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## Contributors and Correspondents

(For the Presbyterian.)

### THE OLD SCOTCH THEOLOGIAN.

BY REV. J. A. R. DICKSON, TORONTO.

With all the progress in science and the professed advances in thought of these later days we can find nothing better than the old Scotch Theology. In truth, nothing near so good; nothing that so perfectly meets the deep cravings of the Christian heart and the Christian consciousness. It is native gold in nuggets, which may be sent to the mint of modern minds to be coined down for currency to-day, enriching the minister first and the member of the church next, by imparting to the sermons a nerve and fervour and force and fulness of truth and doctrine not always and everywhere found in our time. The old Scotch divines were masters in Israel, men mighty in the Scriptures: and possessed too, of a keen insight of man's nature and of the elements of the world around them. They were far from being narrow and one-sided; taking the word of God as their watchtower, they saw afar, and on every side, and clearly. Their entire and hearty submission to the Word and wisdom of God constituted their strength, and created them overruling fountains of spiritual energy. They loved the Bible. They gave themselves wholly to the study of it. They came to its armory for the spiritual weapons wherewith to war a good warfare. And so armed they triumphed, and are, in spirit, triumphing still. They were strong Calvinists, and sturdy utterers of all its circle of truths. Sometimes they seem in their statements to give a deliverance that is utterly indefensible, but reading on they round it off quite scripturally. In the race the chariot seems to overrun the course, but looking at it more closely, we find it to be but the illusion produced by the dazzling of the eye. They keep within the course and sweep its entire circle. And this has made them the Conservators of the grand features of Pauline Doctrine for all time. They are the Reformers of the Reformers, the Puritans of the Puritans. Their watchword in the terribly stormy days that passed over them was one of the highest and holiest we know of, being nothing short of this: "FOR CHRIST'S CROWN, AND GOVERNMENT." Thomas Carlyle tells us that "John Knox was the author, as it were, of Oliver Cromwell. And also, that the Puritan revolution would never have taken place in England at all, if it had not been for that Scotchman." This is equivalent to saying that the Scotch divines were the living fount source of the regenerating streams that renewed England's life. A careful study of their relation to their times will confirm this thought. What a wonderful history might be written if the streams of holy influence proceeding from their teaching could be traced! They have been famous fertilizers, and are yet, wherever they are studied. Who can measure the inspiring energy of Rutherford's letters? Baxter's appreciation is well known. "Hold off the Bible, such a book the world never saw the like." Richard Cecil says "Rutherford's letters is one of my classics. Were truth the beam, I have no doubt that if Homer and Virgil and Horace and all that the world has agreed to idolize, were weighed against that book, they would be lighter than vanity. *He is a real original.* There are in his letters some inexpressible forcible and arresting remonstrances with unconverted men." McChesney studied them deeply. Dr. Andrew Bonar informs us that the letters of Samuel Rutherford were often in his hands." Of that little book written by William Guthrie entitled "THE CHRISTIAN'S GREAT INTEREST," John Owen, known as a prince among theologians, has said: "that author I take to be one of the greatest divines that ever wrote." And referring to a little gift copy of the treatise which he held in his hand, he said, "It is my *vade mecum*, and I carry it and the *Sodan New Testament* still about me. *I have wrote several folios, but there is more divinity in it than in them all.*" Think of these preachers and writers as distributing agencies of the doctrines taught in the Old Scotch theology, with some modifications here and there it is true, and what an idea we get of its power and prevalence! It has untold unspent strength yet, and that as we have said because of its thorough scripturalness. Matthew Arnold in his "ST. PAUL AND PROTESTANTISM," while acknowledging that "Calvinism is both theologically more coherent, and also shows a deeper sense of reality than Arminianism, which in the practical man's fashion, is apt to scrape the surface of things only" yet says elsewhere most strangely and unphilosophically "its fundamental ideas, sounding forth still every week from thousands of pulpits, have in them no significance and no power for the progressive thought of humanity." Why then do thousands of churches tolerate them? Do they not keep abreast of the times? that cannot be. Has their power become exhausted? has the limit of their circle been reached? have men outgrown them? No, no. With Mr. Arnold, with his desire for church comprehension and his love of culture, we fear that the wish is father to the thought. Let him and all like him be assured that the circle of these "fundamental ideas" is co-extensive with the circle of time, and their significance and power is so great and so mighty that man will never on the earth be able to live without them. We are sorry to think that Mr. Arnold, like many with him who ought to be better instructed, are ignorant

