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RESPONSIBILITY OF OUR BRANCH TO ITS OWN PRINCIPLES.

"The regret we feel in seeing such noble and amiable minds driven away from evangelical doctrines ought not surely to be unmixed with self-reproach, when we consider that such aberrations are due in part to the narrowness and bigotry of many of the teachers of religion."—*British and Foreign Evangelical Review on Robertson of Brighton.*

The existence of our own among the various branches of the Presbyterian Church, is and has been an incalculable advantage to the cause of Christ at large. And the whole spirit, aims, and principles of our body as a liberal Presbyterian Church are such as eminently deserve to be perpetuated, and such as the Head of the Church will undoubtedly take care shall never die out of the body. In many respects, the so-called New School Church may be regarded as the fairest outgrowth of the Reformation. The dying John Calvin bequeathed one of its distinctive doctrines—that of a General Atonement—in his last will and testament, and we now appear to claim that part at least of the will as ours. We are inclined to think that in no other organization in the Christian world, is sound doctrine, on the basis of the Reformation, held at greater advantages for recognition, for conservation, and for saving influence upon the characters and interests of men for this world and for the next, than in the so-called New School Church.

This body is the American outgrowth and development of the best form of the Reformation of the sixteenth century; just as our National Institutions are the best development of the movements for civil liberty which originated at the same time and from the same source. It was but natural that Calvinism, as one of the permanent religious forces of the world, should show versatility in adapting itself to the widely different state of society and conditions of success in the New World and in the nineteenth century. Possibly our Presbyterian fathers of 1729 were without consciousness of the significance of their work as set forth in the Adopting Act. Doubtless the sentiment of the fathers of '37 and '38 was mainly that of grief and astonishment at the magnitude of the wrong done them, and a purpose to shield their good names and maintain their status as *recti in ecclesia*. But the Saviour Himself was guiding and controlling these movements in His Church, in order to a re-embodiment of one of its leading forms, more thoroughly to meet the wants of a new age and a new country. We believe that to-day the New School Presbyterian Church knows and accepts with humility and thankfulness its high calling.

1. That calling consists, first, in teaching and maintaining sound doctrine in the world. This function is inalienable from the very nature of a Calvinistic Church. There can be no such Church, without a written, well-defined creed, recognized as binding, in all its essential features, upon the consciences of the office-bearers, and as the basis of all religious instruction in the pulpits, schools, and families of the Church. Our Church regards it as one of her solemn duties to support and propagate her own Scriptural creed, as a protest against error, as a guide to all inquirers, and as one of the great conservative moral forces of the world. With men who reject all creeds, who can render no adequate account of their own beliefs, who make religion to consist in feeling or sentiment, who would cut the common mind loose from its theological moorings, to be tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine—with such, as a Church we have nothing to do, save in the way of instruction and warning.

2. It is the glory of our Church that she effected this result, not at all at the sacrifice of charity, not by that needless and superfluous rigor, that over-wrought and morbid sensitiveness to the jots and tittles, the forms and phrases of doctrine, which have given to the Reformed Churches the appearance of a revised form of Pharisaism and of Popery. The very simple, common-sense principle upon which we go, and from which starts the modern and American development of Calvinism, is that if a man is at heart and by his theological system a Calvinist, he is to be cordially and fraternally recognized as such, and to be left free, to accept this or that teacher's mode of conceiving the de-

tails of the system, without question or suspicion.

It is perfectly easy to illustrate our position. Whether a man was at heart loyal or disloyal during the war, was to be decided by the leading features of his conduct. In order to prove himself loyal, it was incumbent on him to endorse and aid in carrying out every measure of the Government which was plainly needful to bring the struggle to a successful issue. But no one thought of testing a man's loyalty by his approval of all the details of Congressional, Executive, or military action. Such a requirement would have been the suggestion of fanaticism, rather than of patriotism.

