

THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

VOL. XXII.—NO. 3.

JULY, MDCCCLXXI.

ARTICLE I.

TESTIMONY AND FAITH.

In most of the discourses upon faith, the credence yielded to ordinary testimony, founded upon the competence and credibility of the witness, is presented as a complete analogy to the heavenly grace. So that the faith of the believer is reduced to the acceptance of the balance of probabilities. This form of statement is the more taking, because the testimony upon which the Christian relies is the testimony of God, who is infinite in knowledge and in truth. As God knows all things, he cannot be mistaken concerning the facts revealed. As it is impossible for God to lie, the revelation stands upon an impregnable foundation. Therefore, the popular definition of faith is, the act of "taking God at his word."

Testimony presented by God himself concerning things relating primarily to God, and things that belong to his kingdom, is necessarily the highest form of witness-bearing of which the human mind can conceive. But the inevitable objection of unbelievers demands the proof that God has spoken at all, and then an accurate statement of his utterances upon each separate doctrine of the saints. Nor does this demand appear unreasonable; for each believer has his doubts upon these two points

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an important and constituent part of our own body. Every principle of honor and of good faith compels us to say that an unequivocal repudiation of that interpretation of the law under which these men were condemned, must be a condition precedent to any official correspondence on our part.

"4. It is well known that similar injurious accusations were preferred against the whole Southern Presbyterian Church, with which the ear of the whole world has been filled. Extending, as these charges do, to heresy and blasphemy, they cannot be quietly ignored by an indirection of any sort. If true, we are not worthy of the 'confidence, respect, Christian honor and love' which are extended to us in this overture; if untrue, Christian manliness and truth require them to be openly and squarely withdrawn. So long as they remain on record they are an impassable barrier to official intercourse."

"Yours fraternally,

"JOSEPH R. WILSON,

"Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States."

ARTICLE V.

WHAT IS TRUTH?

While Jesus stood in the judgment hall, the Roman Governor put the question, "What is Truth?" Jesus did not refuse to answer, but "when Pilate said this he went out unto the Jews." Had he asked, and humbly waited, the Master, no doubt, would have responded. For to others, in unmistakable language, he had already unfolded the nature and uses of truth.

The Saviour, in his intercessory prayer for the disciples, said, "Sanctify them through the truth—thy word is truth." Again, "He that doeth the truth cometh to the light." "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," "Ye seek to kill me, a man that told you the truth." "The Spirit of truth will guide you into all truth." "I AM THE WAY, AND THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE."

Many things are true which, nevertheless, cannot be called the truth. Man lives, thinks, labors, suffers, and dies; this is

true, but it cannot be called the truth. Abraham believed God, Moses led the Israelites, Job was patient; these are truths, but not the truth to which the Son of God bare witness when he said, "I am the way, and THE TRUTH, and the life."

What, then, is Truth? The speculative mind of every age and country has busied itself about the problem. For the stubborn facts of sin, suffering, confusion, and death, obtrude themselves from generation to generation. Within are sore fightings; without are wrathful intimations. How came these here? Is there any insight into decay—any remedy for disorder? The race has roamed and struggled and fainted. From the very beginning, it is the same story over again—nations rising and falling, inequalities, injustice, crime, sorrow in the household, sorrow to the individual, might opposing right and apparently victorious, the fairest schemes blasted, hope deferred, the heart sick, and unavailing tears. At this point history and human consciousness terribly coincide. And amid this chaotic scene the Babel tongues of so-called prophets can be heard on every side saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." Alas! as experience often shows, these are but "blind leaders of the blind." For nothing, in the highest sense, can be truth to a thoughtful, earnest soul that does not fairly meet, and expound most fully, the conditions of man's existence here, so as to satisfy law, vindicate the Lawgiver, and open up a way of safety to the condemned and guilty creature. Whatever answers this pressing need is, and must be, truth.

In this light, then, has the truth ever been manifested? The divine Law is holy, just, and good; but even this, apart, is not the Truth. For the law is a schoolmaster. It exacts obedience and imposes penalties. Its voice is ever the same—Do and live. Law is a terror to the guilty. It wields a vengeful sword. Written on the heart of man, as well as on the sacred page, are lines which terrify the conscience. There is no truth here to comfort—none to save. On the contrary, under the dispensation of law, both the creature and creation groan. Look whither we may, the curse is visible every where. Here, then, is not the truth to which Jesus bore witness. It is only when