of the great exponents of Calvinistic Doctrine. Doctrine is not best seen in a Compendium or even in a Confession. There it is cramped. It does not appear quite naturally, with the truth on its face, and the winning grace in its movements, and the perfect mastery of all circumstances, which it has in a sermon by a master. It is pressed into unsightly wrinkles, and is too apt to the superficial observer to make a bad impression. If Mr. Arnold turn to the writings of the Old Scotch Divines, he shall find not only the ideas, but that which will meet his "Scientific sense"—the verification of them. These old worthies were richly evangelized in teaching, large and firm in their grasp of truth, concise and even terse in style, and full of sacred union. It is difficult in narrow compass to illustrate their exhortations; however a few extracts to this end may be given, and I. THEY WERE FULL OF CHRIST.—"Deep in Christ" as Rutherford speaks. He was not to them merely a historical person, he was a present Saviour and Lord. They spoke of him, as of one, of whom they knew. He was real to them, personal to them, present to them. "Mark the order here: 1, name—the Lord. 2, then,—Depart. By naming of Jesus, is meant coming to him and believing in him; professing him, worshipping and taking him for your master. And, Depart from sin. We see then we must first be joined to Christ, come to him, believe in him, and possess him, before we can depart from iniquity; for how shall we either get strength or feet to flee from sin, till we come to Christ? Who shall loose our chains and fetters, or who shall cleanse us and make us new? Must not fleeing and departing from sin be from faith in Christ?" Again "Christ still runs before us, and holds out to us the crown of holiness and happiness, and bids us run and have it, and when we see we must either run at it, or else not win into heaven, we follow on still. And so, he trains us into heaven, holding out before us all the way, that which he will give us in the end." (Dickson) "I find Christ as ye write, as the longer the better, and therefore cannot but rejoice in his salvation, who hath made my chains my wings, and hath made me a king over my crosses and over my adversaries: glory, glory, glory to his high, high and holy name!" (Rutherford.) "The soul is naked, destitute of a covering to keep it from the storm of God's wrath; Christ is fine raiment, then accordingly faith's work here is to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ," (Guthrie).

II. THEY POSSESSED A STRONG PRACTICAL COMMON SENSE.—They grappled with men's actual wants. They did not care to paint fine pictures to show off their own powers. They sought earnestly to save men, and to this end they put truth before the mind, laid it upon the conscience and brought it home to the heart. And this they did fearlessly of consequences, with a moral heroism seldom surpassed. All their works are marked by this tincture of mother wit, a very precious quality in dealing with souls. Saith the poor believer: "the work of holiness and sanctification goes on slowly;" and truly so it doth; and we should see it and bewail it greatly. Well, what then? Hath Christ died in vain. Christ's dying is sanctification; "For their sakes I sanctify myself," saith our Lord, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. (John xvii. 19). He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify into himself a peculiar people zealous of good works, (Titus ii. 14). It were a great blessing if believers had but skill to draw, by faith, sanctifying virtue from the death of Christ. This is what the apostle is upon, Rom. vi. throughout. "How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? But how are believers dead to sin? Have they not sin living in them?" "We are dead to sin in Christ," saith the apostle; "he died for sin, and we have dominion over sin, and we reckon ourselves dead to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ, (ver. 11)." (Traill). "How the scripture of God doth clearly shine upon the darkest footsteps of providence, even those which would seem most strange and hard to understand, so that it may be demonstrated that nothing falleth out in the world or befall the saints, but what is most consonant to the scripture." (Fleming).

