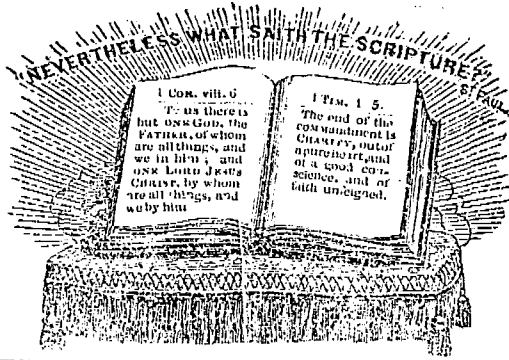


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CHRIST THE FOUNDATION.

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.—1 Cor. iii. 11.

Jesus is the foundation of the Church. It is built upon him as the chief cornerstone. This figure is not uncommon with the writers of the New Testament. In more than one instance they speak of the Church, or the company of believers, as a Temple, each believer one of the stones of which it is formed, and Jesus himself as the chief foundation, or corner stone. Agreeably to this idea, Jesus is represented in the text above quoted, as the only foundation on which the church can stand, and in which believers should trust.

The church is that society or collection of the good who have been brought home to God and been fitted for heaven, through the instrumentality of the dispensations of grace upon earth. It is a permanent body existing alike in all ages. It is one body though of many members. It must then have some common head, and common bond of union; and that is Christ. The members are united in him as the branches in the vine, and draw nourishment and support from one stock. If there be any other head, bond of union, source of nourishment and strength, it ceases to be the Church; and those individual members who abide not in him, are like branches severed from the vine, "cast forth and withered." Without him, they can do nothing. They can find neither life, nor light, nor support, nor the power to bring forth fruit.

The believers at Corinth seem not sufficiently to have considered this; and hence the apostle rebukes them as carnal. Instead of being satisfied with the authority of Christ, they separated from him and from one another in an unwise contention concerning the superiority of favorite teachers—whom they thoughtlessly exalted to be their masters, although admonished that "one only was their master." The reprimand of the apostle is here recorded as a warning to all who should afterwards believe. Yet by how many has it been unheeded! Every age has witnessed other men, and fallible men, set up at the head of the corner, instead of that elect and precious One whom God appointed. As the Samaritans erected a temple on Gerizem in opposition to that at Jerusalem, so the sects in christendom have often erected some authority in preference to that of Christ. There is still too much of this. "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas," is still a cry too frequently heard. Faith is yet established on the speculations of fallible men, and the salvation of the soul rested on the teachings of human wisdom.

This is an error frequently and pointedly censured by Jesus and his Apostles. It is virtually, though not professedly, a renunciation of his authority, a rejection of his rule, a rebellion against his government. The man who surrenders his judgment to the dictation of other men, instead of appealing to the written word of Christ's instruction; and the church, which fetters itself by articles drawn up in language which man's wisdom teaches, instead of walking in the wide liberty of the charter of God's truth,—have laid another foundation than that which is laid, and are obnoxious to heavy rebuke.—*Rev. H. Ware.*

THE DEATH-BEDS OF THE GREAT AND THE GOOD.

It has been said of the Unitarian faith, that it was a good religion to live by, but not to die by. The palpable inconsistency of the two terms of such a proposition wholly destroys its truth, and renders it an absurdity. For certainly the faith that is not good to live by, cannot for that reason be good to die by. And on the other hand, the faith that is good to live by, must therefore be the one that is good to die by; and the converse statement must hold equally good, that the faith for death must be the faith for life. What is sufficient for the temptations of life, must disarm the terrors of death. In this respect death and life are one; what prepares man for one, prepares him for the other; and what unfits him for one, also disqualifies him for the other. The good men to live are the good men to die, and the bad men to live are the bad men to die; though they may be under the influence of the drugs they take as medicines, or the almost equally intoxicating excitement of cer-

tain religious views and the conversation and prayers of zealous friends, and they may die in a species of unreal elation of mind, and kind of insane transport. So likewise on the other side, the effects of the disorder under which they suffer and expire, is sometimes such as to dim the intellect and distress the heart of the best men. Dr. Johnson thought of dying with horror, and Professor Charles Simon shrank from the last conflict with the great conqueror of all, with undisssembled fear. Temperament, early education, disease, medicine, the physical state of the system,—many causes like these may intervene to determine the state of the departing, independently of faith, or life, sin or holiness.

But when all this has been conceded, there yet remains a testimony from the last hours of great and good men, which ought not to be forgotten. When the soul has been about to cut loose from the shores of time, and sail forth into unknown seas, it has often uttered itself sublimely and devoutly. It has summed up a whole life of godliness in a few immortal words, and drawn its mantle around it with dignity, as it retired from the present stage of being.

