

THE PALMERSTON CONTROVERSY

THE REV. MR. CLARKE'S TEACHING CRUEL,
MERCILESS, AND CALVINISTIC, NOT
CHRISTIAN.

The following further letter from the Rev. Father J. Lynch appeared in the *Palmerston and Waikouaiti Times* of July 11:—

A CONTRAST.

'Sir,—

'CATHOLIC TEACHING.

'1. The Catholic Church teaches as of faith that *all men* have been redeemed by Christ. "Christ died for all," says St. Paul.

'2. The Catholic Church teaches that salvation is open to all provided they follow the dictate of their conscience—i.e., avoid evil and do good according to their lights and graces.

'3. The Catholic Church teaches that faith, animated by love of God, and *good works* are necessary antecedent conditions to salvation.

'4. The Catholic Church teaches that no man is so absolutely "elect" or "predestinated" for heaven that he may not through sin fall away and be lost.

'5. The Catholic Church teaches that men must work out their salvation in fear and trembling, not knowing whether they be worthy of love or hatred (as the Scripture says).

'6. The Catholic Church teaches that God will reward or punish men according to their merits or demerits.

'7. The Catholic Church teaches that negative infidels or unbelievers—i.e., those who, through no fault of theirs, do not believe in Christ—can do good works and merit by them eternal salvation. To the man who does what is in his power God will not deny saving grace (St. Augustine).

'8. The Catholic Church teaches that Jews, pagans, Mohammedans—i.e., all non-Christians—can be saved provided they do what in them lies and follow the natural law engraved by God on the hearts of all (St. Paul, Romans i.).

'PRESBYTERIANISM.

'1. The *Presbyterian Confession of Faith* teaches that only "the elect" have been redeemed by Christ—not all men, therefore.

'2. The *Presbyterian Confession of Faith* teaches that salvation is open to "the elect" only independently of any act or good work of theirs.

'3. The *Presbyterian Confession of Faith* teaches that "election" alone suffices for salvation. Faith and good works are not prior conditions, but consequences of election.

'4. The *Presbyterian Confession of Faith* teaches that "the elect" or predestinated are so certainly and absolutely predestinated that they cannot wholly fall from this election to eternal life, no matter how they sin or how wicked be their lives.

'5. The *Presbyterian Confession of Faith* teaches that men may be absolutely assured of their salvation and of that election and predestination from which they can never fall.

'6. The *Presbyterian Confession of Faith* teaches that God will elect or predestine a certain fixed number of men to eternal salvation, without any regard to their merits or demerits, and elect or predestine the remainder of men to eternal damnation, without any regard to their merits or demerits.

'7. The *Presbyterian Confession of Faith* teaches that the works—even good works—of unbelievers are sins; merit damnation therefore.

'8. The *Presbyterian Confession of Faith* teaches that non-Christians *cannot* be saved, and that "to assert that they may is pernicious and to be detested."

'*Presbyterian Confession of Faith*, Chapter III, sections iii., iv., v., vi., vii. Section iii.: "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto life everlasting, and others foreordained to everlasting death.

"iv. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

"v. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, *without any foresight of faith or good works, perseverance in either of them, or anything else in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving Him thereunto*; and all to the praise of His glorious name.

"vi. Wherefore they who are elected being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ; are effectually called into faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith unto salvation. *Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but only the elect.*

"vii. The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His will, whereby He extendeth and withholdeth mercy as He pleaseth, for the glory of His sovereign power over His creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice."

'Chapter X. of "Effectual Calling":—

'Section i.: "All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased, in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call. . . .

"iv. *Others not elected*, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come unto Christ, *and therefore cannot be saved; much less can men not professing the Christian religion be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they ever so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain that they may, is very pernicious and to be detested.*"

'Chapter XVI., pp. 69 and 70: "Works done by unregenerate men, although, for the matter of them, they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others; yet because they proceed not from a heart purified of faith; nor are done in a right manner, according to the word; nor to a right end the glory of God: they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God. And yet the neglect of them is more sinful and displeasing to God."

'Chapter XVIII., pp. 73-74: "Of Assurance of Grace and Salvation":—

"I. . . . Such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus . . . may in this life be *certainly assured* that they are in the state of grace. . . .

"II. *This certainly* is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion grounded on fallible hope; but an *infallible assurance of faith.*"

'Larger Catechism, q. 68, p. 159: Are the *elect only* effectually called?

'A.: All the elect, *and they only*, are effectually called.

'Q. 80, p. 168: Can true believers be infallibly assured that they are in the state of grace, and that they shall persevere therein unto salvation?

'A.: Such as truly believe in Christ . . . may . . . be *infallibly assured* that they are in the state of grace, and shall persevere therein unto salvation.

'Q. 60, pp. 154-155: *Can they who have never heard the Gospel*, know not Jesus Christ, nor believe in Him, be saved by their living according to the light of nature?

'A.: *They who, having never heard the Gospel*, know not Jesus Christ, believe not in Him, *cannot be saved*, be they ever so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, or the laws of that religion which they profess.

'It is needless to comment upon this teaching of the *Presbyterian Confession of Faith*. It is the cruel and merciless doctrine of Calvin or Predestination. No