

SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

NUMBER III.

JANUARY, MDCCCLVI.

ARTICLE I.

TESTIMONY OF THE EARLY FATHERS TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

We have assumed, in our whole discussion, the truth, the Divine inspiration, and the authority of the sacred Scriptures. From this it follows that the teaching of Scripture, in all questions of doctrine, when clearly ascertained, is the infallible rule and judge of what is to be believed as true.

Widely different interpretations, however, have been and are put, upon various passages of Scripture. It is therefore necessary, while every man must, for himself, search the Scriptures, and be fully persuaded in his own mind, that he should avail himself of all proper assistance in confirming himself in the correctness of his conclusions. This assistance is to be found, in the most eminent manner, in the promised influences of that Holy Spirit, who alone can infallibly guide into all truth.—Next to this, however, is the confirmation given to our opinions by the judgment of others, whose ability and character render them capable judges of the true meaning of the sacred Scriptures.

Now, among those who must be regarded as, beyond controversy, most eminently capable of knowing what our Lord and his apostles really taught, orally, and in writing, the Christians who lived contemporaneously and immediately after them, must be enrolled. If, therefore, we can ascertain those views which were held by the *primitive* church, on the subject of the Trinity,

The A. B. Society, previous to the late revision, followed the Edinburgh. Of the translations before King James', 1611,

Wickliffe, 1380, has	28, noon.
	29, no man.
Tyndale, 1534,	28, any man.
	29, no man.
Cranmer, 1539,	28, eny man.
	29, no man.
Genevan ed. 1557,	28, any man.
	29, no man.
Rheims, 1582,	28, no man.
	29, no man.*

The reading of the Edinburgh ed. was introduced at an early period. We find it in the London copy of 1660: and so it continued in the English copies till the revision of Dr. Blaney in 1767, when it was fixed as now printed by A. B. Society, viz: 28, "any *man*;" 29, "no *man*."

* These readings are given in Bagster's English Hexapa; where it is remarked, in the introduction, page 83, that the Genevan N. T., 1557, has the advantage of "the insertion in italics of all words introduced to develop the meaning, but which have no corresponding words in the original." That is, this is the first translation which was marked with this feature: the whole Bible was not printed till 1560.

ARTICLE IV.

LIFE OUT OF DEATH.

One of the most striking, solemn and instructive facts in the whole history of the redemption is this:—that Christ's eternal victory was won through apparent defeat. What an easy, ready triumph his foes obtained! They had long held back, plotting and failing—attempting and retreating—because "they feared the people." They had gnashed their teeth in helpless rage at the displays of his mighty power, because they saw in it a possibility of defeat, even if they stole away the heart of

the people. So many things had to combine, before they could gain their end, that it was after many consultations that they resolved to commit themselves by an attempt. The caprice of the populace must run for the hour with them; their own two hostile parties must agree together; the wilful, despotic Roman Governor must join in the work and condemn without cause; and miracle must hold its bright and terrible hand.

All did combine. The serpent's head was reared; his eyes glittered with expectation and rage; the sharp fang was buried in the sacred flesh! It shuddered: that patient, lofty head dropped down in anguish; the heart that "loved the world" gave a deep groan and a cry of more than mortal pain, whereat the earth trembled and rent her garment of rock, and the bright sun veiled himself in sorrow. That heart burst with mingled pity and agony, and poured out its blood.

Thus had Satan and sin *conquered*.

Yet one might almost wonder that the very *ease* of the victory had not awakened their fears. *Too much* consented to the deed; God had too large a hand in it for their safety. So, at least, it proved. Within that earthen vessel stood a lamp of heavenly fire; when that broke beneath their blows, this shone forth upon them—dazzled and discomfited them. They smote those frail, cumbrous human defences, and they yielded and fell down—only that the King, invulnerable, almighty, might look them into ruin. That which fell, fell upon the serpent's head and crushed it: He who stood needed not to strike a blow—He lived, and that destroyed them.

