The Doctrine of Revelation

A.W. Pink

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INTRODUCTION

During the past 15 years we have devoted nearly a quarter of each issue of Studies in the Scriptures to an expository unfolding of some portion of doctrinal truth, and were it possible to relive those years we should not alter that plan. Two Timothy 3:16, 17, mentions some of the principal uses and values which the sacred Scriptures possess for us, and the first mentioned is that they are "profitable for doctrine." There is an inseparable connection between doctrine and deportment: our convictions mold our characters—what we believe largely determines how we act—"as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). To be soundly indoctrinated and to be well-grounded in the Truth is one and the same thing, and nothing but the Truth operating in the soul will preserve us from error, either theoretical or practical. Of the primitive Christians it is said, "They continued steadfastly [1] in the Apostles' doctrine, and [2] fellowship, and [3] in breaking of bread, and [4] in prayers" (Acts 2:42), which at once indicates that they esteemed soundness in the Faith as of first importance, and were of a radically different spirit from those who are so indifferent to the fundamentals of Christianity, insinuating, if not openly saying, "It matters little what a man believes if his life is good."

The relation between sound doctrine and godly deportment is like unto that between the bones and flesh of the body, or between the tree and the fruit which it bears: the latter cannot exist without the former. The first Epistle of the New Testament exemplifies our remark: three-fourths of it is occupied with a laying down of the essentials of Christianity, ere the Apostle shows what is requisite for the adornment of the Christian character. The history of Christendom during the last four centuries strikingly illustrates our contention. Examine the writings of the Reformers, and what do you find? Why, that exposition of doctrine held the foremost place in their ministry: that was the light which God used to deliver so great a part of Europe from the popish ignorance and superstition which characterized "the dark ages"! The moral tendency upon the masses and the spiritual blessings communicated to God's people by doctrinal preaching appears in the time of the Puritans. Since that day, in proportion as the churches have departed from their doctrinal fidelity and zeal, has close walking with God, purity and uprightness before men, and morality in the masses declined.

Each of our previous doctrinal discussions has taken one thing for granted, namely, that the Scriptures (to which we constantly appealed) are the inspired Word of God. Until recently the majority of our readers were residents of the U.S.A., and since there was available a book which we had had published there on that basic and vital subject, there was the less need for us to write thereon in these pages. Moreover, we were fully justified in taking a belief of that truth for granted, for the inerrancy and Divine authority of Holy Writ is a settled axiom with all true Christians, seeing that it constitutes the foundation of all their faith and the ground of all their hope. But since our book on the Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures is not at present obtainable by our British and Australian readers (for we decline to handle it while the disparity between the pound and the dollar persists), and since the tides of skepticism and infidelity continue to advance and constitute such a solemn menace unto the young, we feel moved to make an effort to show how strong and how sure are the foundations on which the faith of the Christian rests.

What we propose doing in this book, namely, to make a serious attempt to assist some of those who have inhaled the poisonous fumes of infidelity and been left in a state of mental indecision concerning sacred things, is something quite different from the course we usually follow in our magazine, Studies in the Scriptures. In view of the bewilderment and uncertainty of many, and the shaken faith of others, it appears our duty to do so, and we trust our friends will make a point of reading this unto those of their children likely to need it, and that preachers will feel free to use portions in preparing special sermons or addresses for the young. Our principal object will be to set forth some of the numerous indications that the Bible is something far superior to any human production, but before doing that we must seek to establish the existence of its Divine Author. The later chapters will be designed chiefly for preachers or older students of the Word, presenting as they will, some of the rules which require to be heeded if the Scriptures are to be properly interpreted; and though their scope will go beyond the general title of "Divine revelation," yet they will complement and complete the earlier ones.

Under our present title, then, we purpose to treat (DV.) of that revelation which God has given or that discovery which He makes of Himself unto the sons of men. If we were writing a comprehensive and systematic treatise on the whole subject, we should devote a proportionate space unto the manifestations which God has made of Himself First, in creation, or the external world; second, in the moral nature—particularly the conscience—of man; third, in the controlling and shaping of human history by Providence. Fourth, in His incarnate Son; fifth, in the sacred Scriptures; sixth, in the saving revelation which He makes of Himself unto the souls of His regenerate people, and finally, in the beatific vision, when we shall "know as we are known." But, instead, we shall deal more briefly with the first four, and concentrate chiefly upon the Scriptures, presenting some of the evidences of their Divine Authorship, then pointing out some of the principles which govern their right interpretation, and then the application which is to be made of their contents. This is a considerable task to essay, rendered the more difficult because we desire to hold the interest of, and (under God) make this book profitable unto a considerable variety of readers—young and old, believers and unbelievers.

The present generation has, for the most part, been reared not only in an atmosphere of negative unbelief but of hostile unbelief. They live in a world where materialism and skepticism are rampant and dominant. In the great majority of homes the Sunday newspaper is the only thing read on the Lord's Day. Doubt as to moral and spiritual truth is distilled through a score of channels. Our seats of learning are hotbeds of agnosticism. Our literature, with rare exceptions, makes light of God, and jokes about sacred things. The newspapers, the radio broadcasts, public utterances and private conversations, are steadily but surely removing the foundations of righteousness and destroying what little faith in spiritual things still remain. The vast majority in the English-speaking world are totally ignorant of the contents of the Bible, know not that it is a Divine revelation, yea, question whether there be any God at all. Yet modern skepticism is rarely candid, but is rather a refuge in which multitudes are sheltering from an accusing conscience. With such we are not here concerned, for where a prejudiced mind and a caviling spirit obtain, argument is useless; and we can but leave them unto the sovereign mercy of the Lord.

Even those brought up in Christian homes are being corrupted by the paganism of modern education, are bewildered by the conflicting teachings they receive from parents and the school, and are harassed by doubts. Some of them are honestly seeking a resolving of their

doubts, and it has become a pressing duty devolving upon the servant of God to recognize the mental conflict taking place in the minds of his youthful hearers, and to seek to meet their more immediate need by presenting some of the "Christian evidences." It is therefore our desire and will be our endeavour in the earlier chapters to be of some help unto those who may have become entangled in Satan's snares, who have been seriously disturbed by the infidelity of this age, but are willing to carefully examine some of the "strong reasons" by which it is rational to believe in the existence of a living and personal God and to receive the Scriptures as an authoritative and inerrent revelation from Him—and that it is not only the most horrible impiety but the height of irrationality to doubt the one or call into question the other.

There are some likely to deem our present procedure as being needless if not actually wrong, considering that the existence of God and the authority of His Word are matters to be reverently believed and not argued. Though we respect their conviction, we do not share the same. We fully agree that a rational discussion cannot produce anything but a rational faith, but even that should not be despised. Something has been accomplished if we can take away a stumbling block from the path of inquirers: the removal of weeds is necessary to prepare the garden for the seed. Though no external evidence, however weighty, can savingly convert the soul, it can carry conviction to the reason and conscience. Such arguments as we propose to submit are sufficient in themselves to beget in the mind a sober, intelligent, and firm judgment that there is a God and that the Bible is His inspired Word. It is much to be thankful for if we can bring the serious minded to respect and read the Scriptures, waiting for a spiritual confirmation. Intellectual persuasion and motives of credibility are not the ground on which a spiritual faith rests, yet they often prove (under the Divine blessing) a paving of the way thereunto.

Nor is an appeal unto external evidences of the Truth, which address themselves to and are apprehended by the reasoning faculty of our minds, without value to the child of God. They are confirmatory of his faith, support it against the oppositions and objections of others, and relieve the mind under temptations to doubt. In such a day as this, the young Christian especially needs all the help he can obtain in order to withstand the assaults of the Enemy. Even older ones are prone to give way to doubting, and cannot be too strongly established in the fundamentals of the Faith. Moreover, such a course serves to exhibit the excellence of our profession and the impregnable rock on which it is founded. It enables us to perceive what good grounds and satisfactory confirmation we have for the Faith which we avow. Wisdom is justified of her children (Matt. 11:19), and it behooves them to be equipped to justify their profession, if for no other reason than to close the mouths of gainsayers. A Christian should be capable of knowing and giving expression to the distinct and special reasons why he believes in God and reveres His Word—that he has something more substantial and valuable than human "tradition" to appeal unto.

Before entering upon our immediate task it should be acknowledged that it is not possible to prove the existence of God by mathematical demonstration, for if such proof were procurable there would be no room left for the exercise of faith. Yet, on the other hand, it must be pointed out that it is equally impossible to demonstrate the non-existence of the Creator. But though we cannot prove to a demonstration that God is, yet we can adduce evidence so clear and weighty as must impel, if not compel us to accept His existence as a fact. Those evidences, when carefully pondered, separately and together, afford the strongest possible ground for believing in the Divine Maker of Heaven and earth: the probability actually amounting to the

height of moral certainty. There are certain great facts of Nature which call for an explanation, such as the existence of matter, the existence of motion, and the existence of life. The heathen had sufficient perspicuity to realize “Ex nihilo nihil”—from nothing, nothing comes; and if we reject the truth that “the worlds were framed by the Word of God” (Heb. 11:3), then we are left in complete darkness, without any hope of obtaining any satisfactory explanation of either the noumenon or phenomenon of existence.

Most careful consideration ought to be given unto the alternative offered by unbelief. The great enigma which has confronted the human race throughout the centuries, and challenged its sages to supply a solution, is the problem of the universe: how it came to be; and within that macrocosm, the microcosm man—his origin, his intelligence, his destiny. Every explanation that has been advanced, save only the one provided by the Bible, fails to carry conviction to the mind, much less meets the longings of the heart. But the Bible supplies a solution for those problems which has satisfied the reason and conscience of millions of people, yea, which has brought peace and joy to a countless number of souls. Skeptics have indeed rejected its explanation, but what have they offered in its place? Nothing but agnostic doubts and metaphysical vagaries so abstruse that none can understand them, or speculations so incredible and absurd that only those who prefer darkness to light will pay any heed unto them. Ponder well the immeasurable difference there is between Christianity and Infidelity, and despise not the former until you are quite sure the latter has something more solid and valuable to give you in its stead.

There is ample evidence both in the material and moral realm on which to base a rational and intelligent belief in the existence of God. Anyone who seriously examines that evidence and then turns and carefully considers what Infidelity has to offer as an alternative should have no difficulty at all in perceiving which is the more convincing, adequate, and satisfying. As the author of The Gordian Knot rightly pointed out, “Skepticism is a restless sea on which anyone who sails is tossed up and down and driven to and fro in endless uncertainty. There is no solid ground on which to stand until something true is found and believed.”That is the alternative, the only one, for those who credit not the Scriptures. The Infidel would take from you the Bible, but what does he offer in its place but sneers and doubts! He scouts the idea of a personal Creator, but what explanation can he supply you of creation? He despises the Lord Jesus Christ, but to what other redeemer does he point as being able to save you from your sins, and induct you into an inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled, that fades not away, but will endure for all eternity in Heaven?

PART ONE – THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

Chapter 01 – As Manifest in Creation

The Bible opens with the words, "In the beginning God." He was in the beginning because Himself without beginning: the uncaused, self-existent and self-sufficient One—"from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God" (Ps. 90:2). But the youthful, yet intelligent inquirer, will ask, And do you comprehend that? We candidly answer, Certainly not, for how could one who is finite comprehend the Infinite, a creature of time fully understand the Eternal One? Nevertheless, we believe it, being logically and rationally obliged to do so. There must of necessity be a First Cause, and if a first Cause, that Cause is obviously uncaused and self-existent. If that First Cause be the Originator of all other causes and effects, then it follows that Cause is not only self-existent but self-sufficient, or, in other words, all-mighty. Since we may ascertain something—often much—of the nature of a cause from the effects it produces, then from the effects perceptible to us in the visible universe, it is clearly evident that the First Cause must be endowed with life, with intelligence, with will, in a word, with Personality, and one infinitely superior to ours—which First Cause we recognize and own as God.

Though the opening words of the Bible take the existence of God for granted, yet what immediately follows supplies more than a hint where we may find irrefutable evidence that He is: "In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth." It has been truly said, "We need no other argument to prove that God made the world than the world itself—it carrieth in it and upon it the infallible tokens of its original" (John Owen). That is true if we consider it simply in the mass: how came it to be? Three theories have been put forward to account for the existence of matter by those who believe not in its creation. First, that matter is eternal. But that solves no difficulty, in fact it involves one much more perplexing than any which Genesis 1:1 can give rise to. In itself matter is both inert and unintelligent: whence then its motion and marks of design? Second, by spontaneous generation. But not only is there no proof to support such a view, it is too self-evidently inadequate to merit discussion. Third, by evolution: concerning which we will now only point out—push that hypothesis backward, stage by stage, till you come to the first molecule or protoplasm, and to the question, How did it originate? No answer is forthcoming. Something could not evolve from nothing!

Though the universe could not evolve from nothing, it could be created by an eternal and all-mighty Creator! Assuming the existence of God, our difficulty is at once resolved. But with the universe spread before our eyes we do not have to assume God's existence. "Because the things which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:19, 20). God may be rationally inferred by reasoning back from effect to cause. Intelligent arrangement, wise contrivement, marks of design argue an intelligent Designer. There are such palpable and innumerable impressions of Divine wisdom, power and goodness in the works of God that unprejudiced reason must necessarily conclude a Creator of whose perfections those impressions are the faint adumbrations. So true is this that atheists and all idolaters are left without any excuse. Thus it is apparent that the doubts of Infidels are either affected or arise from the determination to rid themselves of the idea of accountableness. "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God." (Ps. 14:1): it is moral depravity and not mental

weakness which prompts such a desire.

"The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork" (Ps. 19:1). The universe proclaims God both by its very existence and its wondrous composition. From whence proceeded this vast system, with its exquisite order, its perfect balance, and its enduring strength? Every effect must have an adequate cause. If the heavens do not declare the existence of God and scintillate with the reflections of His glory, let the Infidel tell us what they do bespeak. If the celestial bodies be nothing more than a fortuitous mass of atoms, flung together by unreasoning law or blind chance, then what has preserved them throughout the ages? What regulates their movements with more than clock-like precision? What invested the sun with light and actinic power? To put it on the lowest level—can skepticism furnish any answer to those questions which satisfies reason or appears adequate to common sense? If the thoughtful beholder of the stellar heavens perceives no evidence of a Divine Creator, then are we not obliged to sorrowfully exclaim, "None so blind as those who will not see"! It is true that a recognition of the Creator in His creation is no evidence of regeneration, for many who never open the Bible are convinced of the reality of His existence, yet such mental perception is much to be preferred to the stupidity of atheism or the darkness of agnosticism.

We pointed out that the origin of three essential things in Nature call for explanation from the attentive observer: matter, motion and life. Having considered the alternative solutions for the first, let us now contemplate the others. Concerning them we cannot do better than present to the reader a summary of what we deem a singularly able and convincing discussion by John Armour in his unique work (out of print), Atonement and Law.

As we contemplate the wondrous movement of bodies in the solar system, measuring time for us with absolute exactness, and as we rise to the conception of the harmonious motion of all bodies in space, measuring duration for all created beings, we cannot but be actuated with an intense desire to know the cause of this wondrous motion. But the question, what is the cause of the motion of the heavenly bodies in space? naturally resolves itself into the more general question: what is the cause of all motion? The ready, the only answer is force. But this raises the real question: what is the origin of force? Every investigation of that subject leads to the profound conviction that all force is traceable to life.

In the entire vegetable kingdom we have perpetual demonstration of the intimate and necessary relations of motion, force and life. Even the least instructed, who have no conception of the real activity or of the observable motion in all growing plants, cannot but know that the mighty forests are built up by vital force operating tirelessly century after century. Even they cannot but know that the whole world is covered over with the countless, varied and marvellous products and proofs of the mysterious, universally recognized, but invisible vital power. Only those who have patiently and perseveringly gazed into that limitless world into which the microscope is the only door, and have witnessed the amazing activity of vital force in plant life, can have any idea of the manner in which the entire vegetable kingdom testifies of the intimate relations of motion, force and life.

Let anyone spend but a few hours in watching the rapid and incessant motion in a small leaf (such as that of the Anacharis Alsinastrum) under one of the best microscopes art has been able to furnish, the field being less than ten thousandths part of an inch—in that small field can be distinctly seen twelve rows of cells with an average of five cells in each row. The current can

be seen flowing rapidly along appropriate channels, like rivers with broken ice on the surface, while in each of the sixty oblong cells the fluids are seen circulating like eddies or whirlpools in a rushing stream. But for the perfection which microscopic art has attained, this amazing activity would never have been suspected or credited. Witnessing this activity in the ten-thousandth part of an inch on the surface of a small leaf, what would be the impression upon the mind could we look upon a single tree, discerning the activity of vital force in every part of it with the same degree of clearness? While we cannot do this, imagination can transfer what we have seen in the leaf under the microscope to all the leaves of the forest, to all vegetation on the globe, for in every cell of every living plant there is substantially the same vital activity.

Whether we look upon forest or field, the eye of the mind should discern not merely motionless forms of life, but everywhere intensely active vital power Were we capable of seeing the real activity of the vital force in the living tree, it would be to us scarcely less wonderful than the "great sight" which Moses turned aside to see; nor could it fail to produce in us a sense of the Divine presence not unlike that which he experienced. This vital action, which man and all created intelligences must ever strive to behold, and may ever more and more clearly discover, God Himself alone sees as it is.

The same line of remark might be followed out at length in regard to force and motion in every department of the animal kingdom. Here also the life is the force, and force that never ceases to produce activity. In the ova vitalized, and from that instant, on and on through all vicissitudes, motion is demonstrably uninterrupted till death, or rather the cessation of motion is death. The only absolute test of life is vital action. When this has ceased it is proof that vital force has ceased— that vitality is extinct. Nor is there the slightest ground to believe that this vital action, having ceased for an instant, can start again of itself. Vital activity can no more begin in plant or animal organism in which it has once ceased than in matter in which it never existed. The animal kingdom, then, is a witness, and in all its extent, with myriad voices in perfect unison, it declares, "All motion is from vital force." The testimony of these two kingdoms is both positive and negative. Their witness agrees: "In us all motion is from vital force." "With us all motion ceases when vital force ceases."

When we come, however, to man, and consider the motion traceable to him, we have to deal with a very different problem, and unless we give special attention we shall probably leave out of the estimate the vastly greater part of the evidence in this case. For man, unlike all other living beings on earth, or at least infinitely beyond other beings on earth, has the power to produce motion, not merely by force of muscle without skill, but he has the power to originate and sustain motion on a grand scale by means of the vital force of brain as well. The savage who should cast a stone a little way into the sea by strength of arm, or from a sling, or shoot an arrow from his bow, or propel his little boat a few miles from the shore in a calm sea, would give proof of the extent of his power. Clearly, in each case, from that of the stone which could be hurled but a few yards to that of the vessel which might be propelled perhaps as many miles, the motion would be wholly attributable to vital force of muscle and brain, or to skill and strength.

The civilized man who constructs and launches the ocean steamer that plows its furrow through the sea, in calm and storm, for thousands of miles gives proof of his power to produce motion by skill and strength. The ocean steamer that circumnavigates the globe, displacing the water and defying the storm, is, as one might truthfully say, hurled around the world; and its

motion, in that entire revolution, is as clearly traceable to vital force of hand and brain in the civilized man, as is that of the stone from the hand, or the arrow from the bow, of the savage. Let an honest inquirer light upon the ocean steamer at any stage of its long journey. Let him search the vessel from keel to top-mast. Finding no life in hull or rigging, no life in coal or fire, no life in water or steam, no life in engine or propeller, shall he say, "This vessel does not owe its force and motion to life at all." If he so determine, he is not a philosopher but a fool. For every part of the vessel, from keel to top-mast, is eloquent in its testimony to the vital force of combined skill and strength of man in its construction. And this we may recognize with all the confidence with which, on approaching an eight-day clock in the middle of the week, we recognize its onward movement as the vital force of the constructor of the clock, combined with the vital force of the person who wound it up—for not only is the vital force of the hand that wound the clock as truly the cause of its continued motion as though that hand had never for an instant been withdrawn, but the vital force of the contriver and the actual constructor, though he may have passed away centuries ago, is as clearly prolonged as would be the vital force of the hand that wound the clock, though the very next hour it were cold and motionless in death.

I have ventured to dwell longer on this illustration because of the argument it furnishes in favour of the recognition of vital force as the cause of other and infinitely grander movements.

We come now to a stage in our investigations in which, unless we exercise the utmost vigilance, we shall utterly fail to interpret the transcendent scene where there is an aggregate of motion in comparison with which all we have hitherto considered is but as the small dust of the balance. As to rapidity, the swiftest we have as yet contemplated is as that of the snail; as to vastness of orbit, even that of the ocean steamer around the globe is but as the "finger ring of a little girl"—as we contemplate motion on a scale so grand, motion of bodies so vast and so numerous, motion in orbits a scarcely perceptible arc of which has been traversed since man appeared on earth, motion which highest created intelligences must regard with never-ending wonder and admiration—shall we begin to detach, in our conception, motion from force, or force from that which lives? If we do, how can we any longer pretend that we are consistent, scientific or philosophical? All motion hitherto considered has been traceable to that which lives. Why at this stage begin to question whether that which moves is moved by force or whether force proceeds from life? Motion on a small scale we have found is from vital force. All the motion that man has ever been able to trace to its source he has found to proceed from life. There is not a shred of trustworthy evidence that any visible thing on earth has the power to originate motion. And the invisible power that causes all the motion we can at all trace to its source is always vital power.

We have traced force and motion from that in the smallest seed in plant life and that of the ova in animal life, and have found force and motion ever proceed from that which lives. Why, then, when we stand in the presence of the most wondrous motion—motion that speaks of force beyond all conception—do we, all at once, lapse from the conviction that motion must proceed from force and that force must proceed from life? Doubt comes in where evidence is most abundant. A stone seen moving through the air we believe was hurled by some lad, though we see him not. A cannon ball crossing the bay we do not doubt was sent by persons having skill and power. An ocean steamer driven around the world we know owes its force and motion to skill and power of living beings. When we see mighty orbs moving in space, why do we raise any question regarding the origin of motion and force? The only shadow of reason that

can be imagined is that we cannot readily conceive of a Being infinite, ever-present, and all-mighty, the Source of all motion, all force producing all motion in the universe. In a vastly higher sense than that in which the motion of the steamship in mid-ocean is to be attributed to man, all motion in the universe, including that produced in and by vital organisms in this world and in all worlds, is to be attributed to the Infinite, the Ever-living, the Almighty. In the presence of the moving universe may we not exclaim: "Power belongs unto God"?

Why should we hesitate to accept the conclusions thus reached? The data furnished to all men leave them without excuse. The soundness of the reasoning by which I have undertaken to prove that motion, mere motion, as recognized everywhere in the universe, since it assures us of the universality of law, is to us direct proof of the existence of the Ever-living, Ever-present Lawgiver is confidently submitted to the judgment of candid and competent reasoners.

The great timepiece of the universe in its surpassing grandeur and glory may continue to move with absolute exactness and utmost harmony from age to age and century to century. The multitudes of mankind may continue to look upon it mainly to see what time of day it is, as indicated upon the broad dial-plate that meets their gaze, and never reflect that this grand time-measurer, like every poor imitation of it man has ever constructed, measures time by means of motion, and motion sustained by force, this force in its turn necessarily from the living, traceable to the living. Yet there may be those who shall find time, even in this busy age, to look with prolonged and steadfast gaze, with awakened and quickened powers, and with intense interest upon the ever-present and never-exhausted wonders of that aggregate of motion before which all effort towards estimate is perfectly powerless. And when favorably situated therefor, the truly evidential nature of God's glorious work may flash out even as the noonday itself, so that, before this one surpassing demonstration of the power and presence of God, all doubts shall be driven away. Even as night itself is chased around our globe by the glorious king of day; so that thenceforward, even to life's close, they shall live in the noonday splendor of unquestioning faith —faith, not vision, for God gives everywhere and in all things not merely proof that He is, but that He is and must be forever more the Invisible.

But though invisible, God is neither the Incredible nor the Unknowable, for He has set before all men "the invisible things of Him" and these "are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." Among the visible things of Him which are clearly seen, that is, clearly and fully recognized by all men—motion, force and life—have place; for by these are made known the universality of law, the presence, power and glory of the Ever-living, Ever-present Lawgiver.

Not only does the existence of matter, of motion, and of life, testify that God is, but the magnitude and magnificence of creation announce the same grand truth: "the work reveals the Workman." The massive dome of St. Peter's, rising 400 feet, and ablaze with the masterpieces of Italian art, declares an architect and artist—someone who planned, built, decorated it. This is a thought in stone and tells of a thinker. It did not grow of itself, or come to be by some mysterious "evolution" or "development." Atoms never could arrange themselves in such harmonious relations, or fall accidentally into such marvelous combination. Blind chance never built that cathedral in Rome. There must have been a controlling intelligence—an intelligent control. Yet some would have us believe that the vaster Dome of Heaven with its millions of starry lamps, surmounting a grander Temple of Creation, had neither Architect to plan nor

Builder to construct! The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews indulged in no mere poetic rhapsody when he wrote, "Every house is builded by someone: but He who built all things is God."

“The thoughtful observer must feel that in the heavens there is not only a testimony to a Creator, but a partial revelation of His character and attributes. Such a work and workmanship not only reveal a Workman, but hint what sort of workman He is. For example, as no bounds have ever been found in the universe, it is natural to infer an infinite Creator. The vast periods discovered by astronomy suggest His eternity. The forces of the universe, displaying stupendous power, bespeak His omnipotence. Waste, everywhere going on and needing perpetual resupply, demands omnipresence. The exact proportion and wise adaptation of every part to each other, and of all to the great whole, tell of omniscience, which includes both infinite knowledge and wisdom. The Being who survives and guides all the changes of this universe must Himself be immutable; and He who lavishes upon His work such wealth of splendour and variety of beauty must be both infinitely rich in resources and versatile in invention. So also the universal harmony by which the whole mechanism is regulated, indicates a character of infinite perfection in harmony with itself. Thus, seen from no higher point of view than the scientific and philosophical, the dome of the sky bears, wrought on its expanse, in starry mosaics, ‘There is a God’” (The Gordian Knot).

Descending from the heavens to the planet on which we reside, here, too, we are confronted with phenomena, both in the general and the particular, both in nature and number, for which no explanation is adequate save that of an all-mighty, benevolent, and infinitely wise Creator. Upon the surface of this earth are incalculable hosts of creatures, varying in size from gnats to elephants, each requiring its regular food, the total amount of which for a single day defies human computation if not the imagination. Those creatures are not set down in a dwelling-place where the table is bare, but where there is abundance for them all; nor are they furnished merely with a few necessities, but, instead, with a great variety of luxuries and dainties. From whence proceed such ample and unfailing supplies? From Nature, says the materialist. And what or whom endowed Nature to bear so prolifically and ceaselessly? To which no intelligent reply is forthcoming. Only one answer satisfactorily meets the case: from the living God! "He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle and herb for the service of men: the earth is full of Thy riches. These all wait upon Thee, that Thou mayest give them meat in season. Thou openest Thy hand, they are filled with good" (Ps. 104:14).

The continuous fertility of the earth after 6,000 years of incessant productiveness can only be satisfactorily explained by attributing the same unto the riches and bounty of its Maker. That one generation of creatures is succeeded by another, in endless procession, on its surface, to find such an illimitable store of food available for them, is nothing but a stupendous miracle, the marvel of which is lost upon us either through our thoughtlessness or because of its unfailing and regular repetition. The constant supplies which God causes the earth to yield for such myriads of beings is just as remarkable as the original production of the place in which they were to live, for the annual re-fertilization of the earth is actually a continuous creation. To quote again from Psalm 104: as the reverent beholder contemplates the revived countenance of Nature in the springtime, he cannot but turn his eyes unto the living God and exclaim, "Thou renewest the face of the earth" (v. 30). Beholding as he does the barren fields, the leafless trees, the frozen ground, and often the sunless skies, during the dreary months of winter, and

seeing everything covered in white, it appears that the earth has grown old and died, that a pall of snow has fallen to hide its forbidding features. And what could man do, what could all the scientists in the world do, if winter should be prolonged month after month, and year after year? Nothing, but slowly yet surely die of starvation.

But the Creator has declared, "While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest shall not cease" (Gen. 8:22), and therefore He makes good that promise each year, by causing winter to give place to spring and "renewing the face of the earth." The world is as full of creatures today as though none had ever died, for as soon as one generation passes from it, it is at once replaced by another, coming to a larder already well filled for it. And again we insist, that was made possible and actual only by God's having "renewed the face of the earth." And what a marvelous thing that is, yea, a series of marvels. That such a variety of food, so perfectly adapted to the greatly varying digestive organs of insects, animals and men, so replete with nourishment, so attractive in appearance, should be produced by soil, than which nothing is more insipid, sordid, and despicable. What a pleasing variety of fruits the trees bear: how beautifully colored, elegantly shaped and admirably flavored! Shall we be struck most with agreeable astonishment at the Cause of such effects or at the manner of bringing them into existence?

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork" (Ps. 19:1). The stellar heavens proclaim the attributes of their Maker, bespeaking not only His existence but His excellence—while the atmospheric heavens exhibit His unique skill, revealing to us both their Author and His wondrous wisdom. Upon the former many have discussed, but the latter has received very much less notice. The "firmament" signifies "the expanse" and, as distinct from the sphere of the more distant planets, refers to the atmosphere surrounding the earth—the air in which the clouds are seen. The Hebrew verb rendered "showeth" means to "place before" for our thoughtful inspection, as challenging our most serious and reverent contemplation. Though the atmosphere be not an object of our sight, and for that reason is little regarded, it is a most remarkable contrivance or apparatus, a source of many advantages to us, and one which richly repays those who carefully consider it and take pleasure in "seeking out" the works of the Lord (Ps. 111:2).

The atmospheric pressure upon a person of ordinary stature is equal to the weight of 14 tons, and it scarcely needs to be pointed out that the falling upon him of a very much lighter object would break every bone in his body and drive all breath out of his lungs. Why then is it that we suffer no inconvenience from it, nay, thrive therein and enjoy it? Here is a phenomenon which, if thus viewed, is not unlike that which so awed Moses of old when he beheld the miracle of the burning bush—the combustible substance all aflame and yet not consumed. And by what means are we preserved from that which, considered abstractly, is such a deadly menace? The Creator's having so devised that the air permeates the whole of our body, and by its peculiar nature pressing equally in all directions, all harm and discomfort is prevented—"the heads of the thigh and arm bones are kept in their sockets by atmospheric pressure" (International Encyclopedia).

The air, commissioned by its benign Author, performs many offices for the good of mankind. While it covers us without any conscious weight, the air reflects, and thereby increases the life-giving heat of the sun. The air does this for us much as our garments supply additional heat to our bodies. If the reader has, like the writer, climbed a mountain and reached

a point 13,000 feet above sea level, then he has proved for himself how considerably the solar warmth is diminished as the quality of the air becomes more attenuated. At its base the climb was comfortably warm, but had we remained a night on its summit, death by freezing would have been the outcome. What reason have we, then, to bless the Disposer of all things for placing us at a level where we suffer no ill or inconvenience from the atmosphere, for the combined wisdom of men could no more moderate it than regulate the actions of the ocean!

The air co-operates with our lungs, thereby ventilating the blood and refining the fluids of the body, stimulating the animal secretions, and regulating our natural warmth. We could live for months without the light of the sun or the glimmering of a star, but if deprived of air for a very few minutes we quickly faint and die. Not to us alone does this "universal nurse" (as Hervey eloquently styled her) minister: it is this gaseous element enveloping the earth which both sustains and feeds all vegetable life. Again—the air conveys to our nostrils those minute particles (effluvia) which are emitted by odiferous bodies, so that we are both refreshed by the sweet fragrance of flowers and warned by offensive smells to withdraw from a dangerous situation or beware of injurious food. So, by the undulating motions of the air, all the diversities of sound are conducted to the ear, for if you were placed in a room from which all air had been withdrawn and a full orchestra (wearing artificial respirators) played at fortissimo, not a sound would you hear.

Not only does the air waft to our senses all the charming modulations of music and the elevating influences of refined and edifying conversation, but it also acts as a seasonable and faithful monitor. For example, should I be walking along the road, my eyes looking off unto some object, or my mind so absorbed that I am completely off my guard, and a vehicle be bearing down upon me from behind, though my eyes perceive not my danger, yet my ear takes alarm and informs me of my peril, even while it be some distance away, and with kindly if clamorous importunity bids me act for my safety. Let us then inquire, what is it that has endowed the atmosphere with such varied and beneficent adaptations, so that it diffuses vitality and health, retains and modifies solar heat, transmits odours and conveys sound? Must we not rather ask "Whom?" and answer, "This also cometh from the LORD of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working" (Isa. 28:29).

"Hearken unto this, O Job: stand still and consider the wondrous works of God. Dost thou know when God disposed them [i.e., the winds and clouds, the thunder and lightning, the frost and rain], and caused the light of His cloud to shine? Dost thou know the balancing of the clouds, the wondrous works of Him who is perfect in knowledge" (Job 37:14-16). The same queries are addressed unto each of us, and call for calm and quiet reflection. "Stand still and consider the wondrous works of God" which appear in the firmament. That is, cease for an hour from your feverish activities and devote yourself, as a rational creature, unto serious reflection, and compose yourself for thoughtful contemplation. "Consider" what is brought forth in, by, and from the atmosphere, and then be filled with reverent wonder and awe. Ponder well the fact that water is much denser and far heavier than air, and yet it rises into it, makes a way through it, and takes up a position in its uppermost regions! One would just as soon expect the rivers to run backward to their source; yet Divine wisdom has contrived a way to render it not only practicable but a matter of continual occurrence.

There in the firmament we behold an endless succession of clouds fed by evaporation from the ocean, drawn thither by the action of the sun. The clouds are themselves a miniature

ocean, suspended in the air with a skill which as far transcends that of the wisest man as his knowledge does that of an infant in arms. It is because so very few "stand still and consider" the amazing fact of millions of tons of water being suspended over their heads and sustained there in the thinnest parts of the atmosphere, that such a prodigy is lost upon them. The writer recalls the impressions made upon him over 30 years ago as he was driven around the Roosevelt Dam in Arizona and inspected that great engineering feat: probably some of our readers have experienced similar ones as they have beheld some huge reservoir of human contrivance. But what are they in comparison with the immeasurably vaster quantities of water which, without any conduits of stone or barriers of cement, are suspended in the clouds, and kept there in a buoyant state!

The clouds, as another pointed out, "travel in detached parties, and in the quality of itinerant cisterns round all the terrestrial globe. They fructify by proper communications of moisture the spacious pastures of the wealthy and gladden with no less liberal showers the cottager's little garden. Nay, so condescending is the benignity of the great Proprietor that they satisfy the desolate and waste ground, and cause, even in the most uncultivated wilds, the bud of the tender herb to spring forth, so that the natives of the lonely desert, those savage herds which know no master's stall, may nevertheless experience the care and rejoice in the bounty of an all-supporting Parent" (James Hervey). But what most fills us with wonderment is that these celestial reservoirs, so incalculably greater than any of human construction, should be suspended in the air. This it was which so evoked the admiration of both Job and Eliphaz: "He [said the former] bindeth up the waters in His thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them" (Job 26:8) notwithstanding their prodigious weight.

One of the things attributed to God in Holy Writ is that He has fixed "the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it; and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet they cannot prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it" (Jer. 5:22). If it be not its Maker whose mandate had determined the bounds of the sea, who has fixed its limits? Certainly not man, for he who cannot control himself is scarcely competent to issue effective orders to the ocean. That was made fully evident in the days of Noah, when for the first and last time God gave the waters their full freedom, and dire was the consequence, for the whole human race was helpless before them. Without that Divine decree the impetuous sea would again overflow the earth, for such is its natural propensity. But by the mere fiat of His lips God immutably controls this turbulent element. On some coasts high cliffs of rock serve as impregnable ramparts against the raging main, but in others—to evince God is confined to no expedients, but orders all things according to the counsel of His own will—He bids a frail bank of earth curb the fury of its angry waves.

But wonderful as it is that, by the Divine ordinance, a narrow belt of contemptible sand should confine the sea to its appointed limits, yet to us it seems even more remarkable that such immense volumes of water are held in the air within the compass of the clouds. Writing thereon, one of the ablest of the Puritans pointed out: "There are three things very wonderful in that detention of the waters. First, that the waters, which are a fluid body and love to be continually flowing and diffusing themselves, should yet be stopped and stayed together by a cloud, which is a thinner and so a more fluid body than the water. It is no great matter to see water kept in conduits of stone or in vessels of brass, because these are firm and solid bodies, such as the water cannot penetrate nor force its way through; but in the judgment of Nature,

how improbable is it that a thin cloud should bear such a weight and power of waters, and yet not rend nor break under them! This is one of the miracles in Nature, which is therefore not wondered at because it is so common, and which because it is constant is not inquired into.

"Second, as it is a wonder that the cloud is not rent under the weight of water, so that the cloud is rent at the special order and command of God. At His word it is that the clouds are locked up, and by His word they are opened. As in spiritual things so in natural: 'He openeth, and no man shutteth; He shutteth, and no man openeth.' Third, this also is wonderful that when at the word of God the cloud rents, yet the waters do not gush out like a violent flood all at once, which would quickly drown the earth, but descend in moderate showers, as water through a colander, drop by drop. God carrieth the clouds up and down the world, as the gardener does his watering-can, and bids them distil upon this or that place as Himself directeth. The clouds are compared to 'bottles' in Job 38:37, and those God stops or unstops, usually as our need requires, and sometimes as our sin deserves. 'I have withholden the rain from you' (Amos 4:7), and He can withhold it till the heavens above us shall be as brass and the earth under us as iron. 'I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it' (Isa. 5:6)" (Joseph Caryl, 1643).

There were still other features of the handiwork of God in the firmament which Job was enjoined to stand still and consider, namely, that God "caused the light of His cloud to shine," and "the balancing of the clouds," which are denominated "the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge" (37:15, 16). Upon the expanse of ether overhead we behold scenes infinitely more exquisite than any which a Turner or a Raphael could produce: sights so delicately colored, so subtle in texture, so vast in extent, they could do no justice unto in their attempts to reproduce. What artist's brush can begin to portray the splendors of the eastern sky as the monarch of the day emerges from his rest, or the entrancing magnificence of the western horizon as he retires to slumber? The Hebrew verb for "shine" in Job 37:15, means to shine in an illustrious manner, as in Deuteronomy 33:2 (and cf. Ps. 50:1), and "the light of the cloud" refers to the light of the sun's reflection from or upon a watery cloud, producing that wonderful phenomenon the rainbow, which is so conspicuous and beautiful, so desirable and attractive, so mysterious and marvelous.

"Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds?" (Job 37:16). Can you explain how such prodigious volumes of water are suspended over your head and held there in the thinnest parts of the atmosphere? Can you tell what it is which causes those ponderous lakes to hang so evenly and hover like the lightest down? What poises those thick and heavy vapours in coverings so much lighter and thinner than themselves, and prevents their rushing down more impetuously than a mountain torrent? Must we not again employ the personal pronoun, and answer, "HE bindeth up the waters in His thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them" (26:8). Who puts the clouds, as it were, into scales, and so orders their weight that one does not overpower another, but rather hang evenly? This is another of the wondrous works of God, who makes the clouds smaller or larger, higher or lower, according to the service He has appointed and the use He makes of them: nothing but the Divine wisdom and power can satisfactorily account for such a prodigy.

Yes, "He bindeth up the waters in His thick cloud." Those masses of water do not remain stationary in the firmament by themselves, nor could they, for, being so much heavier than the air, they would naturally fall of their own weight and power at once in disorder and ruin to the

land beneath. It is God who makes them behave and perform His bidding. By some secret power of His own, God fetters them so that they cannot move until He permits. And though these waters be of such mighty bulk and weight, they do not rend the fleecy filament which contain them. "The thick cloud is not rent under them": the same Hebrew word is rendered "divided" in Psalm 78:13 where the reference is to the Almighty cleaving a way for His people through the Red Sea. There is a natural tendency and power in those waters to rend the clouds, but until God bids them, they are held in place, delicately poised, mysteriously but perfectly balanced.

"Which doeth great things and unsearchable, marvelous things without number. Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields" (Job 5:9, 10). Observe the tense of the verb in the first sentence: it is not only that God "has done" or that He "will do" great things, though both be true, but that He now "doeth" as a present and continued act, for us to take notice of today. Among those stupendous and inscrutable wonders is His sending of the rain, which, though an almost daily provision, is something which men can neither manufacture nor regulate. We do not have far to go in order to inquire or actually see these "marvelous things": they are near to hand, of frequent occurrence, and, if closely looked into, every shower of rain discovers the wisdom, power and goodness of God. Nature works not without the God of nature, and its common blessings are not dispensed without a special providence. The course of nature only moves as it is turned by the hand of its Maker and directed by His counsels. The heaviest clouds distil no water until they receive commission from God to dissolve.

"For He maketh small the drops of water: they pour down rain according to the vapor thereof, which the clouds do drop and distil upon man abundantly" (Job 36:27, 28). “Rain is the moisture of the earth drawn up by the heat of the sun into the middle region of the air, which being there condensed into clouds, is afterward, at the will of God, dissolved and dropped down again in showers” (Joseph Caryl). Though an ordinary and common work of God, yet it is a very admirable one. The Psalmist tells us God "prepareth rain for the earth" (147:8). He does so by the method just described, and then by "making small" its drops, for unless He did the latter, it would pour down in a flood. That, too, is a work of His power and mercy, for the earth could not absorb solid volumes of water at once.

"Also can any understand the spreadings of the clouds?" (Job 36:29). Fully so? No, as the diverse and inadequate theorizings of men go to show. It is almost amusing to examine the various answers returned by philosophers and scientists to the question. What holds the clouds in position? The heat of the sun, say some. But if that were the case rain would fall during the night only, whereas the fact is that as many clouds break and empty themselves in the daytime as during the hours of darkness. By the winds, which keep them in perpetual motion, say others. But how can that be, for sometimes the clouds unburden themselves when a hurricane is blowing, and at others in a dead calm. By their sponginess, which permits their being permeated by the air, thus holding them in place, say others. Then why do light and heavy clouds alike move and evaporate? We are logically forced to rise higher, to the will and power of God It is also of His mercy that the clouds serve as a cool canopy over our heads and break the fierce heat and glare of the sun.

Let us pause here and make practical application of what has been before us. These wonders of nature, so little considered by the majority of our fellows, should speak loudly to our hearts. They should awe us, humble us, bow us in wonderment before the Author of such

works. But it is more especially the children of God we now have in mind, and particularly those who are in straits and trouble, whose way is hedged up, whose outlook appears dark and foreboding. As we have contemplated such marvels of Divine wisdom and power, should not our faith be strengthened, so that we look upward with renewed confidence unto our heavenly Father? Must we not, in view of such prodigies, join with the Prophet in exclaiming, "There is nothing too hard for Thee" (Jer. 32:17)? Cannot He who has commissioned the very atmosphere to perform so many useful and benevolent offices for our good, relieve our temporal distress? Cannot He who sustains such mighty volumes of water over our head, also support and succour us? Cannot He who paints the glorious sunrise shine into our soul and dissipate its gloom? Consider the rainbow, not only as a mystery and marvel of nature, but also as a sacramental sign, as a token of God's covenant faithfulness.

That is the use we should make of "the wondrous works of Him who is perfect in knowledge." That is how we should "consider" them, and the conclusion we should draw from them. There is no limit to the power of that One who, in the beginning, made Heaven and earth, and who throughout the centuries has preserved them. When we are confronted with difficulties which seem insurmountable, we should look above, around, below—and beholding the marvelous handiwork of God commit ourselves and our case into His hands with full assurance. When Hezekiah was confronted with the formidable hosts of Sennacherib he sought refuge in the Divine omnipotence, spreading that king's haughty letter before the Lord and appealing to Him as, "Thou hast made Heaven and earth" (2 Kings 19:15), and therefore can vanquish for us our enemies. So, too, the Apostles, when forbidden by the authorities to preach the Gospel, appealed to God as the One who "made Heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is" (Acts 4:24). Rest, then, in this blessed and stimulating truth, that "nothing is too hard" for Him who has loved you with an everlasting love!

"The sea is His and He made it" (Ps. 95:5). The ocean and its inhabitants present to our consideration as many, as varied, and as unmistakable, evidences of the handiwork of God as do the stellar and atmospheric heavens. If we give serious thought to the subject, it must fill us with astonishment that it is possible for any creatures to live in such a suffocating element as the sea, and that in waters so salty they should be preserved in their freshness; and still more so that they should find themselves provided with abundant food and be able to propagate their species from one generation to another. If we were immersed in that element for a few minutes only, we should inevitably perish. Were it not for our actual observation and experience, and had we but read or heard that the briny deep was peopled with innumerable denizens, we should have deemed it an invention of the imagination, as something utterly impracticable and impossible. Yet by the wisdom and power of God not only are myriads of fishes sustained there, but the greatest of all living creatures—the whale—is found there. In number countless, in bulk matchless, yet having their being and health in an element in which we could not breathe!

As it is with us in the surrounding air, so it is with the fish in their liquid element: the principle of the equal transmission of pressure enables their frail structures to bear a much greater pressure and weight than their own without being crushed—the air and the fluids within them pressing outward with a force as great as the surrounding water presses inward! Moreover, "They are clothed and accoutered in exact conformity to their clime. Not in swelling wool or buoyant feathers, nor in flowing robe or full-trimmed suit, but with as much compactness and with as little superfluity as possible. They are clad, or rather sheathed, in scales, which

adhere closely to their bodies, and are always laid in a kind of natural oil—which apparel nothing can be more light, and at the same time so solid, and nothing so smooth. It hinders the fluid from penetrating their flesh, it prevents the cold from coagulating their blood, and enables them to make their way through the waters with the greatest possible facility. If in their rapid progress they strike against any hard substance, this their scaly doublet breaks the force of it and secures them from harm" (James Hervey).

