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THE EXAMINATION

OF THE

REV. JAMES WOODROW, D. D.,

BY THE

CHARLESTON PRESBYTERY.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE PRESBYTERY.

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ALLENDALE, S. C., Oct. 8th, 1890, }
WEDNESDAY, 3:30 P. M. }

A letter from the Presbytery of Augusta, dismissing the Rev. James Woodrow, D. D., to this Presbytery, was presented and read, and, on motion, the Presbytery proceeded at once to the Constitutional examination. The Rev. R. A. Webb, D. D., was appointed examiner. It was ordered that both the questions and answers be in writing.

THE EXAMINATION.

EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION.

Ques. Will you state to the Presbytery the evidence of conversion which satisfies your own mind?

Ans. The evidence is my conviction that I have accepted the terms on which salvation is offered in the sacred Scriptures, viz: that I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and have repented of sin.

Ques. State to the Presbytery the evidence of growth in grace which comforts you most?

Ans. My chief and highest comfort is, that I am conscious of growth in love to Jesus Christ my Saviour.

Ques. It is currently reported that your life is almost wholly secularized; that you are the Proprietor of a Job Printing Office, Professor in the South Carolina University, President of the Central National Bank of Columbia, President of the Home Insurance Company, Director in the C. N. & L. R. R. Company, Vice-President of the Columbia Land and Investment Company, Vice-President of a Building and Loan Association, Director of the Piedmont Land and Improvement Company, Director of the Congaree Lumber or Furniture Company, President of the Carolina Loan and Investment Company. How do you reconcile this state of things with your ministerial vows and vocation?

Ans. The enumeration above is, in the main, correct. I am Professor in the University of South Carolina, President of the Central Bank of Columbia, President of the S. C. Home

Ins. Co., President of the Carolina Loan and Investment Co., Vice-President of the Congaree Lumber and Fur. Co., Vice-President of a Building and Loan Co., Vice-President of the Columbia Land and Improvement Co., Director in the C. N. & L. R. R. Co.; I am also Director in the C. C. & A. R. R. Co.; I am also a Director of the Columbia Phosphate Co. I am not a Director of the Piedmont Land and Imp. Co., nor am I Proprietor of a Job Printing Office. But I am editor of the Southern Presbyterian. I reconcile this state of things with my ministerial vows and vocation by the fact, that I am making full proof of my ministry by disseminating the gospel for the edification of the Church through the press; that I am debarred from preaching in the many pulpits to which I am constantly invited, by the condition of my throat, under the advice of a physician, and from teaching in a Theological Seminary by the action of the Synod of South Carolina and three other Synods. I give no time to any secular employment until I have done all in my power to disseminate the gospel through the Southern Presbyterian.

Ques. How is it that the condition of your throat does not prevent your lecturing in the University, while it prevents you almost wholly from preaching in the pulpits of our Churches?

Ans. Without considering how far the members of this Presbytery need to be informed on the subject, I answer, that lecturing on scientific subjects to 25 to 35 students in a small room requires only a conversational tone, while all know that such an amount of voice is not at all adequate in preaching.

Ques. In the Southern Presbyterian, November 8, 1888, you three times publish this Presbytery as the "Charleston Inquisition," once as the "venerable Inquisition," and its decisions as "Papal pronunciamentos." In the issue of Nov. 29, 1888, you published an article under the title of "More work for the Inquisition," the "venerable inquisition," and its decisions as "Papal pronunciamentos, inquisitorial imprecations." In the issue of December 20, 1888, you publish the following language: "I am almost afraid to read the news, for I fear I shall see the startling headlines: A. R. K. Burned by order of His Holiness, the Pope, in the Holy City, at Columbia, seat of the Papal Dominions, and Rendezvous of

his Minions." And again this Presbytery is called "the venerable Inquisition." Will you disavow these offensive epithets?

Ans. I do not remember the above quotations from the Southern Presbyterian in their connection, so that I can neither reiterate nor disavow them. But I may add, that so far as any thing that I have ever published in the Southern Presbyterian, is concerned, I am prepared to show, before any tribunal where I may be charged with having committed an offence in such publication, that such publication was right and proper, and not an offence. But, of course, this cannot be done where there is no opportunity of showing the exact meaning of the quotations by pointing out their connexion with other parts of the articles in which they appear, and their relation to current events.