Thus there was an apparent defeat here, in that Christ died by their conspiracy; but within that was a real, a perfect, an eternal victory; for the death of the man was the life of the Saviour. But note here, that not only did the two thus go together; the one was necessary to the other. If Jesus had not so died, Christ could not so have lived and reigned. "Without shedding of blood," saith the Scripture, "there is no *remission of sin*." In that dread sacrifice was infolded *the atonement*. So slight, comparatively, was the discharge, and so mighty the recoil! The adversary did but strike one *weak and perishing human frame*; and from the wound poured

forth balm for multitudes of sick, imperilled souls. All his strength was brought together for that contest; and our dear Lord, gathering all the spears into his own breast, fixed them there; and the enemy, disarmed and vanquished, began to perish utterly and forever, from the day of his seeming victory.*

By his dying, the Lord Jesus Christ made atonement for sin—he purchased the Holy Spirit—he ransomed innumerable souls—he magnified God's law—he glorified the Father—he prepared a human body to sit upon the mediatorial throne—in a word, he wrote the Gospel and built a new heaven. And to all that, an apparent failure was necessary.

Now Paul, the profoundest and weightiest thinker, perhaps, that ever lived, saw that this was only the most illustrious example of a great law; that just as we must bury the seed to reap the harvest, the best successes must be won through a temporary and seeming defeat. And he declares that he—and all such as he—lived on that great principle,—consenting to disappointments, hardships, and the appearance of subjection and defeat, that the same kind of victory might follow. He knew the imperishableness of good; he knew it was its way to break through clouds and darkness with its beam of peace. He rejoiced to remember that the Gospel, though it walked in a disguise of weakness—though it veiled its ministers in a show of inferiority to human weakness—was yet “the power of God and the wisdom of God,” not defeated, but advancing, with swift invisible banner, “unto salvation.” They bore about with them, as the apparel of the spirit, the dying of the Lord Jesus, knowing that thus they made it sure that the life of Jesus would be made manifest in them.—2 Cor. 4: 10.

* There is a likeness here, and an infinite contrast within the likeness, which suggests the story of Arnold Winkelried, the patriot-martyr of Switzerland. The reader will hardly need to be reminded, how—when the Swiss army had thrown itself in vain, though desperately upon the solid spear-front of the Austrians, and had been nearly defeated by its passive strength—Winkelried, feeling in his rough and gallant heart, that one man must sacrifice himself for his country, sprang forward, crying “Make way for liberty,” caught the points of six spears in his hand and drew them together into his breast. While they were entangled and detained in his dying body, his comrades rushed through the gap he had made, defeated the Austrians, and saved Switzerland.

Let us look a little into this matter; let us consider whether this is indeed a law of nature, that apparent defeat must usually infold real spiritual victories: and if we find it so, we shall have some important inferences to draw, touching both truth and duty. As it is a question of spiritual life, it may apply either to the individual Christian, or to the church.

Looking now to the Christian himself, we remark first; that this truth is seen in his *conversion*. He has had a kind of life before. A heart and mind have lived and wrought in him. He has thought, and known, and judged, many things; the child's experiments, enlarged and corrected, have built up the man's experience. The eye that once saw only external facts, has come to understand principles—has turned within and begun to comprehend itself. The power of reasoning unfolds and grows strong by exercise; prudence and self-command appear among the restless passions, and wield them; taste forms, and speaks, in fine and delicate discrimination, the pleasures of the man. *Affections* live in him. Parents, family and friends are cherished; he takes delight in them, and in ministering to them. Generosity, patience, courage, friendship—these are the outshoots of a large and a living heart.

No wonder, with such a spirit—made glad with such graces—that life is dear and beautiful. The manly heart, unfolding slow and shapely, builds up its plans, lays out its riches of youthful strength, confers its confidences, sets its affections. Its very dreams are light and airy—its hopes buoyant—it rises elastic under the pressure of wholesome toil and difficulty.

But look closer: right in the centre of this garden-plot of manhood, is there not a barren—yea, a cursed and blasted spot? Thickly was all sown; human virtues, joys, and powers, came up and flourished; but the seed of heaven that fell here, lies numb and sightless beneath the soil. *The love of God has not a solitary fibre in that heart!* It can look out upon the world of beauty, order and delight, and not swell with praise—or, at the utmost, with barren, unobedient praise alone. It can acknowledge its life preserved amid innumerable perils, without one burst of gratitude—one hearty purpose to repay its

debt. *The affections of a God are lavished here without the smallest return.* This we call death in life.

And now, the blight that rested only here, has spread—not, perhaps, to the world's knowledge, but to his own dismay. He is convicted of sin. The strength and wisdom that were to have secured his happiness, fail of that end, and grow some way weak or foolish in his sight. The beauty and the grace of life are fled; its pleasures weary; its danger alarms him. An offended God shines out upon him, terrible exceedingly. Conscientious at last of sin—broken in pride—tired of his idols and despising them, he turns away, resolved to be a new creature. But alas, his heart is not in his hand. It does not obey his feeble wish. His nature rebels against him. This again kindles his fears; he sees the wrath of God flame out against him; he is appalled by his guilt, danger, and helplessness combined. Hope dies out, his heart faints with shame and sorrow: and at the word of God the old nature expires.

