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## THE CURRENCY OF THE FUTURE.

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WHAT shall be the currency of the future in our country is a question which will, for the next few years, occupy the thoughts of public men, political economists, and the people. That our present system or systems will undergo changes cannot be doubted. Our paper money now consists of United States notes (legal tenders), national-bank notes, and silver certificates. Our metallic money consists of gold and silver, both full legal tender; the latter coined in limited quantity, from year to year, on Government account, and issued by the Government. The United States notes were issued in time of war, as a war measure, then and now carefully limited by law as to volume. Although these notes are in volume now nominally fixed at \$346,000,000 in round numbers, the actual circulation does not probably exceed \$310,000,000; of this amount, from \$30,000,000 to \$35,000,000 are constantly in the Treasury, and from \$75,000,000 to \$100,000,000 are constantly held as national-bank reserves. So that the actual circulation in the hands of the people does not much exceed \$210,000,000. The national-bank notes in volume now amount to about \$350,000,000; silver certificates, \$66,000,000, in round numbers. All State-bank circulation has been inhibited, since 1866, by a prohibitory tax of ten per cent. So that the total of paper money is comprised as above. In addition to this, we have a large circulation of metallic money, chiefly gold coin, as the silver coined is

VOL. CXXXIV.—NO. 307.

36

## ANDOVER AND CREED-SUBSCRIPTION.

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THERE has suddenly sprung up, about the most famous theological seminary in the land, a controversy which promises to be more profitable than theological controversies have sometimes been. Across the sea the general subject of it has been much discussed in Parliament, and at the hustings, and through the press, until the title "Subscription" has come to designate a considerable department of literature. In America, too, there has been, here and there, disputation over it; for the subject, in its nature, is fruitful of dissensions. But there seems to be good promise now of a debate which (to use our favorite American locution) shall "amount to something" toward a settlement of the questions, legal, moral, and prudential, which the mention of the word awakens.

It is natural enough, and in some respects creditable enough, to the orthodox Congregationalists of America, that this debate concerning subscription in a great theological school should have arisen in the midst of that very honorable communion of Christian churches. To begin with, among all the religious sects of this country they have been the foremost in theological as in all other education. The Protestant sects, like the orders of the Roman Catholic regular clergy, have each its specialty in operation, in which it leads the rest. As the Unitarians in elegant literature and social reform, the Baptists and Methodists in popular preaching and pioneering, the Episcopalians in parochial organization and the conduct of worship, so the Congregationalists have been foremost in two specialties: religious journalism and collegiate and theological education. The great colleges of the country, Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and others, have, in singularly large proportion, been founded or manned by them; and the earliest of American theological seminaries, Andover, the work of their hands, has been the model of the multitude of

other seminaries, "and the deviations from the original type have been comparatively few."

But the sect so honorably distinguished as a leader in the highest education has another distinction of a different sort. It is implicated, beyond other sects, in the worst abuses of "subscription." Other communions provide that persons proposed for offices of teaching and government shall be required to give assent to doctrinal standards. The Congregationalists make no such demand of their clergy; but by an abhorrent and demoralizing practice they exact it of children and novices, as the condition of communion in the church. The origin of this miserable and mischievous usage is easily traceable. It had its rise in a false theological dogma, now generally abandoned except in the Roman Church, that faith, the condition of salvation and therefore of Christian fellowship, consists in an intellectual assent to propositions, rather than in a willing trust on a person. Naturally, among those holding this view, a candidate for fellowship would be questioned on his doctrinal views—the weak in faith received to doubtful disputations. Naturally also (since mankind generally are not original thinkers), the answers to such questioning would, by and by, with the aid of the pastor, fall into a general uniformity, and at last the form of dogmatic statement which many successive applicants had freely accepted grew, without anybody's meaning it, into the church-creed which subsequent applicants were required to accept. So this offspring of a theological falsehood survives as an institution after its mother-falsehood is dead and buried. And so, withal, the oddest anomaly in church history is explained—that one of the sects which have set themselves most resolutely and on principle against the use of precomposed forms in prayer is found to be saddled with the tradition of such forms just where they are most irrational and intolerable, to wit, in the enforced expression of personal opinions.\*

