

THE  
PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY  
AND  
PRINCETON REVIEW.

---

NEW SERIES, No. 3.—JULY, 1872.

---

ART. I.—PRIMITIVE GREEK RELIGION.

By TAYLER LEWIS, LL.D., Union College, Schenectady, N. Y.

THE earliest traceable link between the Greek Mythology and the primitive Patriarchal Monotheism must be looked for in the grove of Dodona, on the Western coast, afterwards called Epirus. Long before the war of Troy, a Deity was worshipped there of whom Homer seems to speak with awe, as of one belonging to an antiquity transcending the theology of his day, and whose religion carried with it a more hoary sacredness: "O Dodonæan, Pelasgian, Zeus, *τηλόθρι ναίων*—*αιθέρι ναίων*—dwelling afar, dwelling on high." It seems to convey the idea of something separate, holy, unapproachable. There were two peculiar features in this very early Dodonæan religion. One was the worship of Zeus alone, as unassociated with any other divinity; the other, the esteemed sacredness of the oak. Both testify to its primitive character. As far as can be known this feeling of regard for the oak never degenerated into an idolatry of its object, although it early became the vehicle and fosterer of a gloomy superstition. It gave character to this primitive oracular seat, and inspired that marked reverence for it which is so evident in the Homeric and the earliest Grecian poetry. It is certain that, from the first, a great impression had been made by something in the history and in the local surroundings of Dodona. The seat of the oracle was, originally, not a temple but a grove. Natural causes here, as well as elsewhere, lent

men, through conscience, sympathy and love of life, can be affected by motives to become good. The philosophy which makes something back of volition the necessary cause of the character of all volitions, involves the conclusion that the heart of Adam must have been changed by creative power before he could have sinned. And the ultimate conclusion must be, that if God is the author of holiness he is also the author of sin.

So far as any of these thoughts differ from opinions commonly received in the Church, the responsibility rests with no particular school of Theology. And so far as any of these views are peculiar, they are not new, having been fixed in the mind of the writer more than a quarter of a century. Their presentation in this form is occasioned, as already intimated, by the appearance of the treatise which has given a name to this article.

---

#### ART. VI.—PREACHING CHRIST.

By LYMAN H. ATWATER, D.D.

The learned article of Dr. Schröder on "The Order of Salvation," which appeared in the January and April numbers of the *American Presbyterian Review* for 1871, translated by the Rev. G. W. Sheldon, gave quite an exhaustive resumé of European modes of treating the topic. It was quite natural that some American discussions of the subject should have eluded the author's notice. The article by the Rev. Mr. Willson, which precedes, well represents the difficulties and the manner of solving them, accepted with more or less modifications, by numerous American divines. In order to give our readers a fuller view of the drift of discussions, and to show them the *status questionis*, among us, from another standpoint, we shall follow Mr. Willson's article with an extract from an article on "The Matter of Preaching," in the *Princeton Review* for October, 1856, which, though written by the author of these lines, derives an importance not intrinsically belong-

ing to it, from the fact that it was attributed to the late Dr. J. W. Alexander, and as such was by mistake incorporated in his posthumous volume of essays, entitled "Thoughts on Preaching."

"The effect of preaching the law faithfully will not be to encourage men to attempt to gain life by keeping it, but to show them their utter inability to keep it, and their hopeless condemnation by it. Convincing them of their ruin, it fills them with a sense of their need of a Redeemer. This is the great central truth of revelation and the foundation of true religion. For "other foundation can no man lay." Therefore, while, as we have shown, God must be set forth, first of all and above all, in preaching, he must be preëminently set forth as "God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses." It were a poor and unworthy work to smite, and not to heal; to tear, and not bind up; to kill, and not make alive. Hence, since He, who by death overcame him that hath the power of death, alone can deliver us from sin, our paramount office is to declare Him, who is the way, the truth, and the life. As for us, our mission is to "preach Christ and him crucified; to the Jews a stumbling-block, to the Greeks foolishness, but to them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." We need not labor to prove to the Christian, that

"Christ and his cross are all our theme."

All else converges towards him, or radiates from him. It tends to lead us to him, or flows from our union to him. All unfoldings of God, in his perfections and glories; all exhibitions of the character, condition, and duties of man; all inculcations of doctrine and practice, if true and scriptural, lead the soul directly to the Lord Jesus Christ, for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. "Ye believe in God," says Christ, "believe also in me." True faith in God involves faith in Christ, as soon as he is set before the soul; for in him all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily.

"The first archangel never saw  
So much of God before."