But see! all is not dead. While the gloom and chill of ruin fall around, see in the once dark centre a light shines. In the very death-agony of that nature which perished, a new nature was born within. The graces that were there before, reappear. The hopes and joys that can survive the surrender of the soul to God, adorn the new man, as they sustained the old. But chief of all is this, where death reigned, in that central temple where God should have been, *God is*. The love of God has sprung up there at His word, who said: Let light be, and light was. And from that seed of light unfold the heavenly, the saintly faculties, that never lived in him before. In his dying, he was born again. And this dying had to be, that the regeneration might be. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." The old heart perished and sloughed off; and under its clay throbbed a new heart, whose life and joys are everlasting. Now the terms are reversed; we have here life in death.

Chastenings bless us, secondly, on the same principle. Afflictions are just the breaking down under us of some plan, or some hope, or some confidence, or some affection, for which we cared too much. Too much of our

life was bound up in it. Our worldly successes and pleasures were absorbing the strength of our hearts and hopes and feelings. Prayer, meekness, Christian charity, spiritual-mindedness, pined and weakened daily, being sacrificed to this pampered, favorite passion. Or our parental pride and joy shot up and spread out, crowding out and killing the better plants of faith, love, holiness. Through the deep shadow God shone not; religion began to fail and perish. The wrong life—the lower life—was thriving; the true life was dying out.

But behold, the pillar of our pride is fallen: reverses overtake us; friends desert and denounce us; the child of too wild and blind affections is snatched out of our arms. Like rank weeds plucked up in the morning, the heart's strong passions collapse and wither. The deformed remnants of the old nature that would not die before, now crumble; and with them is cut away the crest of pride, the hand of avarice, or the eye of wrath and revenge. And see, as the hard and leprous crust dissolves and disappears—see the childlike tenderness, softness, meekness and faith, which God has made to live again! A timid hope shines in the tearful eye. The face that was dark with sordid human thoughts and cares, is lighted up with a heavenly reconciliation. The functions of the Christian nature are fulfilled—prayer, praise, confession, covenant—all are entered with new life. Every faculty awakes and works and prospers. Peace, like a river, flows through his heart. Under the pressure of sorrow, and the influence of the Holy Spirit, he has crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts; and he has strengthened the good that remaineth in him, which was ready to die.

But most strikingly do we see the working of the law, thirdly, in that event which closes life below for us. These frames, so delicate, yet so enduring; so complicated and weak, yet quickened from within with a vitality so fine and strong, these frames do perish day by day. Some particles of the dust knit up to man are every hour wrested from their place and borne away: but the strong life within replaces them according to some subtle and yet undiscovered laws. Thus, continually, do death and life contend for us, whose we shall be!

Having obtained help of God, we continue until now. The seasons, the toils, and the diseases that distract a sinful world, make their assaults upon us, and we have not fallen under them. Gradually, we wear out, and our resources, once so abundant, grow scanty and meagre, and chill. The heart must economise its failing blood. The warmth which once visited our very fingertips with a quiet glow, is gathered frugally into the weak body. The flesh shrivels; the mellow voice forgets its music; the exquisite senses are dulled, or dead.

Where now is that victorious strength of life, from which all shocks, toils, injuries, seemed to rebound without hurt to us? Where is the high heart that laughed at risks and efforts? Where is the youthful pride that counted all things possible to courage, energy and patience? The shadows lengthen; the frosts of winter evening silver the scattered hairs; happy—happy, if Heaven's stars begin to shine, as the sun of human life descends! As for man's body in this world, it is encompassed with destructions: its enemies are like the waves of the sea, and it is the poor wrecked and helpless sailor that buffets them for a while, and then is seen no more! Death, to this physical frame, is a *defeat*.

But it is with a few only that Death waits for this descent of the worn body into the grave of age—this, his natural harvest-time. He comes upon the greater part of men in a sudden combat, and discomfits them. We thought we walked firmly in health and safety; and here we are, drifted far out into the dark and hungry ocean! The heart beats breathless—desperately; the coursing blood doubles its speed; the eye gleams with wasted strength and fire. Friends help us, their little utmost. We ply the remedies; there is a running to and fro; a little rally—a great fall. The pulse flickers—stops—begins again—obeys the pressure of a mighty hand, and is still. In this form also, death is a defeat.