\*The opposition of the Puritan and Presbyterian churches to liturgical forms was once founded on a principle—a very absurd one, to be sure, but still a principle: that to introduce any human composition into public worship was an act of idolatry—a breach of the Second Commandment. Hence, Rouse's Psalms, and Ainsworth's Psalms, and the Bay Psalm Book, "worst of many bad," not to mention some one's version of the Acts of the Apostles into common meter—all contrived so that our fathers, by singing the actual words of inspiration, might escape the eternal pains reserved for the idolator who read his prayers out of a book. This principle went overboard in the tempestuous agitation, a hundred years ago, which attended the introduction of Watts's

Surely a worse abuse of the policy of enforced subscription is hardly to be found, even in the history of the English universities. The expression of Lord Brougham is not too strong for it—“a man-trap for tender consciences.”

When we come to creed-subscription as one of the conditions of the tenure of a theological professorship, the matter is on a different footing. Whether the requirement of a creed-subscription is good for anything, anyhow or anywhere, may be a doubtful question. But there can be no doubt at all that, if it has any fit place in the social system, that place is in connection with a chair of theology. In that place it is a violation of no man's conscience, for it is no man's inalienable duty to be, for example, Abbott professor at Andover; and there is no incongruity when trustees, about to employ a teacher of dogma, ascertain from him that the dogmas he will teach are what they ought to be. And how plausible the notion that the readiest and surest way of ascertaining this is to tender him a full statement of the doctrines they require to be taught, and ask his assent to it!

This method is now on trial before the American public in the case of the Rev. Newman Smyth, professor-elect to the Abbott chair of Dogmatics in Andover Seminary. Our concern with this particular case is only in its bearing on the general question of creed-subscription.

Mr. Smyth is a pastor and theological author of repute, the titles of whose works\* indicate the school of “liberal orthodoxy” to which he belongs. He has been elected to the Abbott professorship by the trustees of that foundation, and his election has been informally, but not yet officially, confirmed by the “visitors,” who have right of veto on the appointment. Both election and

Hymns. Since then, the Puritan and Presbyterian opposition to fixed forms of prayer has been the merest matter of traditionary prejudice—a conclusion without any major premise. But what would not have been the horror of the fathers who stood out so piously against “man-made hymns,” if it had been deliberately proposed to enforce on tender consciences a man-made creed, under penalty of excommunication!

It may be thought that, in speaking of imposing a creed on the common worshiper as a characteristic of Congregational churches, I have forgotten the use of the early creeds, Apostolic and Nicene, in common worship. But the ancient creeds are not codifications of dogma, but utterances of personal trust. They do not say “You believe *that*,” but “I believe *in*.”

\* “The Religious Feeling: A Study for Faith”; “Old Faiths in New Light”; “The Orthodoxy of To-day.”

confirmation were made in view of a nomination invited from the active faculty of the institution. Proceedings have been stayed in consequence of a somewhat clamorous newspaper protest, coming from persons having no official responsibility in the case, that Mr. Smyth's published opinions are inconsistent with the minute creed of "the Associate Founders," which he signifies his readiness to subscribe, and which the three bodies of competent theologians which we have named declare, after personal conference with the candidate, that they believe he can subscribe with a good conscience. The latest phase of the affair is that the Board of Visitors, overawed, apparently, by the newspaper demonstrations, have remitted the question of the election to the reconsideration of the trustees.\*

*First.* The most obvious fact in the whole affair is this: that no one of the parties concerned in it, officially or unofficially, places the slightest value on the mere fact of subscription to the prescribed creed. Neither the faculty that nominated, nor the trustees who elected, nor the visitors who approved, nor the candidate who submitted to be successively catechized, nor the newspaper which "pitched in," nor the critical public looking on, has any confidence whatever in the subscription, joined to however irreproachable a character for intelligence and sincerity, as giving a guaranty of the candidate's conformity to the creed subscribed. It does not occur to the candidate "sat upon" in these successive inquisitions to say, "Gentlemen, I have stated my views to you in the language of your printed creed; if you have not confidence in my intelligence and integrity in making this statement, you had better find some one for your professor in whom you do have confidence." If he had said so, official boards, and able editor, and critical public looking on, would all as one man have agreed that it was highly preposterous. On the other hand, supposing that, after thorough personal acquaintance and inquiry, the triple board, the anxious newspaper, and the general public were of one accord that Mr. Smyth was the typical Hopkinsian delineated in the creed of the Abbott foundation, and supposing that being

