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LIBERAL BUT NOT LATITUDINARIAN.

All that we give and all that we ask of liberty in interpreting and accepting the Standards of our Church is such as a fair and reasonable judgment of the documents would allow. Forced interpretations of the text and radical departures from the doctrines are out of the question, whether in the interest of liberty or of bigotry—for they may be made to serve both. For our purposes we discard them. We have no wish to open the door to latitudinarianism, or to set the Presbyterian Church at sea without compass or chart, in these stormy times. Over those stormy seas the steady light of Presbyterian doctrine has beamed afar. It has been neither shifted nor dimmed nor extinguished. Great, irreparable to human view, would be the loss, if the rising tide of error should sweep that steadfast light from its moorings. But it only obscures the light or circumscribes its range to blend with it too much of human philosophy; to insist upon its minor points; to contend earnestly for example, as if the whole faith once delivered to the saints was at stake, for the difference between mediate and immediate imputation, to elevate to the rank of a leading dogma, some theory of the precise relation of the sin of Adam to my nature and destiny, and to give Calvinism the peurile attitude and mission of a sort of patent logic-machine, by which the attributes and government of God, the character of man and the universe itself are to be epitomized and shown up to the entire satisfaction of the spectator. Calvinistic systems of that sort are dark lanterns. Should they be lost or stricken from the recognized developments of the doctrine, it would rather be like taking the bushel off the candle and setting it on a candlestick where it might give light to all in the house.

However, it is not our purpose at present to boast of the services rendered by our theologians in clearing and intensifying the light of these doctrines, great as we believe those services are. Our aim is simply to show the claims of those views, which have been disparaged as "New School," to equal recognition with any others entertained in the Presbyterian Church of this country. We desire to show the falseness and the folly of the charge of looseness and latitudinarianism and "error," which is brought against these views, by which old prejudices are kept alive, a sound basis of re-union rendered impossible, and the hollowness of the pretended union sentiment of some is exposed.

Are, then, our views on Native Depravity and the imputation of the sin of Adam "latitudinarian"? The Confession defines Original Sin to be the "want of the righteousness wherein he [man] was created, and the corruption of his nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed, &c., unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil." Larger Catechism, Q. 25. (The first clause of the answer will be considered under the topic of imputation.) With this statement, and with what seems to us its plain meaning, we agree. The controversy here turns upon the interpretation and connection of the parts of the sentence. Is the corruption spoken of in the second member a distinct original fact in the constitution of the fallen soul, or, as President Edwards teaches, is it simply a consequence of the defect—"the want of righteousness"—mentioned in the first member? Says President Edwards:—"There is not the least need of supposing that man is conceived and born with a fountain of evil in his heart, such as is any thing properly positive. The absence of positive good principles and the withholding of special Divine influence, leaving the common natural principles of self-love, natural appetite, &c., to themselves, without the government of superior Divine principles, will certainly be followed with the total corruption of the heart without occasion for any positive influence at all." (This view of President Edwards is fully endorsed by Dr. Hodge.—Commentary on Romans, p. 290, edition of 1864.) Others may teach that the corruption is something independent of, and additional to, the defect; not related to it as effect to cause. They may believe that sin is a positive, physical, original principle in the soul. Yet it would be a bold and intol-

erant style of interpretation to maintain that this view alone is consistent with the meaning of the passage, and to brand the causative view as dissent from the teachings of the Confession.

A more important question has arisen as to whether, before actual transgression, infants are regarded as deserving the wrath of God for the mere possession of such a defective and consequently corrupt nature? Not whether they are corrupt or whether they need regeneration,—there is no difference of opinion on this point,—but whether they personally deserve punishment for the depraved condition in which they are born. Certainly one could not infer it from the language of the Catechism as quoted. Possibly the Confession may be regarded as teaching this doctrine in VI. 6, where it declares that "every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God and contrary thereto, doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner." &c. This clause, if it proves anything, proves too much. From the use of the active word "transgression," it is evident that something more than native depravity is meant by original sin. Native depravity may, indeed, be described as a want of conformity unto, but surely not as a transgression of, the law of God. For, according to one of the issues of the O. S. Board (which we use in training the children of our own family), transgression is distinguished from "a want of conformity," by the definition: "Doing what God forbids." (Catechism for Young Children, Q. 30.) The Confession, therefore, in speaking of "original sin" as a "transgression," must have intended to characterize the sin of Adam. Only by bringing in some act of sin could they warrantably use the word "transgression," according to the definition of the word given by the Presbyterian Board. And no act of man can be described as original sin but the individual first sin of Adam. We therefore boldly deny that the Confession in VI. 6, or anywhere else, by fair construction, requires us to believe that the mere possession of a depraved nature is a crime.

