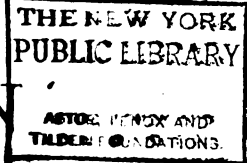


FIDELITY TO THE TRUTH.

A SERMON



PREACHED AT THE OPENING

—OF THE—

SYNOD OF VIRGINIA,

—IN—

Charlottesville, Va., Oct. 30th, 1883,

—BY—

REV. C. R. VAUGHAN, D. D., MODERATOR.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF MANY MEMBERS OF SYNOD.

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Many who had the pleasure of hearing the sermon preached by the Rev. Dr. Vaughan before the Synod of Virginia, which met in Charlottesville on the 30th of October, 1883, wish to preserve it in pamphlet form. By request the JEFFERSONIAN PUBLISHING COMPANY, Charlottesville, Va., have printed the sermon, Dr. Vaughan kindly furnishing the manuscript. The terms upon which the work is printed are as follows :

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OPENING SERMON
BEFORE
THE SYNOD OF VIRGINIA,
IN
Charlottesville, Va., Oct. 30th, 1883.

TEXT—Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.
The General Epistle of Jude: 3d Verse.

Truth is a species of justice. Milton defines it as justice in knowledge. Like all other forms of justice, it carries an intrinsic bond upon the conscience. A man can no more reject the truth without guilt than he can do any other injustice without guilt. Man is consequently bound to receive the truth; to seek for it with a watchful regard to all sources of error; to defend it against assault; to contend for its supremacy, and to stand by it unflinchingly under all temptations to abandon it. Truth is not only obligatory in itself, but from its relation to the integrity and well-being of the human soul. Belief is simply receiving a thing as true. It is the necessary link between the understanding and its objects. No truth can exert any influence until received as truth—until belief has done its work. Otherwise, it is as if it were not. Some form of conviction or belief is consequently indispensable both to animate and regulate the energies of the soul. A man must be convinced that a thing is desirable, or necessary, or of more or less utility, in order to rouse him to an attempt to gain it. Having made up his mind to attempt this, unless convinced that a certain method or line of action will conduce to the attainment of the end, he will not follow it. Belief must both animate and regulate action. This is equally true in all the spheres of human activity. The maxim that it makes no odds what a man believes, if his action is right, is an absurdity. Right action springs only from right belief, and is altogether controlled by it. Right action is a proof of right belief. To exalt action at the expense of the faith which creates it is to exalt a result at the expense of its cause.

From this supremacy of belief over action, and by consequence over all the issues of action, springs the necessity for truth to regulate all safe or wise action. To believe an error, or to receive as true what is not true in reality, is to corrupt the guiding force of energy and to lead to mistaken action and to its ruinous results. Truth is indispensable to safety in every sphere in which human energies can be employed.

The obligation of truth then being so sacred on one side and so important on the other, becomes more powerful just in proportion to the nature of the truth and the dignity of its origin. All truth carries its double bond on prudence and conscience; but the higher the truth the more sacred the source from which it springs; the more profoundly it bears upon the interests of mankind; the more powerful becomes the obligation to hold it fast, to defend it against all impugnors, and to contend for its advancement to universal acceptance and obedience. To these statements there can be no resistance.

Judged by this test, the faith delivered to the saints, the grand truths revealed by Almighty God for the salvation of the world and delivered to the Church with the command to teach them to all nations, carries with it the highest of all conceivable obligations upon the body charged with this commission. It is this truth and no other which is embraced in this command; it is the truth and the only truth which can bring a real salvation to our unhappy race; it is delivered from Almighty God; it is no Delphic utterance caught from the foaming lips of a Pythoness raving from the tripod of Apollo on the steep of Delphos; no Sybilline pages brought from the depths of a forest by some withered hag, pallid and bleary-eyed, from the damp and darkness of a cavern. It is the voice of the Eternal King, speaking by His spirit through holy men of old, certified as his messengers by signs and wonders, the inimitable symbols of a divine intervention. It is truth which touches the highest interests of an immortal being at every point in his progress from the date of his birth through all the endless ages of his history. It is the most powerful of all agencies in forming the character of the individual and in regulating the spirit of organized society in this world. It controls absolutely the issues of the world to come; it quiets conscience; it shows the way to the forgiveness of sins and the purification of the soul; it cheers in those glooms of sorrow which are immedicable by any other power; it supports in death; it provides a plea which will secure acquittal in the day of account; it rescues from an endless ruin; it fills with an imperishable blessedness the endless realms of ages in the future of every one who obeys it. No other truth known or conceivable by man can compare with these revelations from God in their bearing on the well-being of mankind or in the manifestation of the divine glory. To fail to receive and obey it, to defend it against all assault, and to contend for its acceptance by all men of every nation, is to betray the highest obligation which can be laid on the fidelity of man in any relation he can sustain. The obligation on the Church of God, on each of its officers and members individually, on the body as a whole, to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints is absolutely immeasurable in its sacredness and its importance.