Being slender and tapering, the shape of fishes fits them to cleave the waters and to move with the utmost ease through so resisting a medium. Their tails, as is well known, are extremely flexible, consisting largely of powerful muscles, and act with uncommon agility. By its alternate impulsion, the tail produces a progressive motion, and by repeated strokes propels the whole body forward. Still more remarkable is that wonderful apparatus or contrivance, the air-bladder, with which they are furnished, for it enables them to increase or diminish their specific gravity, to sink like lead or float like a cork, to rise to whatever height or sink to whatever depths they please. As these creatures probably have no occasion for the sense of hearing, for the impressions of sound have very little if any existence in their sphere of life, to have provided them with ears would have been an encumbrance rather than a benefit. Is that noticeable and benignant distinction to be ascribed to blind chance? Is it merely an accident that fishes, that need them not, are devoid of ears which are found in all the animals and birds? The cold logic of reason forbids such a conclusion.

A spiritually minded naturalist has pointed out that almost all flat fish, such as soles and flounders, are white on their underside but tinctured with darkish brown on the upper, so that to their enemies they resemble the color of mud and are therefore more easily concealed. What is still more remarkable, Providence, which has given to other fishes an eye on either side of the head, has placed both eyes on the same side in their species, which is exactly suited unto the peculiarity of their condition. Swimming as they do but little, and always with their white side downward, an eye on the lower part of their bodies would be of little benefit, whereas on the higher they have need of the quickest sight for their preservation. Admirable arrangement is that! Where nothing is to be feared, the usual guard is withdrawn; where danger threatens their guard is not only placed, but doubled! Now we confidently submit that such remarkable adaptations as all of these argue design, and that, in turn, a designer, and a Designer, too, who is endowed with more than human wisdom, power and benignity.

"One circumstance relating to the natives of the deep is very peculiar, and no less astonishing. As they neither sow nor reap, have neither the produce of the hedges nor the gleanings of the field, they are obliged to plunder and devour one another for necessary subsistence. They are a kind of licensed bandit that make violence and murder their professed trade. By this means prodigious devastation ensues, and without proper, without very extraordinary recruits, the whole race would continually dwindle and at length become totally extinct. Were they to bring forth, like the most prolific of our terrestrial animals, a dozen only or a score, at each birth, the increase would be unspeakably too small for consumption. The weaker species would be destroyed by the stronger, and in time the stronger must perish, even by their successful endeavors to maintain themselves. Therefore to supply millions of assassins with their prey and millions of tables with their food, yet not to depopulate the watery realms, the issue produced by every breeder is almost incredible. They spawn not by scores or hundreds, but by thousands and tens of thousands. A single mother is pregnant with a nation. By which

amazing but most needful expedient, a periodical reparation is made proportional to the immense havoc" (James Hervey).

"Speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee; and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee" (Job 12:8). Mute though the fishes be, yet they are full of instruction for the thoughtful inquirer. Study them intelligently and your mind shall be improved and your knowledge increased. And what is it that the dumb fishes declare unto us? Surely this: that there is a living God, who is "wonderful in counsel and excellent in working" (Isa. 28:29); that the creature is entirely dependent on the Creator, who fails not to supply all its needs; that ready obedience to the Divine will becomes the creature, and is rendered by all save rebellious man. In exemplification of that last fact, let us call attention to that amazing phenomenon of countless multitudes of finny visitors crowding upon our shores at the appointed season of the year, and in an orderly succession of one species after another. What is equally remarkable, though less known, is the fact that as they approach, the larger and fiercer ones—who would endanger the lives of the fishermen and drive away the ones which provide us with food-are restrained by an invisible Hand and impelled to retire into the depths of the ocean. As the wild beasts of the earth are directed by the same overruling Power to hide themselves in their dens, so the monsters of the deep are laid under a providential interdiction!

If we survey with any degree of attention the innumerable objects which the inhabitants of this earth present to our view, we cannot but perceive unmistakable marks of design, clear evidences of means suited to accomplish specific ends, and these also necessarily presuppose a Being who had those ends in view and devised the fitness of those means. Order and harmony in the combined operation of many separate forces and elements point to a superintending Mind. Wise contrivances and logical arrangements involve forethought and planning. Suitable accommodations and the appropriate and accurate fitting of one joint to another unquestionably evinces intelligence. The mutual adjustment of one member to another, especially when their functions and properties are correlated, can no more be fortuitous than particles of matter could arrange themselves into the wheels of a watch. The particular suitability of each organ of the body for its appointed office comes not by accident. Benevolent provision and the unfailing operation of law, logically imply a provider and a lawgiver. The fitting together of parts and the adoption of means to the accomplishment of a definite purpose can only be accounted for by reference to a designing Will. Thus, the argument from design may be fairly extended so as to include the whole range of creation and the testimony it bears in all its parts to the existence of the Creator.

Forcibly did Professor John Dick argue, "If we lighted upon a book containing a well-digested narrative of facts, or a train of accurate reasoning, we should never think of calling it a work of chance, but would immediately pronounce it to be the production of a cultivated mind. If we saw in a wilderness a building well-proportioned and commodiously arranged and furnished with taste, we should conclude without hesitation and without the slightest suspicion of mistake that human will and human labour had been employed in planning and erecting it. In cases of this kind, an atheist would reason precisely as other men do. Why then does he not draw the same inference from the proofs of design which are discovered in the works of creation? While the premises are the same, why is the conclusion different? Upon what pretext of reason does he deny that a work, in all the parts of which wisdom appears, is the production of an intelligent author? And attribute the universe to chance, to nature, to necessity, to anything, although it

should be a word without meaning, rather than to God?"

"He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? and He that formed the eye, shall He not see?" (Ps. 94:9). The manifest ability of the ear to receive and register sounds, and of the eye for vision, argues an intelligent Designer of them. The Infidel will not allow that conclusion, but what alternative explanation does he offer? This—there may be adaptation without design, as there may be sequence without causation. Certain things, he tells us, are adapted to certain uses, but not made for certain uses: the eye is capable of vision, but had no designing author. When he is asked, How is this striking adaptation to be accounted for apart from design, he answers, Either by the operation of law, or by chance. But the former explanation is really the acknowledgment of a designer, or it is mere tautology, for that law itself must be accounted for, as much as the phenomena which come under it. The explanation of "chance" is refuted by the mathematical doctrine of probability. The chance of matter acting in a certain way is not one in a million, and in a combination of ways, not one in a trillion. According to that theory, natural adaptation would be more infrequent than a miracle, whereas the fact is that adaptation to an end is one of the most common features of nature, occurring in innumerable instances.

When the Psalmist said, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. 139:14), he gave expression to a sentiment which every thoughtful person must readily endorse. Whether that statement be taken in its widest latitude as contemplating man as a composite creature—considering him as a material, rational and moral being— or whether it be restricted to his physical frame, yet it will be heartily confirmed by all who are qualified to express an opinion thereon. Regarding it in its narrower scope, the composition and construction of the human body is a thing of amazing workmanship. To what extent David was acquainted with the science of anatomy we know not, but in view of the pyramids and the Egyptians' skill in embalming the body (and "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians"— Acts 7:22—and doubtless passed on much of the same unto his descendants) and the repeated statement of Holy Writ that "there is nothing new under the sun," we certainly do not believe the ancients were nearly so ignorant as many of our inflated moderns wish to think. But be that as it may, the outward structure of the body, the ordering of its joints and muscles for the service of its tenant, the proportion of all its parts, the symmetry and beauty of the whole cannot but strike with wonderment the attentive student of the human frame.

This living temple has aptly been termed "the masterpiece of creation." Its sinews and muscles, veins and blood, glands and bones, all so perfectly fitted for their several functions, are a production which for wisdom and design, the adaptation of means to ends, not only far surpasses the most skilful and complicated piece of machinery ever produced by human art, but altogether excels whatever the human imagination could conceive. That the nutritive power of the body should be working perpetually and without intermission replacing waste tissue; that there should be a constant flowing of the blood and beating of the pulses, that the lungs and arteries (comprised of such frail and delicate substances) should move without cessation for 70 or 90 years—for 900 years before the Flood!—presents a combined marvel which should fill us with astonishment and awe, for they are so many miracles of omniscience and omnipotence. But turning to the more obvious and commonplace, the human hand and eye, let us conclude this chapter with a rather longer quotation than usual from The Gordian Knot, for it calls attention to features which, though equally remarkable, the most untrained are able to appreciate.

"The human hand was obviously meant to be the servant of the entire body. It is put at the extremity of the arm, and the arm is about half the length of the body, and, as the body can bend almost double, the hand can reach any part of it. The hand is at the end of an arm having three joints, one at the shoulder, one at the elbow, one at the wrist, and each joint made on a different pattern so as to secure together every conceivable motion—up and down, sidewise, backward and forward, and rotary. The hand is made with four fingers and an opposing thumb, which secures a double leverage, without which no implement or instrument could be securely grasped, held, or wielded, and so strangely are the fingers molded of unequal lengths that they exactly touch tips over a spherical surface, such as a ball or the round handle of a tool.

"There are two hands—opposite and apposite to each other in position and construction, so that they exactly fit each other and work together without interference, making possible by joint action what neither could accomplish alone. Montaigne, referring to one only of the hand's many capacities—a gesture—says: 'With the hand we demand, promise, call, dismiss, entreat, deny, encourage, accuse, acquit, defy, flatter, and indicate silence; and with a variety and multiplication that almost keeps pace with the tongue.' The hand is so strikingly capable of being used to express conceptions and execute designs that it has been called 'the intellectual member.'

"The human eye is perfect in structure and equally perfect in adaptation. It is placed in the head like a window just under the dome, to enable us to see farthest; placed in front, because we habitually move forward; shielded in a socket of bone for protection to its delicate structure, yet protected from that socket by a soft cushion; provided with six sets of muscles to turn it in every direction; with lids and lashes to moisten, shut it in, protect it and soothe it; with tear ducts to conduct away excess of moisture; and having that exact shape—the only one of all that might have been given—to secure distinct vision by refracting all rays of light to a single surface, which is known in science as the ellipsoid of revolution.

"'By a wonderful arrangement of iris and pupil it at once adapts itself to near and far objects of vision and to mild or intense rays of light, and, most wonderful of all, the human eye is provided in some inscrutable manner with the means of expressing the mind itself, so that one may look into its crystal depths and see intellectuality, scorn, and wrath, and love, and almost every spiritual state and action' (Dr. E. F. Burr).

"The eye of man has taught us the whole science of optics. It is a camera obscura, with a convex lens in front, an adjustable circular blind behind it; a lining of black to prevent double and confusing reflections; fluids, aqueous and vitreous, to distend it; a retina or expansion of the optic nerve to receive the images of external objects; with minute provision for motion in every direction; and, most wonderful of all, perhaps, perfect provision against the spherical and chromatic aberration which would produce images and impressions ill-defined and false-colored. Yet the microscope shows these lenses themselves to be made up of separate folds, in number countless, the folds themselves composed of fibers equally countless, and toothed so as to interlock. And with all this, perfect transparency is preserved!

"It is in the minutiae of creation, perhaps, that the most surprising marvels, mysteries and miracles of creative workmanship are often found. It is here also that the works of God so singularly differ from the works of man. However elaborate man's work it does not bear minute microscopic investigation. For instance, the finest cambric needle becomes coarse, rough and

blunt under the magnifying lens, whereas it is only when looked at with the highest power of the microscopic eye that Nature's handiwork really begins to reveal its exquisite and indescribable perfection. Where the perfection of man's work ends, the perfection of God's work only begins.

"The proofs of this perfection in minutiae are lavishly abundant. When a piece of chalk is drawn over a blackboard, in the white mark on the board, or the powder that falls on the floor, are millions of tiny white shells, once the home of life. The dust from the moth's wing is made up of scales or feathers, each as perfect as the ostrich plume. The pores of the human skin are so closely crowded together that 75,000 of them might be covered by a grain of sand. The insect's organ of vision is a little world of wonders in itself. In the eye of a butterfly 34,000 lenses have been found, each perfect as a means of vision. The minute cells in which all life, vegetable and animal, reside present as true an evidence of the mysterious perfection of individual workmanship and mutual adaptation as the constellations that adorn the sky, and equally with them declare the glory of God! How it speaks of a Creator who can lavish beauty even on the stones, and who carries the perfection of His work into the realm of the least as well as the greatest!"

Chapter 02 – As Revealed in Man

Creation makes manifest the Creator, and having considered some of the mighty products of Omnipotence therein, we turn now to that which comes closer home unto each of us. We are not obliged to go far afield and turn our attention to objects in the heavens or the depths of the ocean in order to find evidences of God's existence—we may discover them in ourselves. Man himself exhibits a Divine Maker, yea, he is the chief of His mundane works. Accordingly we find that Genesis I, after giving a brief but vivid account of how the heavens and earth were called into existence by a Divine fiat and both of them furnished for the benefit of the human race, God made man last—as though to indicate he is the climax of His works. In each other instance we are told "God said," "God called," "God created," etc., but in our case there is a marked difference: "And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness" (1:26), as if to signify (speaking after the manner of men) there was a special conference of the Divine Trinity in connection with the formation of that creature who should be made in the Divine image. All the works of God bear the impress of His wisdom, but man alone has stamped upon him the Divine likeness.

The fact that man was made by the Triune God and "in Their image" plainly indicates that he was constituted a tripartite being, consisting of spirit and soul and body—the first being capable of God-consciousness, the second of self-consciousness, and the third of sense-consciousness. The dual expression, "in Our image, after Our likeness," imports a twofold resemblance between God and man in his original condition: the former referring to the holiness of his nature, the latter to the character of his soul—which competent theologians have rightly distinguished as "the moral image" and the "natural image" of God in man. That is a real and necessary distinction, and unless it be observed we inevitably fall into error when contemplating the effects of man's defection from God. To the question, Did man lose the image of God by the Fall? the orthodox rightly answer in the affirmative; yet many of them are quite at a loss to understand such verses as Genesis 9:6 and James 3:9, which teach that fallen man retains the image of God. It was the moral image which was destroyed when he apostatized, and which is restored to him again at regeneration (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10). Fallen man is made in the image of his fallen parent, as Genesis 5:3, and Psalm 51:5 solemnly attest. But fallen man still has plainly stamped upon him the natural image of God, evidencing his Divine origin. What that "natural image" consists in we will now consider.

We have called attention to some of the wonders observable in the human body, and if God bestowed such exquisite workmanship upon the casket, what must be the nature of the gem within it! That "gem" is the spirit and soul of man, which was made in the natural image of God—we shall not here distinguish between them, but treat of them together under the generic term "soul." If the human body bears upon it the impress of the Divine hand, much more so does the soul with its truly remarkable faculties and capabilities. The soul is endowed with understanding, will, moral perception, memory, imagination, affections. Man is comprised and possessed of something more than matter, being essentially a spiritual and rational being, capable of communion with his Maker. There was given unto man a nature nobler than of any other creature on earth. Man is an intelligent being, capable of thinking and reasoning, which as much excels the instinct of animals as the finished product of the artist's brush does the

involuntary raising of his hand to protect his face, or the shutting of his eye without thought when wind blows dust into it. From whence, then, has man derived his intelligence?

The soul is certainly something distinct from the body. Our very consciousness informs us that we possess an understanding, yea, an intelligent entity which, though we cannot see, yet is known by its operations of thinking, reasoning, remembering. But matter possesses no such properties as those, no, not in any combination of its elements. If matter could think, then it would still be able to do so after the soul was absent from the body. Again—if matter had the power of thought, then it would be able to think only of those things which are tangible and material, for no cause can ever produce effects superior to itself. Intelligence can no more issue from non-intelligence than the animate from the non-animate. A stone cannot think, nor a log of wood understand a syllogism. But the human soul is not only capable of thinking, it can also commune with itself, rejoice in itself. Nor is its ability to rationalize restricted to itself: it is so constituted that it can apprehend and discourse of things superior to itself. So far from being tied down to the material realm, it can soar into the heavens, cognize the angels, and commune with the Father of spirits.

Consider the vastness of the soul's capacity! What cannot it encompass? It can form a concept of the whole world, and visualize scenes thousands of miles away. As one has pointed out, "it is suited to all objects, as the eye to all colors or the ear to all sounds." How capacious is the memory to retain so much, and such variety! Consider the quickness of the soul's motions: nothing is so swift in the whole course of nature. Thought is far more rapid in its action than the light-waves of ether: in a single moment fancy may visit the Antipodes. With equal facility and agility it can transport itself into the far away past or the distant future. As the desires of the soul are not bounded by material objects, so neither are its motions restrained by them. Consider also its power of volition. The will is the servant of the soul, carrying out its behests, yet it knows not how its commissions are received. Now matter has no power of choice, and what it is devoid of it certainly cannot convey. As man's intelligence must have its source in the supreme Mind, so his power of volition must proceed from the supreme Will.

The nature of man also bears witness to the existence of God in the operations and reflections of his conscience. If the external marvels of creation exhibit the wisdom and power of the Creator, this mysterious faculty of the soul as clearly exemplifies His holiness and justice. Whatever be its nature or howsoever we define it, its forceful presence within presents us with a unique phenomenon. This moral sense in man challenges investigation and demands an explanation—an investigation which the Infidel is most reluctant to seriously make, and for which he is quite unable to furnish satisfactory explanation. "Conscience is a court always in session and imperative in its summons. No man can evade it or silence its accusations. It is a complete assize. It has a judge on its bench, and that judge will not be bribed into a lax decision. It has its witness stand, and can bring witnesses from the whole territory of the past life. It has its jury, ready to give a verdict, 'guilty' or 'not guilty,' in strict accordance with the evidence, and it has its sheriff, Remorse, with his whip of scorpions, ready to lash the convicted soul. The nearest thing in the world to the bar of God is the court of conscience. And though it be for a time drugged into a partial apathy or intoxicated with worldly pleasure, the time comes when in all the majesty of its imperial authority this court calls to its bar every transgressor and holds him to a strict account" (A. T. Pierson).

Conscience is that which conveys to the soul a realization of right and wrong. It is that

inward faculty which passes judgment upon the lawfulness or unlawfulness of our desires and deeds. It is an ethical instinct, a faculty of moral sensibility, which both informs and impresses its possessor, being that which, basically, constitutes us responsible creatures. It is an inward faculty which is not only of a vastly superior order, but is far keener in perception than any of the bodily senses: it both sees, hears and feels. Its office is twofold: to warn us against sin and to prompt us unto the performance of duty— and this it does according to the light shining into it—from natural reason and Divine revelation. Though the heathen be without the Bible, yet their conscience passes judgment on natural duties and unnatural sins. Hence, the more spiritual light a person has, the greater his responsibility, and it is according to that principle and on that basis he will be dealt with at the grand Assize. "That servant which knew his lord's will and prepared not, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Luke 12:47-48). Punishment will be proportioned to light received and privileges enjoyed.

To this moral sensibility of man as the basis of his accountability, the Apostle refers in Romans 2: "For when the Gentiles [heathen] which have not the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law, these, having not the Law, are a law unto themselves" (v. 14). The "nature" of anything is the peculiarity of its being, that in virtue of which it is what it is: it is that which belongs to its original constitution, in contradistinction from all that is taught or acquired. This ethical sense is an original part of his being, and is not the product of education—a power of discrimination by which he distinguishes between right and wrong is created in man. The natural light of reason enables the uncivilized to distinguish between virtue and vice. All, save infants and idiots, recognize the eternal difference between good and evil: they instinctively, or rather intuitively, feel this or that course is commendable or censurable. They have a sense of duty: the natural light of reason conveys the same. Even the most benighted and degraded give evidence that they are not without a sense of obligation: however primitive and savage be their mode of life, yet the very fact that they frame some form of law and order for the community, proves beyond any doubt they have a definite notion of justice and rectitude.

The very nature of the heathen, their sense of right and wrong, leads to the performing of moral actions. In confirmation thereof, the Apostle went on to say, "which show the work of the Law written in their heart, their conscience also bearing witness [to the existence of God and their accountability to Him], and their thoughts the meanwhile [or "between themselves," margin] accusing or excusing [the conduct of themselves and of] one another" (Rom. 2:15). The "work of the Law" is not to be understood as a power of righteousness operating within them, still less as their actual doing of what the Law requires; but rather the function or design of the Law, which is to direct action. The natural light of reason informs them of the distinction between right and wrong. "Their conscience also bearing witness," that is, in addition to the dictates of reason, for they are by no means the same thing. Knowledge of duty and the actions of conscience are quite distinct: the one reveals what is right, the other approves of it, and condemns the contrary. They have sufficient light to judge between what is honest and dishonest, and their moral sense makes this distinction before commission of sin, in the commission, and afterward—as clearly appears in their acquitting or condemning one another.

Those who have given Romans 2:14 any serious thought must have been puzzled if not stumbled by the statement that those in Heathendom, "do by nature the things contained in the

Law," since they neither love the Lord God with all their hearts nor their neighbors as themselves—the sum of what it requires. The American Revised Version is much to be preferred: "Do by nature the things of the Law," which describes not the yielding of obedience to the Law, but the performing of its functions. The proper business of the Law is to say, This is right, that is wrong; you will be rewarded for the one, and punished for the other. To command, to forbid, to promise, to threaten—these are "the things of the Law," the "work" of it (v. 15). The Apostle's assertion is this—an assertion exactly accordant with truth, and directly bearing on his argument: "The Gentiles who have no written Divine Law, perform by nature from their very constitution, to themselves and each other, the functions of such a law. They make a distinction between right and wrong, just as they do between truth and falsehood. They cannot help doing so. They often go wrong by mistaking what is right and what is wrong, as they often go wrong by mistaking what is true and what is false. But they approve themselves and one another when doing what they think right; they disapprove themselves and one another when they do what they think to be wrong; so that, though they have no written law, they act the part of a law to themselves. This capacity, this necessity of their nature, distinguishes them from brutes, and makes them the subjects of Divine moral government. In this way they show 'that the work of the law'—the work which the Law does—is 'written in their hearts,' woven in their constitution, by the actings of the power we call conscience. It is just, then, that they should be punished for doing what they know to be wrong, or might have known to be wrong" (Professor Brown).

Man is the only earthly creature endowed with conscience. The beasts have consciousness and a limited power to acquire knowledge, but that is something very different. Certain animals can be made to obey their masters. With the aid of a stick, even a cow may be taught to refrain from plucking the green leaves over the garden fence, which her mouth craves —the memory of the beatings she has received for disobedience incline her to forgo her inclinations. Much more intelligent is a domesticated dog: he can be trained to understand that certain actions will meet with reward, while others will receive punishment. But memory is a very different thing from that ethical monitor within the human breast, which weighs whatever is presented to the mind and passes judgment either for or against all our actions, secretly acquainting the soul with the right and wrong of things. Wherever we go, this sentinel accompanies us: whatever we think or do, it records a verdict. Much of our peace of mind is the fruit of a non-accusing conscience, while not a little of our disquietude is occasioned by the charges of wrong-doing which conscience brings against us.

Conscience is an integral part of that light which "lightens every man which comes into the world." Forceful testimony is borne to its potency by the rites of the heathen and their self-imposed penances, which are so many attempts to appease the ones they feel they have offended. There is in every man that which reproves him for his sins, yea, for those to which none other is privy, and therefore the wicked flee when no man pursues (Prov. 28:1). At times the stoutest are made to quail. The most hardened have their seasons of alarm. The specter of past sins haunts them in the night watches. Boast loudly as they may that they fear nothing, yet "there were they in great fear where no fear was" (Ps. 53:5)—an inward horror where there was no outward occasion for uneasiness. When there is no reason for fright, the wicked are suddenly seized with panic and made to tremble like an aspen leaf, so that they are afraid of their own shadows.

The fearful reality of conscience is plainly manifested by the fact that men who are

naturally inclined to evil nevertheless disapprove of that which is evil, and approve of the very good which they practice not. Even though they do not so audibly, the vicious secretly admire the pure, and while some be sunk so low they will scarcely acknowledge it to themselves, nevertheless they wish they could be like the morally upright. The most blameworthy will condemn certain forms of evil in others, thus evincing they distinguish between good and evil. Whence does that arise? By what rule do they measure moral actions, but by an innate principle? But how comes man to possess that principle? It is not an attribute of reason, for at times reason will inform its possessor that a certain course of conduct would result in gain to him, but conscience moves him to act in a way which he knows will issue in temporal loss. Nor is it a product of the will, for conscience often acts in opposition to the will, and no effort of the will can still it. It is a separate faculty which, in various degrees of enlightenment and sensitiveness, is found in civilized and uncivilized.

Now even common sense tells us that someone other than ourselves originated this faculty. No law can be without a lawgiver. From whence, then, this law? Not from man, for he would annihilate it if he could. It must have been imparted by some higher Hand, which Hand alone can maintain it against all the violence of its owner, who, were it not for this restraining monitor, would quickly reduce the world to a charnel house. If, then, we reason rationally, we are forced to argue thus: I find myself naturally obliged to do this and shun that, therefore there must be a Superior who obliges me. If there were no Superior, I should myself be the sole judge of good and evil, yea, I should be regulated only by expediency and recognize no moral distinctions. Were I the lord of that principle or law which commands me, I should find no conflict within myself between reason and appetite. The indubitable fact is that conscience has an authority for man that cannot be accounted for except by its being the voice of God within him. If conscience were entirely isolated from God, and were independent of Him, it could not make the solemn, and sometimes the terrible impressions it does. No man would be afraid of himself if self were not connected with a higher Being than himself.

As God has not left Himself without witness among the lower creatures (Acts 14:17), neither has He left Himself without witness within man's own breast. There is not a rational member of the human race who has not at some time more or less smarted under the lashings of conscience. The hearts of princes, in the midst of their pleasures, have been stricken with anguish while their favorites were flattering them. Those inward torments are not ignorant frights experienced only by children, which reason throws off later on, for the stronger reason grows, the sharper the stings of conscience, and not the least so in maturity and old age. It often operates when wickedness is most secret. Numerous cases are on record of an overwhelming terror overtaking wrongdoers when their crimes were known to none, and they have condemned themselves and given themselves up to justice. Could that self-accuser originate from man's own self? He who loves himself would, were it possible, destroy that which disturbs him. Certainly conscience has received no authority from its possessor to lash himself, to spoil the pleasures of sin, to make him "like the troubled sea, which cannot rest."

The very fact there is that in man which condemns him for sins committed in secret, argues there is a God, and that he is accountable unto Him. He has an instinctive dread of a Divine Judge who will yet arraign him. "They know the judgment of God" (Rom. 1:32) by an inward witness. It is a just provision of the Lord that those who will not reverently fear Him, have a tormenting fear of the future. Why is it that, despite all their efforts to escape from the

conclusion that God is, they dread a retribution beyond death?—often demonstrated by the most callous wretches in their last hours by asking for a chaplain or "priest." If there be no God, why do men strive to silence conscience and dispel its terrors? And why are their efforts so unavailing? Since they cannot still its accusations, some Higher Power must maintain it within the soul. That the most enlightened nations recognize men have no right to force the conscience, is a tacit acknowledgment it is above human jurisdiction, answerable only to its Author. Conscience is the vicegerent of God in the soul, and will torment the damned for all eternity.

Chapter 03 – As Seen in Human History

Since God is the Creator of all things, He is their perpetual Preserver and Regulator. And since man is the chief of His earthly creatures, it is unthinkable that God has left him entirely to himself. The same all-mighty Being who created every part of it, directs the vast machinery of the universe and controls equally all the hearts and actions of men. But the same unbelief which seeks to banish God from the realm of creation, denies that He has any real place or part in the moral government of the world. The one, it is said, is regulated by the (impersonal) "laws of Nature," while man, endowed with "free will," must not be interfered with, but left to work out his own destiny, both individually and collectively considered. We have shown how utterly irrational is such a view as it pertains to the material sphere, and it is no more difficult to demonstrate how thoroughly untenable it is as applied to the moral realm. The palpable facts of observation refute it. The affairs of every individual, the history of each nation, the general course of human events—all bear evidence of a higher Power super-intending the same.

In reading history most people are contented with a bare knowledge of its salient facts, without attempting to trace their causes or ascertain the connection of events. For the most part they look no farther than the motives, designs and tendencies of human nature. They perceive not that there is a philosophy of history. They rise not to the realization that the living God has absolute sway over this scene, that amid all the confusion of human wills and interests, all the malice and wickedness of Satan and his agents, the Lord God omnipotent reigns—not only in Heaven but over this earth—shaping all its affairs, directing all things to the outworking of His eternal purpose. Because the reading of human history is done so superficially, and few have more than a general acquaintance with its character, our present line of argument may not be so patent or so potent to some. Nevertheless, it should be more or less obvious unto any person of ordinary intelligence that in the course of the centuries there are clear marks of an over-ruling and presiding Power above the human.

Since there can be no effect without a previous cause, no law without a law-giver, neither do events come to pass fortuitously. Any thoughtful student of history is obliged to conclude that its records are something more than a series of disconnected and purposeless incidents: rather do they evince the working out of a plan. True, its wheels often appear to move slowly, and not infrequently at cross-purposes, nevertheless, the sequel shows they work surely. It is in the combination of events leading up to some grand end that the workings of Divine Providence most clearly appear. As we perceive the wisdom of the Creator in so admirably fitting each member of the human body to perform its designed functions, so we may discern the hand of the moral Ruler of this world in the adapting of appropriate means to the accomplishment of His ends, in the suitability of the instruments He has selected thereunto, in making each separate human actor play his part, each individual contribute his quota in producing the desired effect. As in the mechanism of a watch, each pivot is in place, each wheel in motion, so that the main-spring guides its index, so in the complicated machinery of history every single circumstance pays its mite toward the furthering of some grand object.

Proofs of a presiding Providence are to be found in the life of each individual. Where is the man who has not passed through experiences which made him feel in his heart there must be a God who watches over him? In the unexpected and remarkable turns in the course of his

affairs, in the sudden thoughts and unaccountable decisions which lead to most important results, in his narrow escapes from grave danger, he has evidence of a higher power at work. Even the most giddy and thoughtless are, at times, forced to take notice of this. That we are under a Moral Government which dispenses rewards and punishments in a natural way is also plain to our sense and proved by personal experience. Vicious actions speedily meet with retribution, by involving their perpetrator in disgrace, by often reducing him to poverty, subjecting him to bodily disease and mental suffering, and brining about an untimely death. On the other hand, we find that virtuous actions not only result in inward peace and satisfaction, but lead to respect, health and happiness.

If there be no living God presiding over this scene, how can we possibly account for the almost exact ratio between the two sexes? Each year there are born into this world millions of males and of females, and yet the balance between them is perfectly preserved. Their parents had no say in the matter, nor did medical science regulate it! The only rational explanation is that the sex of each child is determined by the Creator. Again—if there be no personal Creator fashioning human countenances, how are we to explain their unvarying variation? The features of the human countenance are but few in number, yet so much does their appearance differ, both singly and in their combination, that out of countless millions no two people look exactly alike! Suppose the opposite. If a likeness were common, what incalculable inconvenience and confusion would ensue. If only 100 men in a single large city had the same build and countenance, impersonation would be practiced without fear of detection, and criminals could not be identified. Such endless dissimilarities among those descended from common parents must have the Almighty for their Author.

That the One from above regulates all human affairs is demonstrated on every side of us, look where we may. In the instances alluded to above, the individual is entirely passive, for it is by no decision of his that he is born male or female, black or white, a giant or a dwarf. But consider something yet more striking, namely, that even our voluntary actions are secretly directed from on high. Each year hundreds of thousands of both young men and women choose their ordinary vocations or careers: what is it which moves them to make a proportionate selection from such a variety of alternatives? Is it nothing but blind chance that each generation is supplied with sufficient physicians and dentists, lawyers and school teachers, mechanics and manual laborers? Many of our youth emigrate: what hinders all from doing so? Some prefer a life on the land, others on the sea— why? Take something still more commonplace: today I have written and mailed seven letters—suppose every adult in Great Britain did the same! The complicated machinery of modern life would speedily break down and utter chaos would obtain were not an omniscient and omnipresent Being regulating it.

It may be objected that the machinery of our complex social life does not always run smoothly—that there are strikes and lock-outs which result in much inconvenience, that at times the railroads are blocked with traffic, that hotels are overcrowded, and so on. Granted, yet such occurrences are the exception rather than the rule. But we may draw an argument of Divine Providence from the very commotions and confusions which do obtain in the world. Seeing it does occasionally pass through disturbances, is it not evident that there must be a mighty Power balancing these commotions, yea curbing them, so that they do not speedily issue in the total ruin of the world? The same One who has put the fear of man into wild beasts and a natural instinct for them to avoid human habitations, preferring to resort unto the jungles and

deserts, to prowl for their prey in the night, and in the morning return to their caves and dens, sufficiently places His restraining hand upon the baser passions of men as to ensure that degree of law and order which makes life possible amid fallen and depraved creatures. Were that restraining Hand altogether removed, any guarantee of safety and security would be non est.

God is no idle Spectator of the affairs of this earth, but is the immediate Regulator of all its events, and that, not only in a general way, but in all particulars, from the least to the greatest. If, on the one hand, not a sparrow falls to the ground without the Divine will (Matt. 10:29), certain it is that on the other no throne can be overturned without His ordering. "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen" (Rom. 11:36). God is not only "King of saints," but He is "King of nations" (Jer. 10:7) as well. God reigns as truly over His foes as He does over His friends, and works through Satan and his demons as truly as by His holy angels. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, and He turneth it whithersoever He will" (Prov. 21:1). God presides over the deliberations of parliaments and influences the decisions of cabinets. Human governments act only as they are moved by a secret power from Heaven. Jehovah rules in the councils of the ungodly equally as in the prayerful counsels of a church assembly. The designs, decisions and actions of all men are directed by Him unto those ends which He has appointed, yet that in nowise annuls their moral agency or lessens their own guilt in sinning.

The government of this world is as much a work of God as was the creation of it, and while there be some things as inscrutable about the one as the other, yet each alike bears unmistakably upon it the Divine impress. There are riddles in each which the wisest cannot solve, but there are also wonders in each before which all should be awed. Broadly speaking, the moral government of God consists of two things: in directing the creatures' actions, in apportioning rewards and punishments according to the actions of rational creatures. No evil comes to pass without His permission, no good without His concurrence; no good or evil without His over-ruling—ordering it to His own ends. "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Prov. 15:3), and in His balances everything is weighed. The distributions of Divine mercy and of vengeance are, to some extent, apportioned in this life, but more particularly and fully will they be made manifest in the Day to come. God rules in such a way that His hand should be neither too evident nor too secret, and by adopting this middle course, room is left for the exercise of faith, while the unbelief of Infidels rendered without excuse.

Nothing happens simply because it must, that is, of inexorable necessity. Fate is blind, but Providence has eyes—all is directed by wisdom and according to design. The history of each nation is the outworking of the Divine plan and purpose concerning it. Yet it is equally true that the history of each nation is determined by its own attitude toward God and His Law. In the experience of each one it is made to appear that "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 34:3). Thus the Word of God and the Providence of God are complementary: the former sheds light on the latter, while the latter illustrates and exemplifies the former. Therefore in His government of this world, God displays His manifold perfections: His wisdom and goodness, His mercy and justice, His faithfulness and patience. The rise, progress and triumphs of each nation, as also its decline, fall and ignominy, are according to both the sovereign will and the perfect righteousness of the Lord. He rules "in the midst of His

enemies" (Ps. 110:2), yet His rule is neither capricious nor arbitrary, but a wise and just one. The prosperity of nations generally tends to the increase of vice through affording fuller opportunity to indulge its lusts; and in such cases sore calamities are necessary for the checking of their wickedness, or, when it has come to the full, to destroy them as the Egyptian and Babylonian empires were.

The history of Israel affords the most striking example of what has been pointed out above. So long as they honored God and walked in obedience to His Law, so long they prospered and flourished—witness their history in the days of Joshua and David. But when they worshipped the idols of the heathen and became unrighteous in their conduct man with man, sore chastisements and heavy judgments were their portion, as in the times of the judges and of the Babylonian captivity. Observe, too, the futile attempts made by the most powerful of their enemies to secure their extirpation: the efforts of Pharaoh, of Haman, of Sennacherib to overthrow the purpose of Jehovah concerning His people resulted only in their own destruction. Note how an exact retribution—"poetic justice," worldlings would call it—overtook Jezebel: "In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth" (1 Kings 21:19), who was murdered at the orders of that wicked queen, there was her corpse consumed by dogs (2 Kings 9:36). On the other hand, behold how God blessed those who showed kindness to His people: as Rahab and the whole of her family being delivered when Jericho was destroyed because she had sheltered the two Israeli spies; and the Shunnamite woman supernaturally provided for throughout the sore famine for her befriending of the Prophet Elijah. What incredulity regards as "coincidences" right reason views as wondrous providences.

The book of Esther furnishes a most vivid illustration and demonstration of the invisible yet palpable working of God in human affairs. In it we are shown the Jews brought to the very brink of ruin, and then delivered without any miracle being wrought on their behalf. The very means employed by their enemies for their destruction were, by the secret operations of God, made the means of their deliverance and glory. Writing thereon, Carson rightly said: "The hand of God in His ordinary Providence linked together a course of events as simple and as natural as the mind can conceive, yet as surprising as the boldest fictions of romance." The series of events opened with the king of Persia giving a banquet. Heated with wine, that monarch gave orders for his royal consort to appear before the assembled revelers. Though such a request was indecorous and distasteful to the queen, yet it is remarkable she dared to disobey her despotic husband. Whether a sense of decency or personal pride actuated her, we know not—but in voluntarily acting according to her own feelings, she ignorantly fulfilled the will of Him whom she knew not. That the king should subject her to a temporary disgrace for her refusal to heed his behest might be expected, but that he should give up forever one whom he so much admired is surprising.

How extraordinary it was that the deposing of Vashti made way for the elevating of a poor Jewess to the rank of queen of the Persian empire! Was it nothing but a "happy coincidence" that she should be more beautiful than all the virgins of over a 100 provinces? Was it only a piece of "good luck" that the king's chamberlain was pleased with her from the first moment of her arrival, and that he did all in his power to advance her interests? Was it simply "fortunate" for her that she instantly met with favour when the king set eyes upon her? Was it only by blind chance that the conspiracy of two of the king's servants was thwarted and that Mordecai and all his people were saved from disaster? Haman was sure of victory, having

obtained the king's decree to execute his bloody designs. Why was it, then, that the king was sleepless one night, and why should he arise and, to pass the time away, scan the court records? Why did his eye happen to alight on the reported discovery of the plot on his own life? Why had Mordecai been the one to uncover the scheme and his name entered into the report? Why was the king now—at this critical juncture in Israel's affairs—so anxious to ascertain whether Mordecai had been suitably rewarded? Cold logic is not sufficiently credulous to regard these things, and the grand sequel to them all, as so many fortuitous events.

The book of Esther plainly evinces that the most trifling affairs are ordered by the Lord to subserve His own glory and effect the good of His own people. Though He works behind the scenes, He works none the less. He does indeed govern the inanimate world by general laws of His own appointing, yet He directs their operations-or suspends them when He pleases—so as to accomplish what He has decreed. He has also established general moral laws in the government of mankind, yet He is not tied by them: sometimes He uses means, at others He uses none. As the sun and rain minister to the nourishment and comfort of the righteous and wicked alike, not from the necessity of general laws but from the immediate Providence of Him who has ordained all things, so the free determinations of men are so controlled from on high that they effect the eternal designs of God. So, too, the Book of Esther reveals that it is in the combination of incidents the working of Providence most plainly appears. There is a wonderful series of linking events which lead to the accomplishment of God's glorious purpose: the actions of each person are links in the chain to bring about some appointed result—if one link were removed the whole chain would be broken. All lines converge on and meet in one center: all things concur to bring about the decreed event.

If the record of any Gentile nation were fully chronicled, and had we sufficient discernment and perspicuity, we should perceive as definite a connection between one event—which now appears to us isolated—and another, and the hand of God controlling them as in the history of Israel. But even a fragmentary knowledge of general history should be sufficient to reveal to any man the directing hand of God in it and the testimony it bears to the truth of the Bible. It abounds in illustrations that, "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong" (Eccl. 9:11). The most numerous and powerful armies are no guaranty of success, as has frequently been demonstrated. Providence disposes the event: without any miraculous interference the best trained and equipped forces have been defeated by much weaker ones. The discovery of America by Columbus, in time for that land to afford an asylum for persecuted Protestants, the invention of printing just before the Reformation, the destruction of the "Invincible Armada" of Spain, are more than "coincidences." Why has England always had a man of outstanding proportions—genius, valor, dynamism, dogged determination—at each critical juncture of her history? Cromwell, Drake, Nelson, Wellington, Churchill—all were the special gifts of God to a people under His peculiar favour.

A real, if mysterious, Providence is obviously at work, controlling the gradual growth of each empire and of the combination of nations: as in the federation of the ten kings of Revelation 17:16, 17—the Divine plan is brought to fruition by those whose intention it is to accomplish their own purpose. "For God hath put it in their hearts to fulfil His will," though that in nowise lessens their sin: none but the hand of the Almighty can bring good out of evil and make the wrath of His enemies to praise Him. The more their chronicles be studied, the stronger should be our conviction that only the action and interposition of God can account for many of

the outstanding events in human history. The rise and careers of individual tyrants also illustrates the same principle. How often have the workings of Providence verified the Word that "the triumphing of the wicked is short" (Job 20:5). At longest it is but brief because limited by the span of this life, whereas their sufferings will be eternal. But often God blows upon the plans of ambitious oppressors, crosses their imperious wills, and brings them to a speedy ruin in this world: He did so with Napoleon, the Kaiser, Mussolini and Hitler! He raised them on high that He might cast them down by a more terrible fall.

We have called attention to the revelation which God has made of Himself in human history, that is, to the cumulative evidence which the affairs of individuals and of nations furnish that a Divine Person has full control over those affairs, and orders and directs them all unto the accomplishment of His own eternal purpose. The Ruler of this world makes use of the opinions and motives, the resolves and actions of men, yea, overruling their very crimes to further His design and promote His own glory. Every occurrence upon the stage of human events is not only to be traced back to the Divine counsels, but should be viewed as the outworking of a part of His vast plan. We should behold God in all the intrigues of courts and governments, in all the caprices of monarchs, in all the changes of kingdoms and empires; yea, in all the persecutions of the righteous, as really and as truly as in the progress of the Gospel: though in the former it is more the secret workings of His justice, as it is the more open manifestations of His grace in the latter. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD" (Prov. 16:33) whether or not we perceive it.

The One who rules the planets is equally master of every human despot. We supplied proof of that in connection with Ahasuerus. Consider now another example. As a judgment upon their long-continued sinfulness, God delivered the Jews into the hands of an invading power, and suffered the flower of their nation to be carried captive into Babylon. Yet His judgment was tempered with mercy, for He assured His covenant, though wayward people, that after 70 years they should return to Palestine. That promise was definite and sure: but how was it to receive its fulfillment? They were utterly incapable of delivering themselves from the midst of the mightiest empire on earth, and there was no friendly and powerful nation demanding their emancipation. How, then, was the Lord's Word to be made good? God had indeed delivered their forefathers from Egypt by a series of great marvels, but from Babylon He freed them without a single miracle. The manner in which He did so supplies a striking example of His providential workings and an illustrious illustration of how He shapes the history of nations.

"Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of Heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and He hath charged me to build Him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all His people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel (He is the God), which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem" (Ezra 1:1-4).

This is the famous Cyrus whose name occupies a prominent place upon the scroll of secular history. He was the ordained conqueror of Babylon, and when the empire of

Nebuchadnezzar and Darius fell before his sword, instead of keeping the Jews in bondage, he decreed their liberation. But why should he do so? Was he a worshipper of Jehovah and a lover of His people? Far from it: he was a heathen idolater! The prophecy of Jeremiah had evidently been read by him, though it effected not his conversion, for he continued a devotee of his own gods. But God so impressed his mind by that prophecy, and secretly wrought in him a desire and determination to free the Jews that he made an authoritative proclamation to that effect. God gave His people favour in the eyes of the Persian king, and wrought in him both to will and to do of His good pleasure; yet in the forming and carrying out of his decision, Cyrus acted quite freely. Thus with the greatest of ease God can effect His own purpose, and without the use of force remove any obstacle standing in the way.

If (as so many students of prophecy believe) God has predestined that the Jews shall, after centuries of weary wandering among the Gentiles, once more occupy the land of Palestine, and if His time be now ripe for the fulfillment of that decree, then neither the Arabs nor anyone else can prevent their doing so. Whatever method or means God uses will in no wise alter the fact that there will be spread before the eyes of the world a demonstration that One immeasurably superior to man is ordering its affairs. Time will show: but up to now it looks as though God is repeating what He did in and through Cyrus. First, He moved the British Government to take over the mandatory control of Palestine, which has been administered for a quarter of a century at great inconvenience and at heavy cost of life and money, without a "thank you" from anyone. Now He has "stirred up the spirit" of the U.S. Government to insist on the entry of more and more Jews into that land. God has "His way in the whirlwind" (Nahum 1:3).