Now, the essential features of Calvinism and of our Confession of Faith are as plain as were those of patriotism, in the war. And yet, strange to tell, the liberty which is granted to the true patriot, has been won with difficulty for the true Calvinist. And we claim for our Church, that, in it, a man may be a true Calvinist, without being put into a strait-jacket, without being held accountable for agreement with every phrase of the document in which it is embodied, or with the interpretation of the document in vogue in some particular theological school. Holding fast by the grand anchorage of the sovereignty of God; believing in the inherited fallen nature and hopeless condition of the whole human family and dependence upon Divine grace alone for salvation; believing that all whom the Father has given, to the Son will assuredly be saved, while all that perish had provided for them also a free and sufficient salvation, which they chose to reject; receiving Christ as the vicarious offering and substitute for the sufferings of the sinner for the satisfaction of the general justice of God, with the other leading doctrines accepted by evangelical Christendom, he is not required to assent to any human theory of the precise relation of Adam's sin to his own, nor to give undue prominence to one side of the doctrine of human ability in order to favour the prejudices of an aspiring school, nor to tread on the verge of fatalism, nor to shut up the infinite world-embracing scheme of the Atonement—with aspects and proportions, with breadth and length and depth and height worthy of a God, to the contracted proportions of a commercial arrangement, bringing the air of the counting-house to the awful precincts of Calvary and Gethsemane—all for the sake of vindicating his Calvinistic orthodoxy.

In our judgment, it is one of the highest distinctions and most advantageous positions which any branch of the Church can attain, to be known as the sincere guardian of an orthodoxy, which nothing but open partisanship or bigotry will question, and which is perfectly free from all the needless rigor and slavery to the letter with which the best human forms of truth have been so much burdened. To be known as conserving what is essential and what is best, while refusing to bind the conscience to the remnants of scholasticism, the traces of human theory and the doubtful matters which are inwoven with the creed of the Reformed Churches, not only puts the body in an attitude of fairness and attractiveness to all thinking and candid men, but must impress them with a sense of the far greater security enjoyed by the truth in such associations, than with those who, by their rigorous, arbitrary, and repressive arrangements, are sure to bring about, sooner or later, a reaction disastrous to the essentials of the truth themselves.

3. New School Theology has had, and still has, its eminent succession of scientific theologians. The philosophical teachings of what are known as New School Seminaries and Colleges, will compare favorably with those of any other branch of the Church. Yet we count it as one of our highest distinctions that philosophy has no controlling or undue weight in the formation of our Theological system. It is, we believe, a New School instinct to shrink from the idea of bringing the facts and principles of a divine, revealed religion within the limits of a consistent, perfectly logical human system. Our philosophy is warned to take up its cross and to deny itself, when it comes upon ground appropriated to faith. We take the simple declaration of Scripture, like that of Paul, that by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners, and hold ourselves subject in conscience, to no philosophical attempt to explain it. We do not admit the attempts of men to penetrate the mystery, to any

binding place in our theological systems. The Westminster divines were under realistic influence, when they composed their Catechisms. Dr. Hodge and ourselves repudiate that realism. Dr. Baird comes forward in his *Elohim Revealed* with a refined realism, based on identity, not of persons, but of forces. The New School theologian, viewing the problem as insoluble to human reason, composedly recognizes the conflict of opinions as admissible within the limits of Calvinism, and adheres to the doctrine of the mystery as stated by Paul.

In like manner, he looks calmly on the irreconcilable analogies which appear in discussing divine decrees and, the free agency of man. The thorough Old School man sticks to his philosophy of God, and that carries him to the verge of fatalism; the Arminian and Pelagian stick to their philosophy of man and they have a creature independent of the Creator. The New School man gets out of each of these philosophical currents; sees in the Bible and in human consciousness both facts, side by side; denies the right of philosophy to drive him from a belief in either; says that God is truly a sovereign and man truly free; speaks, indeed, of natural ability and moral inability; but really means to say that, while he believes both the facts, he does not consider their reconciliation as a theological necessity, as he does not believe it to be a philosophical possibility.

The truth is, the thorough New School man is one who has had the fever of philosophic theology and has outlived it. He may still philosophize, but no longer as a matter of life and death. With him, the making and teaching of systems are valuable processes for training the mind and for giving clearness to the thoughts, but he is prepared, to see every human system fail in its application to some of the deeper mysteries of divine truth, and he denies the right of any system which goes beyond the clear teachings of holy writ, to claim the conscience and claim authority in the Church.

The world, and especially the thinking part of the world, needs such a Church which uses philosophy faithfully as a hand-maid, but which rejects her as a tyrant. And we believe such a position is suited to the common mind in its normal condition, somewhat as Christianity itself is, far better than a theological system proclaiming its completeness and authority, or, far better on the other hand than a crude, unphilosophical set of notions by which the sovereignty of Jehovah is impeached and His kingdom put at the mercy of contingencies.