Ques. In an editorial, June 6, 1889, you publish this language:

"We have a supreme contempt for such Popish orders as the 'interdict' * * * Our feeling is re-enforced by an honest indignation that a Presbytery of our Church should be so misled as to attempt such an iniquity * * * We are not to be turned from this path by the rumbling thunder of any petty inquisition."

In an editorial Oct. 11, 1888, you say:

"This is not the first time that authority has been unlawfully assumed in attempts to lord it over God's heritage; but we shall be greatly surprised if it is not found that the sentiment still burns brightly in every true Presbyterian breast, 'Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God.'"

In an editorial, March 21, 1889, you characterize a resolution of this body as the "Presbytery's horrible decree." Will you retract this offensive language?

Ans. Without considering whether or not I am now called upon to defend what was done more than a year ago, I give the same answer to this question as to the last.

Ques. In 1888, when the Synod of South Carolina met at Greenwood, it directed this Presbytery to meet and correct a certain minute. In commenting upon this correction you say in an editorial, March 21, 1889: "Whether this action of the Presbytery constitutes obedience to Synod, and whether the members of Presbytery sincerely believe that it does, are questions we do not propose to discuss. No doubt the Synod will

consider the first next fall. The consciences of the members of Presbytery who voted for the two resolutions in a court of the Lord Jesus Christ—1. That we will obey; 2. That we regard what we are doing as obedience to what we sincerely believe to be the meaning of Synod's order—the consciences of these members are deciding, or will hereafter decide, this second question in the sight of the Lord of the conscience." In an editorial of April 25, 1889, in commenting upon a report of the proceedings of this Presbytery, published in the Charleston World, which this body had declared "incorrect, partial and misleading," you say: "In view of the recent history of Charleston Presbytery, a very strong reason for believing in the correctness of the *World's* report to many minds, might be found in the fact, that the Presbytery adopted a resolution condemning it." Will you retract these reflections upon this Presbytery's sincerity and veracity?

Ans. I give to this question the same answer as to the last.

Ques. In 1888, at its regular meeting at Aiken, S. C., this Presbytery spread the following upon its minutes: "Presbytery hereby informs its ministers, ruling elders, and deacons, that the General Assembly has judicially affirmed the decision of the Synod of Georgia, declaring that 'The belief of * * * Jas. Woodrow, D. D., as to the origin of the body of Adam was contrary to the word of God as interpreted in the standards of the Church, and, that therefore, this Presbytery regards the holding of said form of evolution as contrary to the word of God as interpreted in the Standards of the Church, and forbids the public contending against the decision of the Assembly.'" Under an order of the Synod, the Presbytery inserted into this resolution the words, "except in a constitutional manner." The General Assembly at Chattanooga, in 1889, by a vote of 104 to 36, sustained this action. Will you submit to this resolution and obey the same?

Ans. If this question means, Will I obey any resolution forbidding the doing of anything whatever except in a constitutional manner, I unhesitatingly say that I will never in the future do anything except in a constitutional manner, as I have always endeavored not to do in the past.

Ques. Why have you so strenuously contended against this resolution, and so severely criticised this Presbytery for its passage?

Ans. I do not remember that I have objected to the resolution when proper emphasis has been laid on the clause, "except in a constitutional manner." My criticism of the resolution in other respects I am ready to explain and defend whenever suitable opportunity is given. The columns of the Southern Presbyterian will show fully my reasons.

Ques. In an editorial, June 6, 1889, after the meeting of the Assembly at Chattanooga, concerning this Presbytery you used the following language: "But many of whose acts by the rest of mankind, including ourselves, are regarded with very mixed feelings in which neither respect nor admiration is specially prominent." Are there any of the acts of this body devoid of your respect, and regarded by you as here described?

Ans. I cannot recall all the acts of this Presbytery with sufficient definiteness to enable me to answer this question. But if the Presbytery's acts are repeated to me, I will, if the Presbytery desire, give my opinion of each as far as possible.

Ques. After the meeting of the General Assembly at Chattanooga, after the words, "Except in a constitutional manner," had been introduced into the resolution characterised by you as the "Aiken interdict," commenting upon that very resolution, June 6, 1889, you use this language: "We are not to be turned from this path by the rumbling thunder of any petty inquisition. More especially when one of the fundamental principles of the Presbyterian faith—liberty in the Lord—is attempted to be destroyed, we will not, dare not, hold our peace." Do you adhere to this purpose concerning this resolution?