The times in which we live present features in relation to this grand system of truth in many respects unparalleled in the history of the kingdom of God among mankind. The age is one of extraordinary activity—the expansion of commerce, the immense progress of the inventive arts, the increased facilities of communication between all parts of the world, the discoveries and speculations of science, the spread of general intelligence—all have concurred to stimulate the energies of mankind. The increase of mental activity is not always an unmingled good. It

is always attended by a corresponding increase in the energy of the passions; it rouses into enlarged activity the evil as well as the better impulses of the human heart. Unless attended by a moral development needful to guide and restrain it, the increased vigor of the mental character is only an increase in its power and tendency to do mischief. The actual history of the last century, and especially of the last half of it, is full of significant illustrations of this truth. The disposition to inquire has not only brought new conceptions into view but has subjected truths and principles long recognized as established and of the highest importance to a critical and hostile investigation. Not only are old maxims of civil and political wisdom deduced from the experience of ages brought into question, and by many openly rejected, but the sacred bonds of religion and morals are often boldly and shamelessly renounced. Infidelity is rampant and aggressive in its assaults on the venerable faith of the Gospel and on the very existence, personality and providence of Almighty God. In a variety of forms and by a variety of substituted theories it is openly sought to extinguish all recognition of the Holy One among His creatures on this earth. All relations to Him are denied or relegated to the realm of absolute want of knowledge. The foundation of all morals, public or private, is thus shaken; the restraints of the divine government are abolished; the cement of the social fabric is loosened; the powerful supports of civil government, found in the moral and providential government of God, are broken down, and the laws of society are left face to face with the passions of depraved human nature stripped of all restrictive force but what they can find in their own energies. The necessary and not distant result of this will be an increased severity in the administration of civil law, and tyranny is seen striding in the rear of infidelity to a ruinous supremacy over the just liberties of society. The horsemen of the Book of Revelation are on their march, and will not cease their raid until the third part of the human race is trampled under their blood-stained fetlocks.

Kindred with this spirit of skeptical thought a false temper has invaded the very Church of God. Her commission is to teach the truth as God has given it. This commission makes her not only the guardian of the doctrines of salvation but the exponent of the principles of morals. The evil spirit has so far pervaded the Church in some of its divisions as to taint its fidelity to both branches of her commission. A disposition to tamper with the doctrines of faith and qualify them in obedience to varying schemes of philosophy has long been and still is one of the curses of the Church, an overflowing spring of heresy and error. A false spirit of so-called liberalism, or mild toleration as it is soothingly named, has broken through the restraints thrown around the teaching done in her name to enforce unity and consistency in her testimony. Doubtful constructions of the avowed creed are permitted and guarded from all resistance by the faithful in her communion by solemn treaty stipulations; fidelity to the creed is stigmatized by opprobrious epithets; adherence to the old evangelical faith of God's elect is sneered at as hopelessly beyond the reclaiming influences of modern improvement; there is a want of reverence for the Word of God and a disposition to assail the authority of parts of it in deference to a so-called higher criticism; the bond of moral obligation is sometimes treated with equal freedom. Reforms are sought

not on the basis of the Word of God, the law of the tables, the teachings or the example of Christ, but on the theories of men. If the Scriptures are referred to at all their teachings are handled by scraps and piecemeal, not by a broad and logically-adjusted view of all its doctrines on a given subject; exceptions are construed into regulating general principles; concessions to weak consciences are construed as universal law, and the weakness thus conceded to is taken as the only healthful expression of permanent moral sentiment. No consideration of a qualified evil, or a qualified method of dealing with it, seems to be possible with these reformers. Their plans are impatient of time or circumstances or any regard to vested rights and interests involved; they preach peace with the edge of the sword; torrents of human blood are accepted agents of amelioration of the abuses of society, and the liberties of one class are thought to be well purchased by the ruin of the rights and interests of another; the spirit of self-aggrandizement and the unscrupulous employment of arbitrary power assumes the disguise of zeal for humanity; the poles of morality seem to be positively reversed in the conceptions of bodies of men important for numbers and influence, and in individual cases the corruption has proceeded even beyond the degrading principle of Hobbes that the will of the king should constitute the standard of morals. When these toad-eating sycophants recommend that the pulpit should always conform its teachings to the sentiment of the community, the force of baseness could no farther go. In some places the sacredness of marriage is openly assailed; the rights of property are attacked; the lawless indulgence of the sensual passions is advocated without disguise. The system of faith and morals delivered from God to secure the redemption of a fallen world is openly abandoned by multitudes in Christendom, and torrents of fanaticism and unrestrained wickedness are rushing high over the bulwarks of public order and security.