4. Finally, we claim that in the so-called New School Presbyterian body, is to be found the broadest and clearest platform for the union of all the Evangelical Churches. Reunion between the two branches of our Church or between the various Presbyterian bodies on the platform of 1729 and 1758, would be a blessed work. But if a union were now brought about at the sacrifice of that platform, we should have two griefs: first, for the dissolution that would inevitably follow; and secondly, for the loss or obscuration of the most promising arrangement for Christian union in general, in the whole range of the evangelical Church.

We are not in a boasting mood. We would sit humbly at the feet of wiser and better men than we, in all denominations. But we cannot avoid cherishing the belief that just here, in this New-World development of the Reformed Church, God has been providing a rallying-point for the now divided hosts of Zion. The intermediate position of Presbytery as a form of government between Independency and Prelacy is well understood. But Presbytery associated with a hard and rigorous creed, is without that genial, attractive force, necessary to true union. The other denominations shrink from it, as something dark, tyrannical, fatalistic. Junkin and Breckenridge, Princeton and Allegheny, names honorable enough in their own sphere, are without talismanic or magnetic power among other denominations. On the contrary, Union Seminary more than justifies its name by the varied theological characters of its professors and by the freedom with which students of every evangelical denomination frequent its halls; while the names of Albert Barnes, of Thomas Brainerd, and, we may add, of Gardiner Spring, are recognized as the rightful possession of all evangelical Christendom; they are without a grain of repulsive influence, save to the bigoted and intolerant

but draw all hearts with the magnetism of a Christianity, which, like that of its Author, is exalted above the petty distinctions and Pharisaic scrupulosities of a mere scholastic theology, and, which puts the great essentials of truth, judgment, and mercy far above the tithing of the mint, anise, and cummin of human doctrine.

ALBERT BARNES—name crystal clear; best name among the evangelical Churches of America; name whose sure immortality is the only guarantee for the immortality of his detractors; name borne upon more than a million title-pages of works scattered through hamlet, hall, and library on both continents and in half-a-dozen languages, whose evangelic sweetness, purity, and fervor win them easy entrance into every pious heart! Propitious is the theological atmosphere in which such a nature has grown up. Happy is the Church, which embraces in itself the influences calculated to develop such characters. No man has shown less ambition to be an ecclesiastical leader than Mr. Barnes. Nevertheless our branch of the Church shows itself conscious of its mission, conscious of its privilege and of its responsibility in making common cause with him when assailed by the bigoted few, and in turning from all proposals derogatory to herself because derogatory to him. The New School Church has kept its honor in its weakness; it is not likely to sacrifice it in its hour of strength and prosperity.

LEE AND HIS LITURGY.—It will be remembered by our readers that the Assembly of the Established Church of Scotland at its last meeting, enjoined Dr. Lee of Greyfriars, to obtain from "reading prayers from a printed book." Dr. Lee construed the direction literally, and substituted a manuscript. March 13th, Presbytery met and enjoined him to stop reading. Next Sabbath he not only read, but did so with the assistance of another ritualistic Presbyterian, Rev. Mr. Story of Roseneath. On the 27th Presbytery met again, and Dr. L. was asked if he had complied with the injunction. Dr. Lee refused to answer, as the matter having gone before the higher courts, prevented any further action, and said that the law requiring a member of Presbytery to answer Presbytery's questions, was unconstitutional. Presbytery appointed a committee of investigation. Dr. Lee warned them to be cautious how they proceeded, making it abundantly plain that he intends to contest every inch of the ground he at present occupies; and that if matters are driven to extremities with him, in all probability the case will be lauded in the law courts. He has also given notice that at next meeting he will propose that the General Assembly should be requested to repeal the act which has been directed against him and those who sympathize with him.

A FOREIGN MISSION TO PENNSYLVANIA.—Rev. J. R. McElwee writes to the *Associate Reformed Presbyterian*, of South Carolina, from Washington county, in this State:

