL. X.

JULY, 1906.

No. 3.

THE MISSOURI SYNOD AND DIETRICH'S CATECHISM.

The late Intersynodical Conference which was convened at Fort Wayne during August, 1905, had met for the stated purpose of examining the proof-texts of Scripture bearing on the doctrine of election. As frequently happens during discussions of this nature, matters not really essential to the business in hand were touched upon by the speakers. Thus the Fort Wayne Convention was advised that the Missouri Synod had adopted a new catechism for use in its churches and schools in lieu of Conrad Dietrich's Catechism, formerly the authorized catechism of the Missouri Synod; and that this action was tantamount to a repudiation of Missouri's former teaching on the subject of election, inasmuch as Dietrich's Catechism taught the doctrine which the Missouri Synod at present rejects. We quote the information as it was communicated to the public through church papers at the time.

Dietrich's Catechism was referred to in order to prove that the opponents of Missouri stand where this Synod (Missouri) stood formerly. Dietrich's edition of Luther's Smaller Catechism was for years published by the Missouri Synod and used in its churches. This catechism teaches on election: The grounds for election are threefold, to-wit: 1. the unfathomable goodness and mercy of God; 2. the unlimited atonement proclaimed in the Gospel; 3. the abiding saving faith in Christ. This catechism has for some years been replaced by another edition which, it is claimed, is in greater harmony with the present teaching of the Synod.

(Dr. Nicum in report to *The Lutheran* of August 31, 1905, regarding the Intersynodical Conference held at Fort Wayne, Ind., Aug. 8--10.)

WASHINGTON THE CHRISTIAN.¹⁾

When two months old, George Washington was baptized; likely by the Rev. Lawrence De Butts, the pastor of Washington parish. He was carefully brought up in the Christian religion by his mother, and many biographers give her much credit for what he became. Paulding tells us this Christian matron read daily to her household the "Contemplations" of Sir Matthew Hale, the illustrious and Christian judge of the corrupt court of Charles II, which contain a long and minute series of Meditations on the Lord's Prayer. No doubt this family worship went far to form the character of young George.

As far back as 1624 it is recorded that the young were catechised from Lent to far into the summer. Being the son of a vestryman, George no doubt was taught the Christian religion by the pastor of Truro parish, the Rev. Charles Green.

When Washington was a lad of thirteen, he wrote in a blank book a list of maxims for the guidance of young people. Here are some of them: "Speak not injurious words, neither in jest nor in earnest. Be not hasty to believe flying reports to the disparagement of any. Be not apt to relate news if you know not the truth thereof. Be careful to keep your promise. Speak not evil of the absent. When you speak of God, or His attributes, let it be seriously in reverence. Honor and obey your natural parents, although they be poor. Let your recre-

1) *Authorities*:—Senator Lodge's *George Washington*; President Woodrow Wilson's *Washington*; Ford's *The True George Washington*; Lossing's *Washington*; Everett's *Washington*; Weems's *Washington*; Saunder's *Washington Centennial Souvenir*; Sparks's *Washington's Writings*, vol. 12; Collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, vol. 1; Vernon's *George Washington, Soldier and Christian*; Harbaugh's *Religious Character of Washington*; M'Guire's *Religious Opinions and Character of Washington*; Potter's *Washington in His Library and Life*; *The Century*, April, 1889; *The Treasury*, February, 1901; *Washington as Churchman and Communicant*, Address to the Drawing Room Club at the Waldorf-Astoria by Dr. Eliphalet Nott Potter, formerly President of Hobart College.

ations be manful, not sinful. Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire, called conscience." When fourteen, he was bent on going to sea, and his trunk was sent aboard the vessel. Returning to bid his mother good-by, he found her in tears. He promptly gave up his ambition and remained at home. His mother said, "God will not let your filial affection go unrewarded."

He learned surveying, and in 1748, when he was sixteen years old, he surveyed the vast estate of unexplored lands at the base of the Alleghenies belonging to Lord Fairfax, whose frequent companion he was. So well did he do this work among the hostile Indians, that Lord Fairfax procured him the office of public surveyor, which he held for three years.

