

Correspondence.

THOUGHTS ON THE ATONEMENT. I.

THE GENESIS OF THE "FEDERAL" SCHEME.

The separation of Theology and Christian life has always been fatal to the former. Whenever Christian doctrine has been separated even for an instant from its perennial source in the life of Christ in the souls of his people, as apprehending and conditioned by the revealed word; whenever Christian teaching fails to meet and satisfy the cravings of sanctified hearts, which have been made clean by the words spoken unto them, it must always fail to reflect the truth of God. Where its main purpose is to draw distinctions and lines to meet the requirements of the intellect, rather than to apprehend the great unities of truth and the realities—ever old ever new—in which the heart delights, it must necessarily lose its hold upon the business and bosoms of men. It may exult in the exclusive possession of the schools,—may furnish high delight to professional students, may find free scope in the technicalities of system-building, but its hold upon life is gone; it has become, under whatever name, a scholasticism,—something which belongs to the school, and which divides from the life of the people by chilling it into the formality of the schools.

It has been the fortune of the Reformed or Calvinistic Theology to go through very various phases; in some sense, even while its dogmatic forms have remained unchanged, its essential character has been continually changing. In spirit and reality the Calvinism of Calvin died with its author, while the Calvinism of the Calvinists has taken a new form with every successive generation and in every different country.

In Holland and during the thirty years succeeding the Synod of Dort, Calvinism probably was in a lower spiritual state than in any time and place where it had not actually suffered from the inroads of infidelity. It was allied not with the nation, but with a violent political party, which paid for the church's support, by persecuting those whom the church's rigid dogmatism had driven into an attitude of dissent from the famous "Five Points of the Synod of Dort." The very scholastic system against which the reformers had, with one voice, protested as the root of Romish bitterness, as the vicious method by which error had been hardened into Anti-Christianism, was taught in her every school, and Aquinas, in the black gown of Geneva, sat in almost every Professor's chair. The Synod of Dort itself had protested against the introduction of the method by the Pole Maccovius, but the very acts and decisions of that Synod were now on every side defended by the scholastic method of Rome and Paris. The original investigation of the Scriptures was neglected or made the bond-slave of dogmatism, and the supreme question was no longer "What saith the Scriptures? How readest thou?" but "What is the doctrine of the Reformed Church? What the decision of the illustrious Synod of Dordrecht?" The very ground for the existence of a Reformed Church was subverted by placing tradition above the word of God; and the very character of the Reformed Church as the church of an intelligent community, was destroyed by making her principles the mere theme of subtle and punctilious distinctions of such a technical and scholastic character as shut out the teachings of the church from the sympathies of the common people. What Calixtus, one of the most candid and moderate of German theologians, said in 1643 of the state of theology in his time applies, with ten-fold force, to Holland.

In such an era as this it was that Cocceius was raised up of God to vindicate the truth that what God has joined—doctrine and life—man may not put asunder. Born in 1603, he had seen how little the abstract truths of the word of God could control men's consciences in practical matters; he had sat at the feet of the English Puritan Ames, who an exile to Holland for conscience sake, uplifted his voice in the arid wastes, proclaiming the primary necessity of a Christian life. There were already signs of a reactionary movement against Theology itself, such as, in a similar state of the Lutheran Church in Germany, took the name and form of "Pietism," when Cocceius came forward with the Federal Covenant Theology, and saved the Reformed Church by re-calling her to the Divine Word—the great history of Redemption. He embodied his scriptural and, therefore, historical apprehension of Redemption in a theory of two covenants; one of Nature or of Works before the fall, the other of Grace, consequent upon the fall, the latter administered under three economies or dispensations—before the law, under the law, under the Gospel. The great advantages which the Church reaped from the new teaching arose from the facts:

I. That it was new. It was a breath of fresh air let in upon an audience room, when the atmosphere had been breathed and re-breathed until exhausted. It fulfilled the description of the kingdom of heaven, in that the householder

*As a result of want of adequate theologic learning, there was an ignorance of the limits of human knowledge, and a pretence of attempting (in matters of faith) to determine the how when the fact must suffice us. It does not satisfy us to know the quod; what God has revealed to us in Scripture. We want to know and to explain the quomodo; which God has not revealed, and which it is useless to us to know.