Let us now carefully consider the objection of the skeptic. If an infinitely wise and benevolent Being be in full control of all the affairs of earth, then why is there so much evil, so much suffering and sorrow? Justice is a rare commodity between individuals or nations— the ruthless and powerful seize the prey, while the conscientious and honest are despoiled. Mercy appears to be mainly a consideration of prudence, for who acts generously or leniently when another is thwarting his own interests?—witness, for example, the toll of the road. If a God of love presides over the scene, then why has He permitted the horrible holocaust of the past few years, with such widespread havoc and misery? The first answer is, Because the earth is inhabited by a rebellious race, which has revolted from its Maker, and is now being made to feel that "the way of transgressors is hard" (Prov. 13:15). Since man himself was the one who deliberately dashed into pieces the cup of felicity which was originally placed in his hands, he has no legitimate ground for complaint if he now finds that the potion which he has brewed for himself is as bitter as gall and wormwood.

The Infidel may reject with scorn the contents of the first three chapters of Genesis, but in so doing he casts away the only key which unlocks to us the meaning of human history, the only explanation which rationally accounts for the course of human affairs. If it be true that man was made by a holy and gracious God and was under moral obligations to serve and glorify Him, and if instead of so doing he cast off allegiance to Him and apostatized, what would we expect the consequences to be? Why, that man should be made to feel His displeasure and reap what he had sown. If this world lies under the righteous curse of its Creator because of man's sin and its Ruler be displaying His justice in punishing offenders and vindicating His broken Law, in what other ink than that of blood and tears may we expect human history to be written?! Does

the alternative hypothesis of evolution offer a more satisfactory solution? Very far from it. If man started at the bottom of the ladder and during the course of the ages has gradually ascended, if the human race be slowly but surely improving, how comes is it that this twentieth century has witnessed such an unprecedented display of savagery and degradation?!

If an omniscient and beneficent God be governing this world, why is there so much wickedness and wretchedness in it? We answer, in the second place, to demonstrate the truth of His own Word, the accounts which that Word gives of the corruptions of human nature have been widely refused, as being too gloomy a diagnosis of the same. The descriptions furnished by Scripture of man's depravity have been haughtily despised by the wise of this world. Nevertheless, the annals of human history furnish abundant verification of the same. It may not be palatable to read, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. 51:5), that "man is born like a wild ass's colt" (Job 11:12), that "The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies" (Ps. 58:3)—yet universal observation discovers clear proof of the verity of the same. Children do not have to be taught to be intractable, to lie and steal. Remove restraints, leave them to themselves, and it quickly appears what is born and bred in them. The widespread juvenile delinquency of our own day is very far from exemplifying any progress of the human race!

It certainly is not flattering to proud human nature to be told in the unerring Word of Truth, that, as the result of the Fall, man's heart is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9), yet every newspaper we open contains illustrations of the teaching of Christ that, "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man" (Mark 7:21-23). Thousands of years ago God described mankind thus: "Their throat is an open sepulchre: with their tongues they have used deceit, the poison of asps is under their lips, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known" (Rom. 3:13-17). And why is this? The closing words of the same passage tell us: "There is no fear of God before their eyes" (v. 18). Who that has any acquaintance with the chronicles of history can deny that indictment? Who with the present state of society before his eyes can deny it? The very Word of God which men will not receive by faith is being verified in their very sight!

Why does God permit so much human misery? We answer, in the third place, to manifest the glory of His own perfections. The frightful calamity of war causes many to deny or seriously doubt the reality of Divine Providence, for when that fearful scourge falls upon the nations, it appears to them that Satan, rather than the Lord, has charge of things and is the author of their troubles. At such a time God's own people may find it difficult to stay their minds on Him and rest implicitly in His wisdom and goodness. Yet the Word reveals that God is no mere distant Spectator of the bloody conflicts of men, but that His righteous and retributive agency is immediately involved therein, though that neither mitigates the guilt of the human instigators nor destroys their free agency. Their consuming egotism, insatiable greed, horrible barbarities—proceed entirely from themselves and are of their own volition; nevertheless, the Most High directs their lusts to the execution of His own designs and renders them subservient to His own honour.

The affairs of nations are ordered by a Divine hand. Their rise, development and

progress are "of the Lord," so also are their decline, adversities and destruction. God's dealing with Israel of old was not exceptional, but illustrative of His ways with the Gentiles throughout the last 19 centuries. While Israel's ways pleased the Lord, He made their enemies to be at peace with them; but when they gave themselves up to idolatry and lasciviousness, war was one of His sore scourges upon them. Whenever Divine judgment falls upon either an individual or a nation, it is because sin has called loudly for Him to vindicate His honour and enforce the penalty of His Law. Yet warning is always given before He strikes: "space to repent" is provided, the call to forsake that which displeases Him, opportunity to avert His wrath—and if this warning be disregarded and the opportunity to escape His vengeance be not improved—then is His judgment doubly righteous. Ordinarily God makes use of men—a Nebuchadnezzar, a Caesar, a Hitler—as the instruments by which His judgment is inflicted, thereby demonstrating His sovereignty over all, who can do nothing without Him, yet who must play the part which He has ordained.

In various ways does the Ruler of this world manifest the glory of His attributes. By the display of His infinite patience in bearing with so much longsuffering those who defy Him to His face and continue in their obduracy. By exhibiting the exceeding riches of His mercy in sometimes calling the most outrageous rebels out of darkness into His marvelous light, bringing them to repentance and granting them pardon: thus it was with King Manasseh and Saul of Tarsus. By manifesting the strictness of His untempered justice in hardening others in sin to their own destruction. "Behold therefore the goodness and the severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou shalt also be cut off' (Rom. 11:22). By showing forth His wondrous power, both in directing and curbing human passions. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee [as that of Pharaoh's was made to do]: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain" (Ps. 76:10), for He holds in check the fiercest as much as He sets bounds to the turbulent seas.

The depravity of human nature, the potency and prevalency of evil, and the power and malice of the Wicked One in whom the whole world lies, only makes more evident and wonderful the Providence of God. Since holiness be so universally hated and the saints of the Lord so detested and persecuted by the great majority of their fellow men, had not God so signally interposed for their preservation, the last of His people had long since perished amid the enmity and fury of their implacable enemies. Were there no other evidence that the living God governs this world, this one should suffice: that though His servants and sons have been so strenuously opposed in this scene, yet they have never been totally rooted out of it; that though the most powerful governments have sought their complete destruction, and though they were weak and possessed of no material weapons, yet a remnant always survived!—as real a marvel that is as the preservation of the three Hebrew youths in the fiery furnace of Babylon.

What has just been pointed out has not received the attention which it justly claims, for it is a conspicuous feature of history and one that has been frequently repeated. The saints of God in Old Testament times, in the early centuries of this Christian era, and throughout the Dark Ages, when both pagan and papal Rome made the most determined efforts to completely annihilate them, had good reason to confess, "If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us. Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul; then the proud waters had gone over our soul. Blessed be the LORD who hath not given us as

a prey to their teeth" (Ps. 124:2-6). It is quite possible, perhaps likely, that before this present century has run its course, the restraining hand of God will again be wholly removed from their foes and His people subjected to martyrdom. Should such prove the case, He will, unto the end, maintain to Himself a witness in the earth.

Why is there so much suffering and sorrow in this world? Fourth, for the good and gain of God's own people. As there is not a little in the realm of creation which sorely puzzles both the naturalist and the scientist—as there is much in God's written Word that is opposed to proud reason—so many of His governmental works often appear profoundly mysterious. That the wicked should prosper so much and flourish as the green bay tree, while the righteous are often in sore straits and at their wit's end to make ends meet; that the most unscrupulous attain unto positions of prestige and power, while the most virtuous and pious have been counted as "the offscouring of all things," and ended their days in a dungeon or by suffering a cruel martyrdom; that when God's judgments fall upon a nation they are no respecter of persons, the relatively innocent suffering from them as severely as the most guilty—these and similar cases which might be instanced present real problems to those who reflect upon the same.

True, but the more thoughtfully they be examined, especially in view of the hereafter, the less difficulty they present. The thoughts of the materialist and skeptic extend no farther than the narrow bounds of this life, and consequently he sees these things in a false perspective. Because of their misuse of them, the temporal mercies enjoyed by the wicked become a curse, hardening them in their sins and fattening them for the slaughter. On the other hand, afflictions often prove a blessing in disguise unto believers, weaning their affections from the things of earth and causing them to seek their joy in things above. God often thwarts their carnal plans because He would have their hearts occupied with better objects. The more they are dissatisfied in the creature and discover that everything under the sun yields only vanity and vexation of spirit, the more inducement have they to cultivate a closer communion with the One who can fully satisfy their souls.

It is not meet that the righteous should always be in a prosperous and happy case in their temporal estate, for then they would be most apt to seek their rest therein. On the other hand, if their portion were that of unrelieved affliction and misery, while the lot of the wicked was uniformly one of plenty and ease, that would be too severe a trial of faith. Therefore God wisely mixes His dispensations with each class respectively. God so orders His Providences that His people shall live by faith and not by sight or sense. That is not only for their happiness, but for God's honour. He frequently regulates things so that it may appear that the saints trust Him in the dark as well as in the light. An outstanding example of that is seen in the case of Job, who was afflicted as few have ever been. Yet in his blackest hour he averred, "though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (13:15). How greatly is He glorified by such conduct! Tribulations are needful for the testing of profession, that the difference between the wheat and the chaff may appear. Heresies are necessary that lovers of Truth may be made manifest (1 Cor. 11:19). Trials are indispensable, that patience may have her perfect work.

If in every instance the righteous were rewarded and the wicked punished in this life, the Day of judgment would be fully anticipated: but by furnishing some present instances of both the one and the other, the great Assize is presaged and the government of God vindicated. If temporal mercies and spiritual blessings were now evenly distributed, no demonstration would be made of the absolute sovereignty of Him who dispenses His favors as He pleases, and

bestows upon or withholds from each individual that which seems good unto Himself. There are not more inequalities in the dispensations of Providence than in the realm of creation. In its widest aspect there is a noticeable and striking balance observable in the apportionment of mercies. As in Old Testament times Divine favors were largely confined to the seed of Abraham, so in the New Testament era unto the Gentiles. Something analogous thereto is seen in God's conduct toward the eastern and western parts of the earth. For 2,000 years after the Flood, learning, government and piety were largely confined to the east, while our forefathers in the west were a horde of savages. For the last 2,000 years the Gospel, with all its beneficent by-products, has traveled westward. Perhaps in the next 2,000 years it will again move eastward.

The living God controls all circumstances, commands all events, rules every creature, makes all their energies and actions fulfil His will, provides a sure and comfortable resting place for the heart. The present outlook may be dismal, but God reigns and is making all things work together for the glory of His name and the good of His people. If the human race is to occupy this earth for several more generations, or perhaps many centuries, then certain it is that out of the throes through which it is now passing shall issue the furtherance of the Gospel and the promotion of Christ's kingdom. The annals of human affairs can only be read intelligently and interpreted aright as we perceive that history is His-story. In the final Day of Manifestation it will be plain to all that, "He hath done all things well"; meanwhile, faith now knows that it is so.

Chapter 04 – As Unveiled in the Lord Jesus Christ

In the dispensations of His Providence, the revelation which God has made of Himself unto mankind has been a progressive one. First, He is manifested in the realm of creation, and that with sufficient clearness as to leave all without excuse if they perceive not that He is. Second, God is revealed in man himself, so that his very constitution evinces his Divine origin and his conscience bears witness of his accountability to his Maker. Third, God is plainly to be seen in human history: most patently in His dealings with the Jews during the past 35 centuries; yet with sufficient clearness everywhere as to attest that He is the moral Governor of this world, the Regulator of human affairs. But over and above these—O wonder of wonders—God has become incarnate. In the Person of His blessed and co-equal Son, God deigned to clothe Himself in our flesh and blood and manifest Himself unto the sons of men. For the space of 33 years He appeared among men and displayed His glory before their eyes; yea, gave proof of His matchless mercy by performing a work, at infinite cost to Himself, which has made it possible for Him to righteously save the very chief of sinners.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:1, 14). It is by means of words that we make known our wills, reveal the caliber of our minds and the character of our hearts, and communicate information unto others. Appropriately, then, is Christ designated, "The Word of God," for He has made the Transcendent immanent, the incomprehensible God intelligible to us. Thus, too, is He denominated "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15) and the "Alpha and the Omega" (Rev. 1:8)—the One who spells out the Deity unto us. "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared" or "told Him forth" (John 1:18). In Christ's life of impeccable purity, we behold God's holiness; in His utter selflessness, God's benevolence; in His peerless teaching, God's wisdom; in His unrivalled miracles, God's power; in His gentleness and longsuffering, God's patience; in His love and grace, the outshining of God's glory.

The record of Christ's unprecedented life is found in the four Gospels. Those Gospels were written by men who were constantly in Christ's company during the days of His ministry, being an ungarnished record of what they personally saw with their own eyes and heard with their own ears. Numerous copies of those Gospels have been in known existence since the first century of this Christian era. Only three explanations of them are feasible. First, that they were written by deluded fanatics. But the character of their contents, the calmness of their tenor, the absence of anything savoring of enthusiasm, cause anyone capable of weighing evidence to promptly reject such an hypothesis. The dreams of visionaries had never received such widespread credence. Second, that they were the inventions of deceitful men. But that could not be, otherwise their contemporaries had exposed them as impostors. Wicked men could not have devised the Sermon on the Mount. Third, that they were written by honest men, who chronicled actual facts.

The Person of the Lord Jesus presents a baffling problem, yea, an insoluble enigma unto infidelity. Skepticism is quite unable to supply any rational explanation of the phenomenon which He presents. Yet, "what think ye of Christ?" is a question which cannot be avoided or evaded by anyone who professes to use his reasoning powers or lays any claim to being an

educated person. The obvious fact confronts believer and unbeliever alike that the appearing of Jesus Christ on the stage of this world has exerted a more powerful, lasting, and extensive influence than has any other person, factor, or event that can be named. To say that Christ has revolutionized human history is only to affirm what His bitterest foes are compelled to acknowledge. He dwelt in no palace, led no army, overthrew no mundane empire, yet His fame has spread to the ends of the earth. He wrote no book, framed no philosophy, erected no temple—yet He occupies a place in literature and religion which none else has ever achieved. How is this to be explained? Unbelief can furnish no answer! Nor can it refute, for the historicity of Christ is established far more conclusively than that of Socrates and Plato.

Viewed simply from the human plane the Lord Jesus presents a phenomenon which admits of no human explanation. The law of heredity cannot account for Him, for He transcends all merely racial characteristics. Though according to the flesh He was the Son of Abraham, yet He is bounded by no Jewish limitations. Instead, He is the Man of men, the Pattern Man. The Englishman and the Dutchman, with their vastly different racial temperaments, the stolid German and the warm Italian behold their Ideal in Christ: He rises above all national restrictions. The law of environment cannot explain Him, for He was born in poverty, lived in a small town, received no collegiate training, toiled at the carpenter's bench. Such an environment was not conducive to the development of thought and teaching which was to enlighten the whole world. Christ transcends all laws. There is nothing provincial about Him. "The Son of man" is His fitting title, for He is the Representative Man.

Christ was not tinctured or affected by the age in which He lived. And that can be said of no one else. Study the characters and teaching of any of the outstanding figures of history, and we are at once aware that they were colored by their own generation. By common consent we make certain allowances for those who lived in former times, and agree that it would not be just to measure them by present-day ideals. Men of the most sterling worth were, in measure, marred by the crudities, coarseness, or superstitions of their contemporaries. But the Lord Jesus is the grand Exception. You may test Him by the light of this twentieth century—if light it be—or you may judge Him by any century, and no lack or blemish is to be found in Him. His teaching was pure Truth without any mixture of error, and therefore it stands the test of all time. His teaching was neither affected by the prevailing traditions of Judaism, by that of Grecian philosophy, nor by any other influence then abroad. The timeless value of Christ's teaching is without parallel. That of Socrates and Plato has long since become obsolete, but Christ's is as pertinent and potent now as the day He uttered it.

There is no part of Christ's teaching which the subsequent growth of human knowledge has had to discredit. Therein it is in marked contrast with that of all other men, whose dicta have to be constantly revised and brought up to date. There is a universal quality to His teaching which is found in none other's—an originality, a loftiness, an adaptability. There is nothing petty, local, or transient about it. It is of general application, suited to all generations and to all peoples. It possesses a vital and vitalizing freshness without a parallel. It is profound enough for the mightiest intellect, practical enough for the artisan, simple enough for the little child. It is profitable for youth, for maturity, and old age alike. It furnishes that which is needed by those in prosperity, brings comfort to those in adversity, and has imparted a peace which passes all understanding to thousands who lay upon beds of suffering, and while they passed through the valley of the shadow of death. Those are facts attested by a multitude of witnesses whose

testimony cannot be fairly impeached.

Unto Christ the master minds of the ages have paid homage. Such mighty intellects as Lord Bacon and Isaac Newton, Michael Faraday and Lord Kelvin, Milton and Handel; Calvin and John Locke, and a host of others who towered above their fellows in mental acumen and genius, bowed before Him in adoring worship. Not that Christianity is in any need of human patronage to authenticate it, but that it may be evinced to the thoughtful ones of this rising generation that Christians are far from being a company of credulous simpletons. Christianity is not something suited only to little children or old ladies in their dotage. When the young men of this age behold such hard-headed men as General Dobbie, the valiant defender of Malta, and Field Marshal Montgomery, the Commander-in-chief of the British Army, unashamedly acknowledging Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour, they have before them that which clearly challenges them to seriously consider the claims of Christ and carefully examine His teachings— instead of contemptuously ignoring the same as something unworthy of their best attention.

Napoleon Bonaparte, the military genius of a century ago, declared, “Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne and myself have founded empires, but upon what did those creations of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus Christ alone established His empire upon love, and to this very day millions would die for Him. I think I understand something of human nature, and I tell you, those were men and I am a man; Jesus Christ is more than a man. I have inspired multitudes with such an enthusiastic devotion that they would have died for me . . .but to do this it was necessary that I should be visibly present, with the electric influence of my looks, of my words, of my voice. When I saw men and spoke to them, I lighted up the flame of self-devotion in their hearts. Christ alone has succeeded in raising the mind of men toward the Unseen, that it becomes insensible to the barriers of time and space. Across a chasm of 1,800 years Jesus Christ makes a demand which is, beyond all others, difficult to satisfy.

"He asks for the human heart. He will have it entirely for and to Himself. He demands it unconditionally, and forthwith His demand is granted. Wonderful! In defiance of time and space, the soul of man, with all its powers and faculties, is annexed to the empire of Christ. All who simply believe in Him experience that remarkable, supernatural love towards Him. This phenomenon is unaccountable: it is altogether beyond the scope of man’s creative powers. Time, the great destroyer, is powerless to extinguish this sacred flame; time cannot exhaust its strength, nor put a limit to its reign. This it is which strikes me most. I have often thought of it. This it is which proves to me quite convincingly the Divinity of Jesus Christ.” Paul Richter said of Christ: “The holiest among the mighty, the mightiest among the holy, who with His pierced hands has lifted empires off their hinges, turned the stream of centuries out of its channel, and still governs the ages.”

Alexander, Napoleon, Lincoln, are dead, and we refer to them in the past tense. But not so with Christ. We do not think or speak of Him as One who was, but as One who is. The Lord Jesus is far more than a memory. He is the great "I am": the same yesterday and today and forever. He is more real to mankind, His influence still more prevalent, His followers more numerous in this twentieth century than they were in the first. On what principle, scientifically, can we rationally account for the dynamical influence of the Lord Jesus today? That One now at a distance of almost two millenniums is still molding human thought, attracting human hearts, transforming human lives, with such mighty sway that He stands forth from all other teachers as

the sun makes the stars recede into dimness and pale before the luster of His refulgence. As a strictly scientific question, the mystery of Christ's influence demands an adequate solution. It requires neither science nor philosophy to deny, but it does to explain. The only satisfactory explanation is that Christ is God, omnipotent and omnipresent.

We call attention now to what has well been termed "The Logic of the Changed Calendar": what follows is an enlargement of some notes we made nearly forty years ago from a book entitled The Unrealized Logic of Religion. Few people stop to inquire for an explanation of one of the most amazing facts which is presented to the notice of everybody, namely, the fact that all civilized time is dated from the birth of Jesus Christ. This is the twentieth century, and from what event are those centuries dated? From the birth of a Jew, who, according to the view of Infidels, if He ever existed, was a peasant in an obscure province, who was the author of no wonderful invention, who occupied no throne, who died when, as men count years, He had scarcely reached his prime, and who died the death of a criminal. Now if the Lord Jesus Christ were nothing more than what skeptics will allow, then is it not utterly unthinkable that the chronology of the civilized world should be reckoned from His birth? The effect must correspond to the cause, and there is no agreement between such a phenomenon and such an inadequate producer.

To have some common measure of time is, of course, a necessity of organized society, but where shall we find an adequate starting point for the calendar?—i.e., one which will be acceptable to all civilized nations! A world-shattering victory, the founding of some many-centuried city, the birth of a dynasty, the beginning of a revolution: some such event, it might reasonably be expected, would give time a new starting point. But no conqueror's sword has ever cut deep enough on Time to leave an enduring mark. The Julian era, the Alexandria era, the era of the Sileucidae—all had their brief day and have vanished. There is for civilized men but one suitable, enduring and universally recognized starting point for civilized time, and that is the manger at Bethlehem! And how is that strange yet startling fact to be explained? It was imposed neither by the authority of a conqueror, the device of priests, the enactment of a despot, nor even by Constantine; but by slow and gradual consent.

The name of Jesus Christ did not emerge in the calendar till five centuries after His death —a space of time long enough for Him to be forgotten had He been an impostor. It took another 500 years to become universally accepted; and the process is linked to no human name. Here, then, is a phenomenon that skepticism cannot explain: that without any conspiracy of Christian fanatics Jesus Christ has altered the almanacs of the world. The one event which towers above the horizon of history serves as a landmark to measure time for all civilized races. The Lord of time has indelibly written His signature across time itself; the years of the modern world being labeled by common consent the years of our Lord! Every letter you receive (though penned by an atheist), every newspaper carrying the date of its issue (though published by Communists), bears testimony to the historicity of Christ! The One who entered this world to shape its history to a new pattern changed its calendar from A.M. to A.D.

All that had transpired previously in human history counted for nothing. The name of the most famous of the world's generals or of its most powerful monarchs was not deemed worthy to be imprinted upon all succeeding centuries. By a deep, unanimous, inarticulate and yet irresistible instinct, each nation has recognized and recorded on its almanacs the true starting point of its life. Several attempts have been made to establish another point of departure for

recorded time. Islam has made a faint but broken mark upon the centuries, relating time to the sword; but the Moslem almanac is confined to but a cluster of half-civilized races. La Place, the astronomer, proposed to give stability and dignity to human chronology by linking it to the stars, but the world approved not. France sought to popularize its Revolution, and count 1793 as year one, but her calendar lasted but 13 years. The centuries belong to Christ and pay homage to Him by bearing His name!

Men and women of all ages, who are at present being tossed to and fro upon a sea of doubt, there is no reason why you should remain there. It will be your own fault if you fail to secure firm ground to stand upon. You may imagine Christians make an idle boast when they affirm "we know," and declare, "That is exactly what you do not: you suppose, you hope, you believe. The dream may be alluring, the hope pleasing, but you cannot be sure." If so, you err. The children of God have infallible proof, and if you follow the right course, assurance will be yours too. The value and Divinity of Christ's teaching may be personally verified by yourself. How? "If any man will do His will," said Christ, "he shall know of the doctrine" (John 7:17). If you will read the record of it in the Gospels, submit to Christ's authority, conform to His requirements, regulate your life by His precepts, then you shall obtain a settled conviction that He "spake as never man spake," that His are the words of Truth.

Nay, further. If you be an honest inquirer, prepared to follow the Truth wherever it leads—and it will be out of the mists of skepticism and away from the fogs of uncertainty—you may obtain definite and conclusive proof that Christ is and that He is the Rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. His invitation is, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink" (John 7:37), and upon compliance, He promises to satisfy that thirst. Test Him for yourself If the empty cisterns of this world—their poor pleasures or their intellectual speculations—have failed to satisfy your soul, Christ can. He declares, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). If you have toiled in vain for peace and your conscience be burdened with a sense of guilt, then cast yourself on the mercy of Christ right now, and you shall find "rest unto your soul"—such as this world can neither give nor take away. Then you, too, will know the reality and certainty of His so great salvation. Put Him to the test!

PART TWO – THE HOLY BIBLE

Chapter 05 – God's Written Communication

In our preceding chapters we have called attention to some of the evidences which demonstrate the existence of God as seen in the revelation which He has made of Himself in creation, in man himself, in His shaping of human history, and in the Person of His incarnate Son. We turn now to that written communication which He has vouchsafed us, namely, the Scriptures, commonly designated "the Bible," which means "The Book," or more reverently "The Holy Bible"—the Book which is separated from and exalted above all others, the Sacred Book. Concerning it the Psalmist averred, "Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy name" (Ps. 138:2): that is, beyond all previous manifestations of the Divine Being. In the Holy Scriptures God has made a full discovery of Himself and a complete disclosure of His will. There His glories are set forth in their meridian clarity and splendor. The Word is a glass in which the character and perfections of God may be seen, and in order to become better acquainted with Him we need to more diligently peruse the same. Alas that so very few of this generation do so. Alas that so many preachers discourage such a duty.

Nearly 40 years ago, in one of our earliest publications, we wrote: "To all who are acquainted with the spiritual conditions of our day it is apparent that there is being made at this time a determined attempt to set aside the authority of the Bible. In the press, the pulpit and the pew, its Divine Authorship is being questioned and denied. The Serpent's words to Eve 'Yea, hath God said?' are being heard in every quarter of Christendom. The ancient 'landmarks' of our fathers are being abandoned, the foundation of our religion undermined, and for the most part the Bible is no longer regarded as the Word of God.

"In every age the Bible has been the object of attack and assault: every available weapon in the Devil's arsenal has been used in the effort to destroy the Temple of God's Truth. In the first days of the Christian era the attack of the enemy was made openly—the bonfire being the chief instrument of destruction. But in these 'last days' the assault is made in a more subtle manner, and comes from a more unexpected quarter. The Divine origin of the Scriptures is now disputed in the name of 'Scholarship' and 'Science,' and that, too, by those who profess to be the friends and champions of the Bible. Much of the learning and theological activities of the hour are concentrated in the attempt to discredit and destroy the accuracy and authority of God's Word. The result is that thousands of nominal Christians are plunged into a sea of doubt and tossed about by every wind of the destructive 'Higher Criticism.' Many of those who are paid to stand in our pulpits and defend the Truth of God are now the very ones engaged in sowing the seed of unbelief and destroying the faith of those to whom they minister."

Today we behold some of the fearful crops which have resulted from that evil sowing: "some of," we say, for it is greatly to be feared that the full harvest does not yet appear. Shocking and appalling is the situation which is already spread before us. It has become increasingly evident, even to men who make no pretensions unto spirituality, that the restraining hand of God has been more and more removed from the world, till a spirit of utter lawlessness and recklessness now possesses a large proportion of mankind. But only those with an anointed eye can perceive why this is so, namely because the influence formerly exerted by God's Word was suppressed. The majority of church-goers of the preceding generations had instilled into them doubts upon the authenticity of Holy Writ: theological professors and "up-to-

date" preachers openly denied its supernatural character. Once the awe-inspiring authority of God's Word was removed, the most potent bridle upon the lusts and passions of the masses was gone. Where there is no longer any fear of Divine judgment after death, what is left to curb the activities of sin?

The present state of society is due to the infidelity of "the churches" during the past century, and the apostasy of Christendom began by losing its grip upon the basic truth of the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures. And there is no hope whatever of Christendom being recovered from its present corrupt condition and woeful plight until it regains that grip, until it recognizes and avows that the Bible is a messenger from Heaven, a direct communication from God, imperiously demanding complete subjection of conscience to its authority and total subjugation of the mind and will to its requirements. It has, therefore, become the imperative duty of God's servants to put first things first: to affirm with clarion voice the Divine inspiration and authority of the Holy Bible, to present to their hearers some of the many "infallible proofs" by which it is authenticated, that they may "know the certainty of those things" (Luke 1:4) wherein they are instructed. Thereby God Himself will be honored, a sure foundation laid for faith to rest upon, the only specific provided for the disease of materialism and infidelity, and the lone barrier against the inroads of Romanism.

There is not a shadow of doubt in our mind that Rome was behind the "Higher Criticism" movement of the last century, just as she was of the introduction and spread of Arminianism in England (through Laud) shortly after the Reformation. The Papacy was shrewd enough to recognize that the authority of God's Word must be undermined and its influence upon the nation weakened, before she had any hope of bringing it within her deadly toils. There is nothing she hates and dreads so much as the Bible, especially when it is circulated among the common people in their own tongue, as was clearly shown in the days of Queen Mary, of infamous memory. The organization of the Bible Societies, with their enormous output, was a rude shock to Rome, but she promptly countered it through "Modernism," by discrediting the inerrancy of the Scriptures. The promulgation of the so-called "Higher Criticism" has done far more for the spread of infidelity among the masses than did the coarse blasphemies of Tom Paine; and it is among those who have no settled convictions that Rome wins most of her converts!

Now, the most effective way to oppose error is to preach the Truth, as the way to dispel darkness from a room is to let in or turn on the light. Satan is well pleased if he can induce those whom God has called to expound His Law and proclaim His Gospel to turn aside and seek to expose the fallacies of the various cults and isms. When the disciples of Christ informed Him that the Pharisees were offended at His teaching, He bade them, "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind" (Matthew 15:14)—waste no time upon them. When the servants of the Householder asked permission to remove the tares which His enemy had sown in His field, He forbade them (Matthew 13:29). The business of Christ's ministers is to sow, and continue sowing the good Seed, and not to root up tares! Their work is to be a positive and constructive one, and not merely a negative and destructive thing. Their task is to "preach the Word" (2 Tim. 4:2), faithfully and diligently, in dependency upon the Spirit, looking to God for His blessing upon the same. And what is so urgently needed today is that they proclaim with earnest conviction, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16).

That claim is no empty one, but rather one that is attested by unimpeachable witnesses and verified by incontrovertible evidence. It bears in it and upon it the infallible tokens of its

Divine origin, and it is the bounden duty and holy privilege of God's servants to present, simply and convincingly, some of the various and conclusive evidence which demonstrates the uniqueness of the Bible. They cannot possibly engage in a more important and needed task than in seeking to establish their hearers in the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures, for it is of the greatest possible moment they should be thoroughly settled in that truth. The human mind cannot engage itself with any inquiry more momentous than this: "Has the Bible come from God? Is it a Divine revelation and communication addressed unto us personally from our Maker?" If it is, then it has claims upon us such as are possessed by no other writings. If it is not, then it is a wicked imposter, utterly unworthy of our serious consideration. Those are the sole alternatives. Hence, this is "the doctrine of doctrines: the doctrine that teaches us all others, and in virtue of which alone they are doctrines" (Gaussen).

Before we call attention to some of the abundant and varied evidence which makes manifest the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures, perhaps we should meet an objection which a few may be inclined to raise: Is it not largely a waste of time for you to furnish demonstration of a truth which no genuine Christian doubts? We do not think so. All of God's people are not equally well established, and in any case faith cannot have too firm a foothold, especially in a day when the tide of infidelity is seeking to sweep everything away into the sea of skepticism. It is good for Christians themselves to be more fully assured that they have not followed "cunningly devised fables," but have an unmistakable, "Thus saith the Lord" as the foundation of all their hopes. Moreover, as another has pointed out, "Faith needs food as well as foothold, and it is upon these Divine verities, so plainly revealed and so clearly established in the Word of Truth, that faith finds its choicest provision."

Further, these evidences are of value to the Christian in that they enable him to give an intelligent and rational answer to those who inquire after knowledge. God requires His people to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and reverence" (1 Pet. 3:15). Thus we must be able to reply to any who seriously ask us, Wherefore do you believe the Bible to be the Word of God? But our chief desire and design will be to furnish young preachers with material to use in sermons, aimed at resolving the perplexities and removing the doubts which perturb not a few of their hearers, and so counter and nullify the infidelities of modern "education." Yet here again we must anticipate an objection: Since the regenerate alone are capable of discerning spiritual things, why attempt to convince the unregenerate that the Bible is a Divine book? If faith be the sole ear competent to hear the voice of God, why try to reason with unbelievers?

While it is true that no arguments, however convincing in themselves, can remove the veil of prejudice from the understanding of the unregenerate or convert the heart unto God, yet that is far from allowing that such means possess no value. It has often been said by good men that the Scriptures are addressed to faith. That is true, yet only a part of the truth, for if it were taken absolutely it must follow they are not addressed to any devoid of faith, which is a palpable error. Our Lord bade the skeptical Jews, "search the Scriptures," and declared, "He that rejecteth Me and receiveth not My words hath one that judgeth him: the Word that I have spoken the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48), thereby showing plainly the natural man is under binding obligations to heed and be subject unto the Word! The fact is that the Word is addressed to man as a rational creature, as a moral agent, as a responsible being, and it carries its own evidence—evidence which is addressed both to the reason and

conscience.

“These arguments are such as are able of themselves to beget in the minds of men—sober, humble, intelligent and unprejudiced—a firm opinion, judgment and persuasion that the Scripture doth proceed from God” (J. Owen). They are evidences which show the irrationality of infidelity, and render those faced with them without excuse for rejecting the same. They are such as nothing but perverse prejudice can restrain men from assenting thereto. It is a fact that of those who have written against the Bible not one has soberly and seriously undertaken to refute the evidence which they knew had been adduced for the veracity of its history, the fulfillment of its miracles, and the purity and consistency of its doctrine. They close the mouths of gainsayers. Such arguments afford relief to the mind from the objections of skeptics, for if weighed impartially they must produce a moral assurance of the truth of Scripture. Thus they dispose the mind to approach the Bible with confidence and pave the way for receiving it as God’s Word.

Such arguments go to show that Christians are not a company of credulous simpletons, but have good reason for their faith. They are a means of strengthening and establishing those who have accepted the Bible on less satisfactory grounds. Few look farther than human authority and public countenance. The majority believe the Scriptures in the same way as Mohammedans do the Koran: because it is the tradition of their fathers. But wisdom is to be justified of her children, so that they walk in her ways by a rational choice. When the Spouse is asked, "What, is thy Beloved more than another beloved?" (Song. 5:9), she is not backward in making reply; and when the worldling asks, "What, is your Bible above what the heathen appeal to in support of their superstitions," we should be able to give an intelligent answer.

Nevertheless some are still apt to conclude it is useless to enter into such a discussion, insisting that the Bible is to be believed and not argued about, that arguments at best will only produce a human faith. But it is not a thing to be despised if we can prepare the young to respect God’s Word, and then seek the Spirit’s confirmation. Sometimes a human faith makes way for a Divine. The testimony borne by the woman from the well issued in that very sequel: "Now we believe, not because of thy saying, but we have heard Him ourselves and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world" (John 4:39, 42). It is much to be thankful for when we can persuade people upon good grounds that the Bible is the Word of God, so that they are induced to make trial of it for themselves, for often that leads to their obtaining an experimental verification from the Holy Spirit. The revelation which God has made of Himself unto mankind through His wondrous works, both in creation and in providence, are addressed unto their reasoning faculty, and render them without excuse for their unbelief of His existence. Equally so is the more complete discovery of Himself which God has given to the world in His written Word addressed to the intelligence and conscience of those favored with it, and therefore will it in the Day to come condemn all who refused to conform unto the Divine will as it is there made known to them. Hence it behooves preachers to press the inerrancy and Divine authority of the Holy Bible.

Chapter 07 – Fills Man's Need for Divine Revelation

If the Bible is the Word of God, if it immeasurably transcends all the productions of human genius, then we should naturally expect it to be attested by marks which evince its Divine origin. That such an expectation is fully realized we shall, at some length, seek to show. Those marks are not vague and uncertain, but definite and unmistakable, and are of such a character as man could not be the author of them. The indications that the Bible is a Divine revelation are numerous, various, and conclusive. They are such as appeal severally to those of different tastes and temperaments, while taken together they present a case which none can invalidate. The Bible is furnished with such credentials as only those blinded by prejudice can fail to recognize it is a messenger from Heaven. They are of two kinds—extraordinary [miracles and prophecies] and ordinary, and the latter may be distinguished again between those which are objective and subjective—the one addressed to reason, the other capable of verification in experience. Each has the nature of a distinct witness, yet there is perfect agreement between them—united, yet independent.

1. Man's Need. We may well draw our first argument for an intelligible and authoritative revelation of God from our imperative requirement of the same. We have presented evidence to show God exists, that He created man a rational and moral being, endowed with the power to distinguish between good and evil, and, therefore, that he was [originally] capable of knowing God, obeying Him, and worshipping Him. But man could neither intelligently obey nor acceptably worship God unless he first had a direct revelation from Him of how He was to be served. In order for there to be intercourse between man and his Maker, he must first receive from Him a communication of His mind prescribing the details of his duty. Accordingly we find that immediately after the creation of Adam and Eve God gave them a particular statute. He first informed them what they might do (Gen. 2:16), and then specified what they must not do. Thus, from the outset, was man made dependent upon his Creator for a knowledge of His will, and thus, too, was his fidelity unto Him put to the proof.

If such were the case with man in his pristine glory, as he was made in the moral image of God, how much greater is his need of a Divine revelation since he has left his first estate, lost the image of God, and become a fallen and depraved creature! Sin has defiled his soul: darkening his understanding, alienating his affections, vitiating all his faculties. Should a critical objector here say, But you are now assuming what has not yet been proved, for you are taking for granted the authenticity of Genesis 3 [wherein the defection of man from his Maker is recorded]. It should be sufficient reply at this stage to ask, What other alternative remains? Only this: that God created man in his present woeful plight, that he has never been in any better condition. But is not such a concept abhorrent even to reason? Surely a perfect God would not create so faulty a creature. Could One who is infinitely pure and holy make man in the awful state of iniquity in which we now behold him? How, then, has man become such a depraved being?

Why is it that the world over, mankind are so intractable and wayward, that so many are regulated by their lusts rather than reason, that if the restraints of human law and government were removed and everyone given free rein, the earth would speedily become a charnel-house? During the first half of this twentieth century, despite our vaunted education and

civilization, enlightenment and progress, we have witnessed the most appalling proofs of human depravity, and that on a scale of enormous magnitude. So far from beholding any indication that man is slowly but surely ascending from the ape to the Divine, there is abundant evidence to show that the larger part of our race has descended to the level of the beasts. But how comes this to be, if man at the beginning was a sinless and holy creature? Apart from the Bible, no satisfactory answer is forthcoming: neither philosophy nor science can furnish any satisfactory explanation. Here again we see the urgent need of a revelation from God: that Divine light may be cast upon this dark mystery, that we may learn how man forfeited his felicity and plunged himself into misery.

What has just been pointed out makes manifest yet another aspect of man's deep need of a plain revelation from God. Man is now a fallen and polluted creature—no one who reads the newspapers or attends the police courts can question that. How, then, do the ineffable eyes of God regard him? How is it possible for fallen creatures to regain their former glory? Reason itself tells us that one who has rebelled against God's authority and broken His laws cannot at death be taken into His presence, there to spend a blissful eternity, without his sins being first pardoned and his character radically changed. The convictions of conscience reject any such anomaly. But apart from Divine revelation, how are we to ascertain what will satisfy the thrice holy God? In what way shall a guilty soul be pardoned, a sinful soul be purified, a polluted creature made fit for the celestial courts? All the schemes and contrivances of human devising fail utterly at this vital point—at best they are but a dream, a guess. Dare you, my reader, risk your eternal welfare upon a mere peradventure?

Turning back from the future to the present: how is God to be worshipped by man? Such a question is necessarily raised by the being and character of God and of man's relationship to Him as His creature. That the Deity should be acknowledged, that homage ought to be rendered unto Him, has been owned by the majority of our fellows in all climes and ages. True, their conceptions of Deity have varied considerably, and so, too, their ideas of how to honour Him; yet the conscience of all nations has convicted them that some form of worship is due unto God. It has been generally felt and avowed that there should be an acknowledgment of our dependency upon God, that supplications for His favour should be offered, that confessions of sin should be made, that thanksgivings for His mercies should be returned. Low as man has fallen, yet until he be steeped in vice, the dictates of reason and the promptings of his moral nature have informed him that God ought to be worshipped. Yet without a special revelation from God, how is it possible for any man to know that he worships aright, that his efforts to honour God are acceptable to Him? The crude and debasing idol worship of those who are ignorant of or have spurned God's Word will clearly evince the need for such a revelation.

From the works of creation, the voice of conscience, and the course of Providence, we may learn enough of God and of our relation to Him as to make us the accountable creatures of His government. But of that knowledge which is necessary to our salvation, we can discover nothing whatever. Unwritten revelation is inadequate to meet the needs of a sinner. We need a further revelation in order to learn our real character and ascertain how we may be acceptable unto God. Creation as such exhibits no Saviour, announces no redemption, and supplies not the least indication that the forgiveness of sins is possible, much less likely. If we break the laws of nature we must suffer the penalty. Ignorance will not exempt us nor will penitence remit the suffering. Nature's laws are inexorable and are no respecter of persons. A child falling into the

fire will be burned as surely as the vilest criminal. If we had nothing more than the visible world from which to draw our conclusions, we could never infer a hope of mercy for the transgressor of law. Nor would our moral instincts hold out any prospect of future relief—for conscience condemns us and informs us that punishment is just.

Religion [from re-ligo "to bind back"] must have something to tie to. It must have a foundation, a basis, an ultimate appeal. What is that appeal? Many say tradition: to the teaching of "the Fathers," to the decree of Councils, to an authority lodged in the Church as a Divine corporation, indwelt and made infallible by the presence of the Holy Spirit. That is the doctrine of Rome—a doctrine which binds to a system assumed to be supernatural, but which is “as shifting as the decrees of councils have shifted, contradictory as the statements of church fathers have been conflicting, blind and confusing; a congeries of truths and errors, of affirmations, and denials, of half lights and evasions from Origen to Bellarmine” (G. S. Bishop). The Papacy’s claim to be the seat of Divine authority is refuted by historic fact and personal experience. Her career has been far too dark and checkered, her influence on human life, liberty and progress, much too unsatisfactory for any impartial investigator to be deceived by such an arrogant pretension.

Others make their own instincts the supreme arbiter. That which commends itself to their "intuitions" or appeals to their sentiments is accepted, and whatever accords not therewith is spurned. But since temperaments and tastes differ so widely, there could be no common standard to which appeal may be made, and by which each one might test the rightness or wrongness of his preferences. Each separate individual would become a law unto himself: nay, if nothing be right or good save what I approve of, then I am my own god. This may be termed the religion of nature, and it accounts for every vagary from the myths of Paganism to the self-delusion of mis-called "Christian Science," for everything put forth from Homer to Huxley. Such self-limitation exposes its utter poverty. Self cannot advance beyond the bounds of an experience which is limited by the present. How can I know anything about the origin of things unless I be taught by One who existed before them? Apart from a special revelation from God, what can I possibly know of what awaits me after death?

Human reason is the ultimate court of appeal for the majority of this generation. But reason is not uniform: what appears to be logical and credible to one man, seems the very opposite to another. Most of what was pointed out in the last paragraph obtains equally here—reason can know nothing of what it has no experience. The great subject of controversy between Infidels and Christians is whether reason [the intellect and moral faculties] be sufficient to enable us to attain all that knowledge which is necessary for bringing us to virtue and happiness. That question is not to be answered by theorizing but by experiment; not by conjectures, but facts. It must be submitted to the test of history. At what conclusions did the reason of the ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans arrive? So far from formulating any adequate conception of Deity, they worshipped birds and beasts, and invented gods of the most revolting character. There was no agreement among their most renowned thinkers. Their systems of moral philosophy were woefully defective and their framers notoriously profligate. Even today where the Bible is rejected reason rises no higher than agnosticism: I know not—whether there be a God, a soul which survives the death of the body, or what the hereafter may hold.

If it be asked, What purpose does reason serve in connection with spiritual things? We

answer, first, its province is to form a judgment of the evidence of Christianity: to investigate and to estimate the grounds on which it claims to be a Divine revelation. Its duty is to weigh impartially and determine the force of such arguments as we have advanced in the preceding discussion and those we will present. Second, its office is to examine carefully the contents of Scripture, to acquaint ourselves with its teachings, to attentively consider the demands they make upon us—which we could not do if we had no more understanding than the irrational beasts. Third, its function is to subordinate itself unto the authority of Divine revelation—the absurdity of the opposite is self-evident. Reason is certainly not to constitute the judge of what God says, but is rather to consider and test the evidence which demonstrates that He has spoken. The wisdom of God is not placed on trial before the bar of human foolishness. Man is the scholar, and not the Teacher—his reason is to act as a servant and not a lord. We act most reasonably when we thankfully avail ourselves of the light which God has vouchsafed us in His Word.

Having shown the limitations and inadequacy of man's own faculties—manifested everywhere in the records of history, both ancient and modern—we return to our opening postulate: man's need of a special and infallible revelation from God. He needs such in order to deliver from a state of spiritual ignorance—a state which is fraught with the utmost peril to his soul. Consider how prone is the mind of man to embrace error, how ready and fertile to invent new religions. Even when unfallen, man required that his path of duty be made known to him by his Maker. Much more so does man, considered as a fallen creature, require an unerring Mentor to instruct him in spiritual things, one outside himself, infinitely above him. In a world of conflicting opinions and ever-changing theories, we must have a sure Touchstone, an unvarying Standard, an ultimate Authority to which appeal can be made. Amid all the sins and sorrows, the problems and trials of life, man is in urgent need of a Divine Guide to show him the way to present holiness and happiness and to eternal glory.