\* Since this article went to the printer, it is announced that the Visitors have vetoed the election of Mr. Smyth, alleging reasons that involve no question of the candidate's sincerity or intelligence in subscription. Thus they have neatly evaded the main question, and discharged the case from their little tribunal. But it is needless to say that this dexterous procedure does not remove the case from the *forum publicum* before which it was pending.

bidden to the chair of dogmatics at Andover he should say, "I scruple some of the expressions of that creed," or "I will freely tell you my views in my own language, but I am *nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri*, and least of all can I subscribe that document as the expression of my views, when it is tendered to me as the condition of a position and a salary"; in this case, would it not be the universal reply, "Now more than ever we know that you are the man whom we want, and whom the founder of the chair would have wanted, for Abbott professor"? In short, has the enforced subscription any practical effect whatever, unless haply sometimes to exclude from the Abbott professorship a man of too scrupulous conscience or of too nice a self-respect? To sum up this argument in another form, personal examination by the boards of trust, with reference to the creed of the foundation, is sufficient without subscription; subscription is inadequate without personal examination; what, then, is the subscription good for?

*Second.* If there is perplexity in any mind in view of the general disrespect entertained as to the value of this creed-subscription, it may easily be cleared up by a slight study of the casuistry of the subject, as it has been expounded by those most personally interested in it. Professor Phelps, now *emeritus* of the department of rhetoric, a man profoundly and justly respected, published, four years ago, in the "Congregationalist" newspaper, two articles on "The Rights of Believers in Ancient Creeds," which were more properly on the rights of subscribers to such creeds. The rights, as he enumerates them, are: 1, the right to a recognition of the inevitable changes which time brings about in the meaning of language; 2, the right to interpret a creed in part by the history of its formation; 3, the right to recognize and reason from well-known compromises contained in the creed; 4, the right to one's own method of reconciling the contradictions of a creed; 5, the right, within certain limits, to a help which may be called the logic of the drift of a creed; 6, the right to subscribe the creed as a whole, without being held to indorsement of its every detail; 7, *not* the right to mutilate by his interpretation a certain system of truth which all the great historic confessions affirm. It seems strange that so clear a writer should not have set far above and before all these rights of a man subscribing a creed as the condition of holding a place, the splendid and inalienable right to let the creed alone and lose



the place, and should not have seen that these rights which he reserves being conceded (in the application of which each subscriber is to judge for himself), the fact of subscription is discharged of all significance, except as it signifies the candidate's sincere desire to take the place if he can get it.

*Third.* But the futility of enforced subscription to secure conformity of opinion to the standard of a creed has been so abundantly demonstrated in British history that it seems ridiculously unnecessary to have repeated the experiment in America. It is one of the most pitiable things in the history of human nature to take up the old volumes of "The Quarterly," and read the grave arguments of English clergymen for the expediency and importance of requiring all college boys at their matriculation solemnly to declare their belief of thirty-nine articles of theology, which in most cases they did not believe and in some cases they distinctly disbelieved; and to enforce this requirement by a bribe of immense social, political, and pecuniary value. It was a natural sequence of the moral confusion and corruption thus produced, when one of the foremost scholars and most genuine saints of the English Church wrote the famous Oxford tract which urged upon hesitating consciences the policy of signing articles which they detested, "in a non-natural sense"; and when the same man, in his venerable age and ripened erudition, published the "Eirenicon," which labored to show that every article of the thirty-nine (those "forty stripes save one," as they were wont to be called by the school of his condisciples, who nevertheless signed them as one man) was capable of being construed in consistency with the tenets of the Roman Catholic Church, which they were drawn with the avowed purpose of contradicting. If the exacting of doctrinal subscriptions has not resulted in America in just so wide-spread a corrupting of the conscience and the sense of honor, it is because it has been practiced on a less extensive scale, and enforced with less weighty sanctions of reward and penalty, and not because human nature among us is of a finer quality, nor because the offer of valuable consideration to a man on condition of his stating his opinions in a certain form has lost, in this climate, the power of tempting him to tamper with his absolute sincerity.