And yet, to the Christian, it is only that last swerve in the unbroken course of life which perfects his victory. Look at this frame-work—this empty tabernacle—this clay, that retains a certain sacredness, even in the dust; this is Death's conquest—only this. In all his wide domain, there is not one bound or conquered spirit of a

believer—not one. So far as concerns them, his trophies are all these wrecks. The frail vessels he has seized; but the lading, the precious jewelry, you must seek elsewhere. While the stricken and prone body confessed his might, the invulnerable soul stood up before him, and defied it; then, without an effort—not so much as spreading a pinion for flight, it—no—he—he took his swift straight flight into his Saviour's joy. Thither let your faith follow him—consider the safety, the holiness, the light of heavenly favour, the immortal health, and love, and joy, in which he dwells—see his bright companions, and the glory they wear—look up to Jesus, our King, welcoming the tried heart to its rest in him, and crowning it with ever-new delights,—walk by that river of life, clear as crystal, and know the healing sweetness of its waters, and listen to its music;—the tears are wiped away; the guilty stains are vanished; the deformed and wicked heart is *perfect*:—and then say if it is not almost irony to ask with Paul—“Oh death, where is thy sting?”

Even that house of clay that lies tenantless for a time, shall be desolate only for a time: the strong and living spirit shall recapture it, in the resurrection, and dwell in it again, made pure and immortal. Not even that poor trophy shall death retain. In our flesh shall we see God; and death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire. Is it not true, now, that this apparent discomfiture which we call death, is only the harsh, strong wrappage of our greatest victory? The one is necessary to the other; our real triumph grows out of our seeming defeat.

Before we leave this, notice *what that is* on which defeat, calamity and death are wreaked, and what that is which conquers. If you look out into the world of nature, you find examples of this same law in lower kinds. The chrysalis is destroyed that the butterfly may have being. “The seed is not quickened, except it die;” *i. e.* the mass perishes that the germ may shoot forth and grow. Just thus, in a far higher form, is it with the Christian, as we have seen. That which once had a life of its own, becomes the mere envelope of a *seed-life*; bears the germ of a finer and better life within. When its day to be born shall come, the old must burst and

shrivel and pass away. The first and carnal nature, with all its evil, served us to grow up, and receive our characters, and be impressed with heavenly truth,—endured, until God's day to quicken us from above with a new life; and then, under His hand it died. The believer being still tainted with sin, in his daily contact with worldly interests and temptations, becomes incrustated with a hard, unheavenly temper: but God in his goodness, creates and hides beneath it *a new man*—the elements of a better, happier, truer believer; and in His own season, when all is ready, He strikes with the hand of affliction the old shell—and lo! the lost saint reappears. Thus is it also, in the death of the body. Everywhere, that which perishes has become a mere envelope—the seed's husk—the soul's tabernacle; and the life which is secreted within shines out instead.

The second aspect of our subject concerns the life of the church; it may be far more briefly disposed of.

The greatest blessings and victories of the church have always come upon her in *persecutions*. The death of Christ, which was indeed the first persecution, was the travail and birth-hour of the church; and in that likeness stands all her best history. Let us turn to the Acts of the Apostles and see, viii: 1, “And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles. 4. Therefore they that were scattered abroad *went everywhere preaching the word,*” at first (xi: 19,) “to the Jews only. 20. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, *spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.* 21. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord.” Now, let us compare the defeat and the victory—the life and the death.

The church at Jerusalem was scattered; homes were broken up—friends and kindred parted for a time—plans of usefulness disappointed—privileges lost; and one Apostle and several believers laid down their lives for the testimony of Jesus. Their foes rejoiced, and they sorrowed, each for “a little while.” On the other hand, hundreds of churches, to speak moderately, were found-

ed, for the one that was obscured; nations heard for the first time the Gospel; thousands of souls were enlightened and redeemed; and above all, the real, practical conversion of the masses of the Gentile world began and prospered. Which was the greatest—the dying, or the living, of the church at Jerusalem?

