

Divine Jealousy for the Truth.

by Horatius Bonar

God's eyes are always upon the truth, watching over it and marking every error and deviation from his one standard.

Scripture: Psalm 25:5, Psalm 119:160, Proverbs 12:22, Isaiah 45:19, Jeremiah 5:3, John 8:32, Romans 3:4, Ephesians 4:15, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 1 John 1:6-7

Topics: "The Importance of Truth", "Divine Jealousy"

Description

Horatius Bonar emphasizes God's divine jealousy for truth, as expressed in Jeremiah 5:3, where the Lord laments the absence of truth among His people. He asserts that God's watchful, discerning, and just eyes are always upon the truth, condemning falsehood in all its forms. Bonar explains that there is one universal standard of truth, which is the Bible, and that God demands belief in this truth rather than speculation. He warns against the laxity of thought in contemporary society, urging individuals to align their beliefs with God's unwavering standard. Ultimately, Bonar calls for a commitment to truth, reminding us that God's judgment will elevate truth and shame error on the day of the Lord.

Transcript

"O Lord, are not your eyes upon the truth?" Jeremiah 5:3

"O Lord, do not your eyes look for truth?" Jeremiah 5:3

This first clause of this verse should be connected with the two previous verses, in which the Lord complains that truth was gone from his city and his people; that even when swearing by his name men disregarded it. Jerusalem had become a city of falsehood; Israel a nation of false men. They said, 'God regards it not. He allows the speaker of falsehood to go on unpunished. His eyes are not on such men or such things. They are of no importance to him.' The prophet breaks in here with his question, his appeal, "O Jehovah, are not your eyes upon the truth?" Whatever men may say, Do not you regard it? Do not you abhor the untrue? Do not you cut off the liar? Do you not condemn him who utters error?

The word "truth" in Scripture refers both to doctrine and practice. It points both to the "error" and the "lie." It classes both together. It condemns both. False speaking, whether in reference to teaching or witness-bearing, is declared to be abominable to God. His eyes are upon the truth. They watch over it, to guard it and to maintain it. The eyes of Jehovah are upon the truth, whatever men may say; and that which is untrue, whatever form it takes, he marks and will avenge; the untrue thing, whatever its nature or object,

the untrue word, the untrue look, the untrue act, private or public, is not tolerated by him, though tolerated by man, and though God himself bear long with it.

The theory of many is that God's eyes are not upon the truth, and that therefore a man may believe what he pleases, and say what he likes, without fearing God's displeasure. It is only when the untrue thing which he thinks and says interferes with human rights, or social privileges that he is to be visited with punishment. But Jehovah's eyes are upon the truth- the truth as found on earth among the sons of men.

I. They are WATCHFUL eyes. They close not. He whose eyes they are, neither slumbers nor sleeps. Not a sound, a thought, a word from pen or lip, but He notices. He who sees the sparrows, numbers the hairs, and feeds the ravens, has His eye on all human utterances, all writings of man, books or tracts, all openings of man's lips in private or public.

II. They are DISCERNING eyes. They are like flames of fire. They search and try everything. There is no indifference about their gaze. They are keen to discriminate between truth and error. They are the eyes of a judge who loves the true and hates the false. Man thinks whatever is earnestly spoken is good; not so with God. He discerns, he judges, he sifts, he tries every word, every phrase, every thought, every plan. There is such a thing as divine censorship, minute but unerring criticism.

III. They are JUST eyes. They do not make a man an offender for a word, yet they weigh everything in equal balances. There is no over-valuing nor under-valuing what is spoken or written. Each thing is judged without favor or partiality, and it is approved or condemned according as it is true or false. The standard of measurement is divine and perfect. No bribery here, no special favor to the rich. It is "just judgment," a just verdict that is pronounced. The righteous Lord loves righteousness. With nothing less than truth, in every sense, will he be satisfied. Truth from man; truth between himself and man, truth between man and man; the true word, the true thought, the true look, and voice, and tone.

In this watchfulness, this discernment, this justice, there are some things specially to be observed.

1. There is but one standard of truth. God fixes the standard and acts on it, without caprice, or partiality, or compromise. Error is a thousandfold - pliable, moveable, uncertain. But truth is ONE. On this God calls on us to act, on this he acts himself. So that man cannot excuse his error or his falsehood on the ground that there were more standards than one.

2. This one standard of truth is definite. It is not vague or shadowy. It does not merely settle certain great principles, but smaller ones as well. It is so very definite and precise as to leave man without excuse. It lets man know explicitly God's present estimate of truth and falsehood, as well as his future judgment on these. It is so distinct that no one with an open ear and eye can misunderstand it. In our day men call this narrowness, bigotry, intolerance. But if we only insist on being of one mind with God, he that condemns us condemns God himself. Let us be as broad as he is, but no broader; that is enough, whatever the age may say.

3. That one standard of truth is universal. It is for every age and location. It never becomes obsolete. It is like God himself- unchangeable; like the Christ of God- the same yesterday, today, and forever. It was given to our fathers, it is given to us. It suited the East, it suits the West. It suited the Jew, it suits the Gentile also; barbarian, Scythian, bond, or free. It suited the Asian, it suits the European. It suits the Briton, it suits the Indian, and the African. It suits the unlearned, it suits the learned too. One standard for all! One universal test or measurement of truth.

4. That one standard of truth is the Bible. It is no secret standard that He judges us by, or by which He tests truth and error. The test which He gives to us He acts upon himself. The Bible is His book of truth as well as ours. That book contains what God calls truth- truth definite, fixed, certain, not moveable, nor becoming obsolete, nor falling behind the age. The Bible is the one book of the age, no, of the ages- of all ages and all territories. Man's present unbelief seeks to loosen its authority, to dilute its statements, to render indefinite its doctrines. But the word of the Lord endures forever. God is not a man that he should lie. His word is sure, his truth is everlasting, his book is like the sun in the firmament; a light for all ages and lands.

Thus God's eyes are on the truth. It is truth that he delights in, it is error that he abhors. It is truth that he is seeking for among the sons of men. What a condemnation to the laxity of thought in the present day! As if man were at liberty to think as he pleases, irrespective of God and his book! God watches over the truth; he marks each error, each deviation from his one standard.

O man, have you received the very truth, and the whole truth of God? He has given man a book for a standard, not that he may speculate, but that he may not speculate, but believe. What God, in and by that book, demands of men is not criticism, opinion, speculation, but BELIEF. God's eyes are on the truth, to see if men believe it. The day is at hand, the great day of the Lord, when TRUTH only shall be set on high, and error put to shame. O man, God's eyes are on the truth, let yours be on it too. Be true to truth; be true to yourself; be true to God.

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