Those who choose, may ascribe it to the authors of the Confession; they must not raise the cry of "latitudinarian" because we choose to consider the Westminster divines better masters of the English language than their theory requires. Or, if they ascribe to them the realistic view of the elder Edwards, by which Adam did not represent, but actually was the collective human race, so that his actual transgressions are my actual transgressions, and his original sin was an actual transgression of himself and all his posterity, then they are welcome to their theory of the philosophy of the Confession, but they must not force it upon others; nor, if it can be substantially shown that such a theory does underlie this section, can they reckon its denial as "latitudinarian." Dr. Hodge repudiates the realistic theory over and over again in his Commentary on the Romans. At all events, the denial of physical sin, and of personal ill-desert in the mere possession of a depraved nature is a dissent from a certain interpretation of the Confession which is at once damaging to the literary character, and the good sense of the Westminster divines. And if those divines really meant to teach the doctrines which most New School men reject, they assuredly could not have considered them vital to the system, or they would have put them in language more readily and certainly understood in that sense.

On this doctrine of native depravity, such veterans and standard-bearers in our Church as Dr. Duffield and Mr. Barnes teach the very essence of the doctrines of the Confession. Says Dr. Duffield: "Infants come into the world, not only destitute of this [the image of God,] but with a nature inclined to evil and only evil." "Original sin is a natural bias to evil, resulting from the first apostasy, leading invariably and certainly to actual transgression." Mr. Barnes, in his Commentary on Romans, speaks of men being born "with a corrupt disposition." "There is something antecedent to the moral action of his (Adam's) posterity and growing out of the relation they sustain to him, which makes it certain that they will sin as soon as they begin to act as moral agents. What this is, we may not be able to say, but we may be certain it is not physical depravity or any created essence of the soul, or anything which prevents the first act of sin from being voluntary. This hereditary ten-

dency to sin has been usually called original sin; and this the apostle evidently teaches." "There is therefore need of the blood of Atonement; and of the agency of the Holy Ghost that an infant may be saved." These, we suppose are some of the peculiarities of Mr. Barnes' theology, which, according to our O. S. cotemporaries, are to be denied equal rights, in the proposed reunited Church, with the theology taught at Princeton.

Where then is the very essence of this doctrine more truly stated than in these words? What ground is there for the conceit that such doctrine savours of, or opens the door to Pelagianism, which makes the infant nature pure and traces the first sin to external circumstances? Where is room for Dr. N. W. Taylor's theory, that under other imaginable circumstances, the fallen nature might have developed into holiness instead of depravity? Grant only that man possesses at birth a nature "totally and in itself hopelessly depraved, and what remains of the doctrine worth disputing about, or calling hard names, on this side or on that? It may be an interesting question whether the Confession teaches a little more than this or not; but is it one essential to the great system of doctrine taught in the Confession? Is any one adopting the doctrine, as thus stated, to be required to add anything further to his belief on this point, in order to prove himself so far a Calvinist? Those who hold to the total, innate depravity of the race are sufficiently sound to enjoy, unquestioned, every right of ministers and members in the proposed re-united Presbyterian Church of the United States. Those who would require in addition the belief, which may or may not be in the Confession, that the mere possession of such a nature, is a matter of personal ill-desert, and who would make this subordinate and doubtful matter a test of orthodoxy and of membership, are the dark lantern men of Presbytery. Not only should they be forbidden to prescribe terms of union, but they should be admonished that their own status in the only re-united Church over-likely to be formed, will be a question of clarity on the part of the union men of both bodies.

A RESPONSE FROM THE "PRESBYTERIAN BANNER."