we behold the God-man standing between the law, vengeance and the ruined soul, that truth appears. The truth is not the law, even in its fulness and perfection; but Jesus Christ, the Mediator between God and man, the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, this is the truth. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. The truth, then, is the life and doctrine of Jesus, in their merciful relations to the creature in respect to law. Christ testifies to man's guilt and inability on the one hand, but holds up, on the other, his own infinite sufficiency as a Redeemer and Mediator. The world's conscience finds peace at the cross. Man needs righteousness, and it is provided. To the trembling culprit, upon whose ear breaks the thunder of Sinai, the words of Pilate can every where be addressed, "Behold the man." For One, who was both divine and human, came not simply to vindicate God's broken law, but to bring in also a righteousness whereby a fallen creature can be saved. Christ stands between the parties, an offended Judge and a rebellious subject, and here is the great truth in our wicked, weary, groaning earth. True, Christ doing and dying was a tribute to law; for not one jot or tittle of this could fail. The moral government must be upheld, cost what it may. But this obedience, humiliation, and sacrifice of the King's Son, who was not, and could not be, under law for himself, not only satisfied and upheld a Sovereign's dignity, but the now pacified Lawgiver now sets down the mediatorial act to the credit of the genuine offender. Here, then, is the truth, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Humanity can lay its burdens upon his shoulders who "suffered the just for the unjust." That Paradise which was lost in Adam, is regained in Christ. The throbbing heart can find an answer to Pilate's question, if it will. And it is this: "Behold the man."

Take any doctrine of the Scriptures, and it arises to the dignity of the truth only when connected with Christ Jesus as its

divine Author. For while the Gospels are a "treatise of all that Jesus began to do and to teach," and the Epistles a progressive development of the truth spoken by the Master, the Old Testament itself draws its inspiration from the same super-human source, "for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Consider repentance, for example. Every man that lives is conscious of shortcoming and ill-desert. And it is clearly the duty of wrong-doers to repent. This statement is experimentally correct. But when we appeal to consciousness and the history of human kind, what do men know of true repentance aside from the witness of Christ? True, there has ever existed, since the days of Cain, a worldly sorrow. Men have wept over sin because of its bitter fruits. But what unenlightened heart ever exercised godly penitence? Despots reign, tyrants and conquerors fill hecatombs with murdered victims, the individual yields to lust and hate; but who ever knew such criminals, or any criminal at all, in the light of nature, "out of the sight and sense, not only of the danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of sin, to hate and turn from it?" The law of God written on the heart does indeed smite the guilty soul, but the sorrow of the world works death, for its only source and end is self. Conscience paints a throne of judgment, and the carnal mind trembles at the thought of condemnation. Love for God, appreciative apprehension of a holy law, these do not enter into the account.

A repentance which needs not to be repented of is the truth that Jesus Christ came into the world to bear witness to. He came to open the blind eyes, and to turn them from the power of Satan unto God. "For him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance unto Israel." Hence the words of Ephraim, "Surely after that I was turned I repented, and after I was instructed I smote upon my thigh." When the guilty soul looks upon him "whom it has pierced, and mourns for him as one mourns for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born," it is only then that the fountain of true repentance begins to flow. For Jesus Christ bore witness to the hol-

lowness and insincerity of Pharisaical profession, and pointed to that repentance which has God and truth for its source and object.

Ponder another fact. Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. Not only the creature, but creation itself, travails in pain, and groans to be delivered. The world, in all its generations, has hungered and thirsted and toiled, while wretchedness, in every conceivable form, meets the eye from Adam's time down to the present. This is an amazing, stupendous, appalling record. But it is not the truth to which Jesus bore witness. Such statements are admitted, taken for granted, by the Master, when he says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; learn of me, for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Human kind, bewildered by tribulation, are invited to One who bare our sins and carried our griefs. The way to peace and rest for the troubled soul is therefore the truth to which Jesus bore witness.

Once again. The question was asked ages ago, "If a man die, shall he live again?" With the fall came confusion in regard to the soul's immortality. The greatest intellects of the ancient world labored at this problem. Plato reasoned, Socrates half-believed, but after all there remained a doubt. Man's spirit, however, even in its ruins, longs for assurance. The very thought of death is horrible. "Skin for skin, all that a man hath will he give for his life." What a horror of great darkness is the grave, if its silence and gloom quench the light of the spirit forever! But even these wrestlings of awful import was not the truth to which Jesus testified. He came to dissipate the darkness, and to bring life and immortality to light. He preached to the spirits in prison, and said, "If any man keep my saying, he shall never taste death." The Son of Man did not lift some mysterious veil and say, "Yonder, in another world, the soul shall be assured of immortality;" but he said, "He that believeth on me HATH everlasting life." "This is the record that God hath given to us, eternal life, and this life is in his Son." "He that hath the Son hath life." And hence the life that was miserably lost in the first Adam is most gloriously

restored in the second. Federal relations between the first Head and his posterity are complete, and begin with existence. In Adam all died, and the curse is on the child from its very first and feeblest pulsations. But "if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." If the curse was instant when disobedience began, surely life cannot be withheld when justification is pronounced. Man lived at the first because of God's favor; he shall live once again, and forever, when that lost favor is regained. Unbelief separated the creature, spiritually, from the great source of his being, and death was the result; faith restores the communion, and the dead soul is alive. Henceforth the believer can never die, for his life is hid with Christ in God, and while Christ lives he must live also. Here, then, is the truth to which the Lord of glory bore witness.