Ans. The language quoted above can have no reference to the whole resolution, including the added exception; as, with the exception, the resolution restrains no rightful liberty. With regard to any attempt to restrain the liberty rightly enjoyed by one of the Lord's freemen, I adhere with all my heart to the purpose expressed in my words as quoted.

THEOLOGY.

Ques. Do you hold the Confession of Faith in the same sense now that you did when you subscribed it?

Ans. I hold the Confession of Faith now in exactly the same sense that I did when I subscribed, viz., as containing the system of doctrine set forth in the sacred scriptures.

Ques. Is there any part of the Confession of Faith, any individual statement or doctrine of it, to which you except? If any, what?

Ans. In the Chapter on Creation (IV) Par. 1, I except to the statement that "it pleased God in the beginning to create or make of nothing the world, and all things therein * * * * in the space of six days"—if this statement means that this world was made of nothing in six days of twenty-four hours each. In the Confession proper, I know of nothing else to which I except. And I believe that the Westminster Assembly intended to teach the doctrine to which I object.

Ques. Do you still hold the views on the subject of evolution which you have published?

Ans. I hold firmly to all the views on evolution which I have published in the last six and a half years. All my studies during that time have convinced me more and more of their probable truth.

Ques. Do you claim the right to advocate these views as you may have occasion?

Ans. I claim the right to advocate these views as I may have occasion. The occasion seldom arises amongst students of natural history, as the truth of evolution, with certain limitations, amongst them is almost universally taken for granted as established. If the occasion should arise, I shall examine it—subject of course to the rightful authority of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction under which I may be.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

Ques. In the Huntsville Assembly, 1871, while you were defending yourself against the accusation of Mr. Caiter, you said: "The voice of this Assembly is to me the voice of God." Was the voice of the Assemblies of Augusta and Baltimore, the one making a deliverance *in thesi*, and the other a judicial decision against your views of evolution, the voice of God to you?

Ans. The statement that the voice of the General Assembly or other Church Court is to me the voice of God expresses my view to-night as in 1871, when understood and interpreted according to the *in thesi* deliverance of the General Assembly in 1880 on this subject. I do not regard the General Assembly or

other Church Court as infallible. I believe that the General Assembly of 1886 (Augusta) erred in some respects regarding evolution, and that the judicial decision of the General Assembly in 1888 (Baltimore) contained contradictory statements. Therefore, having exercised the right set forth in 1880, I do not regard the *in thesi* deliverance of 1886 and the judicial decision of 1888 as the voice of God; while I have submitted in all respects to all that seemed to me to be commanded by the Baltimore General Assembly's judicial decision—by calling the attention of the Presbytery of Augusta to it, and requesting them to apply it in any way that they might think proper.

QUESTIONS ASKED BY REV. J. WILLIAM FLINN.

1. *Ques.* Without reference to the admissibility of Mr. Webb's third question concerning your occupations, how much of your time is engaged in the secular pursuits therein enumerated?

Ans. It would be hard for me to say exactly. One railway directorship has occupied me about an hour within the last year; another, two or three hours; all the other directorships, vice-presidencies, and presidencies, except that of the Central Bank, from 3 to 8 or 10 hours each per annum. At the Bank I spend most of my hours in the morning, except when at the University—using my room there as my study. My Bank work is not clerical or mechanical, and requires time only to decide matters submitted to me—sometimes perhaps in all two hours a day, sometimes fifteen minutes. The rest of the time at the Bank I spend in editing the Southern Presbyterian, studying scientific and other works with reference to my University work, etc. I lecture and hold recitations at the College one or two hours a day for nine months. The rest of my time—which contains more hours than most professional men devote to all their work, I give to editing the Southern Presbyterian—with the mechanical department of which I have nothing to do. I have recently spent two or three weeks in travelling in the North. I do not think all my directorships, etc., enumerated, with the two exceptions noted, occupied more working hours during the year than were consumed in this journey.

OCTOBER 9TH, THURSDAY MORNING.

The examination of Dr. Woodrow was resumed, and Rev. J. W. Flinn continued his questions.