We behold his glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Faith in

God then is implicitly faith in Christ ; it is a germ which will unfold itself as such, as soon as Christ is presented to it. The law slays, thus showing us that Christ is our only life. So every doctrine, every duty, all legitimate matter of preaching, of whatever sort, culminates in Christ, in whom all things shall be gathered into one, and who filleth all in all. All duty leads to him, to discharge the debt incurred by its non-performance, to obtain strength for its future fulfilment ; while the wisdom, power, and love displayed in Christ, evoke the highest love and adoration, and incite, while they enable us to render, grateful and devoted obedience.

But upon this general view there is no cause to dwell. Few Christians will deny that Christ should be the centre and substance of all preaching. It is only upon some of the consequences and bearings of this truth, that there is occasion for remark.

1. We apprehend that preachers are in little danger of excess in setting forth Christ objectively to their hearers. He, God in him, is the great object towards which their faith, love, hope, obedience, and devotion, are to be directed. They are Christians only as they thus bow to that name which is above every name. They are complete in Him who is the Head of all principality and power. Without him they can do nothing. Life, faith, love, hope, come of looking to him, not to themselves, or to anything which they or other men can spin out of themselves. It should never be forgotten that Christianity, although working an inward renovation by the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost, develops this change in accordance with the laws of our rational and moral nature. No Christian affections can arise except in view of their proper objects. These objects are found in Christ, the God-man, our Saviour, in his person, offices, and works. Of course, we do not mean to advocate any monotonous repetition of any single or isolated truth in regard to him. There is no need of this. One of the most remarkable treatises in our language is that of Bell, showing how much of God is evinced in the human hand. A friend of ours has in contemplation a similar treatise in regard to the honey-bee. If

these diminutive objects require volumes to show the extent of divine imprint upon them, can there be any lack of variety, any need of monotony, in exploring the infinite compass and relations of the Redeemer and his work? All life contains inexhaustible variety in unity which never tires by monotony. How much more He who is the Life, and combines in his own person a divine life, a human life, and the source of all life, out of whose fulness we all receive, and grace for grace! The endless sides and aspects in which he stands related to his people, enable us to view him in relations ever fresh and diversified, while yet he remains the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.

2. It hence follows, that the way and grounds of vital union to Christ should be thoroughly and abundantly set forth and cleared up in preaching. The nature of saving faith, as distinguished from all counterfeits of it; its simplicity, as distinguished from all the entanglements with which unbelief would embarrass it; its naked essence, as simple trust in Christ and his righteousness, should be, in one form and another, a frequent theme of preaching, and habitually inwoven with the whole texture of our discourses. This must be done, even if it incur the danger of seeming repetition. It is the grand requisite to the birth of the soul into the kingdom of God. Simple and rudimentary as it is in Christian teaching, free justification is an article in which men born under the covenant of works are dull learners. There always are those in every congregation who are thinking and inquiring on the subject of religion, but who have never known what it is to believe on Christ to the saving of the soul. They are always babes in Christ, and weak believers, who tremble and stumble in their Christian walk, because they have no adequate view of the free, gratuitous, and full justification which faith embraces and insures merely for the taking. At this point, too, not a few older Christians, "when, for the time they ought to be teachers, have need that one teach them which be the first principles of the doctrine of Christ." Many ministers have been surprised, in conversations with the sick and dying, to find persons who

have been their hearers all their days, in a mist on this simple and vital question, How can a sinner be justified before God? They know, indeed, in general, that it is not by their own, but by Christ's righteousness; yet, until the Spirit takes the scales from their eyes, they will be found, in some form, to be working up a righteousness of their own. They will think they must in some way make themselves better before they can be fit to go to Christ or he can receive them. Many believers often waver at this point. They doubt whether persons so unworthy have any warrant to appropriate to themselves the Saviour's righteousness. It is of great importance, that all inquiring, doubting, trembling souls be brought to see clearly the true nature of justification, which inures to those that believe on Him that justifieth the ungodly, that so they may stagger not at the promise, but be strong in the faith, giving glory to God. Nor can the preacher well expend too much of his strength here. All the liberty wherewith Christ maketh free; all filial confidence, love, and devotion; all holy strength and courage to serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of our lives; all that is sweet, genial, and buoyant, in our spiritual state, depend upon it. Thus there is peace and joy in believing. Thus we obtain righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Thus alone can we be delivered from the spirit of bondage and slavish fear, or feel ourselves in such a relation toward God as enables us to serve him with a true heart and right spirit. To the carnal eye, it indeed seems impossible that free justification should not encourage licentiousness. To the spiritual eye, it is the purifying spring from which good works must flow, and cannot but flow. We are not to get life in order to come to Christ, but to come to Christ that we may have life.