The followers of the Lord Jesus Christ are designated by Him as the *salt*, the great preservative power of the world decaying under the influence of error and sin. For the Church to forget this character or to abdicate this function, consciously or unconsciously, is to forfeit the very name of Christian. The mode in which it is to seek this end and discharge this sublime function is as plainly set forth in the orders of the King as the end itself. The world is to be saved from sin in order to be saved from misery. It is to be saved from sin by the power of the truth. It is to be saved by the truth as it is in Jesus—the truth taught by His precepts, illustrated by His example, supported by His authority, enforced by His power and vindicated by His administration of providence. Men are to be converted by the Word and the Spirit of God; they are to be sanctified by the same agencies; they are to take the law of right as well as the method of grace from Him and Him only. All the great ends of the faith delivered to the saints are conditioned on the truth as He has revealed it, and on nothing else. The Christian individual or the body of Christian or benevolent men who may seek to destroy the power of any one sin, or to break up the universal root and mastery of sin in any one soul, or in the world at large, by any supposed improvements on the faith delivered to the saints in its department of both religion and morals, is engaged in a bootless enterprise. As well attempt to storm a rampart with broom-straws

as the kingdom of darkness with any weapon but the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; as well attempt to curb the rush of a tornado with the hand of a baby as to attempt to arrest the wild, vast tempest of human wickedness except by the Word of Him who bridled the storm on Gennesareth by the infinite energy of a single sentence.

To comprehend the vast reach and compass of the faith delivered to the saints within the bounds of a definition would be difficult, perhaps impossible; to spread it out in detail would require a volume instead of a sermon. *Grace in conflict with sin* is the great characteristic feature of the Gospel system. Grace and sin are the poles of the sphere, and with their implied ideas radiating around in every direction make up the sphere itself. Every departure from the true sense of grace and sin is a departure from the faith delivered to the saints. Opposition to these truths, and the truths inseparably connected with them, is the root and principle of every such departure. Want of clear intuitions of sin and grace is at the bottom of all defects in personal religious character as well as of all divergencies in theory from the faith delivered to the saints. The cure of error in the Church is to be found in purging the spiritual intuitions of sin and grace into clearer insight; the cure of all defects in personal experience is to be sought in the same way. Sin invariably injures the intuitions of moral and spiritual truth, and this leads on to ignorance and error. Grace opens the eyes of the blind, and in proportion to the energy of its influence on the moral and spiritual intuitions it leads unto the knowledge and love of the truth.

We will embody the view which we propose to take of the faith delivered to the saints, and of some of the leading errors to which it is opposed, by noticing some of the principles of that faith as applied to the *doctrines*, the *morals*, the *statutory legislation* and the *practical administration* of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus:

I.—THE DOCTRINES OF THE FAITH DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.

The doctrines of the Gospel are not mere abstractions and ideal theories as is frequently supposed, especially by that large class who take offence at any zeal for doctrinal accuracy. These doctrines are in reality mere verbal statements and descriptions of great facts and things, not merely truths in idea but realities in existence. It is absurd to suppose that the verbal description of a great bridge is all there is of a bridge to know and admire. Manifestly inaccuracy in doctrine is something more than the want of precision in idea. It is the misrepresentation of a thing; and if accurate knowledge of things is of any supreme importance it is folly to undervalue accuracy in doctrine or zeal to enforce it. The relation of truth to the sanctification of the soul vindicates the same conclusion. A flaw in the die will produce a flaw in the medallion struck by it. The doctrines of the Gospel are those statements which Almighty God has formally made concerning His own nature and relations to man and man's nature and relations to God. These statements embrace the nature and relations of both as they existed originally, as they are modified by sin, and as they are again modified by grace. The teaching given in relation to the first of these classifications is clear and