Nor have there been wanting to that faith which is every where spoken against, noble examples of all that was resigned in death, as of all that was holy and beautiful in life.

To a friend, Leake said, when in expectation of death, "This life is a scene of vanity, which soon passes away, and affords no solid satisfaction, but in the consciousness of doing well, and in the hopes of another life. This is what I can say from experience; and what you will find to be true, when you come to make up the account." To one sitting by his bedside, the day before his death, he remarked that "he had lived long enough, and thanked God for having passed his days so comfortably." So departed the great English philosopher.

So too did Sir Isaac Newton die; for when subject to the severest paroxysms of the disease of which he died, he was never heard to utter the least complaint, nor to express the least impatience. Dr. Doddridge gave him the credit of manifesting his firm faith in the divine revelation, in the most genuine fruits of substantial virtue and piety.

Milton was long a severe sufferer by the gout, but a cotemporary states that he was very cheerful in his fits of pain, and sang; and when he departed, it was quietly and silently on the Sabbath: which has been the last day to not a few of the great and good in history.

Dr. Bowditch died in the most happy frame of mind. To his saddened friends he said, "I feel no gloom within me: why should you wear it on your faces?" To one bidding him good night, he replied, "No, say not, good night, but good morning, for the next time we meet will be on the morning of the resurrection." When in the act of dying, he called his family around his bedside, and said, addressing each one by name, "You see I can distinguish you all; and I now give you all my parting blessing. The time is come, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy Word;" and the last whisper that was audible as he sank away, was "beautiful."

Dr. Parker when asked what he should do, if he was certain of dying in three or four days, answered, "Just what I am doing now, and intend to do tomorrow;" and when brought to the decisive hour, he expired in great distress of body, though in great quietness, and even cheerfulness of spirit. His conduct during his last days was described by a friend in these words—"All was natural, all was himself, his every-day self; yet there was a dignity and solemnity which was felt, if it were not seen by the common eye."

Dr. Worcester requested one of his brethren to pray with him that "he might have no will of his own;" and a short time before his death, hearing the clock strike seven, he enquired whether it were morning or evening, and learning that it was the latter, he answered "I hope I shall be in heaven before seven in the morning." And he requested the account of the death of Christ to be read to him from the Gospel of Matthew, which were the last words he heard on earth.

The restless nights of the dying Bancroft were soothed by his repeating the poet's words—

"If piety has marked my steps,
And love my actions formed,
And purity possessed my heart,
And truth my lips adorned;
If I've grown old in serving Him,
My Father and my God,
I need not fear the closing scene,
Nor dread the appointed road."

"Give them (his family and people) my dying love," said Dr. Thayer to his daughter, when he felt the sudden hand of death, far from home while on a journey: "tell them I cheerfully submit. I die in the faith I have preached. I die in peace, and in the hopes of the Gospel."

When Dr. Ware, Jr., felt himself drawing near the close of life, he called on one of his daughters to repeat that beautiful hymn by Milman, beginning,

"Brother, thou art gone before us."

And the last passage of the Scriptures he was able to hear, was the 23d Psalm—"The Lord is my shepherd." &c. During his sickness, he remarked that "his mind was crowded with thoughts, precious thoughts of death and immortality."

And when the great spirit of Channing was in its last hour on earth, he requested that the Beatitudes of Christ might be read to him, and expired in the act of prayer to God.

The last sickness of Bernard Whitman was made beautiful by his holy trust and perfect submission to the will of God. To a friend who said to him, "Your heaven has already commenced," he replied, "Yes, I have indeed a foretaste of heaven; I have communion with heavenly spirits. Some of my dreams have been most delightful. When I leave my friends on earth I shall go to a larger family in heaven. One short line expresses all I feel and wish to say, 'Father, thy will be done!'" When he perceived himself to be dying, he said, "O Father, receive my spirit. I die in peace with all. My firm faith in Christ supports me now."

The last words of Judge Story were those in which he commended himself in prayer to Almighty God. His deathbed was illuminated with the Christian hope, full of immortality.

Judge Smith found pleasure in repeating, by night, while suffering severely in his last sickness, the beautiful lines,

"God of my life look gently down:
Behold the pains I feel;
But I am dumb before thy throne,
Nor dare dispute thy will."

"I have long," he said "considered myself a minute man, like the soldiers in our revolutionary war, ready to go at a moment's warning." When the verse was repeated to him,

"Jesus can make a dying bed
Seem soft as downy pillows are,
While on his breast I lean my head,
And breathe my life out sweetly there,"

he repeatedly inclined his head in assent, and smiled with evident pleasure, though he was unable to speak.