2. A Presumption in its favour. This follows logically from all we have presented. Since man sorely needs such a revelation from God, and He is able to furnish it, then there is a strong probability that He will do so. He who endowed man with his intellectual faculties, is certainly capable of granting him a further degree of light by some other medium. "Revelation is to the mind what a glass is to the eye, whether it be intended to correct some accidental defect in its structure, or to enlarge its power of vision beyond its natural limits" (Professor Dick). To argue that we should be uncertain whether such a revelation be genuine or not would be tantamount to saying that because there are so many impostors in the world, therefore there is no truth—that because so many are deceived, none can be sure that he is right. It is both presumptuous and unreasonable to affirm that God is unable to supply a communication unto mankind which is lacking in those marks that would authenticate it as coming from Himself. Cannot Deity legibly inscribe His signature on the work of His own hand?

We might indeed draw the conclusion that since man is so vilely apostatized from his Maker, that God will justly abandon him to misery. Yet we perceive that, notwithstanding the criminal conduct of His creatures, God still makes His sun to shine and the rain to fall upon them, providing them with innumerable blessings. Thoroughly unexpected as it might well be, we behold God exercising mercy unto the sinful sons of men, ameliorating those evils which they have brought upon themselves, and providing means by the use of which their sufferings are much alleviated. Though we could not from those things warrantably draw the conclusion

that God would proceed any further in our behalf, yet if He should be pleased to extend His care unto our souls as well as our bodies, it would only be an enlargement of the scope of that benevolence already displayed in His provisions for us. It would be in perfect accord with the method He has employed with His creatures, if He further interposed to rescue fallen men from ignorance, guilt and perdition.

"From man at the head of creation, down to the lowest organized structure, there is not a necessity for which provision has not been made, and that in exact proportion to its wants. You yourself came into this world a poor, helpless, naked infant, full of necessities, and would have perished from the womb unless provision had been made for you. Who filled for you your mother's breast with milk and your mother's heart with love? But you have a soul as well as a body—no less naked, no less necessitous. Shall then the body have its necessities, and those be provided for—and shall the soul have its necessities too, and for it no provision made? Is there no milk for the soul as well as the body? no 'sincere milk of the Word' that it may grow thereby?" (J. C. Philpot). The goodness of God, the benevolence of the Creator, the mercy of our Governor, all point to the likelihood of His ministering to this supreme need of ours, without which everyone of us must assuredly perish.

Brother Philpot draws a further argument in support of this conclusion from the relations which God sustains to us as our sovereign Master and our judge, pointing out that a master's will must be known before it can be obeyed, that a judge's law must be declared before it can be transgressed. Why are theft and murder punished? Because the law of the land expressly forbids those crimes under a prescribed penalty; but since no human statute prohibits ingratitude, none are penalized in human courts for the same. It is a recognized principle that "where there is no law there is no transgression" (Rom. 4:15). Then does it not clearly follow from this that God will give unto us His laws—direct, positive, authoritative laws, binding upon us by Divine sanctions? How could He justly punish what He has not forbidden? And if He has forbidden sin, how and when has He done so? Where is the statute book, written by His dictation, which makes known His will to us? If it be not the Bible, we are left without any!

If it would be a far greater tax upon our credulity to believe that the universe had no Maker, than that, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." If it involves immeasurably greater difficulty to regard Christianity as being destitute of a Divine Founder, than to recognize that it rests upon the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then is it not far more unreasonable to suppose that God has left the human race without a written revelation from Him, than to believe the Bible is such? There are times when the most thoughtful are uncertain as to which is the right course to pursue, when the most experienced need a guide their own wisdom cannot supply—will the One who furnishes us with fruitful seasons deny us such counsel? There are sorrows which rend the hearts of the stoutest—will He who has given us the beautiful flowers and singing birds to regale our senses, withhold that comfort we so much need in the hour of bereavement? Which is the more reasonable—that the Maker of sun and moon should provide a Lamp for our feet, or leave us to grope our way amid the darkness of a ruined world?!

Chapter 08 – Declares It Comes from God Himself

We have presented a portion of that abundant evidence which makes it unmistakably manifest that God has given us a clear revelation of Himself in creation, in the constitution of man (physical, mental, and moral), in His government of this world (as evinced in the annals of history), in the advent to this earth of His incarnate Son, and in the Holy Scriptures. We based our first argument that the Bible is an inspired communication from God on the fact that man is in urgent need of a written revelation, because his own faculties—especially as he is now a fallen and sinful creature—are insufficient as a guide to virtue and eternal happiness. Second, that there is therefore a presumption in favour of the Bible's being a revelation from God, since man urgently needs such and God is well able to supply it. Since all nature evinces that a merciful Creator has made suitable provision for every need of all His creatures, it is unthinkable that this supreme need of the highest of His earthly creatures should be neglected.

We now come to point 3: Its own claims. These are unambiguous, positive, decisive, leaving us in no doubt as to what the Scriptures profess to be. The Bible declares that, as a Book, it comes to us from God Himself. It urges that claim in various ways. Its very names proclaim its Source. It is repeatedly denominated "The Word of God." It is so denominated because as we express our thoughts and make known our intentions by means of words, so in His Book God has disclosed His mind and declared His will unto us. It is called "The Book of the LORD" (Isa. 34:16) because He is its Author and because of the Divine authority with which it is invested, demanding our unqualified subjection to its imperial edicts. It is termed "The Scripture of Truth" (Dan. 10:21) because it is without confusion, without contradiction, without the slightest mixture of error—infallible in every verse, every word, every letter inspired—Divine. It is designated "The Word of Life" (Phil. 2:16) because it is invested with the very breath of the Almighty, indelible and indestructible, in contradistinction from all the perishing productions of man. It is entitled "The Oracles of God" (Rom. 3:2) because in it God Himself is the Speaker.

The Bible proclaims itself to be a Divine revelation, a direct and inerrent communication from the living God, that He "spake by the mouth of His holy Prophets, which have been since the world began" (Luke 1:70). They announce that "the Law of the LORD is perfect" (Ps. 19:7)—without flaw or blemish; that "the Word of God is quick and powerful" (Heb. 4:12)—living, pungent, dynamic. They claim that "the Word of the Lord endureth forever" (1 Pet. 1:25)—surviving all the passages of time, withstanding all the efforts of enemies to destroy it. They affirm themselves to be "the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation" (2 Tim. 3:15). The article there is emphatic, being used to distinguish the Sacred Writings from all others, to aver their excellence and eminence over all the writings of men. The Holy One is their Author, they treat of the holy things of God, and call for holy hearts and lives from their readers. And just so far as our characters are formed and our conduct regulated by their precepts, will the fruits of holiness appear in our lives.

The instruments which God employed to bring to us the Word were themselves conscious of and frankly owned to the fact that they were but His mouthpieces or penmen. Again and again we find them avowing that truth. "Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD" (24:2). "The LORD spake thus to me" (Isa. 8:11). "Hear ye for the LORD hath spoken" (Jer. 13:15). "Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken" (Amos 3:1). "The mouth of

the LORD of hosts hath spoken it" (Micah 4:4). Said the royal Psalmist, "The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and His Word was in my tongue" (2 Sam. 23:2). So, too, when the Apostles quoted a passage from the Old Testament they gave their testimony to the same truth. When Peter addressed the disciples, he said, "this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spake by the mouth of David" (Acts 1:16). "Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said" (Acts 4:25). "Well spake the Holy Spirit by Isaiah the Prophet" (Acts 28:25). Whoever were the human spokesmen or writers, the language of the Scriptures is the very Word of God.

Not once or twice, but scores of times, there are passages which, without any preamble or apology, declare, "Thus saith the Lord." In the Bible, God is the Speaker. Chapter after chapter in Leviticus opens with, "And the Lord spake, saying." And so it runs to the end of the chapter. Moses was but a scribe, God the Author of what is recorded. The question of Inspiration is, in its ultimate analysis, the question of Revelation itself. If the Book be Divine, then what it says of itself is Divine. The question is one of Divine testimony, and our business is simply to receive that testimony—without doubting or quibbling, with thankful and unreserved submission to its authority. When God speaks He must be heeded. “If at this moment yonder heavens were opened—the curtained canopy of star-sown clouds rolled back; if amid the brightness of light ineffable, the Dread Eternal were Himself seen rising from His throne, and heard to speak in voice audible, it could not be more potent, more imperative, than what lies now before us upon Inspiration’s pages” (G. S. Bishop).

God requires us to receive and accredit His Word, and to do so on His own ipse dixit. All faith rests on testimony, and the testimony on which faith in the Scriptures reposes is amply sufficient to support it, for it is Divine. “If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater….he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave…” (1 John 5:9, 10). If the witness of men of respectability and integrity be received in the judicatories of all nations, then most assuredly the witness of God is infinitely more worthy of our acceptance. The best of men are fallible and fickle, yet in matters of the greatest importance their testimony is credited—the affairs of the world would soon come to a standstill if it were not so. Then with how much more confidence may we receive the testimony of Him who is infallible and immutable, who can neither deceive nor be deceived?! How unspeakably dreadful the alternative: if we believe not God’s record, that is virtually calling Him a liar—regarding Him as a false witness! May the reader be delivered from such wickedness.

Now we proceed to point 4: No other explanation is even feasible. Whence comes the Bible is a question deserving of the very best attention of every serious mind. The subjects of which it treats are of such tremendous importance both to our present welfare and our future felicity, that the question of its derivation calls for the most diligent examination. The Bible is here, and it must be accounted for. It holds a unique place in the literature of mankind and it has exerted an unrivalled influence in molding the history of the world; and therefore it calls loudly for an adequate rationale to be given of its origin. Only three explanations are possible: the Bible is either a deliberate imposter, manufactured by wicked men; or it is the product of deluded visionaries, who vainly imagined they were giving forth inspired messages from Heaven; or else it is what it claims to be: an infallible and authoritative revelation from God Himself unto the sons of men. Between those three alternatives every thoughtful investigator of the matter must choose. If he ponders carefully the first two and tests them by the evidence adduced in favour of the Bible’s being a Divine communication, he should have no difficulty in

perceiving they are not only inadequate, but utterly absurd.

It is proverbial that "water will not rise above its own level," as it is self-evident that no cause can produce any effect superior to itself. Equally incredible is it that wicked men should bring forth a Book which has done far more than all other books combined (except those drawn from the Bible) in promoting morality and producing holiness. Grapes do not grow upon thistles! To assert that the Bible was produced by evil men is refuted by the very character of its teachings, which uniformly condemn dishonesty and declare that "all liars shall have their part in the Lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Rev. 21:8). It is thoroughly irrational to suppose that the authors of the most impious and gigantic literary fraud ever imposed upon mankind (if such it be) should invent for themselves such a fearful doom as that! It must also be remembered that some of the penmen of the Bible laid down their lives for a testimony to its verity; but the annals of history contain no record of men willingly suffering martyrdom for a known lie—from which neither they nor their families received any advantage.

Another class of skeptics dismiss the Bible as the fanciful flights of poets, the ravings of mystics, the extravagances of enthusiasts. Much in it is no doubt very beautiful, yet it is as unsubstantial as a dream, with no reality corresponding thereto, and those who credit the same are living only in a fool's paradise. They say, If there be a God, He is so absolute and transcendent, so remote from this scene, as to take no personal notice of our affairs; that it is both unphilosophical and a slur on His greatness to affirm (as the ancient Psalm does), "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." Thus we are asked to believe that mystics and fanatics have invented a god with more tender and nobler attributes than the real God has. But to say that fancy has devised a superior god than actually exists is the acme of irrationality. Were it possible for us to choose what kind of excellence deity should possess, would we not include among them pity linked with infinite power, using that power as its servant to tenderly minister unto the suffering?

Surely this is the most amazing chimera that has ever been invented: that men have endowed God with grander qualities than He really possesses, that they have predicated of Him a perfection which He is incapable of exercising. Rather must we affirm that that wondrous statement, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16), is a revelation which opens to us a new moral kingdom, a kingdom of unimaginable benignity and grace. The message of redemption is a Divine light breaking in upon us from Above, a revelation that proves itself. That God should send here His own Son, clothed with our humanity, to seek and to save rebels against His government, to suffer in their stead, and by His death make full atonement for their sins, to provide His Spirit to conform them to His image, to make them His joint heirs and sharers of His eternal glory, is a concept which had never entered human heart or mind to conceive. Yet it is worthy and becoming of our Maker. The Gospel is the noblest force which has ever touched human character.

As another has pertinently asked, "Is it a dishonor to God that, being great, He stoops to us? Does it make Him less? Is it a reproach to Him that He gives Himself to us? Would it be more for His glory if He mocked us? It is this very wedlock of the wisdom that planned the heavens—the measureless Power that guides the stars—with the tenderness that stoops to the whispered prayer of a child, that counts the tears of a widow, that hears the sighs of the prodigal —which makes the unconceivable greatness of God. It completes the mighty curve of His

attributes. And is it credible that we can conceive this amazing greatness and yet God not be capable of it? . . . The Bible represents God as saying, 'My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor My ways your ways, for as the heavens are higher than the earth so are My thoughts above your thoughts and My ways above your ways.' And this ought to be true! The realities of God ought to be nobler than the dreams of men. It would be the perplexity and despair of man if this were not so" (The Unrealized Logic of Religion).

Equally false is it to assert, as some ignorant Infidels have done, that we owe the Bible to the Church. It is an indubitable historical fact that the larger part of the Bible was in known existence more than 200 years before the dawn of the Christian era, and every doctrine, every precept and promise contained in the New Testament is based upon that earlier revelation. Such was the sufficiency of the Old Testament Scriptures that Paul could say they were "able to make wise unto salvation." While it is true that Christian churches existed before the New Testament was written, yet it must be borne in mind that there was the spoken Word by Christ and His Apostles ere the first of those churches was formed. On the day of Pentecost the Old Testament was quoted and expounded, the revelation of God in Christ was proclaimed, and it was upon the acceptance of that Word that the New Testament came into being. Thus, the fact is that the Word created the Church and not vice versa. It was only after some of the Apostles had died and others were engaged in extensive travel that the need arose for the permanent embodiment of the final portions of God's revelation, and this was given gradually in the New Testament. From that time until now, the written Word has taken the place of the original spoken Word.

For centuries before the inauguration of Christianity, the Jews beheld the books which comprised the Old Testament as being the genuine productions of those Penmen whose names they bear, and they were unanimously considered by them, without any exception or addition, to have been written under the immediate direction of the Spirit of God. Those books of the Old Testament had been preserved with the utmost veneration and care, and at the same time had been jealously guarded from any spurious or apocryphal writings. It is a fact well authenticated that while the Jews of Christ's day were divided into numerous sects, which stood in the most direct opposition to one another, yet there was never any difference among them respecting the divinity and authority of the sacred writings. Josephus appealed to the public records of different nations and to many historical documents existing in his day, as indisputable evidence, in the opinion of the Gentile world, of the verity and fidelity of those portions of Israel's history to which he referred. Even to this day the bulk of the religious Jews retain an unshakable conviction of the Divine origin of their religious laws and institutions. Yet their own Scriptures record their unparalleled hardness of heart, resistance to the light God gave them, and their rejection and murder of their own Messiah—things which would have been accorded no place in a spurious production.

That the Jews did not manufacture the Old Testament—on which the New is largely based—is apparent from other considerations. The immense disparity between the Old Testament as a book, and the Hebrew people as a nation, shows that the knowledge of God and of Divine things contained in the former, but wanting in the latter, came ab extra, that it was communicated from on high. One has but to read the writings of Josephus, the Jewish Targum and Talmud, or the Kabbala, to recognize at once the vast difference there is between them and the Holy Scriptures. That might be illustrated at great length, from many different angles, but we

will confine ourselves to a single feature, and treat of it in a way that the ordinary reader will have no difficulty in following: the extreme exclusiveness of the Jews, and then call attention to a number of passages in the Old Testament which cannot possibly be accounted for in the light of that dominant national characteristic.

There has never been another people so outstandingly clannish in sentiment and so provincial in outlook as the Jews: nor had any other equal reason for so being. God dealt with them as with no other nation: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth" (Amos 3:2). "He hath not dealt so with any nation" (Ps. 147:20). He forbade Israel to have anything to do with the religion of other nations, prohibited all marriages with them, and the learning of their ways. Yet they carried the spirit of bigotry and exclusiveness to an unwarrantable extent—far beyond the requirements of Scripture. Their violent prejudice appears in that statement, "the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans" (John 4:9), in Peter's reluctance to go unto Cornelius, and the unwillingness of the Christian Church at Jerusalem to believe the grace of God extended to the uttermost part of the earth. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the teaching of the Old Testament was very far from inculcating that the Israelites must confine their benevolent affections within the narrow bounds of their own twelve tribes. No spirit of bigotry breathes in the sacred songs sung in their temple.

"God be merciful unto us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us. Selah. That Thy way may be known upon the earth, Thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise Thee, O God, let all the people praise Thee. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for Thou shalt judge the people righteously and lead the nations upon earth" (Ps. 67:1-4). "All nations whom Thou hast made shalt come and worship Thee, O Lord, and shall glorify Thy name" (Ps. 86:9). "O sing unto the LORD a new song. Sing unto the LORD all the earth. Sing unto the LORD, bless His name: show forth His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the heathen, His wonders among the people . . . Give unto the LORD the glory due unto His name, bring an offering and come into His courts" (Ps. 96:1-3, 8). Who, we ask, put such words as those into the Psalmist's mouth? Who caused them to be given a permanent record on the Sacred Scroll? Who preserved them intact for the thousand years which followed till the advent of Christ, during which interval the Jews were possessed of most fanatical egotism and the bitterest hatred of the Gentiles!?

The same striking feature appears even in the Pentateuch. "Thou shalt speak and say before the LORD your God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father: and he went down into Egypt and sojourned there with a few, and became a nation, great, mighty and populous. And the Egyptians evil entreated us and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage" (Deut. 26:5, 6). The whole of that remarkable passage (vv. 4-10)—which Israel was required to recite before God at one of her most solemn acts of worship—should be carefully weighed. What could more effectually repress their national pride than that confession? But who instructed them to make such a humble acknowledgment of their lowly origin? Who bade them utter this perpetual avowal of their base beginnings? And more—it was on the very basis of their lowly origin and the sore oppression their fathers had suffered in a foreign land that a number of most un-"Jewish" laws were framed—laws which bade them pity and relieve the stranger. If that fact be critically pondered it should be evident that such precepts could not have originated from such a bigoted and hard-hearted people.

Those precepts were quite contrary to flesh and blood. It is natural for sinful men to

strongly resent harsh treatment, for the memory of it to cherish rancor and malevolence, to feed the spirit of revenge, so that if the positions should be reversed they would "get even." Instead, we find the Mosaic Law enjoining the very opposite—inculcating the warmest and purest benevolence toward the wretched and defenseless of other nations. "Thou shalt not vex a stranger nor oppress him; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Ex. 22:21). Yea, more —"The stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself' (Lev. 19:34). Now, my reader, what explanation can possibly account for such benign statutes?—statutes which were repeatedly flouted by Israel! Who was it that originated and inculcated such unselfish tenderness? Who taught the haughty Jews to return good for evil? Who but the One who is both "no respecter of persons," and, who is "very pitiful and of tender mercy" (James 5:11).

It also requires to be pointed out that the Pentateuch contains a narration of many events which took place in the actual lifetime, yea, before the eyes, of the very people who were called upon to receive those books as authentic. Thus there was no opportunity for Moses, or anyone else, to palm off upon the Hebrews a lot of fictions, for each one of them would know at once whether the records of their cruel bondage in Egypt, the judgments which Jehovah is said to have executed there, and the miraculous deliverance of His people at the Red Sea, were true or not. Had those events been of a commonplace character, few perhaps had been sufficiently interested to scrutinize the narratives of them, still less have taken the trouble to refute them, were they untrue. But in view of their extraordinary nature, and especially since those miracles were designed to authenticate a new religion upon which their future hopes were to be based and by which their present deportment was to be regulated, it is unthinkable that a whole nation gave a mechanical assent, and still more so that they unitedly endorsed evidence which they knew to be false, especially when those same narratives inculcated a code of conduct which they certainly had never designed of their own accord.

But more—not only were many of the Mosaic institutions radically different from those practiced by all other nations, and from what the Hebrews had themselves observed in Egypt, they also involved numerous rites which required constant attention and which must have been most irksome and unpleasant. Moreover, those ceremonies subjected the Israelites to considerable expense by the costly sacrifices they were frequently required to offer and the tithes they were commanded to pay the priests. Furthermore, some of the laws bound upon them were of such a character that it is altogether unaccountable, on the principles of political wisdom, that any legislator should have proposed or that a whole nation should meekly have submitted to them. Such was the law of the Sabbath year, which forbade them tilling or sowing the ground for a whole twelve months (Ex. 23:10, 11). Such was the law ordering all the males to journey from every part of the land to the tabernacle (Deut. 16) —leaving their homes unprotected. Such was the law which prohibited their king multiplying horses (Deut. 17:16); and more especially the law of jubilee, when all mortgaged property had to be restored to the original owners and all slaves freed (Lev. 25:10).

Now we submit that it is utterly incredible to suppose that any sane legislator would, on his own authority, have imposed enactments which interfered so seriously with both private and public liberty, and which involved such hazards as the people dying of starvation while their fields lay fallow, and their wives and children being murdered by invaders when all their men-folk were far removed from them. Still more inconceivable is it that, instead of bitterly resenting

and openly revolting against such unpopular statutes, the whole nation should quietly acquiesce therein. It is quite pointless to say that Israel was imposed upon by Moses, that he deceived them into believing those laws were of Divine authority. No such deception was possible, for the simple reason that the entire nation was assembled at Sinai and had witnessed the supernatural and awe-inspiring phenomena when the Lord had descended and given those Laws audibly—they had with their own ears heard a portion of it published. Israel's reception of such a Law can only be accounted for on the basis that they were fully assured it proceeded from God Himself.

Having demonstrated that the Scriptures could not have been manufactured by either wicked impostors or deluded fanatics, that they were not invented by the Christian Church or the ancient Jews, we are shut up to the only remaining alternative, namely, that they are a revelation from God—His own inspired and infallible Word. No other choice is left; no other explanation is credible. Every other attempt to explain their origin is found, upon critical examination, to be not only altogether inadequate, but utterly absurd. If a thinking man finds it difficult, nay, impossible, to explain a created universe apart from a Divine Creator, it is no less so for him to account for the Book of books without a Divine Author. This is a matter which admits of no compromise: if the Bible has come to us from God, then it has claims upon us which infinitely transcend those of all other writings. If it is not from God, then it is an impious fraud, unworthy of our attention. There is no middle ground! Moreover, if the Bible is not what it claims to be, then we are left without any revelation which, with any reliability or authority, can impart to us the knowledge of God or warrant its reception by mankind!

We now come to the 5th point—It bears the hallmark of genuineness: the contents of the Bible are just what might be looked for. What are the essential characteristics we should expect to find in a written communication from God unto fallen mankind? Would they not be, first, the imparting to us of a knowledge of the true God; and second, of that instruction which is best suited to our varied needs? Such is precisely what we have in the Bible. The grand truth taught throughout the Sacred Scriptures is that God does all things for His own glory and for the manifestation of His own perfections. And is not that exactly in accord with right reason? Once men are led to entertain any true conceptions of the Supreme Being, they are brought to the irresistible conclusion that One who is self-existent and self-sufficient, the Creator and Proprietor of the universe, could not be swayed by any creature or moved to action from a regard to anything outside of Himself, or irrespective of Himself—that in all His works—both of creation and providence, He will have a supreme regard unto His own honour and the maintaining of His own perfections.

If, then, the Bible is the Word of God, proceeding from Himself, stamped with the autograph of His own authority, we naturally expect to find it possessed of that characteristic and directed to that end. Thus in fact it is. The cardinal design of the Sacred Scriptures is to make God known, to exhibit the peerless excellence of His character, to teach us the homage and adoration which are His due. Their supreme end is to display to us the glorious attributes of God, that we may learn to form the most elevated conceptions of His Being, our own entire dependence upon Him, our deep obligations to show forth His praise. The scope of the entire Bible is to teach us our relations to God, and that the business of our lives is to give Him His true place in our hearts, to act always so as to please Him. Yet the very reverse of that is what obtains in human practice: in view of which we are forced to conclude that had men originated

the Bible its teaching thereon had been very different, and that it had contained no such statements as, "The LORD hath made all things for Himself' (Prov. 16:4), "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).

Again—would we not naturally expect to find a revelation from God couched in a strain very different from that in which one man speaks to another? Since the Creator is so high above the creature, does it not befit Him to address us in terms which become His august majesty? Such is just what we find in the Bible. Its instructions are delivered to us not in an argumentative form, but in an authoritative manner, for while arguments are suited to equals, they would be quite out of place for the All-wise when directing the ignorant. Its precepts are not proffered to us as so much good advice which we are free to heed or not at our pleasure, but rather as imperial edicts which we disregard to our eternal undoing. The commandments of Scripture admit of no questioning: "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not," are its peremptory terms. In the most uncompromising way, and without the least semblance of apology, the Bible claims the absolute right to dictate unto all men what they should do, condemns them for their failure, and pronounces sentence of judgment upon every offender. From Genesis to Revelation the contents of Holy Writ are set forth in dictatorial language beyond which there is no appeal. It speaks throughout as from an infinitely elevated plane.

Moreover, the Bible does not single out for address merely the ignorant and the base, but issues its orders unto all classes alike. The cultured as well as the illiterate, the high as well as the low, the rich equally with the poor are imperatively told what they must do and from what they must abstain. And that one feature alone places the Bible, my reader, in a class by itself. If it possessed not the same, then we should have grave reason to suspect its authenticity. It would be most incongruous for the Ancient of Days to use a conciliatory tone and employ the language of obsequiousness when vouchsafing a communication to creatures who are but of yesterday. So far from the language of dogmatism being unsuited, it is exactly what might be looked for in a revelation from the Most High. Nevertheless, the dictatorial ring of the Bible accords it a unique place in the realm of literature. There is no other book in the world which demands, on pain of eternal perdition, the total submission of all mankind unto its authority; as there is none other which pronounces a fearful curse on anyone who has the audacity to take away from its contents. The ring of imperial authority which sounds through all its chapters indicates that it is the voice of the living God who is the Speaker.

Yet it will also follow that if the Bible be a Divine revelation, then it must be suited to the needs of man, and not simply this or that man, but of all without distinction. One of the clearest marks of the handiwork of God in the material creation is that of design and adaptation—that all His productions are perfectly fitted to answer the ends for which they are made—as the human hand to perform so many different tasks. We should therefore expect to find this same characteristic stamped upon the Bible; nor is that expectation disappointed! It imparts to us the knowledge of God's glorious character and our relations to Him, and reveals the means by which we may regain His favour and secure our own eternal happiness. The Holy Scriptures furnish us with an accurate diagnosis of the human heart and all its manifold workings. They describe to us our enemies and make known the stratagems which they employ, and how they are to be resisted and overcome. They discover to us the character of that malady which has smitten our moral nature, and the great Physician who is able to recover us therefrom. They specify the most serious of the dangers which menace us, and faithfully warn us against the

same. They supply instruction which if heeded promotes our welfare in every way.

The Bible makes known to us how wisdom, strength, and true joy are to be obtained here, and how Heaven may be our portion hereafter. It supplies salutary counsels which are admirably suited to all our varied circumstances. It is adapted equally to the young as to the aged, to those in prosperity or those in adversity. Its language is simple enough for those of little education, yet it has depths in it which the most learned cannot fathom. In the Scriptures there is as great a variety as there is in Nature, something to meet the most diverse temperaments and tastes: history, poetry, biography, prophecy, legislation—the essentials of hygiene, profound mysteries, and a message of glad tidings to those in despair. Moreover, the Bible is self-explanatory. No reference library is required to be consulted in order to arrive at the meaning of anything in it: one part interprets another. The New Testament supplements the Old, and by patiently comparing Scripture with Scripture the diligent reader may ascertain the significance of any figure, symbol, or term used therein; though its spiritual secrets are disclosed only unto the prayerful and the obedient.

As the light is accommodated to the eye and the eye formed and fitted to receive the light, so though the Scriptures have come from Heaven, yet are they perfectly suited to those who live on earth. They contain all the information that is required by man as a moral and accountable being. There is no important problem relating to either our temporal or eternal welfare upon which the Bible does not supply excellent counsel. Though its contents be ineffably sublime, they are at the same time intensely practical, meeting every moral and spiritual need, adapted alike to Jew and Gentile, ancient or modern, rich or poor. The Bible not only makes known how the State should be governed and the Church ordered, but it furnishes full instruction to direct the individual and to regulate the home. In a word, the Bible is qualified to be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. When, then, we examine this Book which claims to come from God, and find it possesses all those marks and evidences which could reasonably be expected or desired, that it is exactly suited to answer all the ends of a Divine revelation, we are obliged to conclude that our Creator has graciously met our deep need, and therefore that revelation should be received by us with the utmost reverence and welcomed with the deepest thanksgiving.

Let us move on to the 6thpoint—Christ and the Scriptures. What was His attitude toward them? What was His estimate of them? What use did He make of them? The answers to those questions are of supreme importance and must settle the matter once and for all, for what is the opinion of any man worth when placed over against the verdict of the Son of God! Give, then, your best attention while we seek to furnish a reply to those inquiries. Negatively, Christ never cast the slightest doubt upon their validity or called into question their authenticity. When His detractors reminded Him, "Moses wrote unto us" such and such a thing, He did not say that Moses was wrong, but told them they "erred, not knowing the Scriptures" (Mark 12:19-24). When a lawyer sought to ensnare Him, so far from brushing aside the authority of the Scriptures, He enforced the same, saying, "What is written in the Law?" (Luke 10:26). When engaged in any controversy, His invariable appeal was unto the Old Testament, and declared that what David said was "by the Spirit," (Mark 12:36). Not once did He intimate that it was unreliable and untrustworthy.

But let us turn to the positive side. Behold the Lord Jesus when He was assaulted by the Devil, and note well that the only weapon He made use of was the Sword of the Spirit. Each

time He repulsed the Tempter with a sentence from the Old Testament (Matthew 4)! And observe that as soon as that mysterious conflict was over, God—to evince His approbation of Christ's conduct—sent angels to "minister unto Him" (Mark 1:13). Mark how He commenced His public ministry, by entering the synagogue, reading from the Prophet Isaiah, and saying, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:16-21). Hear Him as He declared, "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till Heaven and earth pass, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law till all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5:17, 18). He had come to enforce the teachings of the Old Testament in their minutest detail, to honour and magnify the same, by rendering a personal and perfect obedience to them. He owned the Scriptures as "the Word of God" (Mark 7:13) just as they stood—without any reservation or qualification—thereby authenticating all the books of the Old Testament.

So far from regarding the Old Testament as being full of myths and fables, He taught that Abraham, Lot, Moses, Daniel, were real entities. He expressly ratified the very incidents at which the skeptics scoff: the Flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire from Heaven (Luke 17:28-29), Jonah being three days and nights in the whale's belly (Matthew 12:40), thereby denying they were but "folk lore," and establishing their historicity. Christ placed the words of Moses on a par with His own—(John 5:46, 47). Jesus said, "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:31), which again evinces our Lord's estimate of the Old Testament. It was of supreme authority to Him. When vindicating Himself for affirming His Deity, after quoting from the Psalms He added, "and the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35)—it is infallible, inviolable. When engaged in prayer to the Father He solemnly declared, "Thy Word is Truth" (John 17:17): not simply contains the Truth, or even is true, but "is Truth"—without the least tincture of error, the word of Him "that cannot lie" (Titus 1:2).

When His enemies came to arrest Him in the Garden and Peter drew his sword, the Saviour rebuked him, saving, "Thinkest thou that I cannot pray to My Father, and that He shall at once give Me more than twelve legions of angels," yet note well how He at once added, "But how then shall the Scripture be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" (Matthew 26:53, 54). Very blessed is that: showing that the written Word was what regulated His every action, and that it was His strong consolation in His darkest hour. Reverently behold Him on the Cross, and observe Him placing homage upon the sacred Psalter by using its words when undergoing the extreme anguish of Divine desertion (Ps. 22:1; Matthew 27:46). But more—"Jesus . . . that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst" (John 19:28). There was yet one detail predicted of His dying sufferings which had not been accomplished, namely, that, "in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink" (Ps. 69:21), and therefore in subjection to the Divine authority of the Old Testament, He cried "I thirst"! After rising in triumph from the grave, we find our blessed Lord again magnifying the Scriptures: "Beginning at Moses and the Prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself' (Luke 24:27).

Thus we are left in no doubt whatever of Christ's attitude toward, estimate of, and the use which He made of the Scriptures. He ever treated them with the utmost reverence, affirmed their Divine authority, and considered that one word of theirs put an end to all controversy. He averred the Old Testament was "the Word of God," entirely inerrent, verbally inspired, as a whole and in all its parts. He affirmed that the Scriptures are the final court of appeal, and

asserted their perpetuity. For the Christian, the testimony of Christ is final: he requires no further evidence or argument. Nor should the non-Christian. It is the height of absurdity to suppose that One who was endowed with infinitely superior wisdom to Solomon should have been imposed upon by a fraud; as it would be horrible blasphemy to say that He knowingly set His imprimatur upon what He knew to be false. Whose judgment, my friend, do you prefer: that of the so-called "advanced thinkers" or the verdict of the Son of God? Which deem you the more trustworthy?

Chapter 09 – Is Unique

We come now to our 7th point—Its uniqueness. Viewed simply as a book, the Bible stands far apart from all others. Amid the writings of the ancients or the productions of our modems there is nothing which, for a moment, bears comparison with it. The Bible not only occupies a prominent place in literature, but an unrivalled one. Consider its amazing circulation. The number of its editions is to be counted not by the dozen or even the hundreds, but literally by the thousands. And not merely tens or hundreds of thousands of copies have been printed, but hundreds of millions! That at once separates it by an immeasurable distance from everything penned by man. Consider its unequalled translation. It has been rendered into almost all the multitudinous dialects of the earth. Those of nearly every nation now have the Bible in their own tongue. It has been printed in more than 600 languages! That too, is without any parallel. The most famous and popular compositions of men have not been translated into one tenth as many tongues. Consider its by-products: countless works have been devoted to its exposition, millions of sermons preached and published on portions of it. That also is without any precedent.

Consider further the laborious indexes which have been made upon its contents. There are voluminous concordances which not only list every word used in the Scriptures, but all the occurrences of them—in many cases scores, and in not a few, hundreds of references. Now we do not possess complete concordances of any of the writings of the most renowned human author, wherein is collated every occurrence of each word he used. And why? Because no such nicety, no such significance, pertains to his language as makes the sense of a passage or the force of an argument turn upon a single word. Much less has the ablest of human authors employed all his terms with exact consistency and correspondence throughout the whole of his writings. Yet such is the case with the Bible—wherein no less than forty different men were used as its scribes! The Concordance loudly proclaims the uniqueness of the Bible. It tacitly declares that not simply this or that term, but every word from Genesis to Revelation is God-breathed, and that every occurrence of each word was directed by His unerring wisdom.

The perpetuity of their text is unique. The Sacred Scriptures were written originally in Hebrew and Greek, which are the only languages that, dating back of all tradition, are still recognized as living vehicles of thought. The language spoken in the streets of modem Athens is identically the same, to its very accents, as that used by Plato and Socrates, yea, of Homer's Iliad, which was composed almost 3,000 years ago. In like manner, the Hebrew of the Talmud is the Hebrew of the book of Genesis. What a remarkable survival, or rather a miracle, of Divine power! That becomes more apparent when we contrast how other ancient tongues have long since passed away. The Egyptian language used by the builders of the pyramids has perished. The Syrian used by Rabshakeh is no more. The dialect spoken by the original Britons is now unknown. Yet the Hebrew employed by Moses is spoken by the Jewish rabbi today, and the Greek used by the Apostle Paul is heard in Salonica at this hour. Here, then, is a striking and unparalleled fact: that the languages in which God wrote His Word have outlived all their contemporaries and have remained unchanged throughout the centuries!

Even on its surface the Bible differs from all other books. That appears in the style of its writings. Two languages were used which are quite diverse in their manner of inscription. The Hebrew is written and read from right to left, whereas the Greek (and all modern languages) is

written and read from left to right. The Scriptures make no comment upon that arresting and striking contrast, but leaves the reader to interpret the fact in the light of their contents. Once attention be focused upon the same, its significance is at once apparent: in the singular reversal of its text the Bible teaches us the two most fundamental and radical facts in human history: man's apostasy from God, and his restoration. The "right hand" is that of dignity and privilege (Ps. 110:1), the "left hand" is that of disgrace and condemnation (Matthew 25:41). The Old Testament, written in Hebrew, is an amplification of that statement, "man being in honour abideth not" (Ps. 49:12), being a record of his departure from God, with all its evil consequences. The New Testament, written in Greek, has for its leading theme how the wanderer is restored to God, how the prodigal returns to the Father's house.

As another has pointed out, the uniqueness of the Bible appears (again) in that its conjugation of the Hebrew verb puts man in his proper place. "In all Occidental languages the verb is conjugated from the first person to the third—'I,' 'Thou,' 'He.' The Hebrew, in reversal of the human thought, is conjugated from the third down and backward to the first: beginning with God, then my neighbor, then myself last—'He,' 'Thou,' 'I.' This is the Divine order: self-obliterating and beautiful." That peculiarity is very much more than an interesting detail in philology: it embodies and expresses a profound spiritual truth. It accords God His due pre-eminence, and thereby teaches us that all right thinking must start with Him and work downward to man. For that very reason the Scriptures open with the words, "In the beginning GOD." No theology can be sound unless it makes that Truth its foundation and starting point. The initiative is ever with God: "we love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). Once God is accorded His rightful place in our affections, man is automatically put where he belongs—but which, apart from Divine revelation and Divine grace, he never takes!

Our 8th point—Its delineation of God. The portrayal of Deity supplied by the Bible is so very different from and so vastly superior to that furnished by all other sources—we are forced to conclude it cannot be of human invention. Beginning with the Old Testament, let us single out two statements which were penned by Moses. "Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God is one Lord" (Deut. 6:4). That is a startling, yea, a unique declaration, at complete variance with the conceptions of all His contemporaries. Polytheism, or a belief in and worship of a plurality of gods, prevailed universally among the heathen. Whence then did Moses obtain his knowledge of the true God, who is one in His essence? Certainly not from the Egyptians, for their king confessed, "I know not the LORD" (Ex. 5:2). "The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty"—who continue impenitent and despise an atoning sacrifice (Ex. 34:6, 7). Such a conception of the Divine perfections is as far beyond the reach of man's mind as Heaven is above the earth. Search the philosophers, the mystics, and religious teachers of the ancients, and nothing can be found which in the least resembles such a blessed conception of God as that.

"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool: where is the house that ye build unto Me? And where is the place of My rest? For all those things hath Mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit" (Isa. 57:15; 66:1, 2). The majesty of such language at once

distinguishes it from all human compositions and evinces it was not fabricated by the brain of man. But suppose for the sake of argument that the mind of man had soared to such an elevated conception of Deity as is portrayed in the first part of those passages, it had certainly not conceived of what follows in the second part. Therein God is presented not only in the greatness of His infinite excellence above all creatures, but also in His amazing condescension unto the meanest of men. Those verses not only exhibit the transcendence of the Creator, but make known the marvels of His grace, "which He accounts His own glory" (Eph. 1:6).

Turning to the New Testament, we will confine ourselves to three brief statements: "God is spirit" (John 4:24), "God is light" (1 John 1:5), "God is love" (1 John 4:8). Those three descriptions of Deity furnish us with a truer and more elevated view of Him than could the most elaborate definitions of human eloquence and genius. They announce the spirituality, the purity, and the benevolence of God. The first purports to be a record of words spoken by Christ during His earthly ministry; the second and third to be inspired declarations given by the Holy Spirit through a human instrument. If their Divine origin be denied, then the skeptic is faced with this problem: all three were penned by an unlettered fisherman! Whence did he derive such conceptions?—conceptions before which philosophy is abashed. The sublimity and the comprehensiveness of those brief expressions are without any peer, or even parallel. If they originated from one unlearned, it would be a much greater marvel and miracle than that he wrote them under Divine dictation. Much more might be added by entering into a detailed enumeration of all the wondrous attributes of God, but sufficient has been pointed out to establish how immeasurably grander is the Bible's delineation of God than anything found in the writings of men.

Our 9th point—Its representation of man. The account which the Bible gives of man is radically different from that supplied by all human compositions. That sin and misery exist, yea, abound in the world, is a patent fact, however unpleasant it may be. The daily newspapers report it, the police courts illustrate it, the prisons witness thereto. Nor is this fearful moral disease confined to any one nation, or even limited to any particular strata of society, but is common to all. It is no new epidemic, for it has prevailed in all periods of history. Every human attempt to banish or even curb it has failed. Legislation, education, increased wages and improved environments have produced no change for the better. Sin is too deeply rooted and widely spread in human nature for the remedial efforts of social reformers to extirpate it. The wisest men who reject the Divine explanation of this tragic mystery are completely in the dark as to the real nature and origin of the malady. The Bible is the only book in existence which truly describes the sinful condition of man, accurately diagnoses his case, and ascribes it to an adequate cause. It teaches that as a result of his defection from God at the beginning of human history, he is a fallen, ruined, guilty, lost creature.

The picture which the Scripture gives of man is a deeply humiliating one, radically different from all drawn by human pencils. It is so because human writers describe how man views himself and how he appears in the eyes of his fellows—the Bible alone informs us what man is in the sight of God! His unerring Word affirms, "There is none righteous: no, not one" (Rom. 3:l0)—not a single member of our race who is conformed to the Divine Rule. That Word solemnly asserts, "There is none that doeth good" (Rom. 3:12) according to the Divine Standard of conduct: not one in his natural condition whose actions proceed from a holy principle, acts out of love to God, or with an eye only to His glory. Such statements as those are much too

unpalatable to proud human nature to have been made by any who sought to palm off an alleged communication from Heaven designed for universal acceptance. The Bible also shows why we cannot meet the just requirements of our Maker: each of us is "shapen in iniquity" and conceived in sin (Ps. 51:5). Depravity is transmitted from parent to child: each one enters this world with a defiled nature, with a bent toward evil.

Since the fountain is polluted, all the streams issuing therefrom are foul. Fallen Adam "begat a son in his own [moral] likeness, after his [sinful] image" (Gen. 5:3), and thus it has been with each succeeding generation. "Man is born like a wild ass's colt" (Job 11:12) — thoroughly intractable, hating restraint, wanting to have his own way. Think you, my reader, such a description of human nature as that was invented by man? "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies" (Ps. 58:3). Entering this world "alienated from the life of God" (Eph. 4:18), that which is bred in the bone quickly comes out in the flesh. No child requires to be taught to tell lies—it is natural for him to do so, and the more he is left free to "develop his own personality" without "inhibitions," the more will his delinquency appear. "Man at his best estate is altogether vanity" (Ps. 39:5)—an empty bubble, yea, as vain as a peacock. He is as unsubstantial as the wind. "Men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance they are altogether lighter than vanity" (Ps. 62:9). Man, who so glories in himself, would never originate such an estimate of himself.

Instead of making Satan the author of all our iniquities, the Holy Bible teaches, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evil things come from within and defile the man" (Mark 7:21-23). External temptations would have no power unless there were something within us to which they could appeal: a lighted match is a menace to a barrel of gunpowder, but not so to one filled with water! That explains why all the efforts of statesmen, educators, and social reformers are unavailing to effect any improvement of man—they are incapable of reaching the seat of his moral disease; at most, they can but place outward restraints on him. It is vain to move the hands of a watch or polish its case if the mainspring be broken. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9), is another concept which would never originate in the human mind, for it is quite contrary to our ideas and too abasing for our acceptance. Such a pride-withering delineation of human nature as the Bible furnishes could have been supplied by none other than God Himself.

The Bible not only paints human nature in the colors of truth and reality, but it also reveals how it has come to be what it now is. The existence of moral evil has been acknowledged in every age, for it was far too palpable and potent to be denied, but whence it came and how it originated proved to be a problem which the wisest, without Divine revelation, were unable to solve. To ascribe it to the malignity of matter (as some of the ancients did) is a manifest absurdity, for matter possesses no moral qualities, and could not corrupt the heart and mind, however closely it were placed in connection with them. The Scriptures inform us that, "Man being in honour abideth not" (Ps. 49:12). The Hebrew word for man, there, is Adam, and that verse informs us that the father of our race continued not in the state of purity in which God created him. He disobeyed his Maker, lost his innocence by his own fault, and having corrupted himself, has communicated his depravity unto all his descendants. "By one man sin entered the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom.

5:12). The root was vitiated, and therefore every part of the tree springing from it is tainted.

We now come to point 10—Its teaching on sin. As might well be expected, the teaching of Holy Writ thereon is as different from that of fallen man's as is light from darkness. So long as it breaks not forth in open crime, to the injury of their own interests, those of this world regard sin lightly and minimize its seriousness. In many quarters sin is regarded as being merely a species of ignorance, and the sinner is looked upon as more to be pitied than blamed. The various terms which are commonly used as substitutes for sin indicate how inadequate and low is the popular conception: infirmities, mistakes, shortcomings, youthful follies they speak of—rather than iniquities, transgressions, disobedience, wickedness. In the Bible sin is never palliated or extenuated, but from first to last its heinousness and enormity are insisted upon. The Word of Truth declares that "sin is very grievous" (Gen. 18:20), that "abominable thing" which the Lord "hates" (Jer. 44:4). It regards sin as being "red like crimson" (Isa. 1:18), and declares it to be "exceeding sinful" (Rom. 7:13). It likens sin to "the poison of asps," to the "scum" of a seething pot, to the loathsome disease of leprosy.