III. THEY WERE MEN OF DEEP DEVOTIONAL FEELING.—They were awed before God and inspired with holy joy at the remembrance of his holiness. They feared God, and therefore had no fear of man. Morton's word on Knox at his grave: "There lies he who never feared the face of men" was characteristic of them all. They so apprehended God that they were bold, brave and true, and withal tender in feeling, and large in sympathy, and living in love. Their preaching was largely the exposition of scripture; so that they bowed in profound reverence. Their fear toward God was not taught by the precept of men, nor did they teach for commandments the traditions of men. Traill writes to a brother minister, "Let us study hard, and pray much, to know the truth and to cleave to it. . . . Let us bring forth that doctrine to our people, that we find in our Bibles, and have felt the power of upon our own hearts." And he preaches this: "See that your thoughts of the law, and of the grace of God and of the righteousness of Christ be such as are squared by the word of God. We must think of these things as God hath spoken of them in his word; and not frame thoughts to ourselves from our own imagination. What saith the word of God concerning the law, and the righteousness of Christ, and the grace of God appearing therein?" Thus dealing with the word they breathed a devout spirit, one full of love and humility toward God, and toward men, one full of serious earnestness. Communing with them a little we are drawn to larger fellowship, a fellowship that quickens the heart, enlightens the mind, and blesses the soul. May many more enter into the same hallowed enjoyment.

(For the Presbyterian.)

### COMMUNITY OF PROPERTY.

BY REV. PROF. WARD, OTTAWA.

Communism and socialism are twin sisters. In the decalogue both these views are put clearly together as criminal: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house (communism), thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife (socialism). It is, therefore, not surprising that some who dispute the right of individuals to private property, also dispute the institution of marriage. The advocates of free love, the communists, socialists, and internationalists, (secret societies whose members number millions,) both in Europe and America, are all representatives of the agitation common to man without a God. If their plans should be carried out, what would become of all the civic and social right, virtue, and happiness of man, sanctioned by God and humanity, and upon which even old heathenism looked with a sacred awe? What would become of the world if enthusiastic apostles of carnality, sloth, and selfishness (and they are very active), should succeed in intoxicating the proletariat, and the masses beyond the control of the governments? Such views as are advocated by communism and socialism, are considered to be nothing more than powerless theories; though I am sorry that we are so little posted. The fact is that they have powerful organs, very active and disseminating. They are said to have at this moment a powerful under current ready to burst forth upon the world when an opportunity comes. "They are slumbering fires which are ever ready to break out into destructive conflagration."

Here, however, attention is directed and confined to communism of property from an exegetical standpoint. We emphatically deny that Jesus Christ either taught or practised community of property, as claimed by some monastic orders (especially Dominicans), and sceptic divines like Strauss, Renan, Grasty, etc. Their view is in substance somewhat like the following: That the bag (mentioned in John xii. 6-8, and xiii. 29,) with which Judas was intrusted was the common treasury, and the means of subsistence of all those who travelled with Jesus; consequently, Christ practiced and taught community of property. But how absurd! None of these sceptical critics, nor the communists, nor even the Dominican friars, could prove either that any one of those who travelled with Jesus paid anything into the treasury carried by Judas, or that those who travelled with Jesus were entitled to draw money from the treasury on their own accord, or that the treasury was to furnish the means of subsistence to all. As long as those divines cannot prove the two aforementioned points, it would be absurd to infer from the two passages in John's Gospel that Jesus practiced community of property. In fact, from all the data we have, no inference could be made that any of the disciples paid anything into the treasury in the hands of Judas; that any of them except Jesus was entitled to draw from the treasury, or that the treasury was for the subsistence of all those who travelled with Jesus. We should surely not err if we say that the money which flowed into the bag of which Judas took charge came from persons who never travelled with Jesus, but who nevertheless gave money to the impressive teacher and powerful preacher of Nazareth; and Jesus, who did not like to burden himself with money matters, gave the contributions over to one of his disciples (Judas), to use them for distribution among the poor and for other necessary objects.

But these gentlemen have still another proof that Jesus recommended community of property. They claim that the first Christian community of Jerusalem had a regular community of goods, which the great Dr. Hodge (*Systematic Theology* Vol. III, p. 130,) admits to be so. From this pretended fact the sceptical party infer that the practice of community of goods at Jerusalem was in obedience to the theory and practice of their Master, Jesus of Nazareth. They thus make our Saviour the author of communism in the Christian world! Indeed, in all ages of the Christian era there have been sects and monastic orders which considered community of goods an apostolic practice. In America there are the Shakers, &c. But if we look more closely into the matter, if we sharply define the notion of communism, all such pretensions prove an absurdity. The term communism, or community of goods, could be applied only to a community whose members were by law or by mutual agreement, to surrender either the whole, or a part of their property to flow to the common treasury upon which the entire community depended for their subsistence. In Jerusalem, however, this was not the case. We hear Peter asking Ananias (Acts v. 4), a member of the community at Jerusalem: "While it remained was it not thine own? and after it was sold was it not in thine own power?" From this, it is clearly seen that the gift of Ananias was entirely spontaneous. The passage of Acts iv. 34, "As many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them and