So has it ever been. How many churches of the old world had to die this temporary and seeming death, that religion might live in this land as it has never lived in a nation before! The covenanters must be scattered on their hills—their martyrs kneel and die before the musket—their pastors languish in exile and sorrow—and a show of triumph crown the king's cruel plans. The Puritans, assembled in stern and secret conclave, must forswear the shores of England. The bloodiest massacre in modern history must stain the soil of France. Everywhere, travail, sorrow and defeat begun the liberty and light of America.

And these things are not finished. As soon as a new element is wanted here, a new ferocity breaks out somewhere, and seems to conquer. Ireland, Germany, Norway, share the history of Scotland, England and France. Last of all, the bigotry of Portugal has smitten Madeira with the same sword; and from her peasantry comes forth a new church, to fill up the measure of prayer and religion that must shine here. These simple pious hearts have borne in their bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus, and the life also of Jesus is made manifest in them.

Once more; it seems to be the fate of every church organization to die outwardly, and renew its life from above, in apparent disaster.

There forms, in the course of its commerce with an obstinate and guilty world,—there forms a shell of evil customs, formalities,—a thread-bare, lifeless doctrinality,—that has to perish, that the real church within may live. That shell may continue in being, but it is cast off from the true body of the church, and is confessed and seen to be, not a living, but a dead body. The Reformation is the most illustrious case in point. The pomps and vain shows of Rome, covered no throbbing heart of Christ's church, but a mass of festering infidelity and vice. The life-centre was transferred, and in Germany

the living church burst through the painted husk, and grew up into Protestantism.

The same thing is seen now in Persia, Turkey, and Syria. The Nestorian and Armenian are ancient Christian churches; but the whole organization is dead; the service and Scripture are in a dead language; the doctrine is a form of dead words; the priesthood is dead to duty and to zeal. But the little life-seed is there; and God's blessing on the missionaries' labour is bringing it to germinate and put forth, fresh and beautiful. The missionaries tried to preserve the old churches, but God's counsel was not so. He has driven them forth, saying "Come out from them, and be ye separate."

The hand of bigotry has driven them out, man by man, and thus constrained them to organize new churches. Out of death sprung life.

Is not this to be, in great measure, the history of the Church? What we call Revolutions, are they not *evolutions*?—unfoldings of young life out of the exhausted and decaying body? Is it not thus that principles are to maintain their immortality, by surviving what once sheltered them, and in forming other frames with life?—"Heaven and earth"—though they were made by the word of the Lord—"shall pass away; but the word of the Lord" itself, "shall never pass away."

The length of this article constrains us to content ourselves with two remarks. The first relates to the Christian; the second to the Church.

We have here the key to the Christian's various discouragements, and the true argument against his despondency. When afflictions or spiritual darkness beset him, we are entitled to say: "Faint not! it is not thou that art dying or canst die. Something about thee, no doubt, is coming to an end;" we die daily; but it is only the envelope, the tabernacle of the soul. The flesh shall be consumed away, but the spirit that has loved God lives forever. "Give up that which is evidently departing, though it seems to be giving up life. Death is a release from the toil, the protracted strife of agony, of dying. Whether it be in this world or another, as dying ends, a better life begins."

Perhaps no other error has cost the church so many

tears and sins, as fixing her eye on outward prosperity. The outward life is, for her, "the flesh." When her funds increase, when her discord and jealousies die away, when the world's respect takes shape and voice to praise her, she is prone to say, "I am rich, and have need of nothing." Precisely then is the chill of death coming upon the prosperous frame, and the life-lamp is drawn away by a silent hand into some humble corner of it, to quicken a little germ that shall grow up to strength and beauty some day. One of two things must be: either she must take warning in time and renew her purely spiritual life by repentance and prayer—her *purely spiritual* life, not the mere life of action, but the life of love;—or the hand of Providence must part the dead mass and the living particle, and bring that particle through throes and sorrows to independent existence.

Let not the afflicted church be discouraged; let her see to it that it is the dying of *the Lord Jesus* that is manifest in her, and the life of Jesus shall soon spread and triumph there. If she will not, He must.

ARTICLE V.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

The Book of Job is of inestimable value in the history of the church. It is justly considered, perhaps, *the oldest* of the inspired writings, and it seems to have been composed and preserved with the express design of unfolding to all succeeding ages what was the amount of religious knowledge—what was the perfection of religious character, and what was the private and public walks of the sons of God: and what was the association which they held with each other, and with the people of the world in these early times, covered with the mists of far distant ages.

It sets the men of God before us, living, moving, and having their being in the church and in the world, just as they appear now. In this book the world of the Pa-