The Bible declares "the thought of foolishness is sin" (Prov. 24:9)—what human mind devised such a standard as that?! It teaches that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23), so that unbelief and doubting are reprobate. It insists that, "to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17), so that sins of omission, equally with those of commission, are condemned. Yea, sins of ignorance are culpable (Lev. 5:17), for with God's Word in our hands ignorance is inexcusable. Holy Writ teaches that sin is more than an act, namely, an attitude which precedes and produces the action. "Sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4 R.V.), spiritual anarchy, a state of rebellion against the Lawgiver Himself. It insists that we are sinners by nature before we are sinners by practice. It does not restrict its indictments to any particular class, but declares that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Now a book which uniformly depicts sin as a vile and hideous thing, which strips man of every excuse, which declares that "every imagination of the heart of man is only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5), and which brings in "all the world guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19) could not have been created by fallen creatures, but must have come from the thrice Holy One.

The same applies with equal force to the teaching of the Scriptures concerning the punishment of sin. A defective view of sin necessarily leads to an inadequate conception of what is due unto it. Man looks at sin and its deserts solely from the human viewpoint, but the Bible exhibits its malignity in the light of God's broken Law, and shows it to be one of infinite enormity and guilt, which—where the atoning sacrifice of Christ be rejected—demands and receives eternal punishment. The Word of Truth reveals that all who die in their sins will be consciously tormented forever and ever in "Hell fire," and there will not be a drop of water to relieve the sufferer. The sphere of their anguish is described as "the blackness of darkness forever," for not a ray of hope ever enters there, and where there is "wailing and gnashing of teeth." None but the Holy One, who alone is capable of determining what is due to rebels against Himself, could have lifted the veil and given us a glimpse of the terrible character of sin's wages. The fact that this solemn truth is so distasteful to all and so widely rejected, and yet occupies a place of so much prominence in the Bible, is one of the many proofs that it is not of human origin.

Let us proceed to the 11th point—Its historical parts. Much of the Bible consists of historical narratives, yet both their contents and the style in which they are written at once

distinguish them from all others. They cover a period of no less than 4,000 years! The Old Testament contains the oldest records of the world, dating far back of the chronicles of men, yea, of the dimmest traditions of all nations, save the Jewish, and therefore the Scriptures of the Old Testament are many centuries older than any other historical records. Herodotus, who has been styled "the Father of History," was born a thousand years after Moses!—the penman employed by God in writing the Pentateuch. They not only impart information which none of the writings of antiquity contain, but are in striking contrast with the legendary fables of early Greece and Rome. The Bible alone supplies us with any knowledge of the affairs of this world during its first 15 centuries. Antedating all human historians, God Himself has made known to us how the earth came into existence, how the nations originated, and has given a brief but succinct account of the antediluvian era which terminated in the Flood—all of which matters are entirely beyond our imagination.

The opening verses of Genesis stand in a class entirely by themselves. Their teaching upon the creation of the universe out of nothing is quite peculiar to Holy Writ. Such an idea is not to be found in the most rational and refined systems of secular writers. Even where an intelligent Architect was conceived of, as in the speculations of Plato and Aristotle, yet he was portrayed as working upon existing material, on eternal matter. While the hypothesis favored by the earlier Egyptians and Babylonians was that everything, including the stars and this earth, has developed from the inherent power of the sun. For reconditeness of theme and yet simplicity of language, for comprehensiveness of scope and yet brevity of description, for scientific exactitude and yet the absence of technical terms, nothing can be found in all literature which for a moment compares with the opening chapter of the Bible. Its Divine revelation stands out in marked separation, not only from the meaningless cosmogonies of the ancients and the senseless mythologies of the heathen, but equally from the laborious jargon of our moderns who essay to write upon the origin of things, and which are out of date almost as soon as published.

Again—the historical portions of the Bible, alone, supply us with a satisfactory explanation of the present state of the world. As was pointed out earlier, the earth exhibits numerous marks of intelligence and benignity, yet they are neither of unvaried orderliness nor of unmixed benevolence. If on the one hand we behold the fertile fields and beauties of nature, on the other there are icy wastes, vast deserts, death-dealing volcanoes. It is apparent that this earth has experienced some fearful convulsion, by which its original structure has been deranged. It is still subject to earthquakes, devastating tornadoes and tidal waves. Man and this earth are manifestly adapted to each other; nevertheless there are many examples of such discrepancy. Why is this? Certainly not because of any imperfection in the Creator. Then why? The Bible alone accounts for these abnormalities, and it does so in a way without the wisdom and power of the Creator being impeached. It reveals that, as the result of sin, God is now dealing in justice and holiness with His refractory subjects, as well as in goodness and mercy with the creatures of His hand.

The uniqueness of Scripture history appears not only in the disclosures which are made, but also in its style and omissions. Its method of chronicling events is radically different from all other histories. It only just touches upon, and often entirely ignores, matters which had been of most interest to men of the world, whereas it frequently treats at length of things which they had deemed of no importance. How amazingly brief is the account given the creating and furnishing

of this earth! Man had never restricted that to a single chapter, and then have devoted more than 10 others to the tabernacle and its erection. No indeed: the wisdom of this world would had regarded the grand edifice of the universe as worthy of a much fuller description than that of a religious tent! Nothing is told us of the "seven wonders" of the ancient world. Men of renown are passed by in silence, while the pastoral lives of insignificant individuals are narrated. The great empires of antiquity are scarcely alluded to, and then only as they touch the interests of Israel. A principle of selection obtains such as no secular historians adopt, and the events singled out are set down as a plain record of facts, without any attempt of the writers to mingle their own reflections with them.

The design of sacred history is entirely different from that of all others. Its aim is not simply to preserve the memory of certain occurrences, but to teach us the knowledge of God and His salvation, and to show us our deep need of the same. Its purpose is not merely to narrate bare facts, but rather impart important moral instruction. It does very much more than convey us a knowledge of events, an account of which is nowhere else obtainable—the agency of God in connection with those events is constantly brought out. That which uninspired historians either overlook or deliberately ignore is made prominent, namely, the Divine displeasure against sin. The historical portions of Scripture display to us throughout, the excellence of the Divine character, and set before us His governing of this world. Sacred history is very much more than an authentic record of human affairs: it exhibits the perversity and folly, the instability and unbelief of human nature, and reveals the springs from which our actions proceed. In its narratives the thoughts and secret motives of men are discovered, and that in a manner and to an extent which none but the great Searcher of hearts was capable of doing. The real character of man is unveiled as in no other writings.

“The Bible describes, in action and exhibition, the perfections of Jehovah as fully as the proclamation in which He declares Himself to be longsuffering and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin. It delineates the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of the heart, as forcibly and distinctly as the annunciation’s of the Prophets, when they aloud and spare not” (Robert Haldane). It emphasizes the providential interposition of God in human affairs and His ways with men. Therein we are shown what a mad and bitter thing it is for either an individual or a nation to forsake the living God—and, contrariwise, what blessings attend those who walk in subjection and fellowship with Him. Consequently its narratives are of great practical value: not only in a general way by showing how God punishes sin and rewards righteousness, but by specific and personal illustrations of the same. Vital ethical and spiritual lessons are thereby inculcated, and from the lives of different individuals we are taught what examples are worthy of our emulation and what evils and dangers it will be our wisdom and profit to avoid. Thus those sacred narratives afford us scope for constant meditation. Into the inspired history is most wondrously interwoven all the doctrines and duties promulgated by Christ and His Apostles.

But the grand design of the Old Testament was to make manifest the need for, the nature of, and the various preparations made unto the redemptive work of Christ. Everything else was subordinated unto an anticipation of the all-important advent of God’s Son to this earth and the inauguration of the Christian era. As there is one central object in the heavens which far surpasses in glory all other planets, so the Person and mission of the Lord Jesus Christ is accorded the place of pre-eminence in the Sacred Volume. That was what regulated the

principle of selection as to what should or should not be recorded in the Bible. Hence it is that the history of Adam and his posterity during the first 2,000 years is condensed into but eleven chapters, and why very little indeed is said about them—special attention being directed only unto those individuals from which the promised Messiah was to spring. For the same reason, from Genesis 12 onwards we are occupied almost entirely with the history of Abraham and his descendants. The lives of the Patriarchs are described in much more detail, that we may perceive the sovereignty and grace of God in His choice of and dealings with them; and that we may obtain a better view of the stock from which Christ, according to His humanity, was to issue.

Most of the Old Testament is a history of the nation of Israel, and it, too, is written in a manner quite different from all others, for as one has well said, "It is recorded by the unerring hand of Truth." No effort is made to magnify the virtues of Israel, nor is there the least attempt to hide their vices. Had those records been composed by uninspired Jews, then obviously they would have laboured to present the most attractive picture possible of their own people, and therefore no reference would had been made unto their base ingratitude and hard-heartedness. Particularly would a forgery have sought to impress other nations with the might, valor, and military genius of the Jews. But so far from that, their faint-heartedness and defeats are frequently recorded. The capture of Jericho and the conquest of Canaan are not attributed to the brilliance of Joshua and the bravery of his men, but to the Lord's showing Himself strong in their behalf. Nor did the victories granted them proceed from partiality or caprice, for only while they walked in obedience to God's Law did He crown their efforts with success. It is noteworthy that the sacred history of the Old Testament ends at the point where credible secular history begins, for the occupation of Palestine by the Persians, Greeks and Romans is recorded by Xenophon and his successors.

And finally, point 12—Its typical teachings. Since the incarnation of His Son, with the attendant blessings of redemption, was the grand object contemplated by God from the dawn of human history, He ordered everything in the early ages of the world to pave the way for the same, particularly in the educating of His people concerning it. It pleased God to first preach the Gospel to them by means of parables, by symbolical instruction and typical occurrences which foreshadowed the Person and work of the future Redeemer. Therein lies the key which opens many a chapter of the Old Testament, which to those lacking, it appears not only of little interest but unworthy of a place in a Divine revelation. But once their scope and significance be recognized, we perceive in those ancient institutions and religious rites such a wondrous anticipation of and perfect correspondence with what is set forth more openly in the New Testament as no human wisdom could have devised. There is a pre-arranged harmony between type and antitype as no mortal could invent; a prophetic meaning in them which only God could have given. The fitness of the types and the agreement of the antitypes lie not so much in their external resemblance as in the essential oneness of the ideas they embody and express and their relations to each other.

The types are so many outward emblems and visible signs appointed by God to portray spiritual objects. They were so constructed and arranged as to express in symbolical form the great truths and principles which are common alike to all dispensations, such as the holiness of God and its requirements, the sinfulness of sin and its polluting effects, the necessity for a Mediator. Under the Levitical ceremonies there was set forth a palpable exhibition of sin and

salvation, the purification of the heart, and the dedication of the person and life unto God. His method of revelation was first to portray heavenly things by means of earthly, to make known eternal realities through temporal events, to exhibit to the physical senses what was later presented more directly to the mind. Thereby was indicated on a lower plane what was to be accomplished on a far higher one. Visible things were made to image and prepare the way for the disclosure of the more spiritual mysteries of Christ's kingdom. In that way the earlier dispensations were made the servants for getting ready the stage of things to come. God so modeled the institutions of Israel's worship as to set before their eyes the cardinal doctrines of Christianity, the one being a stepping-stone to the other. During the immaturity of God's family celestial things were more easily grasped when set forth in a corporate form than by abstract statements about them.

The events recorded in the Old Testament were actual occurrences, yet they also presaged the more excellent things which were promised. Divine Providence so molded human history that in many instances there was made a typical representation of the work of redemption. That was set forth, in its broad outlines, in the days of Noah. The fearful flood which God sent upon the world of the ungodly made known His intense hatred of sin and the punishment which it entails. Yet before that judgment fell, merciful warning was made and time given for repentance; but the wicked repented not. In the ark we behold the gracious provision which God made for those who feared Him. Noah and his family sought refuge therein, and accordingly they were preserved from the overflowing scourge. That ark was the only place of deliverance. It was therefore a prophetic sign of Christ as the sole Saviour of sinners, and the security of those who sheltered therein shadowed forth the deliverance from the wrath to come of those who flee to Christ. There was room in the ark for all who availed themselves of it, and the Redeemer has promised to receive and cast out none who come to Him. The dove sent forth by Noah was an emblem of the Holy Spirit, and her return to the ark with an olive leaf in her mouth spoke of that assurance which believers have that God is now at peace with them.

The whole history of Israel was a typical one and was made to adumbrate the experience of God's people in the days of their unregeneracy, the provisions made by God for their deliverance, and the complete salvation which He effects for them. The cruel bondage suffered by the Hebrews in Egypt under the merciless oppression of Pharaoh supplies a vivid picture of our natural servitude unto sin and Satan. Their crying in the brick kilns and their groaning under the whips of their taskmasters spoke of those smiting of conscience and sorrows of heart when God convicts us of our rebellion against Him and when He makes sin to become exceedingly burdensome and bitter to our souls. The utter inability of those Israelite slaves to free themselves from the galling yoke of their masters portrayed the helplessness of the natural man, his complete impotence to deliver himself from the dominion of sin. The sovereign grace of God in raising up a deliverer in the person of Moses pointed forward to the Redeemer emancipating His people. The appointment of the lamb and the efficacy of its sprinkled blood to shelter from the angel of death on the Passover night revealed yet more clearly what is now proclaimed by the Gospel. While the destruction of Pharaoh and his hosts at the Red Sea, and Israel's sight of the "Egyptians dead upon the sea shore" (Ex. 14:30), told of the completeness of the Christian's salvation—the putting away of his sins from before the face of God.

The subsequent history of Israel after their miraculous exodus from Egypt while on their way to Canaan foreshadowed, in a remarkable and unmistakable manner, the experiences of

Christians from the tune they are born again until their entrance into Heaven. Israel's long journey across the wilderness supplies a graphic picture of the believer's passage through this world. Once the heart has been really captivated and won by the loveliness of Christ, the things of time and sense lose their charm and this world becomes a dreary desert to him. As the wilderness, with its sterile sands and waterless wastes, was a place of trials unto the Hebrews, so this world is made the place of testing unto the graces of the saints. But as God ministered unto Israel of old, so He has made full provision to meet our every need. They had the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night to direct their course, and we have the Word of God as a lamp unto our feet and the Holy Spirit to interpret it for us. As God furnished them with manna from on high, so He has given us "exceeding great and precious promises" to feed upon. As He caused water to flow from the smitten rock for Israel, so He now revives the souls of the contrite. As He enabled them to overcome Amalek, so His grace is sufficient for us.

That remarkable feature of the Old Testament Scriptures which we are now dealing with is a very comprehensive one, and a large volume might readily be written thereon. The whole of the Mosaic ritual possessed a typical and spiritual significance. The tabernacle in which they worshipped was an emblematic representation of Christ and His Church, and by ordaining that more than a dozen chapters should be devoted to an account of its structure, its furniture, and its setting up, while but a single chapter describes the creating and peopling of this earth! This tells us that in the Divine estimation, the latter is of infinitely more importance than the former. The world was made for Christ (Col. 1:16) and His people (2 Cor. 4:15), as a platform upon which the celestial hierarchies "might be known by [or rather "through"—dia] the Church, the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10). The tabernacle was God's dwelling-place in the midst of Israel. Its holy courts, its sacred vessels, the priesthood which ministered there: the sacrifices they offered, were, to their minutest detail, all, so many object lessons brought down to our finite capacity, setting forth the grand truths of Divine revelation, without which we could not so fully understand what is set forth in the New Testament.

Many of the outstanding characters of the Old Testament adumbrated Christ in the varied relations He sustained. Adam presaged His federal headship (Rom. 5:14), Moses His prophetical office (Deut. 18:18), Melchizedek His priestly (Ps. 110:4), David His kingly (Rev. 5:5). The checkered experiences through which Joseph passed foreshadowed Christ both in His humiliation and His exaltation. Joshua typified Him as the Securer of the inheritance. The miraculous birth of Isaac prefigured the supernatural incarnation; the murder of Abel, His death; the budding of Aaron's rod, His resurrection. Every perfection of Christ's character, each office that He sustained, all the aspects of His redemptive work—Godwards, manwards, and sin-ward—were indicated by or through one and another of the historical persons of the Patriarchal and Mosaic eras. That so very much in the Jewish Scriptures should be adapted to image the Person and history of the Saviour cannot be accounted for on any other hypothesis than that God Himself is the Author of them. The spiritual instruction conveyed by the Old Testament narratives, their deeper and hidden meanings, the great number and variety of the types, their anticipations of and perfect accord with what is taught in the New Testament, clearly demonstrate that Judaism and Christianity—so dissimilar in their externals, so opposite in their incidentals, yet uniting in their essentials—both belong to the same Lord.

Chapter 10 – Teaches the Way of Salvation

The uniqueness of the Bible appears most conspicuously here, as anyone may ascertain for himself by comparing the teaching of the so-called "sacred books" of all human religions. The difference between what is revealed in the Scripture of Truth and the systems of men upon the attainment of holiness and eternal felicity is like unto that between light and darkness. At no other point does the celestial nature of the Bible shine forth more unmistakably than in the plan of redemption which is made known therein. The good news which it heralds to ruined and lost sinners is such as was undiscoverable by the light of nature, yet is authenticated by its own intrinsic excellence. The Gospel which is published in the Bible attests itself by virtue of its matchless merits. It discovers its Divine origin by a proclamation of truth which is self-evident. There is no need for an appeal to be made unto any external testimonies, for a true perception of the Gospel demonstrates its Divine nature. That which is affirmed in the Gospel is manifest by its own assertion as something far surpassing all the inventions of the human mind.

The Gospel itself is light, for its central Object is "the Light of the world" (John 8:12). The advent of Jesus Christ to this earth was predicted as the rising of "the Sun of righteousness" (Mal. 4:2), and the universal spread of His Gospel is represented under the figure of that grand fountain of natural light diffusing His beams over every part of the earth (Ps. 19:1-5, and cf. Rom. 10:17, 18). Now light necessarily proves itself for it is self-evident, needing nothing to manifest it. It serves to discover other objects, but requires nothing to discover itself. "Whatsoever doth make manifest is light" (Eph. 5:13), and the Gospel makes manifest the perfections of God, setting forth an open discovery of them before our minds, beyond any other of His wondrous works. Therefore is this Divine revelation, this message of glad tidings unto condemned criminals, designated "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God" (1 Tim. 1:11) because His ineffable glories are there so brightly displayed. The consummate wisdom of God is evidenced far more eminently in the work of redemption than in any of His marvels in creation or in Providence, so that none but the blind can be unconvinced thereby.

The Gospel evinces its Divinity by the solution which it offers to a problem for which the combined wisdom of all mankind can furnish no adequate solution. That problem is succinctly stated thus: "How, then, can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?" (Job 25:4). The problem is twofold: legal, and moral, respecting man's relation to the Divine Law, and his fitness for the celestial Temple. Man is a transgressor of the Divine Law. Every member of the human race is such. Anything short of perfect and perpetual obedience to the Divine commandments in thought and word and deed constitutes one a transgressor. Measured by such a standard, each of us must plead guilty, for we come far short of it. The Law condemns us: how, then, can we be acquitted? On what possible ground can the righteous Judge declare us to be entitled to the award of the Law? But more—we are fallen and sinful creatures, and as such unfit to dwell in the immediate presence of the ineffably holy God. How shall we get rid of our defilement? How do we obtain that unsullied purity to make us meet for Heaven?

Let us briefly amplify the several elements which enter into that problem.

1. The requirements of God's Law. They are founded upon the perfections of its Framer,

and therefore nothing less than spotless holiness is demanded of us. Negatively, it proscribes not only wrong deeds and corrupt counsels of the heart, but—as no human legislation ever did—it also prohibits evil desires and propensities, so that all unchaste imaginations are forbidden, as also the spirit discontent, envy, revenge—anything which is contrary to the perfections of God Himself is interdicted. Positively, the Divine Law demands from us an entire, unreserved, and uninterrupted yielding of soul and body, with all their faculties and powers, unto God and His service. It requires not only that we love Him with all our heart and strength, constantly, but that love to Him must actuate and regulate all our actions unvaryingly. Nor is that unreasonable, for we are all God's creatures, made for His glory, and originally created without sin, in His own image and likeness.

2. The charge preferred against us: "there is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10). Not a single member of our fallen race measures up to the holy standard which our Maker and Governor has set before us—not one who meets the just requirements of His Law. Nor is there one who has made a genuine, wholehearted, and sustained effort to do so. So far from subordinating all his interests to the will of God, the natural man follows the desires and devices of his own heart, giving place to God only so far as that is pleasing to himself. Though he owes his very life to His daily care, yet he has no concern for His glory. He is ungrateful, unruly, ungodly, abusing God's mercies, despising His reproofs, trampling under foot His commandments. And therefore "all the world stands guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19).

3. The sentence of the Law. This is clearly stated in the Divine Word. "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them" (Gal. 3:10). Whoever violates a single precept of that Law exposes himself to the displeasure of God, and to His just punishment as the expression of that displeasure. No allowance is made for ignorance, no distinction is made between persons, no relaxation of its strictness is possible. "The soul that sinneth it shall die," is its inexorable pronouncement. No exception is made whether the transgressor be young or old, rich or poor, Jew or Gentile: the wages of sin is death, for "the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (Rom. 1:18).

4. The judge Himself is inflexibly just, "that will by no means clear the guilty" (Ex. 34:7). In the high court of Divine justice, the Lord interprets the Law in its sternest aspect and judges rigidly according to the strictness of its letter. "He is a holy God, He is a jealous God: He will not forgive your transgressions and your sins" (Josh. 24:19). God is inexorably righteous, and will not show any partiality either to the Law or to its violator. "But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.., who will render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. 2:2, 6). He has determined that His Law shall be faithfully upheld and its sanctions strictly enforced.

5. The sinner is unquestionably guilty. It is not merely that he has infirmities, or that he has done his very best, yet failed to attain unto absolute perfection. He has set at naught God's authority, and has proved a proud rebel rather than a loyal subject. He has gone his own way and gratified himself, without any concern for the Divine honour. Morally respectable he may be in the sight of his fellows, but a criminal before the Divine tribunal. It is impossible for any man to clear himself of the solemn charge: he can neither disprove the accusations which the Law prefers against him, nor vindicate himself for the perpetration of them.

Here, then, is how the case stands. The Law demands flawless and continuous obedience to its precepts in heart and in act, in motive and performance. God charges us with having failed to meet those just requirements, and declares us guilty. The Law then pronounces sentence of condemnation, and demands the infliction of the death penalty. The One before whose tribunal we stand is omniscient, and cannot be imposed upon; He is inflexibly just and swayed by no sentimental considerations. We are unable to refute the charges of the Law, unable to vindicate our sinful conduct, unable to offer any reparation or atonement for our crimes. Truly our case is desperate to the highest degree.

Here, then, is the problem. How can God justify the willful transgressor of His Law without justifying his sins? How can He receive him into His favour without being the Patron of a rebel? How can God deliver him from the penalty of His broken Law without going back upon His word that He, "will by no means clear the guilty"? How can life be granted to the culprit without repealing the sentence, "the soul that sinneth it shall die"? How can mercy be shown to the sinner without justice being flouted? That is a problem which none of the jurists of this earth could solve, one which must forever have baffled every finite intelligence. Yet, blessed be His name, God has, in His consummate wisdom, devised a way whereby the chief of sinners can be dealt with by Him as though he were entirely innocent. Nay, more—He pronounces him righteous, up to the required standard of the Law, and entitled to its reward of eternal life. The Gospel provides a plain, satisfactory, and glorious solution to that problem, and therein evidences its Divinity. To that solution we now direct the reader's attention.

That solution may be summed up in one word, namely, substitution, though a million words could not express all the stupendous wonders attending the same. God decreed that salvation should be provided for transgressors and, in order that His righteousness might not be compromised, determined that Another should take their place, and in their stead make a full satisfaction to the Divine Law, by rendering a flawless obedience to it. But where was to be found one suitable for this task, for, first, he must be a sinless being? There was not a single candidate among the sons of men, for the whole human race was guilty. From whence, then, could a substitute be found? Suitable, we say, for not only must he be without sin, but his obedience to the Law must possess such super-abounding worth as to pay the debts not of one sinner, but of all sinners for whom it was vicariously performed. His obedience must needs possess more merit than their total demerits. That necessarily excluded all the angels, for as creatures of God they themselves were obligated to render perfect obedience to Him, and in so doing merely performed their duty; consequently no merit attached to the same, and so there was no excess for others.

Further, none would be suitable save one who could act in his own absolute right, one who in himself was neither a subject nor a servant, otherwise he could merit nothing for others: he that has nothing that is absolutely his own cannot pay any price to redeem others. He must be a person possessed of infinite dignity and worthiness, so that he might be capable of meriting infinite blessing. He must be endowed with infinite power and wisdom to qualify him for such a stupendous undertaking. He must be one of unchanging integrity and immutable faithfulness, or he could not be depended upon for such a momentous task. He must be one of matchless mercy and love to willingly serve as the Substitute and die in the room of fallen and depraved men. It was also requisite that he should be a person infinitely dear unto God the Father, in order to give an infinite value to his transaction in God's esteem. Now where, my

reader, was such a one to be found? Had that question been propounded to the ablest of men, yea, to a conclave of angels, it had remained unanswered forever.

But "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God" (Luke 18:27). That problem which was far above the compass of all creatures was solved by Omniscience. The surpassing goodness and infinite wisdom of God selected His own Son for the undertaking, for He was in every way fit, possessing in Himself all the requisite qualifications. But here another problem, no less than the former, presented itself. The Son was absolute Sovereign in Himself: how then could He serve? He was infinitely above all law: how then could He perform obedience to law? He was the Lord of Glory, worshipped by all the heavenly hosts: how then could He be substituted in the place of worms of the dust? Moreover, as their Substitute, He must not only fulfil all the preceptive requirements of the Law, but He must also take upon Him their sins and expiate their guilt; He must suffer the Law's condemnation, endure its penalty, receive the awful wages of sin. But how could One of such infinite dignity enter such depths of humiliation? How could the ineffably Holy One be judicially "made sin" for them? How could the Blessed One be made a curse? How could the Lord of Life die?

As another has said, "If God had declared who the person is that should do this work and had gone no further, no creature could have thought which way this person could have performed the work. If God had told them that His own Son must be the Redeemer, and that He alone was a fit person for the work, and that He was a person every way sufficient for it, but had proposed to them to contrive a way how this fit and sufficient Person should succeed, we must conclude that all created understandings would have been utterly at a loss." Yet the Gospel makes known the wondrous and glorious solution to that problem, a solution which had never entered the mind of man to conceive, and in the revelation made of that salvation the Gospel bears unmistakably the impression of Divine wisdom and carries its own evidence of its Divinity.

The manifold wisdom of God determined that His Son should become the Representative and Surety of sinners and so be substituted in their place. But who else would have thought of such a thing: that the Son should occupy the place of rebels and become the Object of Divine wrath! And in order for the Son to be the sinner's Surety, He must render satisfaction to the Law in man's own nature! What created intelligence had deemed such a thing possible: that a Divine Person should become incarnate and be both God and man in one Person! Had God made known such a marvel, what finite intelligence could have devised a way whereby the Son should become flesh without partaking of the pollution of fallen human nature! Not only that the finite should become finite, the Ancient of Days an infant, but that He should be born of a woman without being tainted by the virus of sin! No angel had ever dreamed of the miracle of the virgin birth, whereby an immaculate human nature was produced in Mary's womb by the operation of the Holy Spirit, so that "a holy thing" (Luke 1:35), spotless and impeccable, was born by her! But that was no mystery to Divine wisdom. The Son of God became the Son of man.

And so we might continue, paragraph after paragraph, pointing out that the circumstances of Christ's birth, the details of His life, the reception which He met with from the world, the character of His mission, the nature of His death, His triumphant resurrection from the tomb, His ascension into Heaven, His there being crowned with honour and glory, seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, now reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords—each and all of which transcend the powers of human imagination. But a word requires to be added upon the

application of Christ's work to His people. How shall they partake of the benefits of His redemption without robbing Him of His glory? By what means shall their enmity be subdued and their wills be brought into subjection to Him? That was a further problem which no man could have solved. It is by the Spirit's communicating to them a new nature, making them sensible of their wretchedness and need, and causing them to stretch forth the beggar's hand and receive eternal life as a free gift. Though indwelling sin be not removed in this life, Christ's love has so won their hearts that it is now their fervent desire and sincere endeavour to live daily so as to please and glorify Him.

Now we submit to the critical reader that the Gospel is stamped with the Divine glory, that the wisdom of God appears conspicuously in the way of salvation that it exhibits. In its unique contrivances, its accomplished designs, its glorious ends, its blessed fruits, its stupendous wonder in transforming lawless rebels into loving and loyal subjects, we have that which is worthy of Omniscience. Never had it entered into the heart of man to conceive not only of Hell-deserving sinners being saved in a way suited to all the Divine perfections, but which also provides for their being personally conformed unto the image of God's Son, made "like Him" in holiness and happiness, made "joint heirs" with Him and eternal sharers of His glory. When impartially examined, it is self-evident that the Gospel is not of human origin. Certainly the Jews did not invent it, for they were its bitterest enemies. Nor the Gentiles, for they knew nothing about it until the Apostles preached it to them. Nor did the Apostles themselves, for at first they were offended at it (Matthew 16:21, 22). The Gospel is of God: thanks be unto Him for His unspeakable gift!

In what way shall depraved and guilty creatures be delivered from wickedness and punishment and restored to holiness and happiness, is the most difficult as well as important question which can engage the mind. Such an inquiry is of no interest to a pleasure-loving trifler, but is of vast moment to the sin-convicted soul. He knows that God is justly displeased with him, but how He shall become reconciled and receive him into His favour, passes his comprehension. A sense of guilt makes him afraid of God: how shall the cause of that fear be removed? Those are difficulties which human religions do not resolve and before which reason is silent. No amount of present repentance and reformation can cleanse the blotted pages of the past. When brought face to face with the dread realities of death, judgment, and eternity, the soul is appalled. A vague hope in the general mercy of God suffices not, for that leaves His justice unsatisfied. The Gospel alone provides a satisfactory solution to these problems and peace for the burdened conscience.

Neither sorrowing nor amendment of conduct can right the wrongs of which the sinner is guilty before God, nor can he by any self-effort change himself for the better, still less fit himself for Heaven. A sinner may be filled with bitter remorse for his vicious excesses , but tears will not heal his diseased body or deliver him from an early grave. The gambler will condemn himself for his folly, but no self-recriminations will recover his lost estate or save him from spending his remaining years in poverty. Thus it is evident that when it comes to the blotting out of his iniquities before God and the obtaining of a new nature which renders him fit for the Divine presence, man must look outside himself. But where is he to look for deliverance from himself for sin has made fallen man averse to fellowship with the Holy One? How then shall he desire, seek after, delight in that which is repellent to him? He is bidden to look unto One who is "mighty to save" (Isa. 63:1). The Gospel presents a Divine Physician who can heal the moral

leper, yea, give eternal life to one who is spiritually dead. The Lord Jesus is "able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him" (Heb. 7:25). His salvation is an all-sufficient and everlasting one, freely offered, "without money and without price." Such a Saviour, such a salvation, is of no human invention; therefore the Book which makes them known must be Divine.

It may be asked, If the Gospel be self-evident, why do not all men believe it? The answer is, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). The great majority deliberately close their eyes and steel their hearts against its appeal, because that appeal clashes with their corruptions and worldly interests. Not until men solemnly contemplate the character of God, their relation to Him as the subjects of His government, and their utter unpreparedness for His awful tribunal, will they seriously consider the claims of His Gospel. As food is relished most by the famished, as health is valued highest by those who have suffered a painful and protracted illness, so the Gospel is only welcomed by those who realize they are under the curse of a sin-hating God, stricken with a moral malady which no human remedy can relieve, hastening to hopeless eternity. Nevertheless, he who believes not shall be damned.

Chapter 11 – Its Fulfilled Prophecies

If the Bible is a human invention it ought not to require very much perspicuity to discover and demonstrate its imposture. The Scriptures claim to be of Divine inspiration, but if that claim is an empty and unfounded one, then it should be no hard matter to prove it is so. The Bible not only treats considerably of history and moral instruction, but it contains not a little prophecy, and that not in dark and dubious language, like that of the pretended Sibylline Oracle, such as that ambiguous answer made to the inquiry of Croesus when he was about to engage the Persians in war: "Croesus, having passed the river Hilys, shall overturn a great empire"—which would be verified whether his own kingdom or that of the Persians was subverted. Radically different are the predictions of Holy Writ. They are clear and definite, enter into specific and minute details, and in many instances are too plain to be misunderstood. Thus, the dispute between the Christian and the Infidel may be reduced to a short and simple issue: if Scripture prophecy be Divinely inspired then it will be accomplished; if it be spurious, it will not be.

Since the words "prophecy" and "prediction" are frequently used in a loose and general sense in present-day parlance, it is requisite that we should carefully define our term. By a "prophecy" we mean the annunciation of some future event which could not have been foreknown by natural means or arrived at by logical deduction from present data. Such are scores of predictions recorded in the Bible hundreds of years ago, and which have been accurately verified by history. They are entirely different from weather forecasts, which are more often wrong than right, and merely announce climatic conditions a few days ahead. To bear any resemblance to the prophecies of Scripture, they would have to prognosticate the specific temperature, the direction of the wind, the precise rainfall upon a certain city or country on a given day, 500 years hence! The reader will readily perceive that all of the scientists and astronomers in the world possess no such prevision as that. Yet the Bible abounds with forecasts far more wonderful.

It requires no prophetic spirit to declare that, life permitting, a certain male infant will develop into a child, and then into a man; but it would to announce from his cradle whether he will be a fool or a wise man, a failure or success; and still more so to predict the exact span of his life, and where and how he will die. A well-informed politician may foretell how soon there will be a general election, and which party will win the same; but he is quite incapable of foreseeing the political, social, economic and religious condition of his country 100 years from now. And, likewise, it would be completely beyond his powers to give the name and describe the character of its ruler in that day. An experienced statesman may indeed discern the speedy breakup of his state, and from the temper of its subjects deduce that it is likely to collapse under a fearful revolution, but he could not predict and describe the successive changes of empires centuries in advance—changes which depend upon countless unknown incidents. Yet the Bible does that very thing!

Sagacious conjecture is very different from Scripture prediction. Prophecy is, as one has well defined it, "the eyes of the omniscient God reading the predestinated future, and revealing the secret to His servants, the Prophets." It is demonstrated to be such by the actual accomplishment of the same as testified to by the records of history. And it is highly significant that sacred history ends where profane history—that part of it, at least, which is commonly

regarded as reliable—begins, so that the great changes in world affairs which the Divine seers foretold are confirmed by secular recorders of events, thereby effectually closing the mouths of skeptics. Thus the remarkable predictions of Daniel concerning the rise, the career, and the character of the great Gentile powers which occupied the stage during the last six centuries before the advent of Christ may be fully checked from the chronicles of heathen historians, who, entirely unacquainted with the Old Testament (which then existed only in the Hebrew language), were quite unaware that they were narrating the fulfillment of the same.

The book of Daniel contains prophetic visions which describe one momentous event after another that has come before the observance of the whole world: events so unlikely, so startling, and so far-reaching, that no wisdom could possibly have foreseen the same—least of all, so far in advance. It was therein revealed that four successive world kingdoms should arise, to be followed by a spiritual and everlasting kingdom set up by God Himself. Those four empires are viewed under the figure of wild beasts, to denote their strength, ferocity, and agility. It was therein foretold that they should come forth from "the great sea" (Dan. 7:2, 3), which in Scripture always has reference to the Mediterranean, thereby defining the center of their territorial origin. By that limitation of four, God made it known that after the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires there should never again be another kingdom commensurate with those. Charlemagne, Napoleon, the Kaiser, Hitler, in their insatiable greed, coveted and strove to form one, but in vain. Equally so will prove the ambitions of Moscow. [Written in 1948].

It is an incontrovertible fact that no Infidel has ever dared to meet the great body of Scripture prophecy, nor seriously attempted a reply to the many books written thereon, calling attention to their accomplishment. Either they are silently ignored, or dismissed with some such scurrilous remark that the Scripture prophecies are ‘‘a book of falsehoods," as Tom Paine’s accusation in his blasphemous Age of Reason (Part 2, pages 44, 47). Let the reader judge for himself from the following. Almost 100 years before the event, the Lord announced through Isaiah that Babylon should be destroyed by the Medes and Persians. "Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them. . .And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. . .Go up, O Elam [the ancient name of Persia]; besiege, O Media. . .Babylon is fallen" (Isa. 13:17, 19; 21:2, 9). Utterly unlikely as such a catastrophe then appeared, nevertheless, Herodotus and Xenophon record its literal fulfillment!

Again, Daniel, more than 200 years before the event, foretold the overthrow of the Medo-Persian empire by the arms of Greece, under the direction of Alexander the Great, depicting the government of the latter under the symbol of a he-goat with a notable horn between his eyes. That prophecy, in figurative language, is found in Daniel 8:3-7, and then (vv. 20-21) its meaning is explained in plain terms: "the ram which thou sawest having two horns, are the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough goat is the king of Grecia, and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king." Ask the historians of those times, Diodorus and Plutarch, if that were a falsehood! In his Antiquities (Jud. 11:8) Josephus tells of Alexander’s journey to Jerusalem for the purpose of dealing severely with the Jews, and how that when he was shown by the high priest a copy of the prophecy of Daniel announcing that a Grecian monarch should overthrow Persia, was so deeply impressed that, contrary to his invariable course, he showed remarkable favour to the Jews.

The same Daniel went on to announce that upon the death of Alexander his vast empire

should be divided between four of his principal generals, each of whom should have an extensive dominion (8:8, 22), which, as profane historians record, is precisely what took place. But more—he also predicted that out of one of those four branches of the Grecian empire would arise one who, at first weak and obscure, should become "exceeding great," blatant and impious, and that he would meet with no ordinary end (8:9, 12, 23-25). Therein was accurately described the infamous career of Antiochus Epiphanies, king of Syria. In that remarkable prophecy it was plainly intimated that that monster should, by means of flattery and treachery, accomplish his evil designs; and because of the degeneracy of the Jews would be permitted for a time to ravish their country, profane their temple, and put many of them to death; yet, that in the heyday of his career he should be cut off by a sudden visitation from Heaven. All of which was fulfilled to the letter!

Daniel also went on to herald the rise of yet a fourth kingdom. As he foretold that the Babylonian should be succeeded by the Medo-Persian and it by the Grecian, so in turn would this be vanquished by another yet more powerful. It is described as being "strong as iron: for as much as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all" (2:40); and as "diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful" and which "shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down and break it in pieces" (7:19, 23). Therein was given, more than 500 years beforehand, a delineation of the Roman empire, as differing from the others in its democratic form of government, in the irresistible might of its military power, and in its world-wide dominion (compare Luke 2:1). Finally, Daniel announced that "in the days of these kings" (2:44) should "the God of Heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed" (2:44; 7:13, 14). And it was in the days of the Caesars that the Son of God became incarnate and established His spiritual kingdom, which, despite all the efforts of Satan and his emissaries to overthrow it, continues to this very hour. What proofs of Divine inspiration are these!

But let us now come to a phenomenon which falls more immediately before our own observation, namely, the Jews. To the man of affairs the Jews present an interesting, yet perplexing problem, for they are the greatest paradox of the ages. No other nation was so highly favored by God, yet none has ever been so severely chastised by Him. They are the only people to whom God ever gave a land, yet the only one which for so many centuries have been without one. They are the only nation to whom God ever immediately gave a king, yet for 2,000 years they have been without a ruler or head. They are the outstanding miracle of history. Scattered throughout the earth, they are yet a unit; dispersed among the Gentiles, yet unassimilated by them. They are not wanted anywhere, yet because of their financial strength, needed everywhere. Taxed and plundered as no others have ever been, yet the wealthiest of all people. Persecuted and slaughtered as no other nation, yet miraculously preserved from annihilation.

The Bible alone supplies the key to their history. Not only so—the Bible described, in numerous particulars, their history long in advance. We will now single out but a few from the many scores. Two thousand years before the event, their conquest by the Romans and the terrors of the siege of Jerusalem were graphically depicted: see Deuteronomy 28:49-57—the passage is too lengthy to quote here, but let the reader be sure to consult it. The worldwide dispersion of the Jews was foretold centuries in advance: "And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, and from the one end of the earth even unto the other" (Deut. 28:64). The restless migrating of the Jews was made known ages before their actual dispersion: "And

among those nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind" (Deut. 28:65). So literally has that been fulfilled that "the wandering Jew" has become a proverbial expression adopted by all modem nations!

The taunts universally passed upon them were prophetically declared: "thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations whither the LORD shall lead thee" (Deut. 28:37). Who has not heard the expression, "as greedy as a Jew"! When one man gets the better of another by means of tricky dealings, it has become the custom throughout the English-speaking world to say "he Jew'd me." Literally has he become a "Proverb and a byword." Their survival, despite all the efforts of men to exterminate them, was made known: "when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not... destroy them utterly" (Lev. 26:44). The preservation of their national distinctness was expressly predicted: "lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Num. 23:9). Though scattered throughout the whole earth, they still subsist—unassimilated by the Gentiles—as a distinct people! And so we might go on. Let the reader carefully bear in mind that all of those fore-announcements were made upwards of 3,000 years ago! Such forecasts manifestly render imposture out of the question: they must have been God-breathed.

We now call attention to that which is central in prophecy, namely, the amazing description supplied of the Messiah many centuries before He came to this earth. A full portrait of Him was drawn in advance: one inspired artist after another adding fresh details, until the picture was complete. The Prophets, with one consent, gave witness to the Lord Jesus Christ, so that nothing remarkable befell Him and nothing great was done by Him which they did not foretell. Those prophecies were in the hands of the Jews, and translated into the Greek, generations before His birth, and were so well known that the Apostle Paul could say to king Agrippa that he taught no things, "than those which the Prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead" (Acts 26:22, 23). Thus did the fulfillment exactly correspond to the predictions made long before, for it pleased God to supply such an exact description of the Messiah that His identity should be indubitably established when He appeared among men: and thus the Jews were condemned by their Prophets for rejecting Him.

The supernatural character of our Lord's humanity was declared when it was said that He should be the woman's "Seed" (Gen. 3:15), unbegotten by a man: conceived and born of a "virgin" (Isa. 7:14). In Genesis 9:25-28, it was made known through which of the three sons of Noah the Messiah should issue, namely, Shem: for God would "dwell" in his "tents." Later, it was revealed that Christ, according to the flesh, should be of the Abrahamic stock (Gen. 22:18, and cf. Matthew 1:1). Still further was the compass narrowed, for of the twelve sons of Abraham's grandson, Judah was chosen (Gen. 49:10). Out of all the families of Judah, He would spring from the house of Jesse (Isa. 11:1). The place of His birth was specified (Micah 5:2). The very time of His advent was mentioned (Dan. 9:24-26). So definite were the Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ that the hope of Israel became the Messianic hope: all their expectations centered in His appearing. It is therefore the more remarkable that their sacred Scriptures contained another set of prophecies, telling of His being despised by His own nation and put to a shameful death.

Though Christ would preach good tidings to the meek, bind up the brokenhearted, and

proclaim liberty to the captives of sin and Satan (Isa. 61:1), and though He should open the eyes of the blind, unstop the ears of the deaf, and make the lame leap as a hart (Isa. 35:5, 6), yet utterly incredible as it appeared, He would be "despised and rejected of men" (Isa. 53:3). His back would be smitten, the hair plucked out of His cheeks, and His face covered with the vile spittle of those who hated Him (Isa. 1:6). He would be sold for "thirty pieces of silver" (Zech. 11:13), brought as a lamb to the slaughter, taken from prison and judgment, "cut off out of the land of the living" (Isa. 53:8). His death by crucifixion was revealed a thousand years beforehand (Psa. 22:1). So, too, His being crucified with malefactors (Isa. 53:12), His being derided upon the Cross (Ps. 22:7, 8), His being offered vinegar to drink (Psa. 69:2 1), as well as the soldiers gambling for His garments (Ps. 22:1 8)—were all described. It was also foretold that He should rise from the dead (Ps. 16:1, 2), and ascend into Heaven (Ps. 68:18).

But perhaps the most remarkable feature about the prophecies concerning Christ is their paradoxical character. He was to be the seed of David, which should proceed out of his bowels (2 Sam. 7:12), and at the same time be David's "Lord" (Ps. 110:1). He was to be both "the Son of man" (Dan. 7:13) and "the mighty God" (Isa. 9:6); "a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief' (Isa. 53:3), yet "anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows" (Ps. 45:7). He was to be One in whom Jehovah's "soul delighted" (Isa. 42:1), yet "smitten of God and afflicted" (Isa. 53:4). In one passage it was fore-announced, "Thou art fairer than the children of men" (Ps. 45:2), in another, "His visage was so marred more than any man" (Isa. 52:14). It was said that, "Messiah shall be cut off, and shall have nothing" (Dan. 9:26, margin), yet "of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end" (Isa. 9:7). He would "make His grave with the wicked" (Isa. 53:9), yet would be made "higher than the kings of the earth" (Psa. 89:27). The fulfillment in New Testament times of those apparently glaring contradictions evinced there was perfect harmony between them; yet is it not evident that such seeming inconsistencies as those had ever been inserted in an imposture!

Now we submit to the skeptical reader that the fulfillment of all those prophecies demonstrated the Divine origin of the Book which contains them. They were given not in the form of a vague generalization, but with a precision and minuteness which no human sagacity could possibly have supplied. Again and again have men attempted to foretell the future, but only to meet with failure; the anticipations of the most far-seeing are repeatedly mocked by the irony of events. Man stands before such an impenetrable veil that he knows not what a day may bring forth. How then shall we explain the hundreds of detailed prophecies recorded in the Scriptures which were fulfilled to the letter centuries after they were given? Only one explanation is rational, adequate, and satisfactory: they were revealed by God Himself. It is the prerogative of God alone to declare the end from the beginning, and the numerous, varied, and detailed predictions recorded in the Bible, demonstrate beyond a doubt that that Book is His own inspired and infallible Word. The prophecies of Scripture are supernatural: nothing in the remotest degree resembling or even aiming to do so, is to be found in any of the religions of the world. Prophecy is as truly the product of Omniscience as miracles are of Omnipotence.

