

A Lord's Day Snippet!

Biblical And Southern Studies

H. Rondel Rumburg, ThM, DMin

481

1 Ye humble saints proclaim abroad
The honours of a faithful God,
How just and true are all his ways,
How much above your highest praise.

2 The words his sacred lips declare
Of his own mind the image bear;
What should him tempt, from frailty free,
Blest in his self-sufficiency?

3 He will not his great self deny:
A God all truth can never lie:
As well might he his being quit,
As breaks his oath, or word forget.

4 Let frighten'd rivers change their course,
Or backward hasten to their source;
Swift thro' the air let rocks be hurl'd,
And mountains like the chaff be whirl'd.

5 Let sun and stars forget to rise,
Or quit their stations in the skies;
Let heav'n and earth both pass away,
Eternal truth shall ne'er decay.

6 True to his word, God gave his Son,
To die for crimes which men had done;
Blest pledge! He never will revoke
A single promise he has spoke.

John Needham (d. 1786)

FOR THE TRUTH'S SAKE

"For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever."

2 John 1:2

John by God the Holy Spirit's guidance wrote the reason for his writing. It was for the love of the truth. The elect lady and her children as well as those who know the truth are

addressed as those who love the truth. The basis was for the truth's sake as revealed in Christ who is the Truth. The common ground as John points out is "the truth." Our foundation and focus should be in the truth.

Our very purpose should be "for the truth's sake." John in verse 1 pointed out that Christian love is focused ON truth, and Christian knowledge is focused IN truth. Jesus in His high priestly prayer said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," who is the personification of truth. If Christ in you is the hope of glory, then Christ is the Truth in you. "It is not enough to have truth on our side, if we have not truth in our hearts" [William Gurnall].

What does John mean by truth? Truth is so simple that it is difficult to define. "Ultimate truth is the truth of God, and that He is the foundation and source of all other truth" [R. C. Sproul]. Existentialism of our day does not believe in absolute truth for to them everything is relative. Truth is as certain and constant as God is immutable. Truth is what God says and reveals in His Word of Truth. What is true? God's knowledge, wisdom, justice, goodness, etc. is true. "God's truth is the attribute which characterizes all His communications to His creatures" [Dabney]. Paul spoke of the truth OF Christ (2 Cor. 11:10), the truth IN Christ (Rom. 9:1) and John spoke of the truth IS Christ (John 14:6).

John noted that the truth "dwells in us." All who are in Christ have Him indwelling them by His Spirit forever more. Yes, the truth has taken up permanent residence in the child of God as the branch abides in the vine (John 15:4 ff.). The fruit of this indwelt truth is seen in the believer's life. For example: Gen. R. E. Lee spoke in the highest terms to President Jefferson Davis about a certain officer; another officer was greatly astonished at what he heard and spoke to Gen. Lee, "General, do you not know that the man of whom you spoke so highly to the president is one of your bitterest enemies, and misses no opportunity to malign you?" "Yes," replied Lee, "but the President asked my opinion of him, and I gave him a true answer, he did not ask his opinion of me." The truth is the mark of a true gentleman.

The truth remains in us. "And will be with us for ever." This is an assertion made by John. Not only is Christ the Truth "in us" but He is the Truth "with us." The presence of Christ assures us, "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive." The Truth dwells in us and shall be with us "forever."

Hugh Latimer became a bold and zealous defender of truth in the utmost degree. He astonished all of Cambridge University when he spoke out openly against the Roman doctrine of

purgatory. This sermon was followed by an attack on the immaculacy of the Virgin Mary. Soon, he began to attack the veneration of relics and the images of the saints. When Edward VI died in 1553, “Bloody Mary” Tudor came to the throne of England. She immediately sought to undo all that the good Edward VI had done. Stephen Gardiner, the queen’s favorite bishop, a devout Romanist and Papist, brought charges against Latimer, and the old man was summoned to Oxford to answer for his “heresies.” For many long months, he and other Reformed churchmen like Nicholas Ridley and Thomas Cranmer were summoned to disputation after disputation. Cranmer, always timid, recanted for a time and tried to blend in with the current system. But “Old Father Latimer” would not compromise the truth. Latimer was so sick that he could sometimes hardly stand on his feet during these disputations. His memory was gone, and his sharp skills as an eloquent orator had faded with the years. But Latimer carried his New Testament with him, and did his best to answer all questions in the simple words of Scripture. On the morning of October 16, 1555, the entire town of Oxford was in the streets. The younger Bishop Ridley appeared first and looked earnestly for Latimer. Finally, Latimer appeared, and Ridley cried out, “Oh, be ye there?” “Yea,” answered Latimer, “as fast as I can follow.” The two men embraced each other fondly and knelt together by the stake. Onlookers tried to hear their words, but their words of sweet fellowship were lost to this world as they prepared for an entrance into the presence of the God of Truth. After they were chained to the stake, the burning fagot was lit and applied to the pile. “Old Father Latimer” turned to Ridley to encourage his young friend, “Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle by God’s grace in England as I trust shall never be put out.” In a few short minutes, “Old Father Latimer” was in the presence of his Lord and Master for the truth’s sake. Remember the Truth shall set you free in a way beyond comprehension.