From this mood there follows another. Men are driven by too much contradicting of adversaries into the opposite (and often not less vicious, extreme). They are carried past the mean in which they ought to have rested. From this proceeds a further mischief; the neglect to distinguish between what is fundamental and matters which (without affecting the soul's salvation) may be determined in this, or a different way. Men have wished that their own peculiar opinions shall be held to be scriptural; forgetting that God does not require from us the knowledge of all things; and that ignorance concerning many of them is no harm.

brought forth out of his treasures things new as well as old. The very promulgation of such a system was a re-proclamation of the great Reformation truth, that God is teaching every generation in turn, by leading them into a deeper apprehension of the truth of His holy Word; that while the thoughts of our fathers may be of the greatest service to us, we can only make them our masters by turning our backs upon the Master of us both. II. It was Scriptural in form if not in essence. It led the church, by its very method, back to the true source of Christian theology. It made very light of mere traditions. Its consistent adherents wrote no books on the Atonement, with so many pages devoted to fallible reasonings and distinctions, so many pages to the opinions of fallible men, and so many other pages to the Testimony of Scripture. It vindicated the rights of exegesis to act independently of the trammels of system. It made man a learner and, so far as its purpose went, forbade him to explain away the teachings of the Word, or to explain his opinions into the Word. III. It was human. The older Calvinistic teaching saw man as a mere passive thing, moulded by a divine decree. Its one-sided—because logically consistent—predestinarianism made that decree the centre of the universe. It grew from the assertion of the Divine Will, which has in all ages been a source of human strength, to be merely the denial or ignoring of any will in man, which has always been a fruitful source of human weakness. The new system saw in God the Giver of all good, but in man the receiver of all; and the mere Predestinator became the loving Guardian, leading the future of the race down through successive stages of human history; it recognized a grateful human receptivity in the child of God. Above all, it recognized the true centre of Theology in the incarnation and life of Christ, it read the old dispensation as a hieroglyph, which, in every part, foretold the Life, the Way, the Truth, the Word.

It is not to be wondered then, that the Conservatives of that age were in a rage at this teaching about two Covenants and Federal Headship. Voetius, a man of true piety, but a piety which had no vital relation to his doctrines, led in the assault. They showed very clearly, that the Calvinistic or Reformed System in its historical sense, knew nothing of such a scheme; that Calvin and Beza and the great Sanhedrim of Dort must be all wrong, if Cocceius was right; that whatever Scripture or reason might say, it was "not an open question as to what the teaching of the Reformed Church was." With such straws did they tilt, but all to no purpose, for Cocceianism spread, and the LIBERALS in Church and State sustained it. Imperfect as we believe it was, it met some of the deepest needs and cravings of the church. By and by the Voetian and Orange party got the upper hand in the State, and the bigots wanted to treat the Cocceians as the Gomarist Orangemen had dealt with Grotius. Only by the interposition of the always moderate and Melancthonian Church of Germany, was the scandal of a schism avoided, and the Federalists obtained "equal rights in the undivided Church."

THE TRIBUNE'S LEANING TO INFIDELITY.

If the publishers of the Tribune were persuaded of the claims of infidelity, of its superior moral influence, and if they candidly published that as their creed, and entered the lists to contend against the alleged error and delusion and bigotry of the Churches, they would, of course, be regarded as having made a radical change in their paper. It would no longer be, in any sense, a party journal. They could not expect to reach the same readers as by their present treacherous policy. Their subscriptions would be reduced to their true adherents,—namely those Republicans who chanced to be opposers of the Bible. They would also suffer a corresponding diminution of their advertising patronage, and consequently of their great resources. But their standing would then be on a sure foundation; their success, if they achieved any, would be fairly earned, and they would hope to regain their original circulation when their ideas had won the victory over bigotry.