The *Presbyterian Banner* (O. S.) of Pittsburg, one of our most highly esteemed and valuable cotemporaries, makes prompt reply to our question, designed to elicit the degree in which our "Old School" brethren have grown in the grace of liberality, and to discover the precise nature of the Union feeling in that body which, whatever it is, has made some remarkable demonstrations in the last four years. The *Banner* quotes largely from our columns to show our own liberal position, questions our right to subject it to catechism on the subject, and more than intimates that we have no business with the subject at all, since it is in the hands of Committees appointed for the express purpose. The idea that the appointment of a Committee on a subject of universal interest and importance renders discussion indelicate, is one to which the editor of the *Banner* is welcome, as his private opinion. Certainly it is not one acted on in Scotland, where the discussion of the subject of Union ever since the appointment of the joint Committees, has been most lively and most extensive. If we remember rightly, it was at the suggestion of the Committees, who wanted light on the subject, that these discussions were systematically carried on. And we see no reason why the matter should not present itself just so to our own Committee. For our part, we are not apt to fill our editorial columns with one subject, when the mind and heart of the people is occupied, and reasonably occupied, with quite another. But here is the answer of the *Banner*:

If by "New School Theology" we are to understand the peculiarities of theology as they appear in the works of Albert Barnes and Dr. Beaman, we say most unequivocally, that we are not in favor of it being "recognized as having equal rights in the Church with that taught in Princeton, Allegheny, Danville, or Chicago."

The *Banner* further declares itself to be for Union on the basis of the Standards; which declaration, interpreted in the light of the quotation just made, means the Standards in the sense given them by the "O. S." party. The position of the *Banner*, therefore, is clearly the same with that of the *Presbyterian* of this city. By Union it means uniformity, which is quite another thing, and

wholly impracticable, as we think the *Banner* itself must know.

We wait now for the answer of the only remaining organ of the body, whose sentiments on the subject have not been definitely expressed, but which at the same time has been the most zealous advocate for re-union, the *Presbyter*. The last number, quite exceptionally, contains nothing whatever on the editor's favorite topic.

FROM OUR LONDON CORRESPONDENT.

London, March, 1867.

The foremost subject, to all men's thoughts who go one step below the surface, is still Ritualism. The *Times*, which took the subject up very vigorously, suddenly dropped it. It usually had a column or two devoted daily to the subject, and a constant correspondence of much interest: now, all is blank. Ritualism might have no existence for a reader of the *Times*, saving that some dreary case or other which drags its slow and serpentine way through the Ecclesiastical Courts, get its brief notice in "the law report" of the day. One permanent good, however, came of its vigorous, though brief, onslaught. The *Record* newspaper is the organ of the Evangelical party. So much is this the case that a large bulk of the Evangelicals go by the name of "Recordites." The paper is sound, though poorly edited. It appears three times a week, and has a very large circulation. Its policy, so far as it has any, is that of "Do nothing; wait, watch, but hold on by the endowments." Stirred up by the *Times*, it started a vigorous—vigorous for it—crusade against Ritualism. It, too, devotes now a column or two to facts on Ritualism; but after the silence of the *Times*, it is not likely to continue long.

One phase of the question is rather startling. The Bishops usually hold a meeting at Lambeth Palace previous to the meeting of the Parliament and Convocation. At their meeting this year, it appears, they discussed, in a brief way, the subject of Ritualism; and issued the result of their deliberation in the form of a "Judgment"—which was laid before, and accepted by, both Houses of Convocation. This "Judgment" is curious. This word "Judgment" has at least two meanings. In the sense they use it, it can mean no more than "opinion"; but for obvious reasons they prefer the word "judgment." They would like to have the power of pronouncing effective "judgment" again, both on men, things, and doctrines. At present they are tied hand and foot, and their mouth is so far gagged that their "judgment" means no more than "opinion." The "judgment" was drawn up, it afterwards appeared, by the Bishop of Oxford, and all men who know him, knew, whatever it may seem to mean, it can really practically and mean nothing. "*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.*"

The judgment, however, reads well. It speaks loudly against novelties; speaks against innovation—above all against assimilations to Rome; advises rather the conciliation of Nonconformists—as if he of Oxford cared for Dissenters!—and in the close recommends all cases of doubt and difficulty to be brought before the Bishop. That is the *ridiculous mus*, which this parturient mountain has brought forth. To all sane men the meaning is clear; a sop to the dissenters; a "Hush, hush, be still!" to the evangelicals; and "Meanwhile, ye Ritualists push on your lines; keep all you have got, stand fast, watch your opportunity, then press on."

