

and there would be such dishonesty, mental reservation on points where the individual dissonated from the church to which he requested admission.

And in illustration of these Scripture passages, it is worthy of notice, that we have examples of short creeds used in the age next to that of the Apostles. Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen have furnished us with creeds, which they style, the canon of the truth; the preaching of the truth, and the truth which is preached by the Church. As the earliest existing creed, and as one of the finest monuments of antiquity, we shall quote Irenaeus' creed. In his work on heresies he says,—“For although the Church is scattered through the habitable to the ends of the earth, yet it has received from the Apostles and their disciples, thus faith in one God, the Father Almighty, who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is; and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation; and in one Holy Ghost who announced by the prophets the economy and the coming, and the birth of a virgin, and the passion and the resurrection from the dead, and the reception into heaven in the flesh of the beloved Christ Jesus our Lord, and the manifestation from the heavens in the glory of his father to gather together all things into one head, (Ephes. i. 10.) and to raise all flesh of human kind, that to Christ Jesus as our Lord and God and Saviour and King, according to the good pleasure of the invisible Father, every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue should confess to him, and that he should execute just judgment on all; that he should send into eternal fire both the spiritual things of wickedness and the angels that transgressed, and the apostate and impious, and unjust and covetous, and blasphemers among men. But to the just and holy, and to those that kept his commandments and abode in his love, to those to whom from the beginning he had given the gift of life from repentance, he shall confer incorruption and surround with eternal glory.”

Now, Irenaeus was bishop of Lyons, about the year 170, and if creeds then existed, as the result of a preceding age, then we will be carried back to a period bordering on the apostolic age. He also says that the Church derived her doctrinal belief from the apostles and their disciples; and these facts taken in connection with various passages of Scripture, already referred to, render it morally certain, that creeds existed during the age of the apostles. It ought also to be recollected that what is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, was composed, not by the apostles, but by Rufinus, between the fourth and fifth centuries, from several existing Creeds; and hence, there are many points of resemblance between it and the more ancient one given by Irenaeus. But what is the reason, it may be enquired, that it is now regarded as a mark of intellectual superiority, to speak and write of Creeds with a contemptuous sneer? Some are conscientious in the opposition, but others evidently oppose them, because they wish to get quit of every thing positive in Christianity, and to drift without restraint on a shoreless ocean. Others have imbibed new views in theology, and having removed all land marks which their fathers have placed, they declare against all Creeds whatever, when their hostility is really directed against the Confession of Faith. It is exceedingly suspicious, when an individual signs the Confession of Faith, and when he cannot reconcile his signature with his actual belief, for him then to denounce confessions in general. But while we value our Catechisms and Creeds, and give them that place which they ought to occupy, as exponents of the sense in which we understand the Word of God, we should regard the Bible as the only standard, and submit our walls and our judgments to its authoritative dictates. To the law and to the testimony must be our watchword; and speak Lord, for thy servant heareth, our only rule of conduct.

II.

KRUNMACHERS PARABLES.

[TRANSLATED FOR CANADIAN PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE.]

1. NATHAN.

Nathan, a prophet and a wise teacher in Salem, sat among his disciples, and the words of wisdom flowed like honey from his lips. Then spake Gamaliel, one of his disciples: “Master, how comes it to pass that we receive thy doctrine so willingly, and all hear the words of thy mouth?” Then the discriminating teacher smiled, and said, “Does not my name signify to give? Mankind will certainly receive willingly, if one only knows how to give.”

* The word Nathan, signifies to give.

“How dost thou give then?” enquired Heleh, another of those who sat at his feet. And Nathan answered, “I reach you the golden apple in a silver cup, ye receive the cup—but ye discover the apple.”

On another occasion, Gamaliel enquired of the wise Nathan, and said: “Master, why dost thou teach us in parables?” Nathan answered and said—

“Behold, my son, when I became a man, I perceived the word of the Lord in my heart, that I should be a teacher of the people, and that I should bear witness of the truth, and the Spirit of God came upon me. Then I allowed my beard to grow, and I clothed myself in a coarse hairy garment, and went out among the people and eluded them with very violent words. But men fled from me, and laid not my words to heart, or they explained them in reference to other things.”