George Washington was sullied with none of the vices then so common with the sons of planters; his morals were irreproachable; his habits, temperate; his sentiments, lofty; his health, perfect; his manners, easy and dignified; he loved society, but was no brilliant talker; he was a fine athlete; he loved fox-hunting; he was the best horseman in America; the British officers said they had never seen so heroic a figure as Washington on horseback.

During the Indian and French War Fairfax wrote to Washington at the Great Meadows, "I will not doubt your having public prayers in camp, especially when the Indian families are your guests, that they, seeing your plain manner of worship, may have their curiosity excited to be informed why we do not use the ceremonies of the French, which being well explained to their understanding, will more and more dispose them to receive our baptism, and unite in strict bonds of cordial friendship." This letter speaks volumes for the Christian character of young George Washington—it takes for granted that he prays publicly and is a missionary! "During the French War, when the government of Virginia neglected to provide chaplains for the army, he remonstrated against such impropriety, and urged his request till they were appointed." To Governor Dinwiddie he wrote, "Common decency, sir, in a

camp, calls for the services of a divine, which ought not to be dispensed with, although the world should be so uncharitable as to think us void of religion and incapable of good instructions." Colonel B. Temple says, "frequently, on the Sabbath, he has known Colonel Washington to perform divine service with his regiment, reading the Scriptures and praying with them." The chaplain being wounded, Washington himself read the burial service by the light of a torch at the burial of General Braddock. At this period Washington writes, "I have, both by threats and persuasive means, endeavored to discountenance gaming, drinking, swearing, and irregularities of every other kind."

In the midst of his many pressing duties, Washington often visited his mother at Fredericksburg and provided for her wants. In his letters he always addressed her as "Honored Madam," and signed himself, "Your most dutiful son." He attended his half-brother Lawrence to the end, in 1752, when Lawrence's own brother Augustine would but seldom visit the consumptive. At the death of the daughter of his half-brother Lawrence, he fell heir to the Mount Vernon estate. In 1759 he married his "dear Patsey," the widow Martha Custis, who owned vast tracts of land in Kent County and £45,000, and he was perhaps the wealthiest man in all the colonies.

He was elected vestryman in the two parishes of Truro and Fairfax, and was quite active in church affairs. When the merits of two sites for the Pohick church were warmly discussed, Washington himself went to the trouble of measuring the distance from each proposed site to the house of each parishioner to find out which was the nearer place for all, and then laid the matter before the vestry; needless to say that on the basis of these statistics the spot favored by Washington was chosen. He drew the plans for the new church in Truro and subscribed to the building. Sparks quotes President Madison to the effect that "there was a tradition, that when he (Washington) belonged to the vestry of a church in his neigh-

borhood, and several little difficulties grew out of some division of the society, he sometimes spoke with great force, animation, and eloquence on the topics that came before them." In the elections of 1765 Washington stood third in popularity in the Truro church, and fifth in that of Fairfax.

The Rev. Lee Massey, rector at Pohick (Truro) church before the Revolution, said, "I never knew so constant an attendant in church as Washington. And his behavior in the house of God was ever so deeply reverential that it produced the happiest effect on my congregation, and greatly assisted me in my pulpit labors. No company ever withheld him from church. I have often been at Mount Vernon on Sabbath morning, when his breakfast table was filled with guests; but to him they furnished no pretext for neglecting his God and losing the satisfaction of setting a good example. For instead of staying at home, out of false complaisance to them, he used constantly to invite them to accompany him." And this, although he had seven miles to Pohick church and ten miles to Fairfax. Once when Mrs. Washington was not well and confined to the house, he would have attended church nevertheless, had not something else kept him home, as we may see from his diary of January 6, 1760. On Sunday evenings he read to his wife a sermon or a portion of the Bible. On May 4 he visited his negroes ill of the smallpox. In 1773, he bought a pew in Christ Church in Alexandria, paying £36.10, the largest price paid by any parishioner. To this church he was quite liberal, subscribing several times towards repairs, etc.

Washington asked a blessing at his own table, in a standing posture; if a clergyman was present, he was asked to pray. Once he forgot to ask a visiting clergyman to say grace, and when reminded of it afterwards he said, "Well, at any rate he will know that we are not graceless in this house."

Parson Green, first rector of Truro parish, had his corner at the fireside of Mount Vernon, and the Rev. Lee Massey, of Pohick church, was a friend of the family, as was the Rev.