The arguments urged against the strict construction of the Andover creed, and the requirement of adhesion to it in its literal sense, are to a large extent arguments *ab inconvenientia*;

and in their poor way they are very strong. "No institution is under obligation to suicide." The rigorous enforcement of the creed in its literal sense "would absolutely prevent the maintenance of any trust reposing on a creed." So say the acting faculty in a public manifesto. The throwing of such weighty considerations of expediency into the balance, when a question of simple right or wrong, truth or falsehood, is under consideration—the question, Ought I, or Ought he, to say, in a certain form of words, I believe thus and so—is worse than irrelevant. The implied proposition that the vital interests of an institution may properly influence an honest man in the statements of his religious belief is, to say the least, not conceived in the spirit of martyrdom. The accumulation of precedents to show how many pious and excellent people have acted on this principle is absolutely nothing at all to the purpose.

The Andover discussion ought to give some help in defining the best methods and terms of charitable foundation. The history of Christendom is full enough of instances of successful and unsuccessful charities, of wise and of impracticable provisions in deeds and wills, to afford needed instruction to the many who would be glad to give if they could be sure of giving effectively, and who would gladly learn from collective experience. Already two points are clearly illustrated in the course of the debate:

1. No founder wishing to limit his bounty by dogmatic conditions can hope to provide except for past and current questions of doctrinal difference. The use of the fund with reference to questions arising in the future will inevitably have to be determined by the discretion of the trustees for the time being. On those questions, when they arise, the doctrinal test will be found either to be dumb or to give an uncertain sound. Professor Robertson Smith, enunciating critical sentiments which are agitating all Scotland, as if the foundations were destroyed, seems to have been successful in demonstrating that there is nothing in all the voluminous standards of his church to hinder his holding and teaching these sentiments. In like manner, the minute and diplomatic creed of Andover deals mainly with questions that have ceased to occupy the minds of ordinary theologians, and fails to exclude from the faculty of that institution the holders of tenets which would have more vexed the righteous soul of Samuel Abbott and his associates than many of the heresies which they denounced by name. They debarred Uni-



tarians from the enjoyment of their bounty; but did not foresee the day when the reverence of Unitarians would be shocked by the audacious utterances of Theodore Parker, and the not much later day when some of these utterances would be freely entertained in circles indubitably orthodox. Founders of chairs of doctrinal teaching should make up their minds to such possibilities, and ask themselves to what extent they are willing to rely on the discretion of the unknown successors of their chosen trustees, for that is the only thing that they have to rely on for the contingencies of future variations of theological opinion.

2. A founder wishing to condition his bounty on adhesion to a definite creed ought, for every reason, to make his choice as to whether he will content himself with the subscription of the candidate, or whether, instead, he will make his trustees the judges of the candidate's doctrinal agreement with the creed. Both conditions at once he ought not to exact. There is no decency in first requiring the candidate's consent to the creed, and then inviting a body of men to say whether his assent is unintelligent or dishonest. A man with a certain measure of self-respect, who by the terms of some ancient deed of trust, and the act of trustees under it, is exposed to such a two-fold test, may well be justified in saying to the trustees: "Which of us is to be the responsible judge in this matter, you or I? If I, then my declaration on the subject must be final. I cannot consent to give out the sincerity and competency of my solemn assertion to be a matter of debate among you. If, on the other hand, you are the responsible judges of the correspondence between my opinions and the terms of your standard, don't ask me to pronounce on the question. You know my opinions from my published works. If you want further information on any point, ask me for it. But don't ask my consent while reserving to yourselves the right of giving the lie to it." In fact, to some persons it would not seem like any very exorbitant assertion of one's self-respect and personal dignity to answer all invitations to "qualify" for a desirable office by subscribing another man's statement of opinions, with saying: "In other circumstances, I should have been free to give you my unreserved judgment on this or any other summary of theology; but when you tender it to me for my signature, with the offer of an honorable office and a salary and a house in case of compliance, it is out of the question for me to give you any answer whatever."