bought," etc., does (in the Greek) by no means say that these persons sold all their immovable property. The circumstance that the sacred writer confines (in the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh verses of the said chapter) to relate in detail, that Barnabas sold his property and laid the money at the feet of the apostles, proves sufficiently that this was a singular case, and that this was not universally the practice in the community of Jerusalem; otherwise, the statement in verses thirty-six and thirty-seven would be superfluous—*deca* (according to the view of those who claim for the community of Jerusalem community of goods) all members of the community have done so. It would be impossible for the advocates of community of goods to prove that the very persons who contributed received from the common treasury their daily, weekly, or monthly rations of food, garments, or money. It would also be impossible for them to prove that a member of the community had any legal claim upon the community to be sustained and provided for, as was really the case among the Essenes, the Monastic order of the Catholic Church, among the Shakers in the U.S., or other bodies who have community of goods—that each member has a legal claim.

In consideration of what has been said, I am logically compelled to say that the word "common" (*κοινον*) in the respective passages means nothing more than that there was no feeling of selfishness in the young community of Jerusalem, so that if any of the members were in need, help was immediately and promptly at hand; that many of the members have sold a portion, and some of them even the whole of their real estate, in order to help their poor and needy brethren in the faith. We therefore deny the assumption that there was such a thing among the first Christians of Jerusalem which could even approximately be styled "community of goods," or, "property."

(For the Presbyterian.)

### COLLECTOR'S TROUBLES.

I have read "A Collector's Experience," and deeply sympathize with him in the many rebuffs he met. Surely he met with some of the faithful few who give out of a free heart willingly, then why not commend them, that their hearts may be encouraged, and that others seeing their good works, may be prompted to go and do likewise. The application of the whip to either man or beast is not the only stimulant that can be used, and these everlasting croakers do more harm than good. Though there is truth in what they say about the "begrudging manner" in which some give, they do not speak the whole truth when they put it in that shape only. Give us some of the good deeds that we may know how to do likewise. Surely all he met were not in the classes written about, and if they were the congregation he canvassed has much need of instruction, and he had better speak to his pastor about giving them a discourse on the Christian duty of giving.

Some exceptions might be taken to his inferences. There is no necessity for a quarrel with our Mission Board, but it is not a fact that the contributions to the scheme of missions has been steadily increasing; then who's fault is it that the church is in debt unless it is the fault of those who have overdrawn their income. Upon what principal this has been done it is hard to see unless it be this that all the world is in debt, and the church to be in the fashion must be in debt also.

Your correspondent gives us a spicy piece of information, viz: that our congregations have been taxed, that that debt should be cancelled. The church would like to know no doubt what congregations have been taxed, and by who's authority such a tax has been imposed upon them. If our church courts are resolving themselves into an hierarchy, it is time this matter was sifted, and those who would thus tamper with Presbyterian rights given to understand the true basis upon which Presbyterianism rests. No better plan for killing the true spirit of missions could be suggested than that of imposing a tax, not to speak of the tampering with our rights. If this is the way things are being managed he may well ask, "what better will it be next year?" Will the people of our church be roused to a true sense of duty in the matter of giving, by laying a tax upon them? Never! so long as they are Presbyterians. God has honoured us in allowing us to give, but he has not given the power into any man's hand to force us to give.

Search the Scriptures and you will find that it is our duty to commend those who do well, as well as to admonish those who fall short in duty. Search the Scriptures and you will find that we are commanded to "owe no man anything." Search the Scriptures and you will find that in Christian giving that such "is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not."

Let us get back to a hard money basis, and not kill the spirit of missions utterly by running into debt, and then taxing our congregations in order to liquidate it. It is a false foundation.

The day of grace may be lost before the day of death come.

THERE is nobody but eat and drinks, but there are few who can distinguish the flavor.—Confucius.