Dr. Priestley, the day before his death, while his son was reading to him the 11th chapter of John, dwelt some time on the advantage he had derived from reading the Scriptures daily, and that it had been to him a source of the purest pleasure. To a friend coming in, he said, "We shall all meet again in another and better world." And when his grand-children were brought to his bedside, before they retired for the night, he said to them, "I am going to sleep as well as you: for death is only a long, sound sleep in the grave, and we shall meet again."

So has the faith as it is in Jesus Christ, in its unadulterated simplicity, sustained the great and the good in the final struggle: good to live by, it has been also good, yea, glorious to die by. These are a very few cases out of many. They might be multiplied by countless instances, in humbler life, and among private Christians of those who have fallen asleep in Jesus, and the blessed hopes of his Gospel, with a courage unappalled by the darkness of the grave, and proof against the sting and terror of death.

"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his:" but we must pray and labor that the life of the righteous may be ours, before we can hope that such may be our death.—*Unitarian Annual Register.*

GIVE US ARGUMENT—NOT PITY.

One method of attack upon liberal Christianity is to awaken sentiments of pity and horror against it. I am not about to deny that this is very honestly done; but I do say that it is an unworthy mode of assault: that it appeals not to the judgment, but to the passions; and that it is very apt to be the strongest, in the weakest hands. To put on a solemn countenance, to speak in sepulchral tones of awe and lamentation, to warn men against this doctrine, is easy. But, alas! for the weakness of men, if it is an instrument easily wielded, it is also an instrument of terrible power with the superstitious, the timid, and unreflecting. A considerate man, a man who respects the minds and consciences of those he has to deal with, will be cautious how he takes hold of such a weapon as this—a weapon which prevails chiefly with human weakness, which strikes the very part of our nature that most needs to be supported, which wounds only the infirm, and overwhelms only the prostrate. For I need not say, that it is precisely with minds in this situation that tones of pity and horror have the greatest influence. A man of independent thought and vigorous understanding, who could better afford to bear this sort of influence, is the very person who will not yield to it. He will say indignantly, "That is nothing to the purpose. That does not satisfy me. I did not ask you to warn me, but to enlighten me. I did not ask you to weep, but to reason. No doubt you feel as you say, and very sincerely feel thus; it is not your sincerity that I question, but your argument. You degrade my understanding, when you attempt to work upon it in this manner. I was made to think. The Lord of conscience has given me liberty to enquire; and I will not be subject to any other influence. God has called me to liberty; and man shall not lay me under bondage."

Nor is this all. Pity and horror prove nothing, indeed; but it is moreover a matter of history, that truth—whether our doctrine be true or not—that Truth has always made its progress amidst the pity and horror of men. Yes; it has come thus, amidst sighings, and doubtings, and shakings of the head, and warnings of danger, and forebodings of evil. Yes; it has held its way, through tokens like these; with dark countenances about it, and loud denunciations, and woeful anathemas. It has stood up and spoken in the person of its great Teacher; and men have "gnashed their teeth and rent their garments," at its voice. It has gone forth into the world, with its devoted apostles, and been accounted "the offscourings of all things." It has prophesied in sackcloth, with its faithful witnesses, and borne the cross of ignominy and reproach. The angry Sanhedrim, the bloody Inquisition, the dungeon, the rack, the martyr's stake, have testified to the abhorrence of men against the truth!

I do not say that the truth I hold is worthy of this glorious fellowship. But I say that its being joined in any measure to this fellowship does not prove it false. And if it be true, as I solemnly believe it is, then let not its advocates claim entire exemption from the trials of their elder brethren. It will go on, and men will speak evil of it, and they will struggle against it, and they will lament and weep;—but it will be as if they lifted up their voice to withstand the rolling seasons, or struggled against the chariot wheels of the morning, or poured out vain tears upon the mighty stream that is to bear all before it. I say this more in sorrow, I hope, than in scorn. I am sorry for those who cannot see this matter as I think they ought to see it. I am sorry for the unhappiness, for the honest grief, which a misplaced pity, and an uncharitable zeal, and a spirit of reproach and condemnation, give them. But their grief, save for its own sake, moves me not at all. I consider it as a penance for their mistaken hostility to truth, rather, than a fair admonition of error. I believe, and can believe no less, that this unhappiness is simply the fruit of error. Uncharitableness must be unhappy; anger must be painful; exclusion, and anathematizing, and dooming sincere brethren to perdition, must be works of bitterness and grief. I wonder not, that a man should weep while he is doing them; my only wonder is, that he can ever do them, and not weep!—*Dr. Dewey.*