REDEMPTION, therefore, is the great truth of all the ages. Nothing is comparable to this. Jesus Christ is the central figure in the generations of this world. He did for man that which man could not do for himself; and the doing of which constitutes a condition indispensable to eternal life. Here is the leaven that leavens the whole lump; the little seed that groweth up and shooteth out great branches; the stone cut without hands out of the mountain, which is to fill the whole earth. How happy for Pilate, had he reverentially paused for an answer! Could fear and pride have been cast away, what gracious words of truth would have distilled from the Master's lips! But alas! Pilate had no sooner asked the question than he went out again unto the Jews. He stood in the very presence of truth; but the roar of the multitude without blinded the eye, even of a judge. How sad! All the vital truth in this sorrowing world comes through Christ. Search and see. Destroy all literature, but leave the words of Jesus, and no essential truth is lost; but destroy the record which God has given to us in his Son, and no great truth remains. Down, down, steadily down forever, would go the sinning, suffering, struggling soul of man. Poor Pilate! Never did judge enjoy such opportunities; never were they more

fatally and ignominiously thrown away. A Roman procurator was afraid! He said unto Christ, "Art thou a king, then?" Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." I am a king, but my kingdom is not of this world; it is not built upon fears and falsehoods, but upon the truth. I came to bear witness to the truth even amid the noise and threats of the angry multitude. Oh, Pilate! with such courage before thee, why art thou a trembling coward! Yes! Christ's kingdom is not of this world. It owes the world nothing. Its agencies are from above. While Pilate speaks and hears, the excited mob without are clamorous. The chief priests and the people cry, "Crucify, crucify." Longer respite is impossible. Malice must be gratified. This man calls himself a king; yea, makes himself the Son of God; and the sentence cannot be delayed. At that saying Pilate is terrified the more. They therefore saith unto Jesus, "Whence art thou?" But the hour is passed, and Jesus gives no answer. Then saith Pilate unto him, "Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" Jesus now replies, but his answer only vindicates his own kingly prerogatives. He is greater than a Roman monarch; "but the cup which the Father gave him to drink, shall he not drink it?" He came into the world to "finish the transgression, and to make an end of sin, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." To this end was he born, and to this end has he lived. The work which the Father gave him to do has been done; and now, when one more great agony is over, redemption is "finished." Henceforth the world's Priest becomes its King. "In the ages to follow, he is to be head over all things to the Church. And he shall reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet." Human governments have their place, but these and all else are subordinate and subsidiary to the great spiritual kingdom. For Jesus Christ is King of kings. The kingdoms of this world are upheld, and move forward, until the elect are gathered and the

harvest of earth is ripe. Cæsar reigns by sufferance, but Jesus Christ by right. For the Lord's Anointed is that Nobleman to whom justly belong all the estates of this world. This shall be manifest when he returns. But in the meantime, and by authority, can every faithful subject say, "All things are mine."

Here, then, is the truth which man, in all ages, needed to know. The creature lost in sin, but Jesus Christ, "The Way, the Truth, and the Life;" a Prophet, Priest, and King; a Sovereign whose "kingdom is an everlasting kingdom," and all dominion shall serve him. This is enough. Pilgrim through this vale of sin, be thy burden what it may, "Behold the Man!" FOR HERE IS TRUTH.

ARTICLE VI.

INAUGURATION OF THE REV. DR. WILSON.

[On the 23d of May, 1871, the Rev. Joseph R. Wilson, D. D., was duly inaugurated as Professor of Pastoral and Evangelistic Theology and Sacred Rhetoric in the Theological Seminary at Columbia, S. C., by the General Assembly in session at Huntsville, Alabama. The Moderator, the Rev. Wm. S. Plumer, D. D., LL. D., presided and conducted the exercises. Dr. Wilson read aloud and subscribed the covenant required by the Constitution of the Seminary. The Rev. Thomas E. Peck, D. D., Professor in Union Theological Seminary, gave the charge to the Professor; and Dr. Wilson then delivered his inaugural address.]

DR. PECK'S CHARGE.

I do not know of any reason, my dear brother, why the Assembly has appointed me to this service, when there are so many of its members by whom this office could have been better performed, except that I am connected with another Seminary under the care of the same Church. I have supposed that the Assembly were willing to recognise the very happy fact that these sister Seminaries are one in feeling, and heartily coöperating in the great work for which they were established. I trust it may never be otherwise, that these Seminaries will always