Charles Kemp, and the Rev. Byran, Lord Fairfax; and to Parson Weems Mrs. Washington always gave a double spoonful of egg sauce when it fell to her to carve the chickens.

Washington's nephew, Mr. Lewis, says, that he had "accidentally witnessed his private devotions in his study both morning and evening; that on these occasions he had seen him in a kneeling posture, with a Bible open before him, and that he believed such to have been his daily practice."

When the port of Boston was closed by act of Parliament, the Virginia House of Congress set apart June 1 as a day of fasting and prayer, and the entry in Washington's journal reads, "June 1 went to church, and fasted all day." When he went to Philadelphia as a member of the first Congress, he went to church every Sunday, as we may see from his journal. At this time a stranger asked how he might know Washington; Secretary Thompson replied, "You can easily distinguish him when Congress goes to prayer: Washington is the gentleman who kneels down." When Bishop White made the first prayer in Congress, Washington was the only one observed to kneel.

One of his orders as General was, "The General requires and expects of all officers and soldiers, not engaged in actual duty, a punctual attendance on divine service, to implore the blessings of heaven upon the means used for our safety and defense." On July 9, 1775, he says, "The General hopes and trusts, that every officer and man will endeavor to live and act as becomes a Christian soldier." On February 26, 1776, he says, "All officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers, are positively forbid playing at cards and other games of chance. At this time of public distress, men may find enough to do in the service of their God and their country, without abandoning themselves to vice and immorality." On August 3, 1776, he says, "That the troops may have an opportunity of attending public worship . . . the General in future excuses them from fatigue duty on Sunday." On May 29, 1777, he says, "Let vice and immorality of every kind be discouraged as much

as possible in your brigade; and, as a chaplain is allowed to each regiment, see that the men regularly attend divine worship. Gaming of every kind is expressly forbidden." On December 17, 1777, "the General directs . . . that the chaplains perform divine service . . . and earnestly exhorts all officers and soldiers, whose absence is not indispensably necessary, to attend with reverence the solemnities of the day."

During the war Washington received the Lord's Supper from the Rev. Dr. Jones at Morristown, N. J. Isaac Potts saw the General on his knees in prayer in a thicket in Valley Forge. A woman testified that it was his habit to retire from the camp for prayer. The Rev. J. Eastburn saw him in prayer near the battle of Princeton. At still another time he was overheard at his private prayer, ending with the words, "Grant the petition of Thy servant for the sake of Him whom Thou hast called Thy Beloved Son." General Cobb says, "Throughout the war it was understood in his military family, that he gave a part of each day to private prayer and devotion." General Sullivan makes the same remark. Says an officer, Washington's nephew, "I took the papers from the messenger and directed my steps towards the General's room. I heard a voice within and paused. Listening for a moment, when all was silent around, I found that he was earnestly engaged in prayer. I knew this to be his habit, and therefore retired." At Yorktown he said to his soldiers, "My brave fellows, let no sensation of satisfaction for the triumphs you have gained induce you to insult your fallen enemy; let no shouting, no clamorous huzzaing increase their mortification. It is sufficient satisfaction for us that we witness their humiliation. Posterity will huzza for us!"

In his circular letter to the Governors of the States, on disbanding the army, he praises, "above all, the pure and benign light of Revelation," and in conclusion asks all to follow "the Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without an humble imitation of whose example in these things we can never hope to be a happy nation."

In his Farewell Address he says, "Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligations desert the oaths, which are the instruments of investigation in Courts of Justice. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle." When he bade farewell to the army, he offered "his recommendations to their grateful country, and his prayers to the God of Armies." When he bade farewell to Congress, he commended "the interests of our dearest country to the protection of Almighty God, and those who have the superintendence of them to His holy keeping."

When in New York City, President Washington worshiped regularly at St. Paul's Church. In Philadelphia, at Christ Church, the President was "a constant attendant in the morning." Here, when he had received a just reproof from the pulpit, he did not get angry, but honored the preacher for his integrity and candor and would never again give cause for the repetition of the reproof. When, in 1793, the yellow fever broke out in Philadelphia, he moved to Germantown and for six weeks boarded with the Rev. Dr. F. L. Herman, and attended the English services with his family; he even attended the German services, to set a good example.