The wrong of establishing by deed of trust the double criterion of a man's doctrinal fitness for an endowed office, first in his own assent to a dogmatic standard, and then in the judgment of another party on the validity of his assent, is often illustrated, in ecclesiastical events, by the gratuitous reproaches which it provokes upon characters that are justly above reproach. The Abbott professor, sworn into office upon a statement of opinions made out for him by another hand, is constituted an *ex-officio* butt of evil suspicions and imputations. And human nature being what it is, he is an exceptional man if he do not vindicate his orthodoxy and sincerity by imputations in turn upon the orthodoxy and sincerity of others. The Swiss Reformers, being sore beset with charges of heresy against themselves, counseled extreme measures against Michael Servetus for heresy, as the readiest and most effective vindication of themselves in the eyes of Europe; and Servetus, though strongly objecting himself to be roasted at a slow fire, redeemed himself from the charge of laxity by protesting that no merey ought to be shown to such scum of the earth as Bolsec. The working of this principle of human nature would give to us an infinite series of Abbott professors, each regarded by his predecessor with painful misgivings, and incapable of looking on his successor's subscribing and teaching without anxious solicitude. The clouds of suspicion of doctrinal unsoundness and unworthy subscription that hung round the early labors of Professor Woods had no tendency to withhold him in later years from expressing heart-broken regret at the accession of Professor Park; and it is freely asserted of Professor Park that his own early experience has failed to satisfy him of the general principle that the serious disapproval of one's predecessor is no disqualification for the Abbott professorship. Why should it be thought needful to aggravate the abundantly sufficient acrimony of theological debate by importing into it a personal quality, through the provision that the person having the gravest personal interests in a favorable conclusion should be called on to pronounce, himself, on the question of his own doctrinal qualifications for an office of very high honor and of some emolument?

This article has been devoted much more to the general subject of creed-subscription than to the particular case of the Andover professorship and Mr. Newman Smyth. And yet it is not intended thereby to disparage the importance of this case. The

Theological Seminary at Andover, by its illustrious history and its wide influence, ranks with the foremost centers of education in the world. The chair of the Abbott professorship is a throne of authority and influence for any man who is capable of filling it. It is my strong impression (let it go for what it is worth) that Mr. Smyth, as a large-minded, thoughtful theologian, an evangelical theologian, in both the real and the conventional sense of the word, holding fellowship alike with the present and the past, and looking with teachable mind into the future, and as an enthusiast both for the discovery and for the teaching of theological truth, is exceptionally endowed with gifts that qualify him for such a place; so that if he were to be seated in it he would soon renew its ancient fame; that he would conciliate the transient animosities that have been raised against him, and win to himself the gratitude of successive classes of men through whom his salutary and illuminating influence would go out into every part of the world, contributing everywhere to the spread of truth and the advancement of the Church of Christ. And in all the citations and allegations that have been made against him, I have been able to see no reason to doubt that with no more qualification or reservation than what is justified in the articles of the venerable Professor Phelps,—reserving the right to “a help which may be called the logic of the drift of a creed,” and the right to subscribe the creed as a whole without indorsing all its details,—he could signify his consent to the creed with as much propriety and fitness as his predecessors and associates in the faculty. But I also believe that if, carefully studying the seminary creed, and scrutinizing the convictions of his own intellect, he should find occasion to say to the trustees of the seminary: “Gentlemen, I find in the creed which you tender to my acceptance one syllable which fails to correspond with the sincere conviction of my mind; and this being the case (with many thanks for your hints about ‘helps from the logic of the drift of a creed,’ and about one’s subscribing to the whole without indorsing the details), before I will write one letter of my name at the end of that document I will see your endowments perish with you”—he would do more for the Church of Christ in America, and for the advancement of the Kingdom of the Truth in all the world, than by a long life-time of successful theological lecturing. The country and the world are suffering far less for lack of expert theologues than for the lack of men so fanatical of

truth, that they will not swerve the statement of their convictions one hair's-breadth to the right or to the left for all the treasures or honors in the gift of the corporation of Phillips Academy. Mr. Smyth, returning willingly and quietly thus to the patient labor of his Western parish, might teach more of Christian truth to the young men of this nation than Mr. Smyth acceding, by a slight compromise, to the dignities and the splendid opportunities of the Abbott chair. For he would hereby teach that despised and rejected tenet of the doctrine of Jesus Christ which the Andover faculty have stigmatized under the phrase "an obligation to suicide." It is an essential part of the doctrine of him who bade his disciples "take up their cross and follow him." Now, the cross he bade them take up was not a doctrine of atonement. It was a gallows.

LEONARD WOOLSEY BACON.