2 Ques. When engaged in these pursuits into which Providence has led you, do you strive by your example and your influence to recommend the Christian Faith and life to those with whom you come in contact?

2 Ans. I so strive.

3 Ques. Were you elected to these various positions?

3 Ans. Yes.

4 Ques. What do the people of your community think of known Christian fidelity of character and uprightness of life as one of the qualifications for such offices as you hold?

4 Ans. I don't know. Integrity, business ability, and the like are looked for; but I cannot say that Christianity, as such, enters into the case.

5 Ques. Have you reason to believe that God has blessed your Christian teaching and example in your home—by making your children's lives consecrated to Christ?

5 Ans. All I am willing to say in reply to this question is, that I earnestly thank God for having blessed me in this particular. As to what my children are, and how they became so, I must leave it to others to express an opinion.

6 Ques. As Professor in the South Carolina University, do you, as far as practicable, take pastoral oversight of those committed to your charge? Are you diligent in sowing the seed of the Word; and gathering the fruit thereof, as one who watches for souls? And have you reason for believing that God blesses your work?

6 Ans. As teacher in the University, I do all in my power to sow the seed of the Word, as one who watches for souls. I take and make opportunity in my class-room to urge belief in the Word of God, as of infinitely higher importance than anything else; to teach that the Bible is true in every particular; that there is not the slightest ground in science for declining to accept it as wholly true; that, while the laws by which God governs his physical universe are uniform, they are not so in such sense as to lead to disbelief in miracles; and so as to similar mat-

ters, as far as practicable. As to fruit, I may not speak fully; but may say, I have good reason to believe that not a few of my pupils have been strengthened in their belief in the Bible by my teachings, and that from the minds of others difficulties in the way of believing, have been removed. I may, perhaps, be pardoned for adding, that I have been told by the youth himself, and his now bereaved mother, that it was my class-room teachings and private counsels which were largely instrumental in leading one of my recent pupils to accept and love Christ as his Saviour—a pupil who, in the Geological Survey corps, lost his life a few months ago in a distant Northwestern State. I add no more, as I am not willing unduly to consume your time.

7 *Ques.* Waiving the admissibility of Mr. Webb's questions concerning certain publications in the Southern Presbyterian when, as editor, you have criticised current events in the Church, do you ever do so in a spirit of bitterness or ill-will, or with any motive to injure any Church court or an individual?

7 *Ans.* So far as I know my own heart, never.

8 *Ques.* Do you, *ex animo*, answer affirmatively the following questions:

"1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

2. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?

3. Do you approve of the government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States?

4. Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?

5. Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry out of love to God and a sincere desire to promote his glory in the gospel of His Son?

6. Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?

7. Do you engage to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all your duties as a Christian and a Minister of the Gospel, whether personal or relative, private or public; and to endeavor,

by the grace of God, to adorn the profession of the gospel in your conversation, and to walk with exemplary piety before those among whom God calls you to labor?"

Form of Government, Par. 119. Ques. 1-7.

8 *Ans.* I do answer all these questions affirmatively *ex animo*.

QUESTIONS BY REV. G. A. BLACKBURN.

1 *Ques.* How can ecclesiastical bodies rightfully restrain the privilege you claim of advocating your views on evolution?

1 *Ans.* I do not know. Whether or not such right exists or may exist under any conceivable circumstances, I have not sufficiently considered to be able to express an opinion.

2 *Ques.* Would you feel at liberty to advocate these views before your classes at the University against any *in thesi* or judicial decision of our Church courts on this subject?

2 *Ans.* If called in the course of my teaching to discuss such subjects, I would feel at liberty to advocate my views before my classes under the conditions set forth in the question. If not entitled under our Church law to exercise this liberty, I would hold myself ready for trial before our Church courts for having been guilty of an offence. If found guilty, I would obey the command of the Church courts thus legally given, so long as I remained under their jurisdiction.

3 *Ques.* Do you regard the Baltimore decision as restraining your liberty to advocate your views on Evolution?

3 *Ans.* I do not. The Baltimore decision affirmed the judgment of the Synod of Georgia, which annulled the decision of the Presbytery of Augusta, which was, that I was not guilty. The effect of this was to remand the whole question to the Presbytery for its action. The Presbytery declared there was no cause for action against me, when I avowed my continued belief of my previously expressed views; the Synod of Georgia approved the record setting forth this fact; the General Assembly approved the Synod's records. Hence I concluded, both from this action, and from the entire absence of any prohibition in the Baltimore decision, that no attempt to restrain my liberty, had been intended.