But while the Tribune prefers rather to take its present stand as a distinctive Republican organ, it is bound to conform, in a certain degree, to the accepted standard of such a paper. Its editors, as members of the party, cannot be wholly independent of it. Within certain limits they must submit to its decisions, as for instance in the choice of candidates. They offer their paper for sale as a campaign document. Whoever thus volunteers to speak for the party is in a measure amenable to it. Their position, though not exactly similar, is analogous to that of a candidate or a platform committee. What would the Tribune think of a nominee who should announce from the stump his devotion not only to the principles of the party, but to those of infidelity? Or what would be thought of a convention that published a platform of principles, one plank of which pledged opposition to the Bible? They would be denounced as enemies of the party.

The Tribune justly boasts of the morality and intelligence of its readers. But these are, to a large extent, allied to the orthodox Churches. This is preeminently the case in the rural districts, where we find the strength of the Tribune's influence, and of the party also. There are whole churches in which there is not one Democrat. Of the cases of excommunication that have occurred in them during the last five years, no small portion has grown out of the dissatisfaction of Democrats with the prevailing antislavery tendencies. The few Democratic ministers that remain are compelled to encounter embarrassments similar to those of the radical abolition ministers a few years ago. And this superior character of these subscribers will be found to be largely nourished by the influence of these churches—by those "textual platitudes" as the Tribune calls them—by a belief in God's providence in material things, by the sacred devotion of a Sabbath to the contemplation of these themes. Practically there is almost no other source of this morality. We do not generally find it in circles of scientific skeptics. When this religious sentiment is aroused by the moral issues of the party, it has great power. It overflows in sermons, and prayers, and exhortations, and Sabbath-school instruction, and in every private channel of influence. In proportion as

the appeals of our Republican leaders reach this moral sentiment, do they succeed in rousing the party. Anything that dampens this moral interest chills that enthusiasm on which its success depends. A Christian father, who unsuspectingly puts the Tribune into the hands of his son that he may embrace correct political principles, and learns that he has also imbibed skeptical notions, which will be likely to prevent his becoming a Christian (for it is much easier to sow tares than it is to eradicate them) will not be likely to enter so heartily into the canvass, nor to contribute money to circulate the paper. When his Democratic or conservative brother objects to those infidel sentiments, and expresses preference for the World, or Times, or secular Observer, his mouth will be shut. It is the most cutting of all things to say to such a man that he "need not go mad," because his Bible is proved false, since nature is an equally good teacher. Nothing like the persistent advocacy of infidelity would so imperil the permanent success of the party. Nothing would more effectually hinder the union of all Christians in sustaining these principles. Nothing would so tend to build up here in the North that strange anomaly presented in the State of Connecticut. For it was the prejudice in the minds of the churches of that State against abolitionism as identical with infidelity, that closed their pulpits against it, and originated that conservatism on which the peculiar political condition of that State is based.

The final result of persistence in the policy of slyly insinuating infidel ideas, upon the paper itself, will be, to alienate many of its friends, and if there is no other acceptable paper, to lead them to build up a new one. Exactly in proportion as the newspaper is felt to be a public necessity, will the people arouse to the assertion of their rights. Just as in the Congregational Church, many rose up in indignation against the arrogance of the Independent, stopped their subscriptions and started a formidable rival to it, and compelled its editors, that talked so bravely of retiring, to eat their words, so will Christian Republicans rebel against the Tribune, when it has gone too far. Neither its ability nor its success would satisfy them. "Never so fine a feast spread before a hungry man would entice him, if he supposed all the dishes were to be mingled with poison."

We ought in justice to the Tribune to say, that the offences of which we complain are of comparatively recent date. We have read the paper for many years and never sympathized with a single cry against it as being devoted to Women's Rights, Free Love, Spiritualism, Infidelity, &c., nor could we find ground for what was alleged by many, but generally gave it our indignant denial. Why attention has not been publicly called to this of which we speak (if it has not been done without our knowledge) is, we suppose, owing to the fact that on account of the amount and variety of matter, and particularly the lengthy foreign correspondence, but few read the whole with attention. Besides, since the beginning of the war, men's minds have been absorbed in events of extraordinary interest. Furthermore the patience of the public is proverbial.