positive, but not expanded into any large proportions, owing to the fact that the original state of undisturbed and sinless peace in the history of man was of short duration. The whole history of the race, except a brief period in the life of the original pair, has been passed under the conditions of the second and third classifications. Hence the bulk of the doctrinal teachings of the Scriptures has reference to the classification of the nature and relations of man by sin and the qualification of the same elements produced by grace. One of the most dreadful effects of sin being wrought on the spiritual intuitions of the human soul resulted in universal ignorance of the whole result of transgression on the nature and relations of the transgressor, of the character of God, His relations to the fallen race, and the method of restoration to the Divine favor. The first object of the revelation from God was then to restore this lost knowledge. The grand purpose of doctrine was to remove the ignorance with which sin had deluged the human soul. In the very outset of the history of fallen man, in the first interview between God and his freshly fallen creature, He began to solve the insoluble problem the fall had introduced, and all the leading features of that scheme of redemption which grace instantly brought forward are distinctly delineated. The grand doctrines of a divine and human redeemer, of atonement, regeneration and ordinances of worship were brought into light. From that point onward through successive developments of revelation these grand ideas were more and more clearly expanded. The revelation taught the grand doctrine of an infinite, personal God, glorious in every perfection, sovereign and supreme, working all things after the counsel of His own will and according to a plan determined by His own infinite wisdom and for the manifestation of His own glorious excellencies. It presented this great being as the creator, preserver and governor of the universe; it thus antagonizes all forms of atheism; it taught the doctrine of a true beginning of the universe, the doctrine of a true creation of all things in opposition to an unlimited doctrine of development; it taught the doctrine of an administrative providence, supporting, guiding and employing all the forces of nature in opposition to a self-supporting and mechanically-ordered system of blind forces under an unaccountable regularity of method in action; it taught the doctrine of a divine moral as well as physical government, and brought out all the grand conceptions of His moral administration; it defined a law of essential right obligatory in its very nature on all creatures adjusted to it; it taught a government in the administration of this law inflexibly just in dealing with every species of behavior under it, approving and rewarding obedience towards it, condemning and punishing all forms of transgression; it taught that sin was intrinsic wrong, involving criminality in itself and working mischief in its effects; it taught that justice required its condemnation as the only judgment true to the fact of evil in its nature; it taught as a necessary consequence that God could not on natural principles clear the guilty; it taught that sin reacted invariably in the depravation of the moral nature of the sinner, and that no power but the power of God, acting under peculiar conditions, could ever reverse that result and restore holiness to a depraved soul; it taught that man, as originally created, was made upright in the likeness of God, that the effect of his fall was to destroy his original holiness, and that this depraved moral

state of the soul became the heritage of his posterity ; it enunciated the principle by which the descent of this moral taint was not only rendered allowable but required by justice ; it taught the doctrine of a covenant creating a grand official character in the father of the human race, constituting him the great federal representative of all his posterity in the natural line.

By his failure in the testing ordeal sin flowed down upon the soul and life of every individual man and over the history of the race, not as a mere natural consequence, but as a sentence of law. Any form of doctrine which assails the original perfection of human nature, the doctrine of a covenant and federal representation, the fact of an actual representative and his failure, or the just liability of all those represented, for the consequences of his representative action, the actual taint of the moral nature of all represented by him, and the utter ruin wrought on all mankind as the ultimate result, is opposed to the faith delivered unto the saints. The command to contend for this faith is a command to contend for all this doctrine of sin, and any departure from this doctrine of sin, and just in proportion to the degree of the divergence, will be a departure from the faith. The root of all error in doctrine is resistance to some feature of the Scripture doctrine of sin.

The revelation of God was equally clear in its statement of the doctrine of grace. This doctrine is the statement of the principle, and its manifold developments, by which the covenanted love of God essayed to check the mastery of sin and bring deliverance to its victims. Springing from the infinite fountain of divine benevolence, sovereignly yielding to its own impulses, under no bond of justice compelling to it, the fountain of redemption for man is disclosed in the infinite and sovereign grace of God alone. Grace, the sweetest attribute in the character of the ever-blessed Lord, until then unknown to all existing moral creatures, the favor of the Holy and Just One to the guilty and depraved, then first showed its serene and entrancing splendor. The principle of a covenant is again brought forward ; another great representative is displayed to view ; he undertakes to work out the conditions of the proposed deliverance. In the person of this Redeemer the crowning glory of the grace which undertook the enterprise makes its appearance. A man of the stock of Abraham, in whom an ancient promise had pledged that all the families of the earth should be blessed, whose human nature was by an ineffable mystery linked with the infinite Lord Himself, assumes the awful role of the priest of a sinning world. He proposes to make atonement for sin, to satisfy the claims of the law, to work out an everlasting righteousness through which the infinitely Holy and Just One might be able, in the full sense of the legal term, to justify the ungodly. It teaches that this was completely done, and that now whosoever believeth shall be saved—not merely have a chance to be saved, but shall actually be saved. The result of the enterprise of grace was not a mere possibility of salvation, but an actual salvation. He that believeth shall be saved. The faith delivered to the saints embraces, as its foundation stone, the doctrine of a Saviour at once human and divine. No one other than man could have that compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, which can encourage a guilt-stricken human heart to come for relief. No one less than

divine is fit to become the guardian of immortal souls in their passage through the perils of the way to the gate of heaven. It embraces, as the only rest of a guilty and awakened conscience, the grand doctrine of atonement; it embraces, as the only support of a soul conscious of its own depravity, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and His work of regeneration and sanctification; it teaches the doctrine of a true and full justification; it affirms a privilege of adoption into the family of God which secures a right to all the privileges of the sons of God; it proclaims that all which is necessary for the salvation of a soul is comprised in the covenant, so that in Christ the sinner is complete; it offers its benefits to every soul of the human race who can be reached with the offer, and pledges an absolute title to eternal life to every soul who accepts it. This crowns the glory of redemption by grace. It is a free gift, and is only to be received just as it is offered—to be taken just as freely as it is given. Unbelief is a datum and an outgrowth of the unholy human will, and is only conquerable by the will and power of Him who worketh all things according to the counsel of His own supreme purpose. The whole work of grace is complete when every one of its subjects appears before God without spot or blemish or any such thing. For this great doctrine of grace, sovereign, free, unmerited and invincible, the saints are commanded to contend. Any departure from any of these features of grace is a departure from the faith delivered to the saints.