"I am here in compliance with an earnest request extended by some parties who were formerly in connexion with the U. P. Church, but now with the Associate Reformed Presbytery of Ohio, recently organized. This Presbytery comprises three Ministers, and five or six congregations, some of which lie in Eastern Ohio, and others in Western Pennsylvania, and in the Pan-handle of Virginia. The congregations are Democrats and anti-abolitionists, and were either forcibly ejected, or compelled by persecution for political opinion to withdraw, from the Churches with which they were in connexion at the commencement of the late unhappy war. In many, if not all the Churches in these parts, political opinion was made a term of communion, and those who were opposed to the measures of the Government as to the subjugation of the Southern states, and the emancipation of the slaves, were debarred from communion in the Church. This amounted to the exclusion of all who remained firm to the principles of the Democratic party. A most inviting field for Church-extension is here opened to our Synod; and all that is wanted, is the presence of a few Ministers of popular gifts from the South, who shall eschew politics, and preach the Gospel, and multitudes will gather around the standard of our Church. Many who have not yet openly espoused the cause, strongly favor it, and will give in their adherence as soon as they are satisfied that it is to be a permanency, and that the Synod intends to sustain it. Having experienced for some time a famine of the word, the people have sharpened appetites, and are willing to give

liberally for the privileges of a Gospel ministry. I expect to remain here a few weeks, and then visit some congregations over in Ohio."

We always thought the Democrats of this State were in need of the Gospel, and we rejoice that they are to have it in some form. What an opening for Nasby!

ANOTHER SCOTTISH DELEGATE.—Dr. Guthrie's place upon the delegation from the Free Church of Scotland to the Presbyterian Churches of America will be filled by the Rev. Wm. Arnot, formerly of Glasgow, and now of Edinburgh. Mr. Arnot is one of the ablest platform-speakers in the British Islands, and is well known in America by his popular writings, "Laws from Heaven for Life on Earth," &c. He is a firm friend of this country, and a welcome delegate to our Churches.

The three Scottish delegates, Fairbairn, Wells, and Arnot, were to sail by the *Taman*, which left England April 17; and will probably be in America before this reaches our readers. Rev. Dr. Denham, of Londonderry, is to sail on the 24th, and will arrive about the 6th. Rev. Dr. Hall, of Dublin, having just made a flying trip to Italy, will sail May 1st, and arrive about the 12th.

UNION IN SCOTLAND.—In the Free Presbytery of Glasgow Dr. Gibson has added another to the list of his defeats in the rejection of his overture, "that the Assembly should agree to no union in which the whole of the principles of the Free Church were not maintained in their integrity." An amendment, proposed by the Rev. Dr. Buchanan, declaring that the Union Committee had done nothing to call for the interference of the Presbytery, and that they decline to agree to the motion, was carried by a vote of 34 to 16. In the Free Presbytery of Edinburgh a motion was submitted by the Rev. Dr. Begg to the effect that no decision should be come to by next Assembly on any branch of the question of union with other Churches, until the existing inquiries under all the heads of the program are laid before the Church, and the Assembly is enabled to take a conjoint view of the whole question. He has strong fears that the use of organs and even liturgies, may have to be faced if the union of the four negotiating Churches takes place. On a division Dr. Begg's motion was carried by a majority of twenty-six to nineteen. In the meantime the advocates of union are broadening their ground. The *Weekly Review* asks if there is no way of union between Presbyterians and Congregationalists, and hints that Dr. Begg's overture will be tossed on the table of Assembly as an impertinence.

THE NEW YORK TRIBUNE seems disposed to exult in the fact, that the rowdy and infidel majority of Baltimore have their way in the running of the street cars in that city on Sunday. It undertakes to assert of Philadelphia, also, that there is no doubt a large majority of the city are in favor of legalizing the same practice. Hence, it should be allowed here also.

The *Tribune's* argument is entirely too good, and applications may be made of it to which that journal would be the last to submit. Let the question, whether *The Tribune* itself shall be tolerated upon Manhattan Island be submitted to the vote of the immense Democratic majority of the city, with their fierce indignation against its course on temperance, negro equality and the exposure of political corruption. Let it be understood that what the mob of 1863 undertook to do by violence, can be done by perfectly lawful measures; how long would *The Tribune*, how long would the blacks, whose cause it so nobly and powerfully upholds, be tolerated in that great and wicked city? The fact that there is a "New York" *Tribune*, is, to use its own words in this article, "singular proof of the power of minorities." Or, rather, it is a proof that the good influences and agencies, which are, it seems, tolerably certain to be in the minority in our large cities, have behind them in the less corrupt towns and rural districts, the support of a powerful majority, to which, under God, they owe their existence.

The rebel legislature of Maryland, chose to give the rebel majority of Baltimore—a very small majority—the right to decide this question; the Republican legislature of Pennsylvania refused to put a great fundamental law of the State at the mercy of a local vote. That is the real difference between them.