There is a class of theologians and preachers who involve this whole subject in perplexity, by the theory that love precedes and is the spring of evangelical faith, and that none but penitents are warranted to trust in Christ. The effect of this is to make men feel that, until they can find within themselves evidences of penitence and love, they must consider

the mercies of the gospel, as Boston says, "forbidden fruit," which it is unlawful for them to touch. On this subject, confusion of mind is the easiest of all things, and the clear truth among the most important. It is true, that no faith is genuine without repentance and love. So faith without works is dead. It is also true, that faith, although in the order of time simultaneous with commencing love, repentance, and good works, is, in the order of nature, before, conditional to, and causative of them. Love can only arise from faith's perception and belief of the excellence and glory of Christ and his cross, and of God as shining through them. It arises as they see,

"What wisdom, power, and love,  
Shine in their dying Lord."

But we must discern and believe in this loveliness before it can excite our love. And when we believe and see it, it cannot but draw the heart. Another consideration is, that until we are in that friendly relation to God in which justifying faith places us, we cannot confide ourselves to him. We feel that our sins subject us to his righteous displeasure, and that we merit and must receive vengeance at his hands. Now love is impossible toward those whom we dare not trust, because we are subjects of their righteous wrath. So faith is indispensable to love. And since all works not inspired by faith and love are slavish, dead works, it follows, that although there be no faith without repentance, love, and holiness, yet faith is their antecedent and cause, as truly as the sun of its beams, and life of breath. We apprehend that a clear view of this point is of great moment in guiding inquiring souls. He is paralysed in making the gospel offer, who cannot, without conditions, bid every thirsty soul come and welcome; who is constrained to tell sinners that they must get rid of their inward distempers and maladies before coming to Christ, instead of going to him at once for the removal of sin and guilt. This is preaching a fettered gospel, and it produces a fettered piety. It gendereth to bondage. It is alien from the sweet and simple faith, the filial confidence and freedom, the buoyant yet humble hope, the cordial love and genial devotion of

the gospel ; all which result from going at once to Christ for all, receiving all as a free gift from him, and thence giving all in love and gratitude to him. We think this view is sustained by the whole drift of scriptural representations. According to these, faith purifieth the heart : it works (exerts its energies) by love ; it is the victory that overcometh the world. This view fully accords with the absolute necessity of love, repentance, humility, and good works, to salvation. Faith, which does not exert and evince itself in these, is not saving faith. Though we have all faith and have not charity, it profiteth nothing. Nor do the calls to repent, with the promise of pardon annexed, conflict with, they rather corroborate, this view. On what is this pardon based? On Christ. How apprehended and applied? By faith. When the wicked are exhorted to forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts, and turn to God, who hath mercy, and to our God who will abundantly pardon, it is only a form of teaching, that faith in God's pardoning mercy is prerequisite to true repentance. The definition to the Catechism is a true summation of scriptural teachings on this subject. "Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience."

The mistaken theory to which we have adverted, of deriving faith from love, and not love from faith, has, we are persuaded, a strong tendency to generate error on the subject of the sinner's inability. The preacher does not see his way clear to direct the sinner immediately to Christ for deliverance from this, and all other evils and miseries of sin. If he cannot bid the sinner go out of himself at once to a strength which is made perfect in his weakness, nor till he has procured penitence, or love, or some other robe of clean linen with which to go, the question arises, "How shall he get all this? How can he be incited to work and strive for it? The answer is, the preacher must be prepared to tell him he is able to accomplish it, or else he is hopelessly paralysed, and can do nothing, but leave the inquirer passively awaiting the

sovereign afflatus of the Spirit. Hence various fictions of natural, and we know not what other, ability, have been devised to bridge over this chasm. But the inability of the sinner though moral, is real, and inconsistent with anything that can properly or safely be called ability. All modes of teaching which have any other effect than to lead men, under a sense of their own helplessness, to cast themselves on Christ for strength to lead a Christian life, are delusive and mischievous. We are not sufficient for anything, as of ourselves; our sufficiency is of God. When we are weak, then are we strong in the Lord and the power of his might. This is the whole theory of the Christian life. The just shall live by faith; not faith in their own ability, but of the Son of God, who loved us and gave himself for us. The whole may be summed up by adding to the article of the Catechism on repentance, those on faith and effectual calling. "Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel." "Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel."

If we add Art. 2, of Chap. X, of our Confession to what we have already quoted from the article in the *Princeton Review*, it will complete our own view, and the representation of our standards, and, as we think, of the Scriptures on the general subject. "This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed by it." 2 Tim. i. 9; Tit. iii, 4, 5; Rom. ix, 11; Eph. ii, 4, 5, 8, 9; 1 Cor. ii, 14; Eph. ii, 5; John vi. 37; Ezek. xxxvi, 27, etc., etc.