Dr. Woodrow offered the following explanation:

"I wish to explain one of my answers given yesterday, by say-

ing that I did not intend to recognize the Aiken resolution, forbidding, etc., as ever having been addressed to me: so far as I remember, it is addressed exclusively to the ministers, ruling Elders, and deacons in Charleston Presbytery. I do not recognize the right of one Presbytery to exercise jurisdiction over the members of another."

At the close of the examination, the Rev. R. A. Webb, D. D., offered the following resolution:

"Resolved, That Dr. Woodrow's examination be declared unsatisfactory, and that his application for membership in this Presbytery be declined.

"1. Because Dr. Woodrow's examination reveals the fact that his life has become so thoroughly secularized, that this body, were it to receive him into its membership, would feel constrained to remonstrate with him, and this would involve this Presbytery in a controversy which it does not desire.

"2. Because Dr. Woodrow has so seriously reflected upon the honor, the sincerity, and veracity of this body in the columns of the paper which he edits, that this Presbytery feels bound by considerations of dignity and self-respect to deny him the fellowship which he seeks. In response to the Presbytery's demand for the withdrawal of these reflections, he said: 'I can neither reiterate nor disavow them. But I may add that so far as anything that I have ever published in the Southern Presbyterian is concerned, I am prepared to show, before any tribunal where I may be charged with having committed an offence in such publication, that such publication was right and proper, and not an offence.' Instead of disavowing these offensive epithets, he thus declares his ability to prove them right and proper. He himself has shut the door of this Presbytery in his own face.

"3. Because Dr. Woodrow has declared his disrespect for and contempt of some of the acts of this Presbytery, and, upon the demand of this body, he has failed to satisfy it as to the language he used, and as to his spirit of obedience.

"4. Because Dr. Woodrow has reaffirmed his doctrinal errors on the subject of evolution, which have been condemned several times by the Courts of the Church as contrary to the Presbyterian Standards, saying: 'I hold firmly to all the views on evolution which I have published in the last six and a half years. All my studies during that time have convinced me more and more of their probable truth.'

"5. Because Dr. Woodrow claims the right to advocate these views of evolution as occasion may present itself in the face of

every species of decision known to our law. 'I claim,' he says, 'the right to advocate these views as I may have occasion.'

"6. Because the reception of Dr. Woodrow under the circumstances would put this Presbytery in grievous contradiction with itself, while this body is still convinced of the correctness of its past history touching the matters involved; and with this history Dr. Woodrow was familiar when he sought his letter to this Presbytery.

"7. Because this Presbytery agrees with Dr. Woodrow, when he said, in commenting upon Dr. Richardson's vote against the reception of Dr. Martin into the Presbytery of Memphis: "Consistency required every one, who agreed with him as to the character of the doctrine in question, to vote with him." (Southern Presbyterian, August 13, 20, 1885.) This Presbytery in rejecting Dr. Woodrow is in accord with these views of his editorial.

"8. This Presbytery is persuaded that it traverses no law of the Church in rejecting this application. The law of the Church, self-protection and self-respect alike authorize it."

Immediately after the reading of this resolution, Rev. W. T. Thompson, D. D., said: "In view of the examination, I move that the vote be taken upon the resolution without debate, for to discuss the question of fellowship with one who has flung into our teeth substantially the charge of habitual untruthfulness is, to say the least, to compromise our self-respect." This motion of Dr. Thompson prevailed; and the resolution offered by Dr. Webb was adopted by a vote of 17 to 6.

Presbytery ordered the examination spread upon the minutes, and appointed Rev. R. A. Webb, D. D., Rev. W. T. Thompson, D. D., and Rev. J. R. Dow a committee to publish one thousand copies of the same and distribute them equally among the ministers of the Presbytery.

Rev. J. W. Flinn gave notice of complaint to the Synod of South Carolina against this action of the Presbytery rejecting Dr. Woodrow, and Rev. R. A. Webb, D. D., and Rev. W. T. Thompson, D. D., were appointed to represent the Presbytery in the complaint.