Chapter 12 – More Unique Characteristics, Part 1

1. Its doctrine. Probably that heading would be more intelligible unto most of our readers had we employed the plural number. As a matter of fact, it is at this very point that its uniqueness first appears. Error is diverse and multiform, but Truth is harmonious and one. Scripture speaks of "the doctrines of demons" (1 Tim. 4:1) and "the doctrines of men" (Col. 2:22), which are "divers and strange doctrines" (Heb. 13:9), but whenever it refers to that which is Divine, the singular number is always used. Thus "the doctrine" (John 7:17; 1 Tim. 4:16), "the Apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42), "sound doctrine" (1 Tim. 4:1), "good doctrine" (1 Tim. 4:6), "the name of God and His doctrine" (1 Tim. 6:3). Yet, like a single diamond with its many facets or the rainbow combining all the colors, the doctrine of God has numerous and distinct aspects, which to our finite minds are best apprehended singly. Nevertheless, they are not like so many separate pearls on a string, but rather resemble branches growing out of a single tree. What we term "the doctrines of grace" are only so many parts or phases of the revealed favour of God unto His people.

The more time one devotes to a prayerful and diligent perusal of "the doctrine of Christ" (2 John 9), the more will he perceive not only the spiritual excellence of each of its parts, but also their perfect harmony, their intimate relation to one another, and the mutual furtherance of all unto the same end. It is ignorance of the whole which lies behind the supposition that any one part conflicts with another. It is designated "the doctrine which is according to godliness" (1 Tim. 6:3), for when truly believed it produces and promotes piety. It is a mold into which the mind is cast and from which it receives its impress (Rom. 6:17, margin). An observing eye will easily perceive that a distinct spirit attends different religions and different systems of the same religion which, over and above natural temperament, stamps their respective adherents. Thus it was at the beginning: those who received "another Gospel" received with it "another spirit" (2 Cor. 11:4), and hence we read of "the spirit of truth and the spirit of error" (1 John 4:6). Scripture doctrine produces holiness of character and conduct because it proceeds from the Holy One.

It would require a whole volume to do justice to this argument and illustrate it at length. The doctrine of the Godhead is unique. That God must be one is an axiom of sound reason, for there could not be a plurality of supreme beings. But that God should be one in His essence or nature, yet three in His Persons, is something which mere reason could never have discovered. That God is Triune, a trinity in unity, transcends infinite intelligence, and therefore never originated therefrom. That it is clearly set forth in the Bible evinces its verity. The doctrine of federal headship is peculiar to Divine revelation. That one should legally represent the many, that the many should be dealt with judicially according to the conduct of the one, is a truth which has no place at all in any human religion. Yet the Bible teaches explicitly that the guilt of Adam's transgression is reckoned to the account of all his natural descendants, so that because of it they stand condemned before God—a thing far too unpalatable for human invention. The merits of the obedience of the last Adam is reckoned to the account of all His spiritual seed, so that they are all accounted righteous before God—something far too wonderful to be of human contrivance.

The doctrine of Divine grace is equally unique. It is a truth peculiar to Divine revelation, a concept to which the unaided powers of man's mind could never have risen. Proof of this is

seen in the fact that where the Bible has not gone, grace is quite unknown. Not the slightest trace of it is to be found in any of the religions of heathendom, and when missionaries undertake to translate the Scriptures into the natives' tongues, they can find no word which in any wise corresponds to the Bible word "grace." Grace is something to which none has any rightful claim, something which is due unto none; being mere charity, a sovereign favour, a free gift. Divine grace is the favour of God bestowing inconceivable blessings upon those who have no merits and from whom no compensation is demanded. Nay, more— grace is exercised unto those who are full of positive demerits. How completely grace sets aside all thought of worth in its subject appears from that declaration, "being, justified freely by His grace" (Rom. 3:24); that word, "freely," signifies "without a cause," and is so rendered in John 15:25—justified gratuitously, for nothing!

Grace is a Divine provision for those who are so corrupt that they cannot better their evil natures; so averse to God they will not turn unto Him; so blind they perceive not His excellence; so deaf they hear Him not speaking unto them; so dead spiritually that He must open their graves and bring them forth on to resurrection ground if ever they are to be saved. Grace implies that its object's condition is desperate to the last degree: that God might justly leave him to perish—yea, that it is a wonder of wonders He has not already cast him into Hell. That grace is told out in the Gospel, which is not a message of good advice, but of good news. It is a proclamation of mercy, sent not to the good, but to the bad. It offers a free, perfect, and everlasting salvation "without money and without price," and that to the chief of sinners. To the convicted conscience, salvation by grace alone seems too good to be true. Grace is God acting irrespective of the sinner's character, not as a Demander but as a Giver—to the ill-deserving and Hell-deserving—who have done nothing to procure His favour, but everything to provoke His wrath.

There are other portions of doctrine taught in the Scriptures which by virtue of their very transcendency indicate their Divine source, as, for example, that of the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. It is a dictate of sound reason that if God be God—God in fact as well as in name—then He must have full control of all His creatures and regulate their every action in subservience to His own glory. It is equally self-evident that if man be created a moral agent, he must be endowed with the power of choice, and as such, be answerable unto God for all his volitions. So teaches the Bible: on the one hand that God is working all things after the counsel of His own will, not only in Heaven but also "among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand" (Dan. 4:35); and on the other that "every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12). Yet no human intellect is able to explain how that responsibility of man consists with the fact that God has eternally predestinated his every action and infallibly directs the same without the least violence to his will.

The same seeming paradox appears in the doctrine of man's spiritual impotence and accountability: that the fallen creature is in such complete bondage to sin that he is incapable of performing a spiritual act, yea, of originating a spiritual desire or thought, and yet is justly held blameworthy for all his moral perversity and impiety—that none can come to Christ except they be drawn (John 6:44), yet are condemned for not coming to Him (John 3:18). So, too, the doctrine of particular redemption: that Christ acted as the Surety of and made atonement for the sins of God's elect only; yet that the Gospel makes a free and bona fide offer of salvation unto all who hear it. In like manner, the complementary doctrines of the saints' preservation by God

and the imperative necessity of their own perseverance in faith and holiness—that no child of God can perish eternally, yet that he is in real danger of so doing as long as he is left in this world. Such things appear to be utterly inconsistent to human reason, which is sure evidence that no impostors, would have placed so much in the Bible as is foolishness to the natural man.

Another unmistakable hallmark of the genuineness of the several branches of the doctrine of Holy Writ is the manner in which they are set forth therein. They are not presented as so many expressly defined articles of faith or items of a creed. There is no formal statement of the doctrine of regeneration or of sanctification: rather are there many brief references to each scattered throughout the whole of the sacred writings. They are introduced more incidentally than systematically. Instead of being drawn up as so many propositions, they are illustrated and exemplified in the practical history of individuals. So different from man's method, yet characteristic of the ways of God! Man reduces botany to a system, but the Creator has not set out the flowers and trees in separate beds and fields according to their species, but has distributed them over the earth in beautiful variety. In like manner, He has not gathered into one chapter the whole of any one truth, but requires us to search and collate the numerous references to it, which are mingled with exhortations, warnings and promises. God's Word is addressed not only to our understanding but to our conscience, and no doctrinal statement is made without some practical end being answered.

Another striking feature of Biblical doctrine is its orderly presentation. As in the processes of nature, so there is a gradual unfolding of each particular doctrine. The diligent student will find that every vital truth made known in Scripture is seen first in the blade, then in the ear, and then in the full com in the ear. Thus, for example, with the Messianic prophecies: the germinal announcement in Genesis 3:15, the fuller revelation in Isaiah 53, the complete fulfillment in the New Testament. So with God's justifying of a sinner: briefly hinted at in Genesis 15:6, more plainly disclosed in Psalm 32:1, 2, fully expounded in Romans 4. The Bible is more than a book: it is a living organism, growth marking all its parts.

All through Scripture there is seen a systematic advance in the communication of Truth. In Genesis, the basic doctrine repeatedly exemplified is that of election; in Exodus, redemption by blood and power; in Leviticus, the chosen and redeemed are brought nigh to God as worshippers. Then the complementary side of things is set before us: in Numbers, our passage through this wilderness-world; in Deuteronomy, the enforcing of responsibility. While in Joshua we behold the people of God entering into and enjoying their heritage. What unmistakable progress is there! The same feature marks the New Testament. In the Gospels, Christ accomplishing the work of salvation; in Acts, the proclamation thereof; in the Epistles, salvation experienced by the members of His mystical Body; in Revelation, the saved in Glory around the Lamb. Such progress demonstrates both the unity of Scripture and continuity of its inspiration. Behind all the varied penmen is one Author working according to a definite plan.

2. Its precepts. This is another aspect of our many-sided subject which deserves as many separate chapters as space requires us to condense into paragraphs. At no other point does the heavenly origin of the Bible appear more plainly than the exalted standard it sets forth and the conduct it requires from us. Therein it is in marked contrast with the writings of all who oppose the Bible. Infidels and atheists have no ethical standard, yea, their code is utterly subversive of all morality. So too it differs radically from the teaching of the best of the ancient moralists and philosophers. They far surpass the most celebrated maxims of the sages and

religionists, and immeasurably transcend the best statutes of all human legislation. The Divine precepts embrace every relation and duty, and not only prohibit all evil but promote all virtue. They reprehend practices which all other systems approve or tolerate, and inculcate duties they omit. The laws of man reach no farther than human action, but those of God the fountain from which all actions proceed. If the laws of God were universally obeyed this earth would be a scene of universal peace and good will.

The world approves of ambition, the eager pursuit of wealth, fondness of pleasure, and in many instances applauds pride, ostentation, contempt of others, and even the spirit of revenge—whereas the precepts of Scripture condemn all of those in every form and degree. They require us to renounce the world as a source of happiness and to set our affection upon things above (Col. 3:2). They repress the spirit of greed: "having food and raiment, let us be therewith content" (1 Tim. 6:8). "Labour not to be rich" (Prov. 23:4); "lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth" (Matt. 6:19); and warn that "the love of money is the root of all evil." They bid us "lean not unto thine own understanding. . . be not wise in thine own eyes" (Prov. 3:5, 7), and prohibit all self-confidence: "he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool" (Prov. 28:26). Not only do they reprehend the spirit of revenge (Rom. 12:19; 1 Pet. 3:9), but they enjoin upon us, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). Such precepts as those never originated in any human mind, my reader.

In these precepts morality and duty are advanced to their highest pitch. "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Matthew 7:12). Many of them are entirely against the bent of nature: as "rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth" (Prov. 24:17); "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat" (Prov. 25:21); "In honour preferring one another" (Rom. 12:10); "let each esteem each other better than themselves" (Phil. 2:3). None others so "holy, just and good" (Rom. 7:12). Such statements as the following were never devised by man: "When thou doest thine alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret" (Matthew 6:3, 4). "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31); "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another" (Eph. 4:31, 32). "Giving thanks always for all things unto God" (Eph. 5:20); "Rejoice evermore" (1 Thess. 5:16).

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). The only objection which an Infidel could bring against the precepts of Scripture is that such an exalted standard of conduct as they inculcate is manifestly unattainable by imperfect creatures. That is readily admitted, yet so far from making against them, it only serves to exhibit the more clearly the design and wisdom of their Divine Author. In requiring from fallen creatures that which they cannot perform in their own strength, God does but maintain His own rights, for our having lost our original power does not release us from rendering to God that fealty and honour which is His due. Moreover, they are admirably designed to humble us, for our unsuccessful attempts to meet their demands make us the more conscious of our infirmities, and thereby pride is abased. They are intended to awaken within us a personal sense of dependence upon Divine aid. Where there is a genuine desire and endeavour to obey those statutes, they will be turned into earnest prayer for help—nor will assistance be denied the

seeking soul. Thus, the seeming foolishness of God is seen to surpass the feigned wisdom of man.

One other remarkable feature about the precepts of the Bible calls for a brief notice, namely, the motives by which they are enforced. No appeal is made to vanity, selfishness, or any of the corrupt propensities of our nature. Obedience to them is urged by no consideration of what our fellows will think or say of us, nor how we shalt further our own temporal interests. Rather are the animating motives drawn from respect to God's will, hope of His approbation, concern for His glory, gratitude for His mercies, the example that Christ has left us, and the claims which His sacrifice has upon us. Christians are bidden to forgive one another because God has for Christ's sake forgiven them (Eph. 4:32). Wives are called on to submit themselves unto their own husbands as the Church is subject unto Christ, and husbands to love their wives "even as Christ also loved the church" (Eph. 5). Servants are required to be obedient unto their masters in singleness of heart "as unto Christ" (Eph. 6:5), while their employers are to act toward their servants in the knowledge, that they also "have a Master in Heaven" (Col. 4:1). Christ's commandments are to be kept out of love to Him (John 14:15). How radically different are such inducements as those from urging that which will win the esteem of our fellows! Not that which will promote our own temporal interests, but what "is right" (Eph. 6:1) is that which the Holy Spirit presses upon us.

A final word to the preacher: The solemn fact is that every unsaved hearer is "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1), devoid of any spiritual perception or sensibility, incapable of any spiritual action—such as evangelical repentance and saving belief of the Gospel. Nothing short of a miracle of grace can bring a lost soul from death unto life, and nothing but the almighty and invincible power of God can accomplish the same (Eph. 1:19). It therefore follows that neither your faithfulness nor your earnestness can, of itself, save a single sinner: you will simply be "beating the air" unless the Holy Spirit is pleased to graciously accompany the Word with power and apply it to the heart of your hearer. None but the blessed Spirit can effectually convince of sin, and bring an unsaved person to realize his desperate condition and dire need. Even the Word itself only becomes "the Sword of the Spirit" as He wields it, and we cannot warrantably look unto Him to do so if we grieve Him by using fleshly means and worldly methods. It is unbelief in the imperative necessity of the Spirit's operations which has caused so many churches to descend to the level of the circus, and evangelists to conduct themselves like showmen. Humbly seek His presence and blessing, and trustfully count upon the same.

3. Its promises, which hold out the highest felicity of which man is capable. There is a natural instinct in the human heart after happiness, yea, after eternal happiness; yet instead of looking unto God for the same, the unregenerate try to find it in the creature. They fondly imagine that satisfaction is to be obtained in things visible, that it is to be found through the medium of the senses. But in vain do they gratify their bodily lusts: material things cannot satisfy the longings of an immaterial spirit. The springs of the earth are unable to quench the thirst of the soul. Wealth does not, for the millionaire is still a stranger to contentment. The honours of the world are but empty baubles, as their securers quickly enough discover. The eager devotees of pleasure find there is no real happiness in any form of amusement. Serious souls are at a loss to know where to look for that which will reward their quest. "There are many that say, Who will show us any good?" (Ps. 4:6): they neither know what it consists of, nor where it to be found.

Hence it is that the Lord says unto them, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto Me: hear and your soul shall live" (Isa. 55:2, 3). God has "shown" what substantial and lasting "good" consists of, and where it is to be obtained. He has made known the same unto us in the wondrous and blessed promises of His Word: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit" (1 Cor. 2:9, 10). This is yet another of the many excellencies of the Bible: that its promises set forth the greatest happiness of which we are capable of enjoying. The One who gave us being is alone capable of putting real gladness into the human heart. That gladness comes to us not through the delights of sense, but consists in communion with the One who is the sum of excellence.

The promises of Scripture are the assurances which God has given us that He will bestow the best of blessings, for this life and also for the life to come, on those who seek them in the right spirit and comply with their terms. From the many hundreds which are scattered throughout the Bible we can but single out a few specimens. The sum of them is that the soul of man shall delight itself in God Himself as its everlasting portion. But that is impossible until the guilty conscience has been pacified, and that can only be through the knowledge of His forgiveness of sin. Therefore we begin with the evangelical promises which are addressed unto sinners. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:7). "Come unto Me [Christ] all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28)—peace of conscience, rest of soul, joy of heart. What precious promises are those! They are the promises of Him that cannot lie.

God has solemnly pledged Himself to bestow a free, full and eternal salvation upon every penitent sinner who comes to Him as a beggar and relies upon His Word. Not only to blot out all his iniquities, but to clothe him with the robe of Christ's righteousness, to receive him as a son, and to henceforth supply his every need. He has promised to be "a sun and shield" unto all such, to "give grace and glory," and that "no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Ps. 84:11). The promises of Satan are every one of them lies, those of man unreliable, but every one of God's is infallibly sure. The writer can testify that after forty years of Christian experience, in his travels around this earth, he has never met with a single person who trusted God and found that His promises mocked him. At the close of his long life Joshua said unto Israel, "ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you: all are come to pass unto you" (23:14). So, too, acknowledged Solomon: "Blessed be the Lord that hath given rest unto His people Israel according to all that He promised: there hath not failed one word" (1 Kings 8:56).

"Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee" (Ps. 50:15). That is a promise which every person may test for himself. We can personally bear emphatic witness that many times have we put that word to the proof and never found it wanting; and many, many others, too, can bear witness that the living God is a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God. That is an argument—a well-attested one—which no Infidel can answer. There is no gainsaying the fact that thousands of men and women have called upon God in the day of their trouble and were

miraculously and gloriously delivered by Him. What a monument to God's faithfulness in honoring His promises was raised by George Muller of Bristol, whose 2,000 orphans were daily fed and clothed in answer to believing prayer! In like manner shall everyone who puts his trust in the Divine promises yet receive fulfillment of that most amazing word; "when He [Christ] shall appear, we shall be like Him" (1 John 3:2)—perfectly conformed to His holy image! The Divine promises unmistakably bespeak their Author to be none other than "the God of all grace" (1 Pet. 5:10).

4. Its profundity. There are books in the writer's library which thirty years ago he read with no little pleasure and profit. Some of them he has recently re-read—with mingled disappointment and thankfulness. In the past they were helpful to him: but today they are too elementary to be of service to him. As he outgrew the clothes of childhood, so every minister of the Gospel who continues to pursue his studies assiduously will advance beyond the primers of his theological youth. Yet no matter how intensely nor for how many years he may study God's Word, he will never advance beyond it, either spiritually or intellectually. What a laborious and thankless task would it be to read through the ablest human production twenty times! Yet many who have read through the Bible scores of times have testified that it was more attractive and edifying to them than ever. The deeper any regenerate soul digs into the wondrous contents of the Bible, the more will he discover that it contain a boundless and fathomless ocean of Truth, and an inexhaustible mine of precious treasure.

The Bible treats of the most exalted subjects which can engage the mind of man. It rises above the merely human and temporal, and occupies it readers with God, the unseen world, eternity. Everything is shown to be related to Him whose throne is eternal in the heavens. Human conduct is viewed not so much as it appears unto their performers and fellows, but rather as it appears in the eyes of the Holy One and in the light of the final Day of reckoning. There are many things in Scripture which are above the capacity of man to have devised. Such as a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, the Divine incarnation and virgin birth of Christ, the union of the human nature to a Divine Person, the manner in which the Holy Spirit operates upon souls. A delineation of fallen nature is given such as neither philosophy nor medical science could furnish; the secret workings of the heart are exposed in a manner in which no analysis of the self-styled "psychiatrists" could supply. Parts of human history are chronicled not for the purpose of magnifying man but to show how far the human race has departed from God, and what obstacles stand in the way of recovery to holiness and happiness. Heaven and the everlasting bliss of the redeemed are portrayed not in a manner to gratify curiosity, still less to appeal unto the corruptions of the natural man, but to that place into which nothing that defiles can enter.

The profundity of its teaching appears throughout the pages of the Sacred Volume. The origin of sin, the fall of man, the federal relation of Adam to his posterity, the transmission of his own nature to all his descendants, the consistency of man's freedom with God's sovereignty, his total depravity with his accountability, the justification of a believing sinner by the imputed righteousness of Christ, his union to Him as a member of His mystical body admit of no philosophical explanation. They defy intellectual dissection and cannot be mapped out so as to show their precise points of contact or mode of union with each other. They are not reducible to a system of "common sense," but rather are presented as awful and insoluble mysteries. They possess depths which no man can sound and heights which none can scale. Yet so far from

stumbling the reverent student of the Bible, those very mysteries are just what he expects to find in a book written by the Most High. They are designed to humble the arrogance of man, by a demonstration of his intellectual limitations, and should cause him to exclaim, "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33).

5. Its simplicity. Here is a remarkable phenomenon: that combined with real profundity there is the utmost simplicity. Here again we find the same thing characterizing the Word of God as appears in His works of creation: while there is much that is occult, yet there is much more that is plain and obvious. Though there be hidden prophecies and difficult doctrines, yet on all practical matters and points of duty the Scriptures are so clear that they may be understood by the dullest minds. What is more explicit than the precepts? "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple" (Ps. 19:7). Though there be things in the Bible which are sufficient to confound the proudest efforts of human reason, yet it does not, as to its general tenor, require either genius or erudition to grasp its terms, but is adapted to the level of the unsophisticated. Since its contents are of universal concern, they are presented in language suited to the capacity of all. That which concerns man's temporal well-being and everlasting felicity is written so distinctly that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. Though there be depths which no leviathan can swim, yet the babe in Christ may safely wade in its refreshing streams.

Though the Bible is full of majesty, yet the naked Truth itself is presented in a manner suited to the meanest capacity. God graciously accommodates Himself to our limitations, setting forth His mighty power under such a figure as the baring of His arm, and represents Heaven unto His people as "the Father's house" in which are many mansions. Its very unaffectedness is perfectly suited to the gravity of its Author. Its penmen employed not the "enticing words of man's wisdom," but wrote "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." The Bible is not written in the style of the "classics": there is an entire absence of any appearance of art. Take the four Gospels. Their obvious design is to magnify the Redeemer, yet they never resort to the usual method of elaborate praise. There is a plain statement of His virtuous life, yet no eulogizing of His perfections. His most gracious works are plainly recorded, and no attempt is made to heighten their effect. His wondrous miracles are chronicled as matters of fact, to speak for themselves, no comment being passed upon them, no note of admiration affixed to them. They are sufficient to suitably impress our minds, without any remarks from the narrators. In all of this the candid mind will perceive the signature of Truth, an ungarnished account of events which actually took place.

6. Its impartiality. To fully appreciate this striking feature of the Bible, the reader needs to cast his mind back to the conditions prevailing in society during the centuries when it was written. Women were then the mere chattel of men, slavery was extensively practiced, and with the utmost rigor, while kings reigned with the most despotic sway. Yet the teachings of Holy Writ are without the least bias, requiring obedience to their imperial edicts from all classes alike. So far from being written to keep the oppressed in awe and subjection, rulers and ruled are the subjects of its authoritative commands. Kings and subjects are bound by the same laws, liable to the same punishments, encouraged by the same promises. God's Word declares, "there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:22, 23); while it also announces, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10:13). Such declarations as those were entirely foreign to the spirit and sentiments which

universally prevailed in the day of God's Prophets and Apostles.

The Gospel of Christ is designed for no privileged class, but is to be preached to "every creature" (Mark 16:15). It does not prescribe one way of salvation for the rich and another for the poor: rather does it affirm on the one hand, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" (Mark 10:23), and on the other, "God hath chosen the poor of the world" (James 2:5). There is no toadying to the scholar or sage: "Thou has hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes" (Matthew 11:25). Husbands are bidden to "love their wives as their own bodies" (Eph. 5:28), and masters are enjoined to treat their servants in manner which comports with the fact that they, too, have a Master in Heaven with whom "there is no respect of persons" (Eph. 6:9). No such declaration as the following was ever coined by an impostor: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

7. Its comprehensiveness. God's Word is a compendious and complete Rule of Life, so that we may be "thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:17). Every truth in it is designed to influence our character and conduct. It contains full and explicit instructions for all our relative duties. No case has ever occurred, or ever will, for which adequate provision has not been made in its invaluable treasury. Here are directions suited to any situation in which we may find ourselves. Whether its reader be young or old, male or female, rich or poor, illiterate or learned, he may find that which will supply all his need. That any should read it without receiving any benefit therefrom is due alone to his own vanity or perversity. His duty and his danger are plainly marked out as though it had been written for him alone! Its very fullness proclaims its Author: it is a revelation and communication from the Infinite One. Its contents have supplied material for thousands of books and matter for millions of sermons.

The Bible is more than a book: it is a library. Its history covers a period of 4,000 years. Its prophecies extend to literally dozens of nations. Its teachings respect good and evil, God and man, time and eternity. It makes known how He is to be worshipped acceptably. It informs us how His blessing may be secured upon the home. It reveals its secrets of health and longevity. Here is milk for babes, meat for the strong, medicine for the sick, relief for the weary, consolation for the dying. The particular experience of every believer is so vividly delineated therein that whoever reads it aright may discover, by His grace, his precise state and degree of progress. In the Bible is stored up more true wisdom, which has endured the trials of the centuries, than the sum total of thinking done by men since the day of human history down to the present hour. Of all the books in the world the Bible alone can rightly be said to be comprehensive and complete. It needs no addendum. It has been truly affirmed, "If every book but the Bible were destroyed, not a single spiritual truth would be lost" (Torrey). The comprehensiveness and fullness of the Scriptures is yet another of their innumerable evidences which demonstrate their Divine inspiration.

Chapter 13 – More Unique Characteristics, Part 2

8. Its conciseness. Here is yet another remarkable feature which distinguishes the Bible from other books: though it be the most comprehensive of all, yet the most compact. Though it contains a complete library, having no less than sixty-six books within its covers, yet a small-print copy may be carried in one's pocket. Though there is here an amazing fullness, yet no excessive length. There is an abundance of matter wrapped up in a few words. An epitome of the heavens and earth, an account of the forming of this world into an habitable globe, the creation of its denizens, the making of man, the formation of woman, their state in Paradise, a description of the garden of Eden—are all condensed into two chapters which require but two pages! If "brevity" be "the soul of with," then here is the quintessence of wisdom. A vivid description of the fall of our first parents, how it was brought about, with the effects thereof; to which is subjoined the appearing of the Lord, their arraignment by Him, with their trial, sentence, and expulsion from the garden, are all given within the space of only twenty-four verses! So briefly narrated, yet all-sufficient to answer every purpose for which the revelation of the same is made to us.

Within the space of seven chapters we have the creation and furnishing of the world, the apostasy of our first parents, the birth of Abel and Cain, an account of their worship of God, the murder of the former, and an enumeration of seven generations of the latter—with a description of 10 of the progenitors of Christ. In addition, we find in them an account of the wickedness of men, the announcement of God that He purposed to destroy the earth and the human race; His detailed instructions to Noah for the building of an ark, in which were to be preserved himself, his family, and representatives of all living creatures. Then we have described the coming of the flood, the destruction of the old world, and the salvation of all within the ark! All the wisdom of men could not have expressed and compressed subjects of such vast importance and interests within so brief a compass. Moses himself could not, unless he had been inspired by the Holy Spirit. No book besides the Bible contains so much in so short a space. The brevity of Scripture is beyond imitation. The wisdom of God is most gloriously displayed in revealing so much in language so simple and so succinct. There is nothing within the wide range of human literature which in the least resembles this striking yet little noticed feature.

The unique brevity of Holy Writ only becomes really apparent when we compare the biographies which men have written and the systems of religion which they have drawn up. The Jews have joined to the Scriptures their Talmud, to which they affix equal authority— the one followed by most of their rabbis consists of 12 folio volumes; while the Romanists receive with the same veneration the writings of "the fathers," the decisions of the "councils," the vast accumulations of synod edicts and papal decrees and bulls, and a mass of "traditions" respecting both faith and morals. Who among uninspired historians and narrators would or could have recorded the birth, life, ministry, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ in less than 1,200 lines? Who among them could have related the history of Christianity during the first thirty of its most memorable years within the space of thirty pages? For fullness and brevity, dramatic description yet terseness of language, for outlines of sermons, details of miraculous conversions, intervention of angels, all pictured with a few brief touches, there is nothing comparable to the Acts of the Apostles. What but the Divine Mind

could have comprehended in so small a book as the Bible such an immense store of information and instruction?

9. Its Numerics. As the Creator has been pleased to provide an endless variety in Nature, which appeals to widely different tastes and temperaments both as it respects objects for the eye, sounds for the ear, scents for the nose and flavors for the palate, so He has deigned to supply many different kinds of evidence for the inspiration of His Word, which are suited to all kinds of minds. As one man prefers this dish or flower to that, so one investigator will be more impressed and convinced by a particular line of demonstration than another. It is with that fact in mind we have prepared this material and multiplied their divisions. All of them will not appeal with equal potency and pertinence to the same reader: what strikes one most forcibly may seem not at all interesting to another, while what one finds unimpressive may settle the matter for another. Thus with the argument we are about to expound. Some may deem it fanciful and unsatisfactory, while others will not only find it interesting and instructive, but weighty and conclusive.

Our present argument may be briefly stated thus: as there are innumerable evidences of mathematical design in God's works of creation, we should naturally look for the same in His Word. If the One who "telleth the number of the stars" (Ps. 147:4), who "bringeth out their host by number" (Isa 40:26), who "weigheth the waters by measure" (Job 28:25), should vouchsafe to grant the sons of men a written revelation, it is to be expected that it will bear similar evidences of numerical significance and exactitude. If the heavenly bodies move with such unfailing regularity that an eclipse can be calculated centuries in advance of its occurrence, and if all of our chronometers are set by the motion of the sun, which never varies a fraction of a second, then it is to be anticipated that similar phenomena will appear in the Holy Scriptures. Nor is such an expectation disappointed: rather does it receive abundant confirmation and illustration. Everywhere in the Bible there are to be found the same evidences of a supreme Mathematical Mind as appear to the careful observer in the material realm.

Those marks of mathematical design are seen both in the general and in the particular For example, 12 is the number of rule or government. Thus, the only theocracy or nation immediately governed by God, and in whose midst He set up His throne, comprised 12 tribes; and when Christ established His spiritual kingdom upon earth, He ordained 12 Apostles to be His ambassadors. Now both Scripture and common observation tell us that God has set in the heavens, "two great lights: the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night" (Gen. 1:16). In perfect accord with that fact, day and night alike have 12 hours, each hour consisting of 60 minutes (12 x 5), with 12 months for the year. From the remotest ages of antiquity astronomers have divided the stellar heavens into the "12 signs of the Zodiac"; so, too, the vast circle of the heavens has been divided into 360 degrees or 12 x 30. But why should 12 thus pervade the heavens? Why not 10 or fourteen? Man can give no reason. But Scripture supplies the explanation: "the heavens do rule" (Dan. 4:26), and 12 is the number which stands for that!

The very structure of the Bible evinces numerical design and arrangement. First we have the five books of the Pentateuch, like basal blocks. They are surmounted by the 12 historical books—Joshua to Esther. Next follow the five "poetical"—Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon. Then come the five major Prophets, succeeded by the 12 minor ones. Above these are the five historical books of the New Testament, then the 21 Epistles (by five writers!),

and over all, like a crowning dome, the Apocalypse. It will be seen that five is the number which occurs most frequently, appearing conspicuously at four points: at the beginning of the Old Testament and at the beginning of the New Testament; the other two in the center of the Bible! Nor will the student of Scripture be surprised at this when he discovers that the numerical significance of that number is Divine grace. Hence five is the dominant number in the Tabernacle; and hence too, the five great offerings of Leviticus 1-6. “This mathematical law, pervading the Book, is at least a hint of the mathematical mind of the Author, who reveals the same regard to the symmetry of number and form in the material universe” (The Bible and Spiritual Life, A. T. Pierson).

Before passing from the more general to the particular, let us point out that Bible numerics assure us of the integrity of the Canon of Scripture. How so? The very number of its books intimates the Canon is complete. The Old Testament has in it 39, or 3 x 13, and three is the number of manifestation and 13 of apostasy: its dominant theme being the apostasy of man and of Israel. The New Testament has just 27 books, or the cube of three: 3 x 3 x 3, and three is the number of God and of manifestation—God fully and finally manifested in the incarnate and risen Christ. Now take out a single book, or add one (like "Asher"), and that significance will disappear! But as it is in Nature, so with the Bible: its wonders and perfections, especially in minutiae, are only perceptible to the studious investigator. When examined under the microscope the flakes of snow and even the scales of the herring (as the writer recently saw for himself) are formed and arranged after perfect geometrical patterns. In like manner, the number of times a word or an object is found in the Bible is always in strict harmony with the meaning possessed by that numeral.

As others before us have pointed out, four is the number of the world or earth. The fourth day of Genesis 1 saw the material creation completed—the fifth and sixth being devoted to furnishing and peopling the earth. It is divided into four quarters: north, east, south, west. It has four seasons: spring, summer, autumn and winter. The fourth clause in the Family Prayer is, "Thy will be done on earth." Four Gospels present our Lord’s earthly ministry. Five, which is 4 + 1 (God coming to the aid of the creature), is the number of grace. The fifth day’s work in Genesis 1 illustrates: "life" and "God blessed them" occurring, for the first time. When Joseph signified his peculiar favour unto the beloved Benjamin, "his mess was five times so much" as that of any of his brethren (Gen. 43:34), and while he provided change of raiment for them, he gave "five changes of raiment to Benjamin" (Gen. 45:22). The fifth clause in the Family Prayer is "Give us this day," etc. The 50th year was that of "jubilee." Six is the number of man, for he was made on the sixth day, and see Revelation 13:18. There were six cities of refuge for the manslayer (Num. 35:13). In the Bible there are six words for "man"—four in the Old Testament and two in the New. Our Lord was crucified by men and for men at "the sixth hour"!

Seven, as is well known, is the number of perfection: how exceedingly striking, then, that in Matthew 1:17, the Holy Spirit informs us there were "14 generations" from Abraham to David, 14 from David to the Babylonian captivity, and 14 from the captivity till Christ: or 42 in all. And 42 is 7 x 6: the 42nd generation from Abraham being the perfect Man! Stand in holy awe, my reader, before such Divine handiwork: Eight signifies a new beginning. It was Noah, "the eighth person" (2 Pet. 2:5), who stepped out of the ark onto the earth to begin a new order of things. Circumcision was to be administered on the eighth day (Gen. 17:12). On the eighth day Israel’s priests entered upon their service (Lev. 8:33, and 9:1). On that day the leper was cleansed (Lev.

14:10, 11), and the Nazarite was restored (Num. 6:10). Just eight penmen were employed by God on the New Testament. Thirteen is the number of revolt or apostasy: "Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the 13th year they rebelled" (Gen. 14:4). Note Esther 3:13! In Mark 7:21, 22, our Lord enumerated 13 features of man's apostate heart. The "dragon," the arch-apostate, is mentioned just 13 times in the New Testament. Much of the above has been culled from Numbers in Scripture, by E. W. Bullinger—unobtainable.

The same meaning appears in their multiples. Thus, one of the significations of two is that of witness (John 8:17; Rev. 11:3), and 14 speaks of perfect or complete witness, as in Nehemiah 8:4, the 14 Epistles of Paul. Fifteen (5 x 3) is a manifestation of grace: 2 Kings 20:6; Leviticus 23:6, 34, 39. Ten is the number of responsibility (Gen. 18:22; 24:55; Ex. 34:28), and therefore when Christ graciously fed the multitude and they were required to partake in an orderly manner—"make them sit down by fifties [5 x 10] in a company" (Luke 9:14). Jude is the 26th book (13 x 2) in the New Testament and its obvious theme is apostasy, witnessing unto and against it: verses 4-8, 11-13, 24—a fitting prelude to the Revelation. When the Jews treated Paul as an apostate, they laid upon him "forty stripes save one"—39 or 13 x 3 (2 Cor. 11:24)! Thus, all through the Scripture numbers are not used haphazardly but with design. Not only so, but though they are employed by no less than 40 penmen, yet always with uniform precision; which can only be accounted for on the ground that all were inspired by one and the same Spirit.

10. Its reserve. Had the Bible been of human origin—a fraud passed on upon the world—exactly the opposite had been the case. When human writers take up matters of extraordinary interest they deal with them dramatically rather than prosaically, and in a manner which will appeal to lovers of the sensational. But there is nothing like that in the Scriptures: instead, a holy constraint rests upon its scribes. When secular writers arouse curiosity they endeavour to satisfy it, whereas the sacred penmen lift not a finger to remove the veil from off the mysteries of which they treat. They never draw upon the imagination, nor indulge in that speculation which is so prominent in the authors and disciples of all heathen religions. That can only be accounted for on the ground that the Holy Spirit suppressed their natural proclivities. The Divine inspiration of the Bible appears not only in what is said, but equally in what is not said. Its silences are as eloquent as its speech. No explanation is given of the modus of the three Persons in the Godhead—in marked contrast to the presumptuous reasonings of not a few theologians, who sought to be wise above what is written.

How scanty the information furnished on many things upon which the human heart craves light! In the historical portions men and nations appear abruptly, raising the curtain of oblivion, stepping to the front of the stage for a brief moment, and then disappearing into the unknown. It is full of gaps which human authors would have filled in. How often we wish the Evangelists had been more communicative. Had they been left to their own wisdom, the Gospels had been much fuller and lengthier! No description is given of the bodily appearance of Christ: they say not a word about His stature, complexion, or features. What is yet more remarkable, except for one brief statement concerning Him as a boy of twelve, the first 30 years of our Lord's life are passed over in complete silence, which is very different from the fabled accounts of the Apocryphal writers! There is not the least gratifying of idle curiosity in the Bible, but a noticeable repressing of the same. Nothing is told us of the experiences of the soul—either redeemed or reprobate—immediately after death, and little about the Eternal State. The

Scriptures are not for entertainment, but are given for practical and spiritual ends.

While Holy Writ makes known many facts unto us, it does so no further than they contribute to the design of the Holy Spirit and are for our moral instruction. Very little information is furnished, and sometimes none at all, concerning the amanuenses of God—we do not even know who wrote the books of Ruth and Esther. No account is given of the closing hours of Peter, Paul and John. It is not thus with uninspired historians and biographers! How natural for the Apostle John to have spoken of our Lord's mother in terms of adulation, yet not a word does he utter which affords the least support to the sickly sentimentality and blasphemous idolatry of the Popish Mariolatry. Only once is she mentioned after Christ's ascension, and then at a prayer meeting: not as the object of supplication, but taking her place among brethren and sisters as a supplicant (Acts 1:14)! Frequent mention is made in the Gospels of "the devils" or "demons," yet nowhere are we told anything about who or what they are. There are many matters of which we should welcome information, but the Bible is silent thereon, because such knowledge respected not our duty nor would it have promoted personal piety. But nothing concerning our well-being is omitted. An account is given of how the human race became infected with the virus of sin, but not a word on the origin of evil.

11. Its ingenuousness. Had the historical portions of the Old Testament been a spurious production, how vastly different had been their contents! Each of the books was written by a son of Abraham, yet nowhere do we find his posterity flattered. So far from extolling the virtues of the Jewish nation, it is uniformly portrayed as an ungrateful, rebellious, and sinful people. There is scarcely a book in the Old Testament which does not relate that which is most unfavorable and highly disgraceful to them. Nowhere do we find their bravery eulogized, and never are their victories ascribed either to their valor or military genius. Success is always attributed unto Jehovah, their God. In like manner, their defeats are referred unto Him, as withholding His power because their evil conduct had justly displeased Him. Their defeats are accounted for neither by misfortune nor bad generalship, but to their own wickedness restraining a holy God from showing Himself strong in their behalf. Now such a God is not the creation of the human mind, nor are such historians actuated by the common principles of human nature. Time after time Israel's subjugation by heathen nations is faithfully chronicled.

The Jewish historians have also impartially recorded the numerous backslidings and spiritual declensions of their own people. One of the outstanding truths of the Old Testament is the unity of God, that beside Him there is none else, that all others are false gods, and that the paying of any homage to them is the sin of all sins. Yet the idolatry of Israel is frankly and repeatedly recorded. The guilt of some of their leading men is mentioned, as that of Aaron and Solomon. Nor is there the slightest attempt made to excuse such appalling wickedness: instead, it is openly censured and roundly condemned. Nor do the writers spare themselves or omit that which is to their discredit. Moses concealed not the reflection cast upon his own tribe (Gen. 34:30; 49:5), nor the incest of his parents (Ex. 6:20), or the rebellion of his sister (Num. 12:1). He failed not to set down his own faults and failings, but frankly tells us of his disinclination to respond to Jehovah's call (Ex. 4:10-14), his murmuring against God (Num. 11:11-14), his lack of faith after so many Divine interpositions on his behalf (Num. 10:12), and the Lord's displeasure against him because of his disobedience (Num. 27:12-14). Such unsparing fidelity is found not in those who are left free to follow the bent of their own hearts.

The same unusual feature is found in the New Testament. John the Baptist is presented

as a most eminent personage: miraculously born, the Lord's forerunner, accorded the high honour of baptizing Him. Where had human wisdom and sentiment placed him among the Saviour' s followers? Surely, as the most distinguished and favored of His attendants, set at His right hand. Whereas he was granted no familiar discourse with Him, but was treated with apparent neglect, suffered to be cast into prison through no fault of his own, left there unvisited. See him harassed with unbelief, doubting whether or not He was the true Messiah. Had his character been the invention of fraud, nothing had been said of his lapse of faith. The same shocking unbelief is recorded of the Apostles, who not only basely deserted Christ in the hour of His crisis, but had no expectation of His rising from the dead—nay, when informed that He had done so, were full of skepticism. A spurious history had omitted such glaring blemishes. But the Bible characters are painted in the colors of truth and nature, and in the unrivalled honesty of its penmen we have yet another evidence that they wrote by Divine inspiration and not by natural impulse.

12. Its majestic tone. If God is the Author of the Bible we should naturally expect to find in it a loftiness of tone and majesty of diction which surpasses all human productions. And such is indeed the case, especially in those portions of it which more especially treat of the Divine perfections. Amidst great plainness of speech and homeliness of expression, adapted to that meanest capacity, there is often an elevation of spirit and grandeur of language which not only command attention but fill with reverent awe. Thus, "Hear O heavens, and give ear O earth, for the LORD hath spoken" (Isa. 1:2). "The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble" (Ps. 99:1). It would be the height of presumption for any creature to speak thus, yet perfectly fitting for the Almighty to do so. When the Son of God became incarnate, the people who heard Him declared that, "He taught with authority, and not as the scribes" (Matthew 7:29), and the very officers sent to arrest Him testified, "never man spake like this Man" (John 7:46). The same qualities mark God's written Word. It possesses a sovereign majesty which is unrivalled and inimitable.

Though the contents of the Bible are not presented pompously or bombastically, but calmly and with becoming dignity, there is yet an unmistakable elevation of style and an august solemnity of diction which is without parallel. God speaks therein and reveals the glory of His excellence. His supremacy, His omniscience, His holiness, His immutability, His faithfulness, His goodness and grace, are set forth in a manner worthy of Himself, yet at the same time admirably suited to our weakness. The most laborious efforts of scholars and rhetoricians are insipid in comparison with those passages which are particularly designed to convey to us due apprehensions of the One with whom we have to do. "He sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in" (Isa. 40:22). Yet, "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young" (Isa. 40:11).

We adduce but one other specimen. "O LORD my God, Thou art very great; Thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain: Who layeth the beams of His chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds His chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind: Who maketh His angels spirits; His ministers a flaming fire: Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed forever. Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains. At Thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of Thy thunder they hasted away"

(Ps. 104:1-7). Where shall we fine in human compositions anything as chaste, so elevated, so sublime!

13. Its undesigned coincidences. Infidel challengers of the Scriptures and deniers of their Divine inspiration have shown some industry and ingenuity in gathering together apparent contradictions between different statements in the Bible. But such alleged contradictions are only apparent, and betray the ignorance and misapprehension of those who urge them. The men who present them are merely retailing old trivial objections, which have been refuted again and again. On the other hand, those who undertake the defense of the Bible may appeal to innumerable proofs not only of its general harmony but also of its detailed consistency and verbal precision. The veracity of Holy Writ is demonstrated by hundreds of undesigned coincidences in them, or the uncollaborated agreement of one part with another. Though the Bible has in it 66 books, written by 40 penmen, covering so many generations of the world, relating to widely different states of society, containing such a variety of matter upon so many different subjects, and abounding in supernatural incidents, yet it exhibits concord in all its parts, which becomes increasingly evident the more closely it is examined. Their consonance without collusion is too uniform to be accidental, and too incidental to have been mutually planned.

That which gives greater force to this argument is its self-evident feature that the perfect agreement of all its writers is undesigned on their part. The closer their productions be scanned, the more is it manifest that their perfect unity was not studied but casual. This line of argument was developed at considerable length by Paley and later by J. I. Blunt, who fully evinced the minute agreement and yet unpremeditated concurrence of one writer with another. The value of such evidence cannot be overestimated. As Professor Blunt pointed out, "It does not require many circumstantial coincidences to determine the mind of a Jury as to the credibility of a witness in our courts even when the life of a fellow creature is at stake." When independent narrators describe an incident in detail and there is no discrepancy but perfect accord between their several accounts, we logically conclude that they have related actual occurrences—the more so when there is no indication of conference or contrivance. We shall now condense a number of examples from those authors.