Meanwhile if protests, memorials, complaints, resolutions—on paper—can be of any service, the work is being well done, for that sort of thing is abundant. "It was resolved, seconded and carried unanimously that" so and so, and such and such; then the meeting goes away home in the individual fragments that composed it, the local *Times* reports the thing in full, and there the whole matter is at an end. Everybody supposes that now the thing is done, and yet the thing is not even well begun. The Ritualists do not speechify much, nor resolve much, on paper; they go on acting; the thing is consolidating, and spreading, and all seeing men are wondering whereunto this thing will grow.

Perhaps two exceptions might be made; the first what we might call a County meeting, held at Dorchester, straight under the nose of the Bishop of Salisbury, who is a Papist in all but name, a meeting of the laity presided over most ably by the Earl of Shaftesbury, and attended by the elite of the

town and county. Things got called by their right names; the speaking was excellent, bold, out-spoken, fearless; the one grand mistake, was that nothing whatsoever was done. Resolved, resolved, resolved—on paper; and then, "now let us go home for our dinner; for the evenings are dark and cold just now," and there the matter ends.

Exception the second—a course of lectures in St. James's Hall, London, on the whole subject of Ritualism. I put some trust in these lectures, for they have been singularly able, clear, and conclusive; one on Priesthood, by that gallant Champion of Protestantism—Dr. Hugh McNeill of Liverpool, having been a perfect success. Crowds pack every corner of the Hall; and listen with body and soul; and men must at least be taught how evil a thing and how bitter this Ritualism is. The lectures when complete are to be published and they will be a really valuable contribution to this controversy.

PROGRESS OF THE TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT.

The Temperance Revival which for some time past we have hoped for rather than believed in, has assumed the proportions of solid reality. The frightful advances of intemperance; its shocking, humiliating and intolerable manifestations at the seat of the National Government; the unfathomable depths of fraud in the manufacture and traffic in intoxicating drink revealed by the operations of the Internal Revenue laws, have combined to open the eyes of men in low places and in high, to the immediate and urgent necessity for a return to old temperance principles and to the old zeal in putting them in practice. The formation of a Congressional Temperance Society, through whose instrumentality several drinking members have been induced to attempt a reformation, has been followed by a joint resolution to prohibit the selling of liquors in the Capitol. It is a pity that in this, as in other reforms, Congress is obliged to work against potent influences at the other end of the avenue.

Pennsylvania, we are proud to say, has a teetotaler in the Governor's chair; a man who stuck to his principles through the long political campaign which made him Governor, and who is not ashamed to avow those principles before a Temperance Convention to-day. It was a good omen for the new State Temperance Society, recently formed at Harrisburg, that the chief citizen of the Commonwealth hesitated not to give it his hearty countenance and support, not in the full tide of its prosperity, but in its weak and uncertain beginning. In this speech, the Governor informed us that the Lieutenant General of the Army of the United States is about to become a Son of Temperance. In New York State, the Temperance men are full of energy and determination. The State Society is holding frequent conventions, and Mr. Greeley in person and through the *New York Tribune* is doing his utmost to promote the cause and to defeat the persistent efforts of the liquor dealers in New York city to break down the wholesome Excise Law of the State. We are certainly in the beginning of a Temperance Revival which promises to be a movement of great depth and power.

THE COVENANT A REALITY.—The Pado-baptist papers, recently quoted the statistics of Andover Seminary, as showing how God accepts the consecration of children by pious parents, in calling them into the highest paths of usefulness. The Baptist papers report by quoting cases in which the "unsprinkled" children of pious Baptist families are called in large proportion, (or all of them), to the same work of the ministry. We are exceedingly obliged to our friends for showing that the Abrahamic covenant "with you and with your children," is a reality, and asserts itself even when the narrow views of men ignore and deny it. God's covenant mercy is broader than man's recognition of it.

WEST POINT REFORM.—The effect of a West Point education upon the character of many of its graduates is such, that its entire abolition would be an advantage to the morals of the country. We are glad to see, however, that something is being done to improve matters.

The appropriation for the Military Academy was so amended, through the intervention of Senator Wilson, as to prohibit drills and parades on Sunday, and to make it the duty of the chaplain to organize a class for biblical instruction, and give his whole attention to the religious welfare of the cadets