The Tribune is just now profiting by the mistakes of its rivals. The Times and Post will long have reason to regret their meddling in the great "Bread and Butter Convention." The Tribune is also quite successful in a plan of preoccupying the ground by underbidding—evidently at great sacrifice, unless its profits before were enormous—all the other weeklies of the same class. But its greatness could not prevent its fall, if it should wear out the patience of its readers, though it might postpone the day.

Thoughtful men in the Church must always raise the question whether the hope of religion in the future is not a matter of greater concern than that of present party success. The present Republican and Democratic parties must continue, or have their legitimate successors. The orthodox Church, as a body, is committed to the leading principles of the former party, and, if she maintains her faith, her children will be. Democracy must become more and more allied, in the character of its members, with those who oppose orthodoxy, with the exception of the few Republicans in the Liberal seats and in certain literary circles, together with the remnant of the old Abolition party that was estranged from the Church on account of the prejudice they met, as infidels, while engaged in that agitation. But some of them we can hardly count on. Stephen S. Foster is not the only rabid one who has gone over to the other side. But the great mass of the more outrageous Sabbath-breaking, church-neglecting, Bible-hating classes, will be found in opposition to us. The Republican party ought not to forget how much it owes to the Church for what was done, during the anti-slavery agitation and during the war. Possibly Oberlin College, with its thousands of ministers sent to the then far West, turned the scale in that region by giving to those churches their antislavery character, and thus insured the triumph of the party. Otherwise the whole of that part of the country might have been somewhat "Egyptian," with just enough Republicanism there to grace a Democratic triumph. With the West neutral or hostile, a conspiracy might have succeeded there. Without her aid, we might not have been able to subdue the rebellion, and thus innumerable miseries would have befallen our country.

Every Christian Republican ought to utter his protest against the course of the Tribune, both for the sake of true religion and of the party. If appeal to their sense of honor fails and the evil is not abated, then it will be time for both Christians and Republicans to use other means. In the meantime, let every reader use the utmost diligence to guard against the mischiefs which this subtle sowing of the seeds of error may cause. And whatever developments may take place in the field of science, let no man fear that any of them will, when the truth is ascertained, diminish our confidence in that Volume, which alone is inspired of God. Its authenticity and genuineness rest upon a sound historical basis, more impregnable than that of any other book. The history of Christianity is largely made up of bitter attacks, most of which serve to strengthen that which they attempted to destroy, and are monuments of human prejudice, ignorance and malice. If anything shall recur to put the foundations of our belief on surer grounds, or to define and limit our ideas of divine truth, we ought to rejoice over it. But it is hardly possible that anything will be discovered to alter the essential nature of any of our fundamental beliefs. Resting, therefore, upon these historical grounds, we

may confidently reject those opposing theories, or rather hypotheses, that are contrary to these fundamental Bible truths, assured that true science in its progress will also reject them. In the meantime we should take a lively interest in these controversies, and sustain those men who are contending on scientific grounds against these errorists. We are under obligations to do this for truth's sake, and also because busy hands are scattering these errors, and many souls are being entangled, that we ought to be able to help in recovering themselves out of their snares. FRED. A. CHASE.

RECONSTRUCTION IN CHURCH FINANCES.

By a LAYMAN.

It must be admitted by many who have had experience in the financial management of church organizations that the promise to pay of an incorporated church society is about as unreliable as that of any other organization.

The cost of erecting churches is greatly enhanced from this cause, builders and contractors having little confidence in the promises of trustees, elders, or even ministers of the gospel, when acting in a corporate capacity.

The minister himself knows from sad experience that if his own character for punctuality in the fulfillment of his promises is made to depend on the promptitude of the church in the payment of his salary, his character as a truthful man must suffer before the world. Too often he is made to suffer, because he finds himself unable to secure from a single member of his congregation, the sympathy that should make every member suffer if the pastor loses in character because of the unfulfilled promises of the church.