“Then I became famous in my spirit, and rushed out in the night to mount Hermon, and said in my heart: Will not the light prevail as when it wanders through night and darkness and prevails against the darkness? Thus I cried and wandered angrily through the dark night.”

Behold, then came the twilight, and the day-blush rose up in heaven, and the dew of the morning fell down upon mount Hermon. Then the night-bloomed, and Hermon sent forth a fragrant smell. For the glimmer of the day-blush was soft and lovely, and the misty cloud hovered round the summit of the mountain and moistened the soil. But men travelled joyfully, and looked up to the day-blush. Then the day rose from the lower part of heaven, and the sun came from the anus of the day-blush and irradiated the dewy plants.

And I stood and looked, and it especially touched my heart. Then the humming wind arose, and I perceived in the breeze the voice of the Lord, which spoke to me and said: Behold, Nathan, thus doth Heaven send to the sons of earth his most precious and delicate gifts, the sweet daylight.”

When I now descended from the mountain—immediately I became a prophet—then the Spirit of the Lord led me under a pomegranate. But the tree was beautiful and shiny, and it bore at the same time flowers and fruit. And I stood in its shadow and looked on its flowers and said: O, how beautiful and ruddy is it, like the soft breeze of innocence upon the blooming cheek of the daughter of Israel!—And when I drew nearer, I also discovered the excellent fruit, hidden in the shadow of its leaves.—Then the word of the Lord came to me from the pomegranate, and said: Behold, Nathan, this nature promises the precious fruit in the simple blossom, and offers it, her land being concealed, in the shadow of the foliage.”

And now—having immediately become the wise Nathan—I returned with a joyful mind to Salem: I threw from me my coarse garment, anointed my head, and taught the truth in a joyful manner and in parables. For the strict truth has few friends. She must, therefore, be freely manifested in a simple, joyful garb; she must be human among men, if she would obtain friends and disciples.*

2. THE MAN ON CAMEL.

In a hamlet on mount Carmel lived a wise man, on whom the Spirit of God had bestowed the gifts of consolation and healing. He went into every dwelling where a sick person lay and healed him of his disease; or he consoled and refreshed the dying with wholesome discourse, and soothed the complaints of the mourners. For he knew the secret powers of wholesome herbs and the hearts of men, although he was only between a man and a youth. Therefore, all men loved him and entreated him to enter into their dwellings, and his name was widely known all around.

But behold! there came a disease from the land of Egypt into the hamlet on mount Carmel, and into the district around, and men sickened and many died. For the disease was evil. And when one became sick, they sent to him day and night, that he would heal and comfort them.

Then he was fatigued, and his soul was troubled, because the power of the disease was far stronger than the power of his skill and wholesome herbs, and he began to fear for his own blooming life. For he wanted the crown of wisdom, humility, when he trusted in himself and in his skill, but not in the Lord.

Then his spirit conducted him out to the top of Carmel, and he doubted within himself, whether he should remain on the mountain and not return, or search for wholesome herbs and plants, for the migration and removal of the disease. Then he went out and said in his heart: nature was my instructor from my youth. She shall even yet instruct me.

He stood before a flower, which varied itself more beautifully in its flowers than Solomon in his glory. Then he spoke: “It blooms in its splendour and youthful power only for itself, and opens its cup to the ray of the sun and to the soft wind, which comes in the evening down upon the sea. What can man do more, than, unconcerned about others, be perfected in himself?—I will remain on Carmel and among the flowers I will bloom, till I in the end, unobserved and softly, wither like the flowers.”

At that moment, a butterfly fluttered among the flowers; but he looked on it and said,—“Nay, thou teachest me another lesson. I will return to men in the slumbers of night, and I will hasten to the palace, that I may thus reap all around from my wisdom the sweet fruit of pleasure and joy. Thus as the butterfly spreads itself upon the magnificent flower-cup, so will I upon my skill.”

Thus, he spoke and looked into the flower-cup. Behold, there lay a dead bee in the bottom of the cup. Carrying with difficulty the delicate flower-dust, it had breathed out its sweet soul in the midst of its labour. He saw it and silently contemplated the lifeless integument of the little creature—and the purple of shame mantled his cheek. “O, I recognise