

LECTURE ON TRUTH. -- I. WHAT IS TRUTH?

p. 1, Para. 1, [TRUTH].

JOHN xviii. 38. Pilate saith unto him, What is Truth?

p. 1, Para. 2, [TRUTH].

IN this question by Pilate, we have the same thing presented which all mankind are professedly seeking after; yet with as little desire, perhaps, to know, believe, or practise the truth, as the individual who asked the question. p. 1, Para. 3, [TRUTH].

Pilate was noted for his depravity, wickedness, and crime; and when he had asked the question, went out, without waiting for a reply, and did that which he knew was wickedly wrong. For he said to the Jews, "*I find in him no fault at all;*" and yet he released unto them a murderer, and took Jesus and scourged him, crowned him with thorns, mocked and smote him, and said unto the Jews, "*Take ye him and crucify him, for I find no fault in him.*" Just so at the present day: we find many inquirers after truth, but few who are willing to hear, and fewer still who are willing to practise it. p. 1, Para. 4, [TRUTH].

I. I shall, in this discourse, endeavor to show some things that are true; although in this question a field is open which neither you or I could fully explore, even with the talents of the highest seraph, or the ability of an elect angel. Yet, by divine permission, we may look within the door, and see so much, and only so much, as Christ came to witness unto us. For he says, "*For this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.*" We may, then, safely inquire, "*What is truth?*" p. 1, Para. 5, [TRUTH].

1. God is true. This may be known by his works. Look into yourselves; see the order of your bodily system, the flow of blood, the heaving of the lungs; see, too, the activity of thought, the affections of the soul, the acuteness of feeling; every department of the mind, every function of the body acting in unison with its fellow; no jarring, while in health, but every motion and emotion true to the original cause as the needle to the pole. Can these laws by which we are governed in the body be thus true, and He who created them be untrue? No. p. 1, Para. 6, [TRUTH].

Look at the vegetable world. See the regular system of all the plants of the earth, each springing forth in its season, growing, budding, blossoming, bearing fruit, yielding its seed after its kind, and each seed containing elements of further increase, and so on, until figures would fail to multiply the number of likes contained in every seed. All *true* to the laws of the vegetable world -- can this be true, and He who clothes the field with its verdure not be *true*? Never. p. 2, Para. 1, [TRUTH].

Look again at the heavens. See the systems of the planetary world. See suns innumerable, each the centre of a system, and all the planets moving in their respective orbits around these suns, keeping their proper distances, observing regular times, and so true that revolutions unnumbered may pass off without the variation of a moment. Do not all these things show that He who spake them into existence must be truth? p. 2, Para. 2, [TRUTH].

When, in short, we view the regular laws of nature, and behold all things, both animate and inanimate, obeying those laws, and man, though a rebel, compelled to yield to them, so that he cannot by any physical force evade or nullify the acts of the Almighty, are we not irresistibly led to conclude, that God is *true* -- true to himself, true to his own laws, true to his own word and will, and that he does manifestly declare that he will be *true* in his moral government? This leads us to show, p. 2, Para. 3, [TRUTH].

II. THAT THE WORD OF GOD IS TRUTH. p. 2, Para. 4, [TRUTH].

That the Old and New Testaments are the word of God, is hardly a disputable point at the present day. Yet there are a few heaven-daring skeptics who do sneeringly insinuate that it is only the work of man. And we would not wish to deny that there are many, very many, who deny parts of the word, and by so doing nullify, or endeavor to nullify, so much as does not suit their carnal appetite or moral taste of things. Some do away the divinity of Christ, others the office or work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, others the depravity of the natural heart; and so on, to the several other parts of the word. Some deny the historical, and some the prophetic; some dispute the doctrines, and some the precepts. But I am to show that the *word of God*, embraced in the Old and New Testaments, *is true*. p. 3, Para. 1, [TRUTH].

1. *It is true*, because those books give the only rational account of creation. p. 3, Para. 2, [TRUTH].

2. *It is true*, because they give the best code of laws in our world. p. 3, Para. 3, [TRUTH].

3. *It is true*. They tell of events to come with a certainty that silences all caviling. p. 3, Para. 4, [TRUTH].

4. *It is true*. They describe the character of man, the thoughts and intents of the heart. p. 3, Para. 5, [TRUTH].

5. *It is true*. There is a general harmony through the whole. In every page, in every book, we find the same important *pillars of truth*. We find the same God, the same Savior, the same Spirit, described. We see human character unfolded with entire harmony and truth; and the two opposite states of man, the righteous and the wicked, from Abel and Cain, down to the judgment of the great day, clearly brought to view. In every book we find the same promises to the one, and the same curses denounced upon the other. And, although these writers lived in different ages of the world, and about sixteen hundred years apart, from the first writer to the last; although there were between forty and fifty of them, in every grade of life, from the king on his throne to the poor fisherman; yet their enemies have not been able to show any discrepancy, or disagreement, that is not easily reconciled. p. 3, Para. 6, [TRUTH].

These things show that God is the author of his word. "And holy men (from the king to the peasant) spake as they were moved upon by the Holy Spirit." p. 3, Para. 7, [TRUTH].