Surely there is a remedy for all this, which is very plain. If a church society is unable to meet its obligations promptly, the remedy should be immediately sought for. In many cases the deficiency of funds could be met in fifteen minutes time, on the very next Sabbath morning, which would be the time and place to correct the wrong because it concerns every member, and is of far more importance than the sermon itself. Let the deficiency be stated by one of the session, and the church be exhorted to meet its liabilities at once by a contribution from each member, though it involved the abstaining from some unnecessary expenditure during the week. Make it a matter of the highest importance, as it is, that church debts should be immediately paid, and the congregation will respond, and the credit of the society be made good. Even in chronic cases of disregard of all covenant obligations by the corporate society the appeal would have a salutary effect.

In most cases, ministers and elders will be found to be at fault, in not instructing believers in regard to their duty on this subject. The collection on the Sabbath is as important a part of the church service as the sermon, the prayers, or the singing of hymns, and should be so regarded. The practice of collecting by pew rents, or in any other method than the Sabbath collection, should be abandoned. Believers should be instructed to lay by during the week as the Lord has prospered them, and always have something to give, even if it required abstinence from a meal, and the church would be greatly blessed by such teaching.

If the expenses of a church amount to \$100 a week, or \$5,000 a year, and there are present 200 members on a Sabbath morning, the \$100 should be collected before the congregation is dismissed, though it required a contribution of 50 cents from the poorest member present. Indeed it would be found that the cheerful contributors were the poor of the congregation.

The collection should always be sufficient to pay one week's expenses. If inclement weather, or absence from other causes, prevent a large attendance, and the absent members forget or fail to send their contributions, the faithful members present should contribute all that is needed, which will surely be rewarded at the Lord's appearing and kingdom.

If the collection amounts to more than the week's expenses, the surplus should be distributed by the session or deacons to the poor during the week. If a collection is to be made for any special object, let it be stated, and only the amount collected in addition to the week's expenses, be set aside for the object.

The collection every Sabbath, and the prompt payment of all the obligations of the church, would soon give it a character for honesty and promptitude it does not now possess, and would prevent in many cases the building of costly edifices where there is no ability to pay for them, a practice that so much embarrasses ministers and congregations in their efforts to extend the gospel of Christ.

Sabbath collections would then become an acceptable part of the Lord's worship, and would be a bond of union among the believers in a society; some might stand aloof, and allow the burden to fall upon the faithful, but the dollar or two dollars, a week; or even the five dollars a week, contributed by these would be cheerfully given, and be blessed by Him who loveth the cheerful giver. The poor in the church would then be provided for. There would not be found in the same congregation members contributing largely to the erection of some splendid church edifice at a distance, while their own pastor's salary remained unpaid, and while some of their fellow members were suffering for the necessities of life, and others dying in almshouses, and asylums not under the supervision of the church. We would not find believers in affliction resorting for relief to such worldly organizations as Masons and Oddfellows, because there are none in the church of Christ to extend a helping hand.

This collection made every week, according as the Lord has prospered us, would keep alive among members a feeling of sympathy for each other that would manifest itself before the world, and would train the believer to feel—that all he has is the Lord; and that he is not like Ananias and Sapphira to bring only a certain part, after making a full consecration of all to His service.

FEEBLE CHURCHES.

We have received an admirable circular from our esteemed Secretary of Home Missions, Dr. Kendall, appealing to ministers and others for co-operation and effort, to save our feeble churches from extinction. We have been trying to cooperate in this thing for years past, embracing every opportunity we could to tell how some feeble churches have saved themselves, with God's blessing. It has been by effort, by enterprise, by courage, by self-denial, as at Campbelltown, at Oaks Corners, and some other places, which we could not easily name. It has not been by depending alone or chiefly on Home Missionary aid. If some of these feeble churches would work and give, they would not be feeble much longer.

There was a church, not a thousand miles from this city, depending a few years since on the Home Missionary Society. A Committee of our Presbytery was sent to talk with them, and see if it was not time for them to try to take care of themselves, and let such money go to more needy churches at the West. The conference begins. The committee asks one of the leading men in the feeble church how much he gives to the Society. He answers, ten dollars a year. He is asked what his property is. He has a good farm, all paid for, with five or six thousand dollars. The committee frankly says to him, "Why, Sir, we expect men worth as much as you are, in our city churches, to give from fifty to one hundred dollars, a year, to support the Gospel; and they do it all the time. How can you expect such men to be giving to the Home Missionary Society, to aid you, when you do not give more than one-tenth as much, according to your means, to sustain a sanctuary for yourself and your neighborhood?"