II.—THE MORALS OF THE FAITH DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.

To restore obedience to the law of God is a necessary condition in the process of salvation. Salvation in sin is a contradiction in terms. The very essence of salvation by grace is salvation from sin. The law is the measure not only of integrity but of peace. As violation of law is a necessary fountain of misery as well as corruption, obedience to law is the indispensable condition of happiness as well as of purity. It is an indispensable condition to the successful issue of any plan looking to the salvation of a sinful soul to bring it back to obedience to the law which fundamentally conditions its welfare. No creature of high or low degree in the scale of creation can be at ease or fulfill the ends of its being except by compliance with the laws of its nature. Hence the faith delivered to the saints is inexorable in its demand for that holiness without which no man can see the Lord. It begins the process of salvation by the renewal of the heart—the spring-head of the moral energies. It progressively develops the holiness implanted in regeneration through the whole progress of the Christian life in the work of sanctification, turning all the instituted means of grace and all the events of providence in the history of the individual to this one grand purpose—the destruction of the remains of sin and the full infusion of holiness into all the energies of the immortal soul. Holiness in a human heart, originating in sovereign grace, is developed by instrumental and secondary causes, and prominent among these is obedience to the moral law. As depravity in the soul is a necessary reaction of violations of law, so holiness is a similar reaction of obedience to law. It is a slander on the faith delivered to the saints to accuse it of disregard to the claims of the law. The salvation of grace is deliverance from sin and a guarantee of obedience.

To contend for the faith delivered to the saints in its department of morals is not only to proclaim the necessity of holiness, but to lay down the rules of holy living as prescribed in the precepts and examples of the Word of God. The means are defined as well as the end. It is treason to the faith to seek the end by rejecting the means and methods which it authorizes. To aim to promote the moral improvement of mankind by any supposed improvements on the principles of the Scriptures is to betray the faith, not to contend for it. Satan never appears more strikingly as an angel of light than when he appears as a moral reformer on other than Christian principles, the friend of a godless humanitarianism, the advocate for a broad and liberal scheme of religious communion which will never contend for the truth and disregards the Word of God. He is ready for all this if he can only discredit the teachings of the Scriptures or the illustrations of obedience to divine law in the example of Christ. He often makes godly men, unconsciously to themselves, his agents in these schemes of refined and high moral iniquity. The age in which we live is full of these perversions of the faith delivered to the saints. So extreme have become some of these improvements on the morals of the faith that in many sections of Christendom it has become as much as a Christian man's good name, and even his standing in the Church of God is worth, to stand simply on the rightness and propriety of the example of the Son of God, or of institutions positively ordained by Him, or of relations recognized in the very letter of the law and engraven on the tables of stone by the finger of God amid the thunder and flame of Sinai. The whole of modern Christendom is infected with a philosophy not only defiant of the inequalities in the state and condition of mankind, but openly daring to impeach the divine administration of injustice in the ordering of these inequalities. Nay, this devilish eagerness for what is called justice does not hesitate to announce that it is the main object of every just human government to rectify the injustice ordered by the government of God. Wherever this speculative enthusiasm for ideal right is allowed to gain practical control of political honor it is invariably followed by the ruin of established institutions, the overthrow of vested rights, and by torrents of tears and blood. Our own country furnishes a melancholy illustration of this truth; France, in her many revolutions, furnishes another, and the agitated condition of Europe is even now furnishing another. Vast sections of the Church of God, under the influence of this same philosophy, refuse positively to obey the voice of the Holy Ghost to Timothy:

“ Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort. If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.”