Again; the *historical* part of the word of God is true. All the contemporary profane historians agree in supporting some parts, and collectively prove the whole; and many monuments of antiquity, still standing, are an additional weight of testimony. The evidences of the flood, of the cities of the plain, of Babylon, Jerusalem, and the monuments of Egypt, all show that the writers lived in the several ages in which they professed to write; and if their writings had not been true, how easily would their enemies have detected them. And surely no one will pretend that the writers of the sacred books had no opposers. Had Moses

none? See Egypt, then in her glory; see the Moabites, the Ammonites, Edomites, and all the nations of the land of Judea. Had Joshua, Samuel, David, no enemies? Yes; for there was war all the days of these writers. Had the prophets no enemies? Yes -- in their own kings. See the history of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and of all the smaller prophets. Would not the kings and rulers among the Jews have confuted the writings of these men, if it had been in their power, for they were all against them? Yes, yes. But God preserved his word; for it was *truth*. p. 4, Para. 1, [TRUTH].

In the apostles' days, -- had they no enemies? There were Jews and Gentiles, all opposed to those wild fanatics and visionary fools, as they were called, who wrote the New Testament, -- "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness." All the erudition and wisdom of the pagan government of Rome, that mistress of the world, embracing the most learned people in the whole earth, worshiping in all manner of ways, having and professing to have a knowledge of all the gods many and lords many then known, and altars erected in every city and kingdom in their empire, with their gods and goddesses, priests and priestesses, kings, generals, heroes, soldiers, and people, all combined to destroy the *Bible*; and yet how vain was the attempt. It stood; "for truth is mighty and will prevail." The fishermen's Bible hath stood the shock. p. 4, Para. 2, [TRUTH].

Look at the infidels of France in modern times. A government which shook the kingdoms of Europe, and made Egypt and Asia quail, bent all her energy and power to destroy the Bible. Her learned men, her great men, her mighty men, did all that men could, -- and what did they do? They opened the eyes of the world. For after three years and a half, during which time the Bible was a dead letter in France, anarchy, murder, and blood filled the kingdom with horror, terror, and dismay; so that the infidels and deists themselves prayed for the restoration of the christian religion -- the precepts of the *Bible*. And the two witnesses, the Old and New Testaments, arose in a cloud, and have been sent to every nation, in every clime, and are now witnessing in every language. p. 4, Para. 3, [TRUTH].

By these events, the *truth* of the prophecies of the Bible has been tested. John, in Rev. xi. 5,6, says, "*And if any*

*man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies. And if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters (people) to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will."* p. 5, Para. 1, [TRUTH].

How truly were these texts fulfilled on infidel France! Where are her infidel writers? "*Devoured and slain*" in the same Revolution which they said would revolutionize the christian world and destroy the Bible. Where are the millions of deists who filled France in the days of her Revolution? And the millions more in every nation in Europe and America? They are "turned to blood," or "smitten with a curse." There are but few left, and that "*remnant was affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.*" Once, our cities, our villages and hamlets, were full of deists. But now, where are they? None, none, to raise their puny arm against the Lord and his Anointed. p. 5, Para. 2, [TRUTH].

But, my brethren, there is one more battle, and then the mystery of God will be finished. The enemies of truth have one weapon yet. They wield it now; they begin to shout the victory. It is to *pervert* the word of God, and wrest its meaning: to change the truth into a lie. This will be the last struggle. Here the enemies of the truth will fall to rise no more forever; for "*truth is mighty and will prevail.*" "*Which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: to him be glory, both now and forever. Amen.*" So says Peter; and it is a solemn admonition to us, in this last day. Let us not pervert or wrest the scriptures from their own simple meaning. The word of God must be its own expositor. It is a chain of truth which cannot be broken without doing despite to the Spirit of God by whom it was indicted. p. 5, Para. 3, [TRUTH].

III. WHAT DOES THE WORD TEACH US? p. 6, Para. 1, [TRUTH].

1. It teaches that God is the Creator of all things, both which are in heaven and on earth. It teaches that we must be created anew in Christ Jesus: yet some say we create

ourselves by good works. p. 6, Para. 2, [TRUTH].

2. It teaches that Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh: the mighty God, the everlasting Father. Yet some tell us he is but a man. p. 6, Para. 3, [TRUTH].

3. It teaches that the Holy Spirit is sent down from God, as a sanctifier and reprover, to lead our minds into truth, and to regenerate the heart. Yet some deny his office totally, and some in part. p. 6, Para. 4, [TRUTH].

4. The word teaches that we are *elected* according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. See 1 Pet. i. 2: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied." And yet there are many, very many, who profess to be Christians, who deny this doctrine. p. 6, Para. 5, [TRUTH].

5. The word teaches that "we are kept by the mighty power of God through faith unto salvation. Yet some say we keep ourselves. "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." Yet some at this day say they can perish. p. 7, Para. 1, [TRUTH].

6. The Bible says the wicked shall be driven into hell, punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, shall go away into everlasting punishment. Yet, say some, everlasting has an end. "But the *fearful* and *unbelieving*, and the *abominable*, and *murderers*, and *whoremongers*, and *sorcerers*, and *idolaters*, and *ALL liars*, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." And yet many say, you shall not surely die. p. 7, Para. 2, [TRUTH].

This is a fearful day, my brethren. It seems the devil has come down unto us, knowing that he hath but a short time. The *lo-heres* and *lo-theres* gather upon us thick as a cloud. Some pervert the *doctrine* of the gospel, and some the *precept*; some resist the power, and some pervert the ordinances. Let us, then, take heed unto the truth; for the truth shall make us free. p. 7, Para. 3, [TRUTH].

Let us often ask the question, "*What is truth?*" and let us be sure we believe, practise, and teach it. For what good will deception or false sentiments do us in the coming

storm; when the fire of God's wrath will try every man's work, and when *truth* only will stand in the day of judgment? "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but not one jot or tittle of my word shall fail." "For the great day of his wrath is come, and who will be able to stand?" Amen.  
p. 7, Para. 4, [TRUTH].