We are happy to add, that after such frank, Christian exhortation, that church soon became self-supporting. We do not mean to say that all connected with feeble churches are backward in regard to the support of their own sanctuaries; but some, we know, are so, and are asking for help before doing all they can, or doing as much as many others under the circumstances, to help themselves. Many of these feeble churches might be raised right up into a reasonable prosperity, if some of those who would be regarded as leading men in them, were such givers as we have in some other churches. Let them try it. Rochester, N. Y.

DIRECTORY

Of Presbyterian (N. S.) Ministers and Churches in Philadelphia and vicinity.

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Allen, R. H., 404 South Eighth street, Third Church, 4th and Pine streets.
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Barnes, A. Henry, 735 Spruce street.
Beale, J. H., 1029 Palmer street, First Church, Kensington, Girard av. near Hanover street.
Boggs, James, 1223 South 16th street.
Brown, Charles, 272 Chestnut street, 401, 2nd St., Relief, Presbyterian House.
Bruen, Edward B., 1531 Chestnut street.
Butler, J. G., D.D., 4035 Chestnut street.
Cox, George W., 1822 Frankford Road.
Crittenden, Samuel W., Presbyterian House.
Culver, Andrew, 1506 South Third street, First Church, Southwark, German street above 2nd.
Diver, Charles F., 2138 Mt. Vernon street.
Duffield, Samuel W., 17th and Tioga streets, First Church, Kensington, Tioga street above Broad.
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Eva, Wm. T. No. 8 Harrison street, Bethesda Church.
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Hotchkiss, B. B., Haverford P. O., Delaware county, Marple Church, Marple.
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Malley, Richard A., 814 South 15th street, Cedar street Church, South street above 11th.
March, Daniel, D.D., 329 South 10th street, Clinton street Church, 10th and Clinton streets.
McLeod, John, 2015 Fitzwater street, Secretary A. B. C. F. M., Presbyterian House, Southwestern Church, 20th and Fitzwater streets.
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Miller, Jeremiah, 1106 Callowhill street, Secretary Philadelphia Sabbath Association.
Mitchell, James Y., 1003 North 5th street, Central Church, N. L., Coates street above 3rd street.
Moore, W. E., West Chester, Pa., West Chester Church.
Moore, George R., 1732 Catharine street, Presbyterian Church, 18th and Christian streets.
Prentiss, N. A., 231 Chestnut street.
Keeve, J. B., 219 Rodman street, Lombard street Church, Lombard street above 8th.
Robbins, Frank L., 1317 Jefferson street, Oxford Presbyterian Church, Broad and Oxford streets.
Schickel, A. V. C., Manayunk Church, Manayunk.
Saw, Charles B., King street, Wilmington, Central Church, Wilmington.
Shepherd, Thos. J. D.D., 507 Brown street, First Church, N. L., Buttonwood street above 6th.
Smith, H. Augustus, Baring above 36th street, Mantua Church, W. P., 36th and Bridge streets.
Snyder, A. J., West Wilmington, Olivet Chapel, West Wilmington.
Stewart, A. M., Frazer P. O., Pa., Reeseville and East Whiteland Churches, Reeseville, Pa.
Stricker, Peter, D. D., New York City, Pastor elect of North Broad street Church, Broad and Green streets.
Sutton, Rev. J. Ford, Hermon Presbyterian Church, 53 Harrison street, Frankford, Pa.
Thorne, W. H., Below Kingessing, Second Church, Darby.
Taylor, W. W., 2041 Wallace street, Olivet Church, 22d and Mt. Vernon streets.
Wiswell, G. F., D.D., 1402 North 15th street, Green Hill Church, Curran avenue above 16th streets.
Logan Square Church, 20th and Vine streets.
Western Church, 7th and Filbert streets.
Walnut street Church, W. Phila.
First Church, Darby, Darby, Pa.
Second Church, Mantua, Lancaster avenue.