While President, Washington usually retired to his study at nine o'clock every night for communion with his Bible and his God; no exception was made when he had company, receptions, and state dinners. On Sundays he would have no visitors; Trumbull, the Speaker of the House, an earnest Christian, was the only exception. At Philadelphia a youthful member of the President's household, whose room was near the study, on one occasion looked in and saw Washington upon his knees at a small table with a candle and an open Bible thereon. Traveling through Connecticut in the fall of 1789, Washington on Sunday "attended the morning and evening services and heard very lame discourses from a Mr. Pond."

With all his self-respect and natural dignity, Washington was modest and unassuming. When elected commander-in-chief, he frankly doubted his ability; yet without reluctance he accepted the trust, pledging to exert all his powers, under Providence, to lead the country through its trials. He indignantly rejected the overtures made privately to consent to be king. He was fearless of praise or blame, though not insensible to either. He was reserved in manner, yet capable of the warmest affection. He had a very fiery temper, but he usually kept it well under control. In 1754, when he was twenty-two years old, in an election contest in the market-place of Alexandria, Colonel Wm. Payne, little as he was, with a stick knocked down Colonel Washington, big as he was. Washington was in the wrong, with his fiery temper he had used insulting language. He was Christian enough to apologize the next day to his doughty little assailant; later he introduced him to his wife, mentioning the fact of their encounter, and always remained a warm friend.

He once said, "I can truly say, I had rather be at Mount Vernon with a friend or two about me, than to be attended at the seat of government by the officers of state and the representatives of every power of Europe." He said that more permanent and genuine happiness is to be found in connubial life than in the giddy rounds of pleasure or the scenes of successful ambition.

Washington would take no salary for his services to his country, but he consented to have his expenses refunded.

Washington's charities were not very conspicuous, but very judicious. Careful in the smallest expenses, he never turned a deaf ear to the many poor of the county. For their use he kept a granary full of corn, and a boat with a net in one of his best fisheries. The baker in the neighborhood of one of the "Virginia Springs" was ordered to supply a daily dole of bread to a number of very poor mountaineers, but not to tell the giver's name. Quite by chance it was found out to be Washington, as Governor Johnson of Maryland tells us. When

President at Philadelphia, "he incidentally heard some one speak of a very destitute family in the city. He asked for the number and street in which they lived. Soon after he visited this family in their lowly abode, spoke words of gentle sympathy to them, and, when leaving, pressed ten dollars into the trembling hand of the grateful widow." While very careful not to help the lazy, he was always ready to help the deserving. Even during the troublous times of the war he did not forget to do good. He wrote Lund Washington, the manager of his estate, to give about £40 to £50 a year to the worthy poor and seed corn to such as were in need of it. He founded the School for Boys in Alexandria, and for many years gave \$250.00 annually for the schooling of the poor, and left \$4000 to the institution, and \$10,000 to Liberty Hall Academy in Rockbridge County, and \$20,000 to a National University at Washington. All his slaves were to be freed at the death of his wife, who had the whole property for life, about \$530,000.

Jared Sparks says that in the twelve volumes of Washington's writings, "whenever he approaches it (the Christian revelation), and indeed when he alludes in any manner to religion, it is done with seriousness and reverence." Ford says, "In all public ways Washington threw his influence in favor of religion." President Madison says, "He was constant in his observance of worship." Chief Justice John Marshall says, "He was a sincere believer in the Christian faith, and a truly devout man."

When the doctors in New York told him that he was sick unto death, he said, "I am not afraid to die, and can bear the worst. Whether to-night or twenty years hence makes no difference. I know that I am in the hands of a good Providence."

His last sickness was less than twenty-four hours. To his doctor he said, "I die hard, but I am not afraid to go. I believed from my first attack that I should not survive it." He also said, "I should have been glad, had it pleased God, to die

a little easier, but I doubt not it is for my good." The Bible was on his dying bed; his beloved wife was kneeling by his side; he said, "I am just going. 'Tis well. Father of mercies, take me to Thyself!" — His epitaph is, "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

At his death Congress resolved, 1. to erect a grand marble monument, and, 2. to hold a funeral service in the German Lutheran church.

Milwaukee, Wis.

W. DALLMANN.