So far from teaching and exhorting these things they teach and exhort exactly the reverse. The servant, instead of being taught to account his own master worthy of all honor, is taught to regard him as a thief and robber. He is exhorted, not to obedience, but to redress himself by any extreme of violence which may be necessary. Those who comply with the command, "These things teach and exhort," are made the mark for unrestrained vituperation and abuse. The institution of domestic slavery is finally abolished in this land of ours. While it stood we defended it by appeals to the Word of God, and the defence of the divine law on the subject was far more prominent in the hearts of the Christian champions of Southern institutions than even the peace and prosperity of our dear native land. While the controversy has ceased in the sphere of the state, the teachings of the law of God remain the same and still demand defence against all impugners. It would be an intolerable shame to have contended boldly for the truth while it protected our own temporal interest, and abandon it to the reproach of its enemies when we ceased to have such interests to defend. But a yet practical issue of even infinitely more importance than the vast material and civil interests which have already perished still demands of us to understand and abide resolutely by the teachings of God on this subject. Slavery is dead here, but its removal and the principles on which it was extinguished now working in the minds of our people have left a vast and portentous issue in the future, many-headed and dangerous in the highest degree. Yet, further, the philosophy whose application was the cause of its overthrow still lives, and wherever it lives it is and always will be the cause of sedition, distress, public and domestic trouble, and wherever armed with power will fill all the lands it dominates with blood and ruin. It is the soul of Communism in France and in all Middle Europe; it is the animating spirit of Nihilism in Russia with its hideous orgies of treachery and murder; it upholds the sceptre of the dynamite dynasty in unhappy Ireland; it has covered this land with mourning, and it still steadily undermines the security of property, domestic comfort and the free institutions of Great Britain and America; it is forcing race issues on our own desolated Southern land, and opening prospects from which the wisest and the boldest of our thoughtful men turn away in despair of a safe solution. This deadly doctrine of universality of right in all human beings, regardless of age, sex, color, intelligence, morals, property, and fitness for privilege, is working the ruin of modern society. It antagonizes the moral doctrines of the faith delivered to the saints which clearly recognize that subordination in the persons and relations of life which is indispensable to any regulated society; it is a tempest on whose black vapors devils are riding in triumph, a force which can only be controlled by that holy and terrible voice before which the wild turmoil of "chaos and old night" stood ruled. The Southern Church, in its various branches, is the only section of the kingdom of God so far free from the influence of this philosophy of death as to be able to stand consistently for the moral doctrines of the faith touching the duties and the related rights of persons in the relations of organized society. Let this Southern Church see that she is faithful in her testimony in spite of the odium which in all probability will follow the fearless obedience to the voice of the Holy Ghost to Timothy. The conflict over the

theories of this deadly philosophy is only begun, and unless it can be discredited by the wisdom of God that discredit will come at the end of calamities beyond all conception in all the civilized states of the modern world.

Time forbids a more extended illustration of the extent and boldness of the departures from the morals of the faith delivered to the saints. It is high time the Church should study thoroughly the real bearings of many modern schemes of improvement and reform, to understand more fully the moral lessons of the Word of God, and to stand resolutely in the breach against everything, no matter how plausible, which is not in full agreement with—nay, in absolute submission to—the faith delivered to the saints. We *must* learn to trust *more* to the wisdom of God and *less* to the wisdom of man in dealing with the crimes and vices of men, with the modern demands of social improvement, and the unequal distribution of values in modern society.

III.—THE STATUTORY LEGISLATION OF THE FAITH DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.

The Church of God has no right of original legislation. Christ is the only lawgiver in His own kingdom. But inasmuch as regulated action is necessary to execute the laws of the king, a certain subordinate right of legislation in fixing those necessary regulations exists in the Church, but this right exists only in this relation to the law of the king, and is limited by it. In the adoption of her constitution and laws, those authorized to be made and necessary to carry out the commands of her head, she is to be guided by the general principles of His word. She is to see that all her legislation is duly subordinated to His, adapted to promote His will, and thoroughly guarded against all obstruction to it. When the constitution of a church has been properly grounded in the principles of the Scriptures, and suitably adjusted to carry out their prescriptions, it is wisdom to stand firmly by it. No considerations of expediency, however plausible, should ever be allowed to modify any fixed principles in the constitutional law of the Church which has been clearly adjusted to carry out the law of the king. An educated ministry is one of the most positive demands of the constitution and law of our own branch of the kingdom. This constitutional provision is clearly adjusted to carry out the law of the king as expressed in both the grand divisions of His revealed will. In the Old Testament "the priest's lips were to keep knowledge," and the schools of the prophets showed the same demand. In the New Testament the twelve fishermen, selected as the chief agents of the reorganized kingdom, were kept for three years and a-half under the instruction of the best teacher of religious truth that ever appeared in the world, and when fully invested with their high commission they were supernaturally endowed with the ability to teach the truth in any language of any people. They were thus endowed with the *results* of the highest scholarship without its processes. The largest part of the work assigned to the Apostles was assigned to the only one of their number who had, so far as we know, received the highest human culture of the day. The Apostles are clearly a precedent for an educated, not for an uneducated, ministry. No unwise eagerness to be at work in the great harvest was allowed to paralyze their thorough preparation for the work. No false expediency should lead us to

turn away from the precedent plainly expressive of the Master's will, or to abate one jot of the covenant and constitution of the Church enforcing that will. If alterations in the constitution and statute laws will secure a more complete execution of the law of the king they are altogether admissible and may be obligatory; but, if not, we can only adopt the formula of the barons at Runnymede. We are not willing for the laws of the Church to be altered.