### SABBATH SCHOOL CONVENTION AT BARRIE.

One of the encouraging signs of this age is the deep interest taken in the religious welfare of the young. Not only ministers, but a Church Courts vie with each other in trying to feed the lambs. For some years the Presbyterians of the County of Simcoe have occupied a prominent place in the Sabbath School gatherings within the district, and in harmony with the well understood wishes of the congregations under its charge, the Barrie Presbytery appointed a Convention to be held in the Barrie Presbyterian Church, on the 27th ultimo. On the morning of that day, there was a mastering of the ministers, teachers, and other friends of the young, from all parts of the county.

The meeting was opened by the Rev. M. Fraser, who was elected President, and who presided over the meeting with great tact and success. The first paper submitted was by the Rev. J. Gray of Orillia, on the "Relation of the Sabbath School to the Church," followed by a kindred document by the Rev. G. Crow, on the "Relation of the Sabbath School to the Family."

Speeches of five minutes' length were made on these two topics, and the discussion evinced a large amount of earnestness on the part of the friends of the Sabbath School.

Papers, all of them excellent, both in their matter and in their mode of presenting the several subjects, were submitted by Mr. Thos. Dallas, on "How to prepare the lesson;" by Rev. W. McCounell, on "How to select the library;" by Mr. John Black, on "The aim of the Sabbath School work;" by the Rev. R. Rodgers, on "The Model Superintendent;" and "The Blackboard;" and by Rev. J. Gray on "The teacher and his work." Each of the topics was considered in five minute addresses with great interest and considerable ability.

One of the most interesting exercises was "How to teach an Infant Class," by Mr. A. M. Sutherland. Mr. Sutherland brought his class into the meeting, and by means of a series of object lessons, carefully prepared by himself, interspersed with singing, showed how admirably he could keep up the attention of the youngest, and imbue their minds and memories with saving and Bible truths. Owing to the unexpected absence of eight ministers and two laymen, who, from unlooked for circumstances, were unable to prepare their papers, or to be present, the Convention was closed on the evening of the 27th ultimo, at ten o'clock.

The meeting was very successful, so far as the character of the papers read and the aptness and excellence of the addresses were concerned. The paper of Rev. G. Crow, was highly commended, and not without reason. All through the meeting no unseemly remarks were made, or frivolous statements offered. While cheerfulness prevailed in the assembly, all who engaged in the Convention work seemed deeply in earnest, and solemnly impressed with the gravity and importance of Sabbath School teaching.

So benefitted were all present from the spirit and lessons of the assembly, that it was unanimously decided to recommend to the Presbytery to hold a similar meeting at Orillia, on the first week of next September.

Owing to the boisterous weather, and the excitement consequent on the call from St. Thomas to the Rev. M. Fraser, the attendance was fair, but not so large as the importance of the occasion demanded. May our Zion be more thoroughly aroused to the need of devoting her fullest energies to the noble work of feeding the lambs.—Cor.

An auxiliary to the Female Board of Missions within the Presbytery of Glenora was formed in Dalhousie Mills, on Sept. 25th, the following as office-bearers:—President, Mrs. Stackhouse; Vice Presidents, Mrs. Morrison, Mrs. Harriet Morrison, Mrs. Alex. McGregor, Secretary, Mrs. J. McIntosh; Cor. Secretary, Mrs. J. McIntosh; Treasurer, Mrs. Sylvester; Committee Management, Miss M. McRae, Mrs. D. McNaughton, Mrs. J. McQuaig, Mrs. J. McVean, Mrs. M. McRae, Miss M. Hope, Miss Billa Munro, Mrs. J. Hope.

The London Advertiser of the 30th ult., had the following:—"After the consummation of Presbyterian Union, the anti-union party in London retained possession of St. James' Church on Richmond street. A suit, which has been known as that of Cowan et al. vs Wright et al., was begun, and a bill was filed in chancery to recover possession for the union party. The Chancellor issued an injunction in January last giving the unionists possession. At the last sitting of the Court of Chancery here the case was heard before V. C. Blake and the decision postponed. It was given at Osgoode Hall this forenoon in favour of the union party. This confirms Mr. Cowan and his co-voicers in possession of the Church. The Dayfield case was similar in its nature, and it was also decided this morning in favor of the union party."