After Joseph's brethren had cast him into the pit, we are told that, "they lifted up their eyes and looked, and behold a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead, with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt" (Gen. 37:25). Now this, by no means an obvious incident to have suggested itself, does appear to be a very natural one to have occurred. But what is more to our point, it tallies exactly with what we read of elsewhere, yet in a passage which has no reference whatever to the one just cited, namely, "Joseph commanded the physicians to embalm his father... and the Egyptians mourned three score and ten days" (Gen. 50:2, 3). It was the practice of the Egyptians to embalm their dead, and hence the Ishmeelites would find a ready market in Egypt for their spices! Again—when during the famine, Joseph possessed himself on the king's account of all the land of Egypt, "he did not buy the land of the priests" (Gen. 47:22)—as a specially favored class, they were exempted. In perfect accord is the fact that the final mark of the king's regard for Joseph was his giving him to wife, "the daughter of Potipherah the priest" (Gen. 41:45)—showing that the priests were held in peculiar esteem by their monarch.

"Moses gave. . . two wagons and four oxen unto the sons of Gershon, according to their service; and four wagons and eight oxen to the sons of Merari" (Num. 7:7, 8). Why twice as

many to the one as to the other? No reason is expressly stated, yet if we turn to an earlier chapter—separated by sundry details on other matters—we discover for ourselves a satisfactory explanation: the sons of Gershon carried the lighter part of the tabernacle furniture (Num. 4:25), those of Merari the heavier (Num. 4:32, 33). Does cunning contrivance or truth lie behind that? "But he [Israel's king] shall not multiply horses to himself' (Deut. 7:16). The governors of Israel rode on "white asses (Judges 5:10, and cf. Joshua 15:18; 1 Sam. 25:23), and it was the asses and not the horses of Kish which were lost (1 Sam. 9:3). News of Absalom's death was brought to David by runners on foot (2 Sam. 18:21-23). Thus it appears quite incidentally in the history of Israel that for several centuries they had no horses—a coincidence of reality which had never occurred in a fiction.

When praising the Lord for deliverance from their enemies, Deborah mentioned there was not "a shield or spear" among the Israelites (Judg. 5:8). Strange though that be, it fully accords with several other details found in that book. Ehud "made him a dagger" (3:16), Shamgar slew the Philistines "with an ox goad" (3:31), Jael had to improvise and use a tent pen, (4:21), Samson searched in vain for a weapon till he "found a new jawbone of an ass" (15:15). Yet more remarkable was Gideon's victory over the Midianites with trumpets and broken pitchers, with their satirical cry of faith "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon" (7:15-22). No explanation is furnished by the writer of Judges, nor does he link together those incidents. But when we turn to 1 Samuel 13:19-22, they are fully accounted for, for there we are told that when the Philistines subdued Israel they suffered "no smith throughout the land"! Those who are qualified to weigh evidence will perceive in such "undesigned coincidences" the marks of truth—the more convincing since our attention is not directly called to them.

"Goliath of Gath" (1 Sam. 17: 4). Let us mark the value of that casual mention of the giant's town—a detail of such little importance that its insertion or omission apparently mattered nothing. In Numbers 13:32, 33, we are informed that, "the sons of Anak were men of great stature." Later, that Joshua "cut off the Anakim from the mountains and utterly destroyed their cities," but a few remained "in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod" (Josh. 11:22). Thus 1 Samuel 17:4 is found to square with those independent statements in Numbers and Joshua—in the mouth of those three witnesses the veracity of history being established! In 1 Samuel 22:3, 4, David trusted his father and mother to the protection of the Moabites. Why he made such a strange and dangerous choice we are not told. Had not the book of Ruth come down to us, the mystery had been left unexplained, but there we learn that the grandmother of David's father was "a Moabitess" (Ruth 4:17), and thus the propriety of his selection of their place of refuge appears—yet only by comparing the two books together is the circumstance accounted for.

The undesignedness of many passages in the Gospels is overlooked in our familiar acquaintance with them. For instance, why were the sick brought to Jesus "when the even was come" (Matthew 8:16)? From the parallel passages, (Mark 1:21; Luke 4:31) we learn that the transaction took place on the Sabbath—which ended at sunset (Lev. 23:32). Then from Matthew 12:10—an entirely independent passage—we discover there was a superstition among the Jews that, "it was not lawful to heal on the Sabbath day." No explanation is given in Matthew 8:16, and had it not been for the accounts of Mark and Luke we had not known it was "the Sabbath"! How came it to pass that Peter, a stranger, who had entered the house in the night, and under circumstances of some disorder, was identified by the maid in the porch (Matthew 26:71)? John 18:16, tells us: he had stood there with John until "her that kept the door" admitted them—one

Gospel minutely confirming the other.

The Bible, my reader, consists of no cunningly devised fables, but authentic records of momentous events. They court examination and will sustain the most diligent scrutiny, evidencing themselves to be eminently trustworthy and faithful accounts of actual happenings. While they relay much that is extraordinary, miracles many and mighty, yet confidence in the historicity is established by the numerous marks of reality, consistency, and accuracy which the ordinary matters of fact combined with them constantly exhibit. The exact agreement between incidental statements in widely separated parts of the Bible argues the truthfulness of each of them. The closer we check one narrative with another the more does the veracity of the writers appear. Thus, when I find Paul affirming that from "a child" Timothy had "known the Scripture" (2 Tim. 3:1 5)—which necessarily implies at least one Jewish parent—and then discover his mother was "a Jewess" (Acts 16:1), I am compelled by the very obliquity of such a statement to accept it as inerrent.

14. Its dispassionate poise. In all the historical narratives of Old and New Testaments alike there is a most noticeable absence of any expression of feeling on the part of those who penned them. One and all maintain candor and calmness when chronicling the most pathetic or the most atrocious incidents. There is no trace anywhere of their own delight or anger—not a single outburst of that personal bitterness and rancor which so often mar the writings of uninspired men. Instead, we behold a mild equanimity and quiet dignity breathing throughout the sacred pages. Thus, when the fall of our first parents, with all its disastrous consequences, is recorded, it is with out any reflections of the scribe annexed thereto. The murder of Abel is related, but no recriminations are cast upon Cain. Even when informing us there was "no room in the inn" for Joseph and Mary, and that the newly born Saviour was perforce laid in a manger, the evangelist indulges in no cutting invectives upon those who so grievously insulted the Son of God.

When another evangelist records the ferocious and wicked attempt of Herod upon the life of the infant Saviour by ordering all the children in Bethlehem under the age of two to be slain, he voices no horrified denunciation at such brutality; and when he relates how the legal parents of Christ had to flee into Egypt in order to escape from the murderous designs of that king, he pronounces no railing accusation upon him, such as an ordinary writer had deemed fit. Another of them tells us of the tetrarch of Galilee vilely yielding to the demand of a dancing girl that the head of John the Baptist be brought to her on a platter, but refrains from all aspersion upon the woman's baseness and the weakness and wickedness of his consenting to the murder of our Lord's forerunner—and with unparalleled honesty states that, "the king was exceeding sorry" (Mark 6:26). It was not that the evangelists were devoid of feeling, but that they were so completely under the control of the One who moved them to write that their natural passions were wholly subdued.

Still more remarkable is the entire absence of any reproaches from the evangelists upon the glaring injustice of the judges of the Redeemer, the horrid indignities to which He was subjected during His last hours, and the blasphemous taunts hurled at Him as He hung upon the tree. Their temperate and unvarnished description of Christ's trial and crucifixion is without parallel. Instead of indignantly upbraiding Caiaphas and Pilate, instead of hot strictures upon the hypocritical priests and Pharisees, instead of strong declamations of the brutal soldiers—there is nothing but the calm discharge of their task as sacred historians. How entirely different

from the temper and tone of the ordinary biographer when recounting the injuries of those he loves or highly esteems! So, too, in the accounts of our Lord's resurrection—what an opportunity did that unique event afford the evangelists to break forth in accents of admiration! What an occasion was it for extolling the powers of their triumphant Redeemer! Instead, there is only a brief account of the bare facts of the case. Surely it is patent that such moderation and sobriety can only be accounted for on the ground that the Holy Spirit fully controlled them, that as the amanuenses of God they wrote not by natural impulse, but by Divine inspiration!

15. Its amazing anticipations. A few words need to be said upon the scientific reliability of the Bible. First, there is not a word which clashes with any known fact discovered since it was written. Therein it differs radically from the Shafter of the Hindus (which affirms the moon to be 50,000 leagues higher than the sun!), the Koran of Mahomet (which teaches the mountains were created "to prevent the earth from moving"!), the statement of Pope Zanchary (which denied the antipodes), or the blunders which the latest generation of scientists find in the writings of their immediate predecessors. Second, the Bible makes known "secrets of Nature" of which all contemporary writings were totally ignorant. Space permits of but few illustrations to show that the Bible has always been far in advance of "science."

There is not a little recorded in Holy Writ of which the ancients knew nothing, but which was verified long afterwards. For example: "Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, Pleiades, and the chambers of the south" (Job 9:9): centuries after that was said the southern hemisphere was unknown! "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing" (Job 26:7): sustaining it in space without any material support, kept in position by the center of gravity. As Dr. Leathers (King's College London) pointed out, "Job, more than 3,000 years ago, described in the language of scientific accuracy the condition of our globe." "Or ever the silver cord [the spinal column] be loosed, or the golden bowl [the skull] be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel be broken in the cistern" (Eccl. 12:6). The lungs take in and pour out air as a pitcher does water. The heart is "the wheel" on which the pitcher is brought up from the cistern: one of its lobes receives blood from the veins, the other lobe casts it out again, pulsing it through the arteries. Therein the circulation of the blood was figuratively described long before Hervey discovered it!

Any good encyclopedia will inform its readers that in the 17th century AD., Sir Isaac Newton discovered the "law" of the circular motion of the wind; yet long before, Solomon had declared, "The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again to his circuits" (Eccl. 1:6). It will likewise attribute to Newton the discovery of "the law of evaporation," yet the Bible had previously made known, "He causeth vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth" (Ps. 135:7). One would think from man's writings that the scientists had invented these things! But many centuries before coal was first mined, Job declared, "As for the earth out of it cometh bread, and under it is turned up as it were fire" (28:5): combustible material which provides the most suitable fuel for the furnace. Millenniums before Henry Ford was born, Nahum. (2:4) foretold, "The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall justle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings"!

In Genesis 15:5, God said to Abraham, "Look now toward Heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them," while in Jeremiah 33:22, we read, "the host of Heaven cannot be numbered." When those verses were penned, none on earth had the least idea there was a

countless number of stars. Ptolemy made a catalogue of the whole sphere of the heavens and made them to be but three thousand and fifty! But when Galileo turned his telescope on the heavens, he discovered there were many more than had been seen by the naked eye; when Lord Roosse used his great reflector, he found they were to be numbered by the millions; and when Hershel examined the "milky way," he learned it was composed of countless myriads! How came it that Moses and Jeremiah used expressions so far in advance of the knowledge of their day, unless guided by Omniscience? "Thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man shall be revealed: in that day. . . he that is in the field . . . in that night there shall be two in bed, the one shall be taken and the other left" (Luke 17:30-35). How strikingly accurate: day on one side of the earth, night on the other!—a fact quite unknown in Luke's time!

16. Its ineffable purity. This appears relatively, by comparing the Bible with other writings, for it far excels all human codes of law in its injunctions, prohibitions, and motives as the light of a sunny day does that of a foggy one. It is equally evident when considered absolutely in itself as no other book, the turpitude and horrid nature of sin as "that abominable thing" which God hates (Jer. 44:4), and which we are to detest and shun. It never gives the least indulgence or dispensation to sin, nor do any of its teachings lead to licentiousness. It sternly condemns sin in all its forms, and makes known the awful curse and wrath of God which are its due. It not only reproves sin in the outward lives of men, but discovers the secret faults of the heart, which is its chief seat. It warns against its first motions, and legislates for the regulating of our spirits, requiring us to keep clean the fountain from which are the issues of life (Prov. 4:23). Its promises are made unto holiness, and its blessings bestowed upon the pure in heart. The ineffable and exalted holiness of the Bible is its chief and peculiar excellence, as it is also the principal reason why it is disliked by the majority of the unregenerate.

The Bible forbids all impure desires and unjust thoughts, as well as deeds. It prohibits envy (Prov. 23:17), and all forms of selfishness (Rom. 15:1). It requires us to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, to perfect holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1), and bids us "abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:22)—injunctions which are quite foreign to the "moralists" of the ancients! Heavenly doctrine is to be matched with heavenly character and conduct. Its requirements penetrate into the innermost recesses of the soul, exposing and censuring all the corruptions found there. The law of man goes no farther than "thou shalt not steal," but that of God, "thou shalt not covet." The law of man prohibits the act of adultery, that of God reprehends the looking upon a woman to lust after her (Matt. 5:28). The law of man says, "thou shalt not murder," that of God forbids all ill-will, malice or hatred (1 John 3:15). It strikes directly at that which fallen nature most cherishes and craves:

"Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you" (Luke 6:26)— a denunciation of no human invention! It prohibits the spirit of revenge, enjoins the forgiveness of injuries, and, contrary to the self-righteousness of our hearts, inculcates humility.

Though we have now set forth no fewer than thirty separate lines of evidence for the Divine Authorship of the Scriptures, we are far from having exhausted the subject. We might have shown that the Divine inspiration of the Bible is attested by its miraculous preservation through the centuries, its unrivalled influence upon humanity, its perennial freshness, its inexhaustible fullness, its marvelous unity, its verification in Christian experience—but we have previously written thereon. Separate sections could have been devoted to the setting forth of its minute accuracy, its pride-abasing contents, its inculcation of altruism, its power to search the

conscience, its intense realism– dealing not with theorizing and idealizing, but the actualities of life, its utter unworldliness, its sanctifying tendency, its teaching on Providence–but we hesitate lest the reader be wearied, and because young preachers should now be able to work them out for themselves.

PART THREE – GOD'S SUBJECTIVE REVELATION

Chapter 14 – In the Soul

We would be woefully unfaithful to our calling and fail lamentably in the exercise of our present task did we not here issue a plain and solemn warning—one which we beg each reader, and especially the young preacher to seriously take to heart, namely that something more than an intellectual belief in the existence of God and the inspiration of His Word is necessary to the soul's recovery. There are multitudes now in Hell who lived and died in the firm belief that God is and that the Bible is a communication from Himself unto the children of men. It is one thing for the mind to be assured that creation must have a Divine Creator, and quite another for the heart to be yielded up to Him. There is a radical difference between mental assent to the evidences of God's existence, and a wholehearted consent to take Him as my God—my only Lord, my chief Good, my supreme End—subject to Him, delighting in Him, seeking His glory. So too with His Word. It is one thing to be thoroughly persuaded of the uniqueness and excellence of its contents, yet it is quite another to submit to its authority and be regulated by its precepts. One may greatly admire the plan of redemption revealed therein, and yet have no acquaintance with its saving power!

The evidence we have presented for the existence of God and the arguments produced in demonstration of the Divine Authorship of the Bible, are amply sufficient for that purpose, yet they are incapable of regenerating a single person or of producing saving faith in anyone. Though they be such as no Infidel can refute, though they thoroughly expose the utter irrationality of skepticism—they will not be effectual in bringing one soul from spiritual death unto spiritual life. They are indeed sufficient to intellectually convince anyone who will impartially weigh the same, but they are unable to accomplish a spiritual transformation in the soul. Though they are strong enough to produce an historical faith, they are not strong enough to work saving faith. Something more is necessary for that. However desirable and valuable be a mental assent to the Bible's being the Word of God, we must not rest satisfied therewith. There is a vital difference between perceiving the transcendence of its teaching, its immeasurable superiority to all the writings of men, and having a personal experience in our own soul of its sanctifying virtue. That can be acquired by no study or pains on our part, nor can it be imparted by the ablest reasoner or most searching preacher.

In the introductory chapter we stated that after treating of the manifestations which God has made of Himself in creation, in the moral nature of man, in His shaping of human history, in His incarnate Son and in the sacred Scriptures, we would consider that saving revelation which He makes of Himself in the souls of His people. In each of the others, it was an objective revelation of God which engaged our attention; but we now concern ourselves with a subjective or inward revelation of Himself. This is a much more difficult branch of our subject, and one which requires to be handled with great care and reverence; yet it is the most vital of all so far as the eternal interests of the soul are concerned, and therefore one which it behooves each of us to give our best attention unto. There are few duties to which professing Christians are so reluctant to apply themselves—they would not think of crossing a river in a boat with an insecure and leaky bottom, and yet will venture into the ocean of eternity on an untested (and, most probably, unsound) faith. All around us are those who mistake a theoretical knowledge of the Gospel for a saving acquaintance therewith.

There is a vast difference between being firmly persuaded that God is, and knowing God for myself, so as to have access to Him, communion with Him, delight in Him. Such a knowledge of Him cannot be obtained by any efforts on our part. It is impossible for a man by any exercise of his rational and reasoning powers—by acquired knowledge in the arts and sciences, by philosophy or astronomy—to attain to the least spiritual knowledge of God. The existence of God may be known, His works seen and admired, His Word read and stored up in the mind, and yet without any true and saving knowledge of the Triune Jehovah. No human study or learning can impart to us one spiritual idea of God and His Christ, or convey the slightest acquaintance with Him. The reader of these lines may acknowledge God, confess Him to be sovereign, holy, just and good, and yet be entirely ignorant of Him to any good purpose. An infinite Being cannot be cognized by finite reason. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" (Job 11:7). We may indeed say of His wondrous works, "Lo these are parts of His ways," yet after the most exhaustive investigation and examination of them we are obliged to add, "but how little a portion is heard of Him" (Job 26:14).

God can only be known as He is supernaturally revealed to the heart by the Spirit through the Word. None can be brought to a spiritual and saving knowledge of God apart from Divine illumination and communication. Hear what Christ Himself declared on the subject: "neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomever the Son will reveal Him" (Matthew 11:27). They may entertain correct opinions of Him, have Scriptural ideas of Him in their brains, but know Him they do not and cannot, unless Christ, by His Spirit, make Him manifest to the soul. To the Jews He averred, "It is My Father that honoureth Me: of whom ye say that He is your God Yet ye have not known Him" (John 8:54, 55). So it is today, with the vast majority of preachers and professing Christians: they mistake a notional knowledge of God for an experiential acquaintance with Him. The Lord Jesus said, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes" (Matthew 11:25). "Unto babes,"—unto those whom Divine grace has made simple and teachable, little in their own eyes, conscious of their ignorance, and who cling to Him in their dependence.

When Peter owned the Saviour as, "The Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus answered, "Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in Heaven" (Mart. 16:17). Peter had long been in possession of the Old Testament, yet despite its prophecies so manifestly fulfilled in and by the Lord Jesus, it was not sufficient of itself to produce in Peter a saving conviction that Jesus was the Messiah. Nor were His wondrous miracles enough to bring spiritual assurance to Peter's heart—they did not even to the multitudes who witnessed them!

Nor is the Word of God, even in its unadulterated purity, adequate of itself to save souls. This too was unmistakably and solemnly demonstrated by the preaching of Christ: the great majority of those who listened to Him remained unaffected, or else had their native enmity against Him fanned into a flame. Nothing external to man can impart to him a saving knowledge of God or His Christ. There must be a supernatural application of the Truth made unto the heart by the special power of God before it can be spiritually apprehended.

Not without good reason did the most favored of the Old Testament Prophets exclaim, "Who bath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?" (Isa. 53:l)—the second question answering the former. That evangelical Prophet, like most of God's servants in

all ages, had many Gospel hearers, but few in whose hearts a supernatural work of Divine grace was wrought. The "arm of the LORD" is a figurative expression for His invincible power (Ps. 136:12). The Lord, in His conquering might, is revealed subjectively by inward manifestation, with life and efficacy in the soul. In 1 Corinthians 2:4, the same expression is termed, "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Where there is not that powerful work of the Spirit in the heart, there is no genuine conversion. In order to do that, something more than faithful preaching is necessary: there must be a distinct, personal, peculiar, immediate, miraculous and effectual work of the Spirit: "a certain woman named Lydia... whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto [took unto her] the things which were spoken of Paul" (Acts 16:14).

"You may listen to the preacher,
God's own Truth be clearly shown:
But you need a greater Teacher
From the everlasting Throne.
Application is the work of God alone."

The most fearful and fatal delusion now so prevalent in most sections of so-called "evangelical" Christendom is that a saving belief in Christ lies within the power of the natural man, that by performing what is naively termed "a simple act of faith," he becomes a new creature. That is to make the sinner the beginner of his own salvation! He takes "the first step," and God does the rest; he believes, and then God renews him—which is a blatant denial of the imperative necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit. The fact is, if there is one time more than another when a man is absolutely dependent upon the Spirit's power, it is at the beginning, for the most formidable difficulty lies there. To savingly believe in Christ is a supernatural act and is the direct product of a supernatural work of grace in the soul. Fallen and depraved man has no more power to come to Christ evangelically than he has merit of his own to entitle him to God's favour. He is as completely dependent on the Spirit's gracious operation within him as he is upon Christ's worthiness without him. Fallen man is spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1), and a dead soul cannot "co-operate," any more than a physical corpse can with an undertaker.

"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14). The "things Of the Spirit" signify contents of the Word of Truth, for they were penned under His immediate inspiration. The "natural man" is man in his fallen and unrenewed state while the sinner remains unregenerate, he "receiveth not" either the Divine Law or the Gospel. That requires a word of explication: the natural man can, and often does, receive the things of the Spirit in the letter of them as so many propositions or statements, but he cannot apprehend them as does one who has been made the subject of a miracle of grace. They are "foolishness"—absurd, unattractive, distasteful to him. Yea, he "cannot know them"— he is disqualified to perceive their verity and value; "because they are spiritually discerned," and spiritual discernment he has none. The sinner has to be transformed from a natural into a spiritual man before he has any spiritual perception. "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Only in God's light can we see light (Ps. 3 6:9), and in order to do that, we must be brought out of that darkness in which sin has enveloped the soul.

The natural man, by reading and hearing, is competent to receive the things of God in their grammatical sense and to acquire an accurate mental notion of them, but is quite

incapable of receiving a spiritual image of them in his understanding, of taking them into his affections, of cordially accepting them with his will. They are neither discerned by him in their Divine majesty and glory, delighted in by him, nor obeyed. The things of the Spirit are not only addressed to the intellect as true, but to the conscience as obligatory, to the affections as good and lovely, to the will to be yielded unto. The unregenerate are entirely unable to recognize by an inward experience their surpassing weight and worth. They may indeed receive the Truth of God into their brains, but they never receive "the love of the Truth" (2 Thess. 2:10) in their affections. The natural man is insensible alike to the authority and the excellence of the things of the Spirit of God, because his whole inward state is antagonistic to them. There must be congeniality between the perceiver and the thing perceived: only the pure in heart can see God. We not only need the Spirit objectively to reveal unto us the things of God, but He must make us subjectively spiritual men before we can receive them into our hearts.

As the eye is fashioned to take in sights, and the ear, sounds—as the faculties of the mind are fitted to think, reason, and retain concepts, so God must make the heart of fallen man suitable unto spiritual things ere he can receive them. There must be a correspondence between the object apprehended and the subject apprehending, as there is between the qualities of matter and the senses of the body which cognize them. As I cannot truly appreciate in oratorio—no matter how acute my hearing—unless I have a musical ear and refined taste, neither can I delight in spiritual things until I be made spiritual. Between God and fallen man there is no living relation, no agreement. The "beauty of holiness" cannot be perceived by one who is in love with and blinded by sin. There is no harmony between the sinner's spirit and the Holy Spirit. No matter how simply and clearly the things of God be set before the natural man, nor how logically and accurately he may reason about them, he cannot receive them in their actuality and spirituality, for he has no spiritual sight to discern their wisdom and goodness, no taste to relish their loveliness and sweetness, no capacity to take in their desirability and glory.

"The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not" (John 1:5). Though "the Light of the world" stood before them, they saw in Him no beauty that they should desire Him. Something more than an external revelation of Him is necessary, even such as that described in: "For God who [in the beginning] commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6). The unregenerate have their "understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Eph. 4:18), and they have no more ability or power of their own to dispel the same than had the deep to dissipate the darkness which abode upon it (Gen. 1:2). In the darkness of a heart which, in its native condition, is a chamber of spiritual death, God shines with a light that is none other than Himself. The One who is light irradiates the benighted soul, and in His light it now sees the fullness of truth and grace shining in the face of Jesus Christ. By sovereign fiat and miraculous power the soul is now enabled to discern the glory of the Divine perfections manifested in and through the Redeemer.

For several generations past there has been a woeful ignoring of what has been pointed out above. There has been little recognition of the fact, and still less acknowledgment of it, that all which the Father has purposed and contrived, all that the Son has done and suffered for the redemption of His people, is unavailable and ineffective to their souls until the Holy Spirit applies the same. The inestimable blessings of the Father's love, through the Son's mediation,

are only brought home to the souls of the elect by the testimony, power and operations of the Spirit. But during the last century, the majority of "evangelists" displayed a zeal which was not according to knowledge. In their efforts to show the simplicity of "the way of salvation," they ignored the difficulties of salvation (Luke 18:24; 1 Pet. 4:18); and in their pressing the responsibility of men to believe, repudiated the fact that none can do so savingly until the Spirit imparts faith. One of His titles is "the Spirit of faith" (2 Cor. 4:13), because He is the Author and Communicator of it. Faith is "the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8): not offered for man ‘s acceptance, but actually bestowed: "the faith of the operation [not of man’s will, but] of God" (Col. 2: 12)—"who by Him do believe in God" (1 Pet. 1:21).

The work of the Spirit in the heart is as indispensable as was the work of Christ on the Cross. The necessity for the Spirit’s inward and effective operations are from the darkness, depravity and spiritual emptiness of fallen human nature. He alone can discover to us our dire need of Christ, convict us of our lost and ruined condition, create within us a hatred and horror of sin, bring us to consent to Christ’s sceptre, and make us willing in the day of His power to take Christ’s yoke upon us. By nature we are totally averse to holiness, and from birth have been accustomed to doing evil only. It is impossible for us to take into the arms of our affection a holy Christ until the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus first takes hold of us. Moreover, there is a transcendency in spiritual things which far exceeds the highest flight of natural reason. Nature stands in need of grace in order for the heart to be rightly disposed to receive the things of God, and no human culture or education can effect that. A Gospel which comes to us from Heaven can only be savingly known by an inward revelation from Heaven. The Gospel is a revelation of Divine grace, such as had never entered the heart of man to conceive, still less is it capable of comprehending it—their Author must apply it to the heart.

The Gospel consists of supernatural truth and it can only be perceived in a supernatural light. True, an unregenerate person may acquire a theoretical concept and notional knowledge of the Gospel, but that is a radically different thing from a spiritual and experimental knowledge thereof: the latter is possible only by the effectual application of the Spirit. The natural man lacks both will and power to turn unto Christ. Do some of our readers regard that as "dangerous teaching"? Then we would remind them of the words of the Lord Jesus, "No man can come to Me, except the Father who hath sent Me draw him" (John 6:44). We who are "darkness" by nature must be made "light in the Lord" (Eph. 5:8) ere we can enjoy the light of the Lord. As we cannot see the sun in the heavens but in its own light, neither can we see the Sun of righteousness but by the beams of His sacred illumination. "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me" (Gal. 1:15, 16). There Paul gives us an account of his conversion, ascribing it wholly unto God: unto His foreordination, His effectual call, His miraculous and inward illumination by the Spirit.

The Holy Scriptures, which are inspired of God, contain a clear and full revelation of His will concerning our faith and practice. They are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus, and having done so, by them the man of God is "thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:15-17). Great things are ascribed to those Scriptures and the most blessed effects are declared to be produced by them. "The Law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes" (Ps. 19:7, 8). In all ages the child of God has acknowledged, "Thy Word

is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105). All of the Christian's peace and joy, assurance and expectation, proceeds from the knowledge which he has of the love and grace of God as declared in His Word. Nevertheless, it remains that the operations of the Holy Spirit within our souls are imperative and indispensable: the Gospel needs to come to us—not only at first, but throughout our Christian lives—"not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Spirit" (1 Thess. 1:5). Our reception of the Truth is due alone to the interposition and secret workings of an Almighty power in our hearts, making it effectual to our conviction, conversion and consolation.

Chapter 15 – Is Essential

Our urgent need for something more than an external revelation from God, even though it be a written communication from Him, inspired and inerrant, was intimated in our last chapter in a general way. Now to be more specific. Our need of an immediate and inward discovery of God in the soul, or for a supernatural work of grace to be wrought in the heart in order to fit us for a saving knowledge of Him and the receiving of His Truth, arises from the power which sin has upon man. Sin has such a hold upon the affections of the unregenerate that no human arguments or persuasions can divorce their heart from it. Sin is born and bred in man (Ps. 51:5), so that it is as natural for fallen man to sin as it is for him to breathe. Its power over him is constantly increased by long-continued custom, so that he can no more do that which is good than the Ethiopian can change his skin (Jer. 13:23). It is his delight: "It is sport to a fool to do mischief (Prov. 10:23). Sinners have no other pleasure in this world than to gratify their lusts, and therefore they have no desire to mortify them. It has such a maddening effect upon them that, "their hearts are fully set in them to do evil" (Eccl. 8:11). Nothing but the might of God can change the bent of man's nature and the inclination of his will.

The impossibility of a sinner's coming to Christ without an effectual call from God, or His quickening application of the Word to his heart, appear again from the strong opposition of fallen man. "Three things must be wrought upon a man before he can come to Christ. His blind understanding must be enlightened, his hard and rocky heart must be broken and melted, his stiff, fixed, and obstinate will must be conquered and subdued—but all these are effects of supernatural power. The illumination of the mind is the peculiar work of God (2 Cor. 4:6). The breaking and melting of the heart is the Lord's own work: it is He that gives repentance (Acts 5:31). It is the Lord that takes away the heart of stone, and gives an heart of flesh (Ezek. 36:26); it is He that pours out the spirit of contrition upon man (Zech. 12:10). The change of the natural bent and inclination of the will is the Lord's sole prerogative (Phil. 2:13)" (John Flavell). None but the Almighty can free sin's slaves or deliver Satan's captives. It is a work of infinite power to impart grace to graceless souls, to make those who are carnal and worldly to become spiritual and heavenly. The call of God is to holiness (1 Thess. 4:7), and nothing but omnipotence can make the unholy respond thereto.

The same must be said of the nature of that faith by which the soul comes to Christ. Everything in faith is supernatural. Its implantation is so (John 1:12, 13). "It is a flower that grows not in the field of nature. As the tree cannot grow without a root, neither can a man believe (savingly) without the new nature, whereof the principle of believing is a part" (Thomas Boston). No vital act of faith can be exercised by any man until a vital principle has been communicated to him. The objects of faith are supernatural—Divine, heavenly, spiritual, eternal, invisible—and such cannot be apprehended by fallen man: his line is far too short to reach to them. The tasks allotted faith lie not within the compass of mere nature—to deny self, to prefer Christ before the dearest relations of flesh and blood, to adopt His Cross as the principle of our lives, to cut off the right hand and pluck out right-eye sins—are contrary to all the dictates of natural sense and reason. The victories of faith bespeak it to be supernatural: it overcomes the strongest oppositions from without (Heb. 11:33, 34), purges the most deep-seated corruptions within (Acts 15:9), and resists the most charming allurements of a bewitching world (1 John

5:4). Nothing short of that mighty power which raised Christ from the dead and exalted Him to the right hand of God can enable a depraved creature to savingly believe (Eph. 1:19, 20).

Divine teaching is absolutely essential for the reception and learning of Divine things, and without it all the teaching of men—even of God's most faithful and eminent servants—is inefficacious. God Himself cannot be apprehended merely by the intellectual faculty, for He is spirit (John 4:24), and therefore can only be known spiritually. But fallen man is carnal and not spiritual, and unless he be supernaturally brought out of darkness into God's marvelous light, he cannot see Him. This Divine teaching is promised: "Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will He teach sinners in the way" (Ps. 25:8). Sinners are subjects on whom He works, elect sinners, on whom He works savingly: "all Thy children shall be taught of the LORD" (Isa. 54:13). In them God makes good His assurance, "I will give them a heart to know me" (Jer. 24:7), and until He does so there is no saving acquaintance with Him. No book learning can acquire it: "According as His Divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Pet. 1:3). That Divine power communicates life to the soul, light to the understanding, sensitivity to the conscience, strength to the affections, a death-wound to our loving knowledge of Him" (2 Pet. 1:3) consists of such a personal discovery of God to the heart as conveys a true, spiritual, affecting perception and recognition of His surpassing excellence. God is revealed to it as holy and gracious, clothed with majesty and authority, yet full of mercy and tender pity. Such a view of Him is obtained as causes its favored subject, in filial and adoring language, to exclaim, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee" (Job 42:5). God Himself has become an awe-inspiring but blessed reality to the renewed soul. He is beheld by the eye of faith, and faith conveys both a demonstration and an inward subsistence of the objects beheld. The Father is now revealed to the heart (Matthew 11:27). The word "reveal" means to remove a veil or covering, and so exhibit to view what before was hidden. The blessed Spirit, at regeneration, removes that film of enmity which sin has produced, that blinding veil which is upon the depraved mind (2 Cor. 3:14), that "covering" which is "cast over all people" (Isa. 25:7).

The saving revelation which is made to an elect sinner is not a creating of something which previously had no existence, nor is it ab extra to the Word: nothing is ever revealed to the soul by the Holy Spirit which is not in the Scriptures. It is most important that we should be quite clear on this point, or we shall be in danger of mysticism on the one hand or fanaticism on the other. "To expect that the Spirit will teach you without the Word is rank enthusiasm, as great as to hope to see without eyes: and to expect the Word will teach you without the Spirit is as great an absurdity as to pretend to see without light—and if any man says the Spirit teaches him to believe or do what is contrary to the written Word, he is a mad blasphemer. God has joined the Word and the Spirit, and what God has joined together let no man put asunder" (W. Romaine). "The Spirit of God teaches and enlightens by His Word as the instrument. There is no revelation from Him but what is (as to our perception of it) derived from the Scriptures. There may be supernatural illuminations and strong impressions upon the mind in which the Word of God has no place or concern, but this alone is sufficient to discountenance them, and to prove they are not from the Holy Spirit" (John Newton).

There is real need to labour this point, for not a few highly strung people and those with vivid imaginations have been deceived thereon, supposing that strange dreams, extraordinary visions, abnormal sights and sounds, are the means or manner in which the Holy Spirit is made

manifest to the soul. Those who look for any such experience are far more liable to be deluded by Satan than enlightened by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit supplies no new and different revelation today from that which He has already made in the written Word. God indeed spoke to His servants of old by dreams and extraordinary means and made known to them hidden mysteries and things to come—but a "vision and prophecy" is forever "sealed up" (Dan. 9:24). Through Paul it was announced that prophecies should "fail" (be given no more) and tongues should "cease" (1 Cor. 13:8), and they did so when the Canon of Scripture was completed. All of the Divine will, so far as it can be of any use to us in the present life, is already clearly made known to us in the Old and New Testaments. The testimony of the Spirit in the Scriptures is a "more sure Word" than any voice from Heaven (2 Pet. 1:19)!

The most fearful curse is pronounced upon those who presume to add to or diminish from the testimony of God in the Scriptures (Rev. 22:18, 19). It is plain to the Christian that Mohammed, John Smith and Mrs. Eddy who pretended to be the recipients of special revelations from God, were lying impostors. Others who claim to have received any Divine communications of their own souls, over and above what is contained in or may be rightly deduced from God's infallible Word, are themselves deceived, and on highly dangerous ground. "God does not give the Spirit to His people to abolish His Word, but rather to render the Word effectual and profitable to them" (Calvin on Luke 24:45). The Holy Scriptures "are able to make wise unto salvation" (2 Tim. 3:15), yet not apart from the Spirit; the Spirit illuminates, yet never apart from the Word. The Spirit has first to open our sin-blinded understandings, before the light of the Word (2 Pet. 1:19) can enter our souls. He alone can seal the Truth upon the heart. The things revealed in the Bible are real and true, but the natural man cannot perceive their spiritual nature, nor is he vitally affected by them, for he has no inward experience of the realities of which they treat.

By means of religious education and personal application to the study of the same, the natural man can obtain a good understanding of the letter of Scripture, and discourse fluently and orthodoxly thereon; yet the light in which he discerns them is but a merely natural or mental light; and while that be the case his experience is the same as that of those described in 2 Timothy 3:7—ever learning and never able to come to the [spiritual, Divine experiential] knowledge of the truth." The religion of the vast majority in Christendom today is one of tradition, form, or sentiment—destitute of one particle of vital and transforming power. Unless the Spirit of God has regenerated and indwells the soul, not only the most pleasing ritual but the most orthodox creed is worthless! Reader, you may be an ardent "Calvinist," subscribe heartily to the soundest "Articles of Faith," assent sincerely to every sentence in the Westminster Confession and Catechism, and yet be dead in trespasses and sins. Yea, such is your sad condition at this very moment, unless you have really been "born of the Spirit" and God has revealed His Son in you (Gal. 1:16).

"A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from Heaven" (John 3:27). How little is that statement understood by the majority of professing Christians! How unpalatable it is to the self-sufficient Laodiceans of this age, ignorant as they are of their wretchedness, poverty and blindness (Rev. 3:17). Though the wisdom and power of the Creator manifestly appear in every part of His creation, yet when the first Gospel preacher was sent to the Gentiles he had to declare, "the world by wisdom knew not God" (1 Cor. 1:21). Though the Jews had the Holy Scriptures in their hands and were thoroughly familiar with the letter of them, yet they knew

neither the Father nor His Son when He appeared in their midst. Nor are things any better today. One may accept the Bible as God's Word and assent to all that it teaches, and still be in his sins. He may believe that sin is a transgressing of God's Law, that the Lord Jesus is alone the Saviour of sinners, and even be intellectually convinced that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, and yet be entirely ignorant of God to any good purpose. Until a miracle of grace is wrought within them, the state and experience of all men—spiritually speaking—is, "Hearing, ye shall hear, and not understand; seeing, ye shall see, and not perceive" (Acts 28:26). They cannot do so until the veil of pride and prejudice, carnality and self-interest be removed from their hearts, by God's grace.

The soul must be Divinely renovated before it is capable of apprehending spiritual things. The careful reader will have noticed that the marginal rendering of John 3:27, is: "A man can take unto himself nothing, except it be given him from Heaven." He must first be given a disposition in order to do so. What a word was that of Moses to the Israelites: "Ye have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt . . . Yet the LORD hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day" (Deut. 29:2-4)—they took not to them the implications of what God had done so as to profit therefrom. Many have "the form of knowledge and of the truth in the Law" (Rom. 2:20) in their heads, but are total strangers to the power of it in their hearts. Why is this the case? Because the Spirit has not made an effectual application of it to them:

they have received no inward revelation of it in their souls. Let us furnish a specific illustration: "For I was alive [in my own esteem] without the Law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died" (Rom. 7:9). From earliest childhood Saul of Tarsus had been thoroughly acquainted with the words of the Tenth Commandment, but until the hour of his spiritual quickening they had never searched within and "pricked him in the heart" (Acts 2:37).

Hitherto, that "Hebrew of the Hebrews" was proud of his orthodoxy, for had he not been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the perfect manner of the Law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God (Acts 22:3)? Conscientious in the performing of duty, living an irreproachable life, "touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless" (Phil. 3:6) in his outward walk, he was thoroughly pleased with himself. But when the Spirit of God applied to his conscience those words, "thou shalt not covet," his complacency was rudely shattered. When God gave him grace to perceive and feel the spirituality and strictness of the Divine Law, that it prohibited inward lustings, all unholy and irregular desires, he was convicted of his lost condition. He now saw and felt a sea of corruption within. He realized he stood condemned before the bar of a holy God, under the awful curse of His righteous Law, and he died to all self-esteem and self-righteousness. When the Law was Divinely brought home to his conscience in shattering power, it was like a bolt from the blue, smiting him with compunction: he became a dead man in his own convictions, a justly sentenced criminal.

Have you, my reader, experienced God's Word to be "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit"? Have you found it to be "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4: 12)—of your heart? You have not merely by the reading of it, nor by the hearing of it. That Word must be applied by an Almighty hand before it cuts a soul to the quick: only then is it "the sword of the Spirit"—when He directs it. It is only by the blessing and concurrence of the Spirit that the Word is made to

produce its quickening, searching, illuminating, convicting, transforming and comforting effects upon the soul of any man. Only by the Spirit is the supremacy of the Word established in the soul. It is by His teaching that there is conveyed a real apprehension of the Truth, so that the heart is truly awed and solemnized, by being made to feel the authority and majesty of the Word. Only then does any man realize the vast importance and infinite value of its contents. By the inward work and witness of the Spirit the regenerate have a personal and infallible source of evidence for the Divine inspiration and integrity of the Scriptures to which the unregenerate have no access.

Spiritual life is followed by Divine light shining into the heart, so that its favored subject perceives things to be with him exactly as they are represented in the Word. The Spirit makes use of His own Word as a vehicle for communicating instruction. The Word is the instrument, but He is the Agent. The holiness of God, the spirituality of His Law, the sinfulness of sin, his own imminent peril, are now discovered to the soul with a plainness and certainly which as far exceed that mental knowledge which he previously had of them as an ocular demonstration exceeds a mere report of things. By the Spirit's teaching he obtains radically different thoughts of God, of self, of the world, of eternity, than he ever had before. Things are no longer general and impersonal to him: "thou art the man" has become the conviction of his conscience. He no longer challenges that awful indictment, "the carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7), for he is painfully aware of the awful fact that he has been a lifelong rebel against Heaven. He no longer denies his total depravity, for the Spirit has given him to see there is "no soundness" in him—that there is nothing in him by nature but deadness, darkness, corruption, unbelief and self-will.

Those who are inwardly taught of God discover there is abundantly more of evil in their defiled natures and sinful actions than ever they realized before. There is as great and real a difference between that general notion which the natural man has of sin and that experiential and intuitional knowledge of it which is possessed by the Divinely quickened soul as there is between the mere picture of a lion and being confronted by a living lion as it meets us roaring in the way. In the light of the Spirit, sin is seen and felt to be something radically different from how the natural man conceives it. None knows what is in the heart of fallen man but God. He has delineated the same in His Word, and when the Spirit opens the eyes of the sinner's understanding, he sees himself in its mirror to be exactly as God has there portrayed him—with a heart which is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9). His secret imaginations are now discovered to him; his pride, his presumption, his awful hypocrisy are beheld in all their hideousness. The sight and sense which the illumination of the Spirit gives him of his wickedness and wretchedness is overwhelming: he realizes he is a leprous wretch before a holy God—he sees himself as irreparably ruined—lost.

Chapter 16 – The Holy Spirit Must Quicken

We have dwelt upon the revelation which God has made of Himself in the material universe, in the moral nature of man, in the shaping of human history, in His incarnate Son, and in the Holy Scriptures. We have pointed out that while the evidence which the first three supply for the existence of God is ample to expose the irrationality of skepticism, and to show that the Infidel is without excuse, and that while the testimony of the last two transmit to us a clear and full communication of the Divine will and make plain our path of duty, yet none of them nor all combined are sufficient of themselves to bring any man—fallen and sinful as he now is—to a saving knowledge of and relation to the thrice Holy One. While the natural man may be intellectually assured of God's existence, that Christ is His Son, that the Bible is His inspired Word, and that while he may acquire an accurate theoretical understanding of the Scriptures, he cannot either discern, receive, or relish them spiritually and experimentally—and in order thereto, he must first be made spiritual, "born of the Spirit" (John 3:6), become "a new creature in Christ" (2 Cor. 5:17).

The absolute necessity for a supernatural work of grace upon the human heart to fit it for the taking in of a spiritual knowledge of spiritual things was shown from its indisposedness unto them because of its native depravity, from the might and enthralling power which sin has over it, as well as from the transcendency of Divine things over the scope of human reason, and of the nature of that faith by which alone they can be apprehended. In a word, that an answerableness or correspondency between the object apprehended and the subject apprehending is indispensable. But what accord or concord is there between an infinitely holy God and a totally depraved and defiled sinner? And thus the work of the Spirit within the sinner is as imperative as is the work of Christ for him. The Word itself does not produce its quickening, searching, convicting and converting effects except by the blessing and concurrence of Him who of old moved holy men to write it. In short, before anyone can obtain a saving and sanctifying knowledge of God, he must make a personal, supernatural, inward discovery of Himself to the soul. As none but God can change night into day, so He alone can bring a sinner out of darkness into His own marvelous light.

"All thy children shall be taught of the LORD" (Isa. 54:13). There is a teaching of God without which all the teaching of man—even that of His most gifted and faithful servants—is ineffectual and inefficacious. The One by whom the elect are taught is the Holy Spirit, and therefore is He rightly called, "The Spirit of wisdom and revelation" (Eph. 1:17). Not because He reveals to the soul anything which is not found in the Word itself. But first, because it was by His own wisdom and revelation that the penmen of Scripture were enabled to write what they did; and second because it is by His operations that what they wrote is now made effectual unto their souls. He begins by regenerating them—imparting to them a principle of spiritual life, without which they are incapacitated to see the things of God—(John 3:3). Then He makes to their renewed mind a real and spiritual application of the same, so that they are realized in the heart, and are found to be Divine realities. By the work of the Spirit, the soul obtains an actual experience of the things contained in the Scriptures, thereby receiving fulfillment of that promise, "I will put My Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts" (Jer. 31:33).

All of God's children are taught by Him, yet not in the same degree, nor in the same

order of instruction. God exercises His sovereignty here, as everywhere, being tied by no rules or regulations. That there is variety in the influences of the Spirit is intimated in that figurative expression, "Come from the four winds, 0 Breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live" (Ezek. 37:9), and is more definitely stated in, "There are diversities of operation, but it is the same God which worketh all in all" (1 Cor. 12:6). Though God ever acts as He pleases, and always with unerring wisdom, and where His people are concerned, in infinite grace; usually His operations upon their souls follow more or less a general pattern. But in every instance such a revelation of God is made to the soul, as none can understand or appreciate except those who have been made the favored subjects of the same. It is accompanied by a life and light, power and pungency, such as no preacher can possibly impart. An effectual application of the Truth is then made so that its recipient is enabled to know and feel his own personal case before God—to see himself in His light, to have an actual experience of things which hitherto were only hearsay to him.

Here we should, perhaps, anticipate an objection. Some may be inclined to think that in the two chapters preceding this one and in what follows here, we have wandered somewhat from our present subject. That we are supposed to be treating of that immediate and inward, that personal and saving revelation which God makes of Himself to the soul: whereas we appear to be bringing in that which is extraneous and irrelevant, by describing the varied experiences through which a soul passes just prior to and in his conversion. But in reality, the objection is pointless. As "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," so an inward knowledge of God Himself is the beginning of spiritual life and the first entrance into vital godliness. "This is life eternal that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (John 17:3). There cannot be any evangelical conviction and contrition, still less a coming to Christ and resting upon Him, until God Himself is known. We never move toward God in Christ until He directly shines in our hearts (2 Cor. 4:6), and thus the efficacious cause of faith is neither the clearness of our minds nor the pliability of our wills, but our effectual call by God from death unto life.

As no artist would undertake to draw a picture which would exactly resemble every face in each feature and particular, yet may produce an outline which will readily distinguish a man from any other creature, so we shall not essay to give such a delineation of regeneration and conversion as will precisely answer to every Christian's experience in its circumstances, but rather one which should be sufficient to distinguish between a supernatural work of grace and that which pertains to empty professors. All births are not accompanied by equal travail, either in duration or intensity, yet it is often the case that those who have the easiest entrance into this world are the greatest sufferers in infancy and childhood. So some of God's children experience their acutest pangs of conviction before conversion and others afterward, but sooner or later each is made to feel and mourn the plague of his own heart. "The first actings of faith are, in most Christians, accompanied with much darkness and confusion of understanding; but yet we must say in the general that wherever faith is, there is so much light as to discover to the soul its own sins, dangers, and wants, and the all-sufficiency, suitableness, and necessity of Christ for the supply and remedy of all; and without this, Christ cannot be received" (John Flavell).

The selfsame light which discovers the holiness of God to a soul necessarily reveals its own vileness. Though the Spirit does not enlighten in the same measure or bring different ones to perceive things in the same order, yet sure it is that He teaches everyone certain

fundamental lessons, and that, in a manner and to an extent which they never understood before. "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick," and before one will savingly betake himself to the Great Physician he is made conscious of his need of His ministrations. When a soul is quickened and illuminated by the Holy Spirit, his heart is opened to a sight and sense of sin. A work of Divine grace is made perceptible first on the conscience, so that its subject is given to realize the exceeding sinfulness of sin. He now perceives how offensive it is unto God and how destructive unto his own soul. The malignity of sin in its very nature is seen as a thing contrary to the Divine Law. He who had previously felt himself secure, now realizes he is in terrible danger. If he is one who was already a professing Christian, he now knows that he was mistaken, deluded—that what he thought to be peace, was nothing but the torpor of an unawakened conscience.

Conviction of sin is followed by a wounding of the heart, for life is accompanied not only with light but feeling also, otherwise its subject would be a moral paralytic. The sinner is filled with shame, compunction, horror and fear. He apprehends his own wickedness and pollution to be such as none other was ever guilty of. He sees himself to be utterly undone, and cries "Woe is me." He no longer laughs at what is recorded in Genesis 3, or any longer has any doubt about Adam's fall, for he perceives his sinful image in himself—conveyed to him at his very conception, a defiled nature from birth. He has been given an experiential insight into the mystery of iniquity. He now realizes that so far from having lived to the glory of God, self-gratification has been his sole occupation. "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned, and done evil in Thy sight" (Ps. 51:4) is now his anguished lament. He thinks there was never a case so desperate as his, and fears there is no hope of forgiveness. Now his heart "knoweth its own bitterness."

This anguish of heart is something radically different from that sorrow for sin which is sometimes found in graceless souls, which usually consists of being ashamed because of their fellows or a chagrin at their own folly. Even Judas repented of betraying his Master, but not with a "godly sorrow" (2 Cor. 7:10). It is not the degree but the nature of our sorrow for sin which evidences whether or not it be produced by the grace of God. That grief for sin which issues from a gracious principle is concerned for having flouted God's authority, abused His mercies, and been indifferent whether his conduct pleased or displeased Him. Whereas the sorrow of the natural man proceeds only from self-love: his grief is that he wrecked his own interests and brought misery upon himself. The quickened soul is now thoroughly ashamed and abased. He no longer makes excuses, but takes sides with God and unsparingly condemns himself. The guilt of sin lies heavily upon him, as an intolerable burden. The sentence of the Law is pronounced in his conscience. He perceives that there is no soundness in him, that his case is desperate to the last degree. How can I escape my merited doom? is now his great concern.

Those who have not sat under a preaching of the Gospel of the grace of God wherein Christ is freely offered to all who hear it, and have reached the stage described above, are now at their wit's end. The condition and case of such a one is no worse than it was formerly, but the scales have been removed from his eyes and he sees himself in God's light. The soul is now brought to a state of utter unrest and disquietude: not only unable to find any satisfaction in the creature, but even to obtain the slightest relief from the things of time and sense. He seeks help and peace here and there, only to find they are "cisterns which hold no water." He is at a total loss about deliverance, and sees no way of escape from that eternal doom to which he now

realizes he is fast hastening. He once thought that a little repentance would save him, or a cry to God for mercy would suffice for pardon, but he now finds "the bed is shorter than a man can stretch himself on, and the covering narrower than he can wrap himself in" (Isa. 28:20). Neither meet his dire need.

What shall become of me? is now the question which wholly absorbs his thoughts. If, like a drowning man seeking some object that he may grasp to support him, he turns unto professing Christians and inquires in what way the Lord dealt with their souls and how they obtained relief—sometimes he will receive a little encouragement, but more often that which dampens his faint hope that God will yet be gracious unto him that he perish not. As he listens to what one and another relates, he realizes that it is not the path which he is treading, that he has not experienced the things which they did, and he is brought to the place of self-despair. He wishes that he had never been born, for he fears that in spite of all his convictions and anguish he may be lost forever. He feels his utter helplessness and has an experiential realization that he is "without strength" (Rom. 5:6). Yet so far from this sense of his impotency producing apathy and inertia, he is increasingly diligent in making use of the means of grace: he now searches the Scriptures as he never did before, and cries from the depths of his soul, "Lord save me" (Matthew 14:30).

"Understandest thou what thou readest?" said Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch. "How can I?" he replied, "except some man should guide me" (Acts 8:27-33). Nevertheless, he read the Scriptures, and God graciously and savingly met with him therein, using Philip as His instrument to preach Jesus unto him. None but Christ can save a sinner: He alone can remove the burden of guilt, cleanse the conscience, speak peace to the heart. As sin is loathed and hated, and self-righteousness is renounced, room is made in the soul for Christ. There is no true desire for Him until the utter vanity of this world has been felt—that its most alluring pursuits and pleasures are nothing better than the husks which the swine feed on. Sin must be made bitter as wormwood to us, before Christ can be sweet to the heart. God must wound the conscience by the lashing of His Law, ere the healing balm of Christ's blood is longed for. Like the prodigal in the far country, the soul must be brought to the place where it cries, "I perish with hunger," before the rich provisions of the Father's house are really sought.

It is in this way the blessed Spirit prepares the heart for the receiving of Christ. By giving him to understand his condition and case: his sins, his guilt, his pollution, his emptiness, his personal demerit, his misery. By giving him such a sense of the same as causes him to die unto himself, to renounce himself, to abhor himself to acknowledge that the worst that God says of him in His Word is true. Thereby the Holy Spirit shows him that he is exactly suited to Christ, who is "mighty to save," and who does save "to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him" (Heb. 7:25). He makes him to realize that he is a fit subject for the Great Physician to exercise his loving kindness upon, to heal him of his loathsome leprosy, to pardon his innumerable sins, to supply all his need out of the exceeding riches of His glorious grace. The Holy Spirit is pleased to show the self-condemned soul that Christ has nothing in His heart against him, that He is full of compassion, of infinite power, in every way meet for him; that He came into the world with the express purpose to "seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Thus is Christ made desirable unto him.

But it is one thing to perceive our need for and the perfect suitability of Christ and to have longings after Him, and quite another for Him to be made accessible and present to us. There

has to be an inward discovery of Him to the soul before He is made a reality unto it and laid hold of by him. Said the Saviour, "This is the will of Him that sent Me, that everyone that seeth the Son and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life" (John 6:40). Note well the order of those two verbs: there must be a "seeing" of the Son with the eye of the soul before there can be any saving believing on Him. In other words, the same One who has removed the scales of pride and prejudice from the sinner's eyes to behold his own abject state, must show him the glorious Object on which his trust is to be reposed. The light of the Gospel now shines into his heart, and he is enabled to behold "the King in His beauty." When He is beheld thus it must be said, "flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee," but it has been supernaturally communicated by the Spirit.

Christ is now made known as "Fairer than the children of men," as wholly suited to and all-sufficient for the stricken sinner. The soul is now assured that, "the Son of God is come, and has given him an understanding that he may know Him that is true" (1 John 5:20). The heart is taken with Him, attracted by Him, drawn to Him, and cries, "Lord I believe, help Thou mine unbelief." A convincing and fully-persuading realization of the truth of the Gospel concerning Christ is his. The Spirit has vouchsafed no new and different revelation of Christ than what was in the written Word, but He has given a supernatural efficacy unto the Gospel to his soul, as truly as the blowing of the rams' horns was made by God to cause the walls of Jericho to fall down. The hour has come when the hitherto dead soul hears the voice of the Son of God, and hearing, lives (John 5:25). His voice has come to him with quickening energy. The saving knowledge of Christ which is thus obtained is a vastly different thing from having a good opinion or orthodox conception of Him: He is now realized to be everything which the justice of an angry God required for satisfaction and everything which is required by the most indigent soul.

Christ now dwells in his heart by faith, and the testimony of such a one is, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see" (John 9:25), and neither man nor Satan can make him deny it. Before the Holy Spirit, in His sovereign and invincible power, dealt with my soul, I was "blind": blind to the just claims of Christ's holy sceptre, blind so that I saw in Him no beauty that I should desire Him, blind to my own folly in spending money for that which was not bread and by seeking contentment and satisfaction away from Him. "But now I see": see His surpassing loveliness and superlative worth, see that He loved even me and gave Himself for me. I see that His precious blood cleanses me from all sin. I see that He is the only One worth living on and living for. Hear him singing from the heart, "Thou O Christ are all I want, more than all, in Thee I find." Hear him as he avers with the Apostle, "I count all but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil. 3:8). Behold him, as lost in wonder, love, and praise, he bows in adoration and exclaims, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift."

How different is such a coming to Christ, closing with Him, and knowledge of Him, from that of the deluded and empty professors! Rightly did the Puritan Flavell declare, "Coming to Christ notes a supernatural and almighty power, acting the soul quite above its own natural abilities in this motion. It is as possible for the ponderous mountains to start from their bases and centers, mount aloft into the air, and there fly like a wandering atom hither and thither, as for any man of himself, i.e., by a pure natural power of his own, to come to Christ. It was not a stranger thing for Peter to come to Christ walking upon the waves of the sea, than for his or any man's soul to come to Christ in the way of faith." It is only as the Spirit quickens the dead soul, makes him sensible of his desperate condition and deep need, reveals Christ as an all-sufficient

Saviour, and by a powerful inclining of his will, that he is brought to cast himself on Him, and that he obtains for himself a saving experience of the Gospel, in contradistinction from a mere hearsay knowledge of it.

This personal and secret revelation of God in the soul is a miracle, as truly and as much so as when darkness enveloped the chaos of Genesis 1:3, and God by a mere fiat said, "Let there be light, and there was light." This is clear from, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts unto the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face [or "Person"] of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6). In His own ordained hour, by a sovereign and almighty act on His part, a supernatural, saving and sanctifying knowledge of God is communicated to the souls of each of His elect. This knowledge of God is spiritual and altogether from above, being wholly Divine and heavenly. Being miraculous, this unique experience is profoundly mysterious. Its favored subject contributes nothing whatever to it, not so much as desiring or soliciting the same. "There is none that seeketh after God. . . the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes" (Rom. 3:11, 17, 18). It could not be otherwise, for by nature all are, spiritually speaking, "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). There can be no spiritual sight of spiritual objects, no spiritual hearing, still less any spiritual actions, until spiritual life is imparted to the soul.

No one can possibly have any spiritual hatred of sin, any pantings after holiness, any saving faith in Christ, until he has actually "passed from death unto life." In every instance where God graciously gives this inward and vivifying revelation of Himself. He declares, "I am found of them that sought Me not" (Isa. 65:1)—the subsequent seeking of the soul is the reflex, the consequence, the effect, of His initial seeking it. As we love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:19), so we call upon Him (Rom. 10:13), because His effectual call (1 Pet. 2:9), preceded and capacitated ours. The "Spirit of life" (Rom. 8:2) must first join Himself to the spiritually-dead soul in quickening power, before he has any spiritual life or light. In that initial operation of the Spirit, the soul is wholly passive and unconscious. Regeneration is not something which we actually "receive," but is wrought in its subject once and for all. Was not natural life communicated to me without any act of mine? What act did I perform when a living soul was imparted to me? Nothing: it was utterly impossible that I should. Being and life were Divinely given to me without any volition whatever on my part.

The soul must be Divinely renovated before it is able to discern or relish spiritual things. The natural man, totally depraved as he is, can neither perceive the reality of spiritual things, be impressed with their excellence, or have his affections drawn after them. How can the natural man savingly believe in Christ when he has no grace, no power of will upwards, no sufficiency in himself? Coming to Christ is a spiritual motion, for it is the soul going out to Him. But motion presupposes life, and as there can be no natural motion or movement without natural life, so it is spiritually. Deny that, and you deny the indispensability of the Spirit's work of grace to bestow life, light and sight. Something in addition to life and light is required: the Spirit must remove from our eyes the scales of pride and enmity before we can perceive our ruined condition. Coming to Christ imports both a sense of need and a hope of relief: it is an actual closing with Him as He is freely offered to sinners in the Gospel, by a practical assent of the understanding and hearty consent of the will.

By the Spirit alone are we awakened from the sleep of carnal sloth and unconcern for our eternal welfare. By Him alone are we given to perceive the spirituality and strictness of the

Divine Law, and feel its condemning power in our conscience. The Spirit alone shows us ourselves and brings us to realize that our very nature is a sewer of filth. He reveals to us our desperate need of Christ, who overcomes our hostility to Him, and makes us willing to receive Him as our Prophet to teach and instruct us, our Priest to atone and make intercession for us, our King to rule over and fight for us. It is wholly by His powerful operation that Christ is formed in us "the hope of glory." By Him alone do we obtain an experimental and intuitional knowledge of Christ. Said the Saviour, "He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I that He shall take of mine and shall show it unto you" (John 16:14, 15). "Show it," not in the mere letter of it (there is no need for Him to do that, for by a little diligence we can grasp the literal or grammatical meaning for ourselves), but in the spirituality, blessedness and power thereof.

The preciousness and potency of the things of Christ are set home on the renewed mind by the grace and energy of the Spirit in such a manner that the believer is inwardly assimilated thereto. He shows them not to his reasoning faculty but to his heart, and in such a way as to impress a real image thereof, fixing the same indelibly in his affections. The Spirit is He who gives unto him soul-satisfying, heart-warming apprehensions of the Saviour's love, so that at times he is quite lifted out of himself, his thoughts being raised above the things of time and sense, to be entirely absorbed with the "altogether lovely" One, and thus vouchsafes him an earnest and foretaste of his eternal joy. It is the Spirit's special office to magnify Christ: to make Him real unto His redeemed, to endear Him to their souls, until He becomes their "All in all." Every true thought entertained of Christ, every exercise of the believer's affections upon Him, is through the effectual influence of the Spirit. All true fellowship and communion which the Christian has with the Redeemer, all practical conformity unto His holy image, is by the Spirit's gracious operations. We are completely dependent upon Him for every spiritual breath we draw and spiritual motion we make.

But we have been somewhat carried away—it is not easy for love to heed the requirements of logic! The last three paragraphs should have been preceded by the statement that, though an inward revelation of God to the soul be both truly miraculous and profoundly mysterious, yet it may be identified and known to its participant. To the participant we say, for it is no less impossible to explain the same by mere words to one who has had no actual experience of the same, than it would be to convey any intelligible concept of color to one born blind or of sound to one born totally deaf. It may be known by its attendants and by its fruits. When life and being were given me naturally, all that followed was but the effects and consequences of the same. In due time I was brought forth into the world—a feeble and needy, but living and active creature, yet entirely dependent upon others. So at regeneration the soul has spiritual life imparted to it, is born again, and all that follows in the experiences of that soul is but the effects and fruits thereof, making manifest the reality of it, so that by comparison of its present history with its past, and by an examination of both in the light of Holy Writ, the great change may be clearly and indubitably informed.

God has endowed the soul with the power of reflection, so that it may be conscious of its own condition and operations. Therefore does He bid professing Christians, "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Cor. 13:5). The Psalmist tells us, "I commune with mine own heart, and my spirit made diligent search" (77:6). God has so

wondrously constituted man that he is able to look within and form a judgment of himself and of his actions, and at regeneration he is given "the spirit of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7) so that he may form an impartial and true judgment of himself While some are too introspective, others are not sufficiently so for their own good. The regenerate soul has power not only to put forth a direct act of faith upon Christ, but also to discern that act: "I know whom I have believed" (2 Tim. 1:12). In this way Christians may attain unto a certainty of their saving knowledge of and union with Christ. The more so since they have received the gift of the blessed Spirit, by which "they might know the things that are freely given to them of God" (I Cor. 2:12). "Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit" (1 John 4:13), which is apparent from His operations within us.

It most highly concerns each reader to examine and try his knowledge of God, and make sure it be something more than a merely natural and notional one, namely that he has been favored with a spiritual and experiential discovery of God to his soul. "Being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them . . . have given themselves over unto lasciviousness. But ye have not so learned Christ: if so be ye have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man" (Eph. 4:18-22). There a contrast is drawn between the unregenerate Gentiles and the Ephesian saints. The latter had learned both from the precepts and example of Christ. The question for them to make sure about was, Had they really been taught inwardly and effectually by Him, so that a vital change was evident in their character and conduct? That "if so be" intimated that nothing was to be taken for granted. They must put themselves to the proof and ascertain whether the truth dwelt in and regulated them as it did the Saviour: whether in short, the teaching they had received was inoperative or whether it had produced a radical change in their daily lives. By its fruit is the tree known.

The inward and immediate revelation of God to a soul is made manifest by its accompaniments. It is accompanied by a principle of life, of grace, of holiness. It is attended with light and warmth and power, producing a great and glorious change within, renovating each faculty of the soul. Therein it differs radically from the "conversions" of modem evangelism which effects no such change. It is attended with the opening of the eyes of the understanding, enabling its subject to see God, Christ, self, sin, the world, eternity—in a light he did not previously. Such sights, under the gracious influences of the Spirit, lead to the experiences of conviction, contrition, and conversion, described in the preceding chapters. The quickened soul not only now discovers the true nature of sin, but feels the guilt and burden of it, and unfeignedly sorrows for and hates it. He is brought to realize the worthlessness of all self-help and creature performances. He is enabled to take in, little by little, a knowledge of Christ from the Word, by which means he is led to an acquaintance with Him and his will is brought to a full surrender to Him. Thus there is an efficacy accompanying the Spirit's teaching which is not found in any man's teaching: illuminating the understanding, searching the conscience, engaging the affections, drawing the heart unto it, sanctifying the will.

As there is both an outward and an inward "hearing" of the things of God (Acts 26:26), an ineffectual "learning of the Truth" (2 Tim. 3:7), and an effectual one (Eph. 4:20-22), so there is a knowledge of God which is inefficacious (Rom. 1:21), and a knowledge of Him which is saving (John 17:3). How am Ito ascertain that mine is the latter? Answer: from its effects. It is not the quantity but the quality, not the degree or extent of the knowledge but the kind of it that matters

and that is evidenced by its products. A real Christian may have a far inferior intellectual grasp of the Truth than has an unregenerate theologian, and yet possess a spiritual and sanctifying knowledge thereof to which the theologian, after all his studying, is a stranger. Concerning all the renewed God says, "But the Anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same Anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in it" (1 John 2:27). That "Anointing" is the Person and operations of the Holy Spirit, and where He indwells a soul no man is needed to teach him there is a God, that the Bible is His Word, that Christ is an all-sufficient Saviour, etc.

Let us now describe some of the effects of this Divine anointing. First, it is a realizing knowledge. Its grand Object is no longer known theoretically and inferentially, but actually and immediately, not by a process of reasoning but intuitively. God, who is spirit and invisible, is made visible and palpable to the soul. Does that strike some of our readers as being too strong a statement? It would not, had they experienced the same, and it should not, if they be at all familiar with Holy Writ, for of Moses it is said, "he endured as seeing Him who is invisible" (Heb. 11:27). God was real to his faith, though imperceptible to his senses. At the new birth such a discovery of God is made to the heart that its subject avers with Job, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee" (42:5). The recipient of that manifestation is awed by a sense of His majesty, His authority, His power, His holiness, His glory. Such a revelation of the Most High is overwhelming: he dare not trifle any longer with Him, for he now knows something of the being and character of the One with whom he has to do. In like manner, the Gospel becomes to him something very different from merely an external proclamation by God's servants—it now is "the ministration of the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:8) inwardly.

In the light of God the soul sees things as they actually are. Hitherto, if he had not a false concept of them, it was but a notional acquaintance at best. But now he views himself the present life, the hereafter, as God does, perceiving that all under the sun is but vanity and vexation of spirit. When truth is applied by the Holy Spirit its authority and spirituality are discerned, its power and pungency are felt, its savor and sweetness are tasted, its excellence and uniqueness are realized. When God is inwardly revealed to a person he becomes better acquainted with Him in five minutes this way, than in a lifetime of reading books and hearing sermons about Him. It is not an acquired knowledge, but an infused one, obtained by no mental efforts, but is Divinely imparted. As a very different image is begotten in the mind by actually seeing a person face to face than by looking upon his portrait, so by the secret operations of the Spirit a spiritual subsistence of God is wrought in the soul. Let the ablest artist paint a picture of the sun, let him use the brightest pigments and most brilliant colors, yet what a wan and insipid representation does he make in comparison to the shining and splendor of the sun itself! Glorious apprehensions of God and His Christ are conveyed and begotten in the renewed soul by the Spirit. He has now "seen" the Son (John 6:40) for himself, has "heard" His voice (John 5:25), "handled" Him by faith (1 John 1:1), "tasted that the Lord is gracious" (1 Pet. 2:3).

Second, it is a convincing and certifying knowledge. By this inward and gracious teaching of God there is given to the heart such personal evidence of the wonders of wisdom and the riches of His grace as set forth in the Gospel, that he is fully persuaded of the same. A firm and unshakeable assurance of the verity of what is revealed in the written Word is conveyed to the soul, for the Spirit works an inward experience of the same in him, so that their reality and

actuality is known and acknowledged. There is an ocular demonstration made to him by the light of the Word and the power of the Spirit revealing and applying them to the one born again, so that the teachings of the Scripture and the experiences of the believer, by these means, answer to one another as do the figures in the wax and the engravings in the seal. As a Spirit-taught person reads the Bible, especially much in the Psalms or a chapter like Romans 7, he finds the workings of his heart are accurately portrayed there, and says, "That is exactly my case." Such an experience supplies far stronger proof than can either reason or sense, and though faith be occupied with things not seen by the eyes of the body and which are far above the reach of reason, yet it produces a conviction and certainty which is more conclusive and invincible than any logical demonstration.

The internal witness of the Spirit is much more potent and satisfying than all arguments grounded upon human reasoning. The natural man may be intellectually convinced that the Bible is the Word of God, and yet never have had an experiential sense of the spirituality of His Law and a heart-conviction that he is a guilty transgressor of it. He may entertain no doubt whatever that the Lord Jesus is the only refuge from the wrath to come, and still be a complete stranger in his soul to His so-great salvation. A spiritual assurance that the Scriptures are Divine can no more be obtained without the inward witness of the Spirit than can a spiritual understanding of their contents. It is an essential part of His distinctive work to produce a spiritual and supernatural faith in the hearts of God's elect, so that they receive the Word on the alone testimony of its Author. When that faith has been communicated, he can no more doubt the integrity of the Scriptures for he now "knows the certainty of those things wherein he has been instructed" (Luke 1:4). Such an assurance will cause him to cling to the Truth and confess it though there were not another person on earth who did so. He now values the Bible as his dearest earthly possession, and no matter how he might be tempted to do so, will steadfastly refuse to "sell" or part with the Truth.

Third, it is an affecting knowledge. The notions possessed by the natural man, Scriptural though they be, exert no spiritual influence upon him and produce no godliness of character or conduct. They are inoperative, ineffectual, inefficacious. He may perceive clearly that sin is hateful to God and harmful to himself, that if cherished and continued in, it will certainly damn him, yet his lusts dominate him. He may be well informed upon the excellence of holiness, and the necessity of possessing it if ever he is to enter Heaven, yet self-love and self-interests turn the scales and prevent his seeking it wholeheartedly. A natural knowledge of spiritual things penetrates no deeper than the brain, neither influencing the heart nor moving the will. The empty professor may subscribe sincerely to the doctrine of man's total depravity, but it never moves him to cry from the depths of an anguished soul, "O wretched man that I am." The doctrinal light which the unregenerate have is like that of the moon's: it quickens not, possesses no warmth, produces no fruit. A merely theoretical knowledge of the Scriptures, however accurate or extensive it may be, leaves the heart dead, cold, barren.

Radically different is that spiritual knowledge which God imparts to the renewed mind. It has a vitalizing, convincing, moving and powerful effect upon the whole of the inner man. It conveys a real subsistence of Divine things to the soul, so that the understanding discerns and knows them, the affections delight in and cleave to them, the will is influenced and moved by them. "Thus saith the LORD, the Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit" (Isa. 48:17). He teaches so much of the evil of sin as makes it the

most bitter and burdensome thing in the world to us. He teaches us so much of our need for and the worth of Christ as moves us to freely take His yoke upon us—which none do unless they have been Divinely tamed. Spiritual light is like that of the sun's, which not only illuminates, but warms and fructifies, and therefore is Christ designated, "The Sun of righteousness" (Mal. 4:2). All the real teaching of the Spirit has a powerful tendency to draw away from self unto Christ, to a fixation in and living upon Him to find all our springs in Him, to prove Him to be our everlasting strength.

Fourth, it is a humbling knowledge. This is another unmistakable effect of an immediate and supernatural revelation of God to a person. That spiritual illumination and inward teaching lays the soul low before God. Therein it differs radically from self-acquired learning and the intellectual teaching we absorb from men, for that only serves to feed our conceit: such knowledge "puffeth up" (1 Cor. 8:1). Truth itself when unapplied by the Spirit is only unsanctified knowledge, adding to our store of information but producing no lowliness of heart. But when the Lord teaches a soul, the bladder of self-sufficiency is punctured, and there is a "casting down imaginations, reasonings, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" (2 Cor. 10:5). He now renounces his own wisdom and becomes as a "little child." The soul is brought to realize not that he is lacking in instruction, but that he is incapable of making a good use of what he already knows. He is now sensible that he needs to be Divinely taught how to effectually translate his knowledge into practice. The letter of God's precepts may be fixed in his mind, but how to perform them he knows not, and therefore does he cry, "Teach me, O LORD, the way of Thy statutes" (Ps. 119:33), "Teach me to do Thy will" (Ps. 143:10).

Of too many Laodicean "Christians" must it be said, "thy wisdom and thy knowledge it hath perverted thee [caused you to turn away]" (Isa. 47:10) from the only One who can effectually anoint blind eyes. But the wisdom which is from above is a self-emptying one, making its possessor cry, "Lord, teach me to pray" (Luke 11:1), and when he does, it is in a very different manner from the polished periods and eloquent language of what are termed pulpit "invocations." The natural man will ask for relief when in temporal distress, though he has no sense of need for spiritual mercies. But one taught of God is painfully conscious of the fact that, "he knows not what he should pray for as he ought," and has "groanings which cannot be uttered," and that makes him implore the help of the Holy Spirit. Such a one prays, "Give me understanding that I may learn Thy statutes." "Incline my heart unto Thy testimonies." "Quicken Thou me in Thy way." "Teach me good judgment." "Order my steps in Thy Word and let not any iniquity have dominion over me" (Ps. 119:73, 40, 66, 133). Thus the soul is taught how perfectly suited is God's Word to his deep need.

Fifth, it is a transforming knowledge. When God savingly reveals Himself to a person, a real and radical change is effected in him, so that the one alienated from Him is now reconciled to Him. The light of Divine grace is a prevailing and overcoming one, producing an altered disposition toward God, so that the one who shrank from Him pants after Him. Not only is Christ now feared, but adored. Divine teaching not only slays enmity against God, but conveys to the soul an answerableness to His holiness. It is affirmed of all such, "but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine whereto ye were delivered" (Rom. 6:17), i.e., the mold of teaching into which you have been cast. At regeneration the heart is made tender and the will tractable. The characters of the renewed are formed by the Truth—for a corresponding impression is made thereon. Their hearts and lives are modeled according to the tenor of the Gospel. Truth is

received not only in the light of it, but in the love of it as well. The inward inclinations are changed and framed according to what the Word enjoins, the faculties being fitted to respond thereto. He delights in the Law of God after the inward man, and chooses the things that please God (Isa. 56:4).

The sanctifying discovery of God to the soul not only slays its enmity unto Him, subdues the lusts of the flesh, removes carnal prejudices against His holy requirements, but stirs up the affections after them. No longer is there a murmuring against the exalted standard which God sets before us, but rather a reaching forth and striving to measure up to it. The Spirit's effectual application of the Word is always accompanied by a drawing out of the heart unto God, so that its subject is sensibly affected by His majesty and authority, His love and grace, His forbearance and goodness. So great was the change wrought in those who had been converted under his ministry, the Apostle could say of one company, "Ye are manifestly declared to be the Epistle of Christ ministered [instrumentally] by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God" (2 Cor. 3:3). And why? Because, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, they were changed "into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord" (v. 18): changed from pride to humility, from self-love to self-loathing, from self-seeking to Christ-pleasing.

Sixth, it is an operative knowledge. There are multitudes in Christendom today who "profess they know God, but in works [not "words"] deny Him" (Titus 1:16). Much Truth has entered their ears and eyes, but it results only in idle notions, useless speculations, and frothy talk. Whereas those who by grace are made partakers of the Divine nature have a disposition and impulse unto the performance of duty, and therefore they not only long after communion with God, but diligently endeavour to please and glorify Him in their daily lives. At the new birth God puts His Law into their souls and writes it upon their hearts (Jer. 31:33), and that moves its favored recipient to exclaim "How love I Thy Law!" (Ps. 119:97), and to manifest that love by diligently seeking to comply with the Divine precepts. The Spirit is given to the elect that He may "cause them to walk in God's statutes" (Ezek. 34:27). A saving knowledge of God constrains the soul unto obedience to Him: not perfectly so in this life, yet a real responding to His requirements. No sooner did the light of God shine supernaturally into the heart of Saul of Tarsus than he cried, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" "Being made free from [the guilt and dominion of] sin, and became servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness" (Rom. 6:22).

When the Holy Spirit effectually applies the Truth unto a person, he responds thereto: the soul is quickened and solemnized, God is revered, the affections are elevated, the will is given an inclination to deny self, renounce the world, resist the Devil. Thus it was with the Thessalonian saints: "For this cause thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men; but as it is in truth, the Word of God which effectually worketh in you that believe" (1 Thess. 2:13). It effectually prevails over sloth, the fear of man, worldly interests, everything which stands in opposition to it. "Who teacheth like Him?" (Job 36:22). Divine teaching is both efficacious and intensely practical. As God's creative words were mighty and effectual (Gen. 1), 50 are His teaching words (John 6:63; 15:3). "Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments" (1 John 2:3). Keeping His commandments is the evidence and proof of a saving knowledge of God. Though the obedience of a Christian be far from flawless, yet is it

real, spontaneous, sincere, impartial. Where no such obedience exists, then "he that saith I know Him and keepeth not His commandments [by prayerful and genuine endeavor] is a Liar" (1 John 2:4).

Seventh, it is a satisfying knowledge. The language of every truly regenerated and converted soul is, I ask for no better Saviour than Christ, I desire no other peace than God's—which passes all understanding; I need no superior Director through the mazes of this world than the infallible Scriptures. Though his station in life be the humblest and meanest, the one who has been Divinely quickened would not change places with those in highest office. The one in whose heart the supernatural light of God has shone, making him wise unto salvation, counts all other knowledge as comparatively worthless. Though he be a financial pauper, yet the one who has had the scales of prejudice and unbelief removed from his eyes, and Christ "revealed in him," knows himself to be infinitely richer than the godless millionaire. The one who has had the Divine Law effectually applied to his conscience, his sins set before him in the light of God's holiness, and has found cleansing and healing in the atoning blood of the Lamb, had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord than dwell in the mansions of the wicked. Joint heirs with Christ envy not the great of this world; those who are clothed with His righteousness look not with grudging eye upon those clothed in silks and flashing with diamonds.

Yes, this knowledge is a heart-satisfying one. It cannot be otherwise, for it is engaged with an all-sufficient Object. Nothing outside of Christ can suit the soul. Satisfaction is not to be found in ourselves, for we are mutable and dependent creatures. Nor in any of the things of time and sense, for they all perish with the using. Christ alone is the Fountain of Life and Happiness. He is all-sufficient for us, "for it hath pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell" (Col. 1:19), and therefore can He amply supply our every want. He is "altogether lovely," the perfection of beauty. He excels all on earth, out-shines all in Heaven. The infinite mind of God Himself finds contentment in the Lord Jesus, declaring Him to be "Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth" (Isa. 42:1). Every genuinely saved person readily sets to his seal that Christ is true when He avers, "Whosoever drinketh of this Water [the failing wells of earth] shall thirst again [as Solomon found, though he drank deeply from them all]. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:13, 14). A Divine discovery of the fullness, suitability, and excellence of Christ meets every need and satisfies every longing of the soul.

Let every reader, as he values his soul and its eternal interests, carefully and honestly test himself by what has been set before him. As the sin of Adam could not hurt us unless he had been our head by way of generation, so the righteousness of Christ cannot enrich us unless He be our Head by regeneration. There must be union with Him before we partake of His benefits. The bands of union are life and the Spirit on His part, faith and love on ours. There is no coming and cleaving to Christ in a saving way until the soul has "learned of the Father" (John 6:45). We have described some of the characteristics and effects of that "learning." Speculative knowledge produces no spiritual fruit: no humility, no poverty of spirit, no broken-heartedness, no godly sorrow. Divine knowledge manifests a heart-searching, sin-discovering, conscience-convicting, soul-humbling, Christ- magnifying attitude. When Isaiah beheld the Holy One he exclaimed "Woe is me! for I am undone" (Isa. 6:5). Have you ever been brought to the place where you have made such a confession? When Daniel had a vision of the Lord with "His face as the appearance of lightning and His eyes as lamps of fire," he tells us, "my comeliness was

turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength" (10:6, 8). Has anything resembling that been duplicated in your experience?

Try yourself, we beseech you, by what has been pointed out. Assume not that all is well with you. Examine yourself, and your knowledge of Divine things. You may not know the very day of your regeneration, nor how it was brought about, but the evidences of it are apparent. Which do you really love the more: the pleasures of sin or the beauty of holiness? Which do you genuinely value most: God or the creature? Which are you actually serving: self or Christ? A sanctifying knowledge of God results in the heart being divorced from the things formerly cherished and idolized, and now cleaving to objects disliked and shunned. When the Spirit shines into the heart and reflects His own light from the Word into it, the soul is forevermore out of conceit with itself. When the Lord fully discovered Himself unto Job, he cried, "Behold, I am vile" (40:4). Have you ever been made conscious of the same thing before Him? Do you now perceive that, in yourself, you are a corrupt and polluted creature? Has the blessed Spirit made Christ real and precious to you? If so, there has been a radical change in your heart and life. When Christ was revealed to Paul, he had a contempt for all things else, ardent desires after Him, supreme delight in Him, and was willing to suffer the loss of all things for His sake (Phil. 3:8, 9). A saving knowledge of Christ gives us to prove the sufficiency of His grace, sustaining the soul amid trials (2 Cor. 12:9).

"Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). That which we have sought to describe is only commenced at regeneration and conversion: henceforth we are to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). Our native spiritual blindness is only partly cured in this life, so that we "see through a glass darkly." Believers are still completely dependent upon the Lord that He should "open their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures" (Luke 24:45). They need to beg Him to make good unto them that promise, "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18). As the work of God is carried on in the soul, the Spirit shows him more and more what a Hell-deserving wretch he is in himself, causes him to groan frequently over his corruptions and failures, makes him more deeply sensible of his need and suitableness unto Christ, brings him more and more in love with the Saviour, and stirs him unto an increased diligence in endeavoring to serve and honour Him. However far a saint may advance in an experiential acquaintance with Him, it is his privilege and duty to pray that he may be, "increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:10).

It is very necessary that the young Christian should clearly recognize that God's work of grace in the soul is not completed in this life. There are some of His people who look within themselves for a faith that is not hampered with unbelief, for a love that is ever warm and constant, for pantings after holiness that vary not in fervour and regularity. They look for an obedience which is well-nigh perfect, and because they are unable to find that this is their case, conclude themselves to be unregenerate. They fail to realize that the evil principle of "the flesh" is left in them, and remains unchanged unto the end. It is indeed their bounden duty to mortify its lustings and to make no provision for the same (Rom. 13:14), nevertheless, they will frequently have occasion to complain, "iniquities prevail against me" (Ps. 65:3), and daily will they need to avail themselves of that fountain opened to the Lord's people for sin and for uncleanness (Zech. 13:1). If they do not, if they trifle with temptations, consort with the ungodly,

allow unconfessed sins to accumulate on the conscience, they will soon relapse into a sickly state of soul, lose their relish for the things of God, have their graces languish, and then they will be unable to discern in their hearts and lives the seven marks named above. A backslider will not find the fruits of righteousness in his soul.

It is also necessary to point out here that there is a radical difference between the manner of the Spirit's working in regeneration and His subsequent operations. In the former, He wrought upon us as we were "dead in sin," and consequently entirely passive therein. But after He has quickened us into newness of life, we concur with Him. That is to say, we are required to use the means of grace, especially the reading of God's Word, meditating on its contents, praying for grace to conform thereto. The blessed Spirit will set no premium on slothfulness. We are to Work, but He graciously assists: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities." As we are "led by the Spirit" to walk in the paths of righteousness, conscience testifies in our favour, and "the Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14, 16). But if we become careless and excuse ourselves therein, then the Spirit is grieved and obstructed, His comforts are withheld, and we taste the bitterness of our folly. The chastening rod falls on us till we repent of our waywardness and turn again unto the Lord. When matters are righted with God, the Spirit stirs us afresh to the use of means and again takes of the soul-satisfying things of Christ and shows them unto us.

Finally, let it again be emphasized that all the inward teachings of God are perfectly agreeable to the written Word. The revelations made by the Spirit to the souls of God's elect and which constitute their own actual "experience," and the revelation which He has made in the sacred Scriptures never conflict (Isa. 59:21). When God speaks to the heart of man, whether it be in a way of conviction, consolation, or instruction in duty, He always honours the Bible by making express use of its words. Thus the written Word is the sole standard by which we must try all the teaching we have received: all must be weighed in the balances of the Sanctuary. "To the Law and to the Testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20). Without that Divine safeguard we lay ourselves open to gross fanaticism and fatal deception. Whatever spiritual knowledge you think you have received, if it accords not wholly with God's Word, it is not of Divine revelation, but is either of human imagination or Satanic insinuation. "The Word contains the revelation of Christ; the Holy Spirit from the Word reveals Christ. In a spiritual apprehension of Him eternal life is begotten in the soul, which while it is full of Christ, yet we do not see and believe on Him to life eternal until the Lord the Spirit be our Teacher and Instructor" (S. E. Pierce).

In conclusion, let us draw a few inferences from all that has been before us. (1) Herein we behold the sovereignty of God, who divides the light from the darkness as He pleases. Divine grace is discriminating (Rom. 9:18). That particularity in which Christ dealt with souls still exists: "It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given" (Matthew 13:11). (2) Hence we see the deep importance of distinguishing between that knowledge of the things of God which is naturally acquired and that which is Divinely taught the soul, and the need for ascertaining whether my knowledge is producing spiritual fruit in my life. It is a safe criterion to apply that whatever originates with self always aims at and terminates on self; whereas that which is from the Spirit draws out the heart and will unto Christ. (3) That those upon whom the Sun of righteousness has arisen cannot be sufficiently thankful or praise Him enough. How grateful we should be if we "know the joyful sound" (Ps. 89:15) and have

found peace and joy in Christ! Well may we with wonderment exclaim, "Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" (John 14:22). (4) Why so few who hear the Gospel are truly saved under it. How different were the effects produced by the same Seed on the several soils (Luke 8:5-8): the heart must be plowed and harrowed before it is made an "honest and good" one (v. 15). (5) Why so many keen-brained and well-educated people are left in spiritual ignorance, while simple and illiterate souls are made wise unto salvation. (6) How that the preacher is wholly dependent upon the Holy Spirit. The ablest minister of the Word can no more of himself win souls to Christ than experienced fishermen could catch a single fish until He gave success (Luke 5:5). Neither the gifted Paul nor the eloquent Apollos was "anything": it is God "that giveth the increase" (1 Cor. 3:7). Often the most carefully prepared and earnestly delivered sermons produce no fruit, while a plain and ordinary one is blest of God. (7) How highly should the Christian prize the illumination of the Spirit and be looking continually to Him for instruction. He needs not a plainer Bible, but a clearer vision. I know no more of God to any good purpose than as I have been and am being taught of Him!

PART FOUR – REVELATION IN GLORY

Chapter 17 – This Life and Life Hereafter

We have now arrived at the grand climax of our subject, and well may we beg the Lord to enlarge our hearts that we may take in a soul-rapturing view thereof. Having traced out—most imperfectly—the revelation which God has made of Himself in the created universe, in the moral nature of man, in His shaping of human history, in His incarnate Son, in the sacred Scriptures, and in the saving discovery which He makes of Himself in the souls of His elect at their regeneration and conversion, we shall now endeavour to contemplate something of that manifestation which the Triune God will make in and through Christ unto His saints in Heaven. That experiential knowledge of and communion with God which the believer has here on earth is indeed a real, affectionate and blessed one, so that at times he is lifted out of himself and made to rejoice with joy unspeakable— yet it is but an earnest and a foretaste of what he shall enjoy hereafter! At death he enters into a life which amply compensates for all the trials and tribulations he experiences in this world. Said one who had endured persecution in every form: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).

The profession of the Gospel subjects the believer to peculiar hardships, for it requires him to deny self, take up his cross daily, and serve under the banner of One who is despised and rejected of men generally. To follow the example which Christ has left us involves having fellowship with His sufferings and enduring His reproach, and the more fully we be conformed to His holy image the more shall we be hated, ridiculed and opposed by the world—especially by its graceless professors. In certain periods of history, and in some countries today, particularly fierce and sore persecution was experienced by the saints; but everywhere and in all generations they have found, in different ways and degrees that, all who are determined to live godly in Christ Jesus "shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). Yet that is only one side of the present experience of Christians: they also enjoy a peace which passeth all understanding, and have blessed fellowship with Christ as He walks and talks with them along the way. Moreover, "the hope which is laid up for them in Heaven," whereof they have heard in the Word of the truth of the Gospel (Col. 1:5), causes them, like Moses of old, to "esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward" and by faith "endured, as seeing Him who is invisible" (Heb. 11:26. 27).

Such is the experience of God's people, and ought to be so increasingly by all of them: looking off from the things seen and temporal unto those which are unseen and eternal. With the eye of faith fixed steadfastly upon the Captain of their salvation, they should run with patience the race set before them. Though a very small part of this world be their portion, they are to "look for a City which hath foundations, whose Maker and Builder is God." Though called upon to suffer temporal losses for Christ's sake, they are to remember that in Heaven, "they have a better and enduring substance." If they be the objects of scorn and infamy, they can rejoice that their names are written in Heaven, and will yet be honored by Christ, not only before the Father and the holy angels, but before an assembled universe He will not be ashamed to call brethren. If their affections be really set upon things above, then having food and raiment they will therewith be content. If they have the assurance they are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, it will be a small matter when worms of the earth cast out their names as evil and

shun their company. If believing anticipations of the glorious future be theirs, then the joy of the Lord will be their strength.

If the would-be disciple of Christ is enjoined to sit down first and count the cost (Luke 14:28), let him also make an inventory of the compensations. How rich those compensations are, how great "the recompense of the reward" is, may be estimated by many considerations:

1. From the contrast presented by our present sufferings. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17). The sufferings of God's people in this world are, considered in themselves, often very heavy and grievous, and in many cases long protracted. If, therefore, they be "light" when set over against their future bliss, how great that bliss must be! The paucity of human language to express it is seen in the piling up of one term upon another: it is a "weight," it is an "exceeding weight," even a "far more exceeding weight," yea, it is an "eternal weight of glory."

2. From the Divine promises. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you . . . for great is your reward in Heaven" (Matthew 5:11-12): who can gauge what He terms "great"! "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matthew 13:43). "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matthew 25:21).

3. From our relationship to God. The saints are designated His children and heirs, and it is not possible for Almighty God to invest created beings with higher honour than that. This sonship is not that which pertains to them as creatures, and which in a lower sense other creatures share—but rather is it