Another requirement in the existing constitution and laws of our Church is the demand for unity of belief and strict adherence to the creed and standards of the Church in all its officers. This is a right principle, and would ultimately enure to the interests of the Church if it were applied to all its members. This law, as now existing and enforced, is in a right relation to the law of the king in relation to the subject. In giving the truth he necessarily implied the prohibition of any departure from it. He required His disciples to have one faith, to speak the same thing, to contend earnestly for the faith given to the saints. The adoption of a creed is the definition of the truth as received from the Word of God and a covenant to maintain it. It simply says, This is what we understand the Scriptures to teach and what we have covenanted with each other to teach as the testimony of God. When a creed is adopted the Church is bound, in common honesty, to make her ministers teach its doctrines. Yet more, the creed of a Church is a part of its covenant, a part of those announced principles upon which its adherents agreed to come together in the same organization. Here again integrity requires the covenant of the Church to be inflexibly maintained. To allow double and divergent constructions of the creed is really to abolish the creed altogether. If differing constructions arise it is indispensable to settle the construction under peril of the creed itself. For the construction of the creed is the creed, and the necessary effect of double constructions is to annihilate the creed altogether. It is, moreover, treachery to the truth, as the Lord has delivered it, to allow it to be emptied of positive significance—to be made an empty bag to be filled with every vagrant breath. If it has no positive sense, it is not fit to be put into the creed. If it has a positive sense, it is treason to the Master to allow it to be contradicted. The misapprehension of a truth is one thing, the conscious double construction of it is another. The very use of a creed is to define the truth and covenant for its maintenance. To allow it to be both affirmed and contradicted under a formal agreement for that purpose is to destroy the creed, to break down the authority of the truth, and to insult its Giver. Yet further, the unity of testimony in the teachers and officers of the kingdom is necessary to its internal peace and to all freedom and comfort in the association of those officers with each other. The church which does not require unity in her teaching betrays the truth, sacrifices her true honor, weakens her influence, and is preparing materials for intestine strife. The theory of double construction starts in unfaithfulness to the truth. It invites error, confusion and weakness all along its course, and will end in comparative failure, if not in ruin. In these days of spurious liberalism nothing is of more vital importance to every church which seeks to fulfill her ends and receive the blessing of her Head than a strict and resolute adherence to the truth as embodied in her creed—a firm training of her teachers to know it and an unflinching demand

of them to teach it or else lay down the standard under which they profess to serve. It is the truth of God they have been charged to propagate, and to allow it to be denied is treason against Him, and makes the Church accessory to all the mischievous results which will assuredly flow from error. When God speaks the whole earth should keep silence before Him; when He commands men to repeat His words, and to contend earnestly for the faith He delivers to them, it will be ill for any who knowingly consents for that truth to be compromised or sanctions any departure from it.

More than one important issue, growing out of the statute laws of the Church, demand close investigation in these days of feverish innovation. Such are the existing prescriptions touching the eldership, the dignity and relation of the evangelist, and that of the baptized children of the Church. But we cannot dwell upon these, and hasten to close an address, already far too long, by a brief reference to one or two points in the practical administration of the Church which ought to be considered in view of practical emergencies either present or likely to become so in the not distant future.

IV.—THE PRACTICAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE KINGDOM AS DETERMINED BY THE FAITH DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.

The unity of the kingdom of Christ is not at all inconsistent with its division into distinct branches. The principle of unity in this kingdom is precisely the principle of unity in any other kingdom—*subjection to the same crown*. To condition the unity of the kingdom on the existence of a single official, or a class of officials *under the crown*, is as much of a solecism in the kingdom of Christ as it would be in any other kingdom. The crown is the centre of unity in every kingly state, and obedience to the crown in all fundamental articles of loyal service is proof of claim to be an integral part of the realm. The Church is sometimes likened to an army as well as a kingdom. The principle of unity in an army is subjection to the orders of a single chief, and is not at all affected by divisions into infantry, cavalry, artillery, or into brigades, regiments, and companies of these separate arms under subordinate commanders. The subjection of the whole to a single chief makes it in the strictest sense *his* army, and its unity is defined by this circumstance. Subjection and obedience to Christ as king and captain of salvation in all fundamental articles is the principle of unity in the Church; and every organization of Christian people discriminated by this test is to be recognized as a loyal province of the kingdom, a true member of the army of the Lord. This divided state of the kingdom raises questions touching the proper mutual relation of these different sections of the realm which are of great interest and importance. Since the unity of the kingdom is not affected by the division into parts, it is manifest the question of union between two or more of these parts is a question of expediency and not a question of positive obligation. It is to be settled by considerations altogether apart from any supposed general obligation to unity, because unity bestowed then already exists in subjection to the same crown. It is to be controlled by considerations of fidelity to the faith in its departments of doctrine and morals as supreme and determining. In the absence of any bar to

union growing out of these supreme and mandatory reasons, it is to be settled by considerations of policy and convenience. Purely race considerations may control it with all the absolute propriety and even positive obligation which may grow out of the institutions of society and the duty of self-protection against dangerous associations. There is no requirement in the principle of unity in the kingdom or in the law of Christian communion to demand disregard either of the truths of the faith on the one side or of considerations of real policy and prudence on the other.

The equal title of each separate branch of the kingdom to be considered a province of the realm does entitle each to all the courtesies of recognition and a rigorous regard to all the rights to which each is entitled. The arts of proselytism are as much an offense in the church of God—nay, a greater violation of propriety than for one division of an army to seduce the soldiers of another. Nothing in the carriage of one church to another is more unjust or more quickly mars the spirit of communion than this detestable practice. If it is claimed to be warranted and even required by the principles of any section of the kingdom, so much the worse for those principles. A violation of Christian law which is inconsistent with those principles leaves them without discredit; but violations of propriety consistent with or required by those principles demonstrates error in the principles themselves. The equal rank of the provinces of the kingdom entitles each to all suitable acts of recognition. No one of them is more entitled of right to this recognition than another, though a closer approximation in views of the truth will necessarily create a closer sympathy which may be properly expressed in any suitable way. But this will be a matter of liberty, not of obligation, and the method of correspondence is a matter of the same sort. This modern method of public recognition is construed, and has been construed, as only expressive of this peculiar sympathy growing out of approximation in views; but it is equally appropriate in the recognition of the simple character of a province of the kingdom. This mutual obligation between the sections of the kingdom to recognize each other does by no means impair the obligation of each to teach the truth as they receive it, but it does impose the obligation to discharge this great leading duty in strict obedience to the law of Christian kindness. Whenever a Christian teacher has to deal with the errors of his brethren he ought to charge his own conscience with the obligation to take all pains to let it be fully understood that these are the errors of real brethren, differences between friends and not between enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ. When language of heart-felt sympathy and confidence towards those from whom we differ is carefully mingled with a candid discussion and advocacy of the truth, no offense will be given or taken, and the interests of Christian communion as well as the interests of the truth will be positively promoted by this union of fidelity to the truth and love to the church of God in all its parts.

Another question of practical administration has been recently raised touching the division of territory between the sections of the church. Upon this we can only say that an unquestionable utility springing out of the divisions of the church seems to vindicate the wisdom of that providential ordering which has determined these divisions in every age and land where the church has existed. The parts of

the kingdom are mutual stimulants to zeal and activity. A single church in exclusive charge of a given locality is apt in the long run to grow indolent from security. The prevailing precedent in the history of the kingdom seems to be opposed to this policy of territorial division on anything like a general scale. If desirable at all, it would seem to be so only in special cases and perhaps in the foreign field.

In conclusion, permit us to say the times call for universal activity and devotion in every section of the kingdom of our Lord. The world shakes under the awakened energies of the human race. The powers of darkness are gathering greater and greater force with the progress of time and improvement in the inventive arts. The eagerness for wealth is already stimulated into gigantic proportions, and, if covetousness is idolatry, the real appearance of modern Christendom in the eyes of God may not be so different from those lands where the idols of a benighted faith show hideous in grove and temple, as might appear upon the surface. If the divine maxim, "Labor not to be rich," is sound wisdom for man, it is obvious that the modern maxim of the world of business has in it an immensity of folly. The emissaries of religious error are full of activity. Infidelity strikes full at the very throne and life of the Immortal God. The gospel of Christ is assailed from every quarter, as if the modern world, at least, had no need of redemption. Vice blooms grandly like the flowers and gigantic plants of a tropical jungle. Misery still preys on the heart of humanity. Conscience still wails in heart-sick terror of sin and judgment. The hoof-strokes of the pale horse are still heard resounding on the later reaches of every man's path toward the end, and the crowned Terror who bestrides him wields his dart as inexorably as ever. The orders of the King are unrepealed. The Great Physician has ordered no change in the only medicine for a sick world. The voice of God to the whole sacramental host is still heard: Go, preach the Gospel to every creature. Inquire for the old paths, and walk therein. Contend earnestly for the faith delivered to the saints, and, lo! I, the infinite Lord of the covenant, am with you alway, even unto the end; and the gates of hell shall never prevail against you. Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. Even so; come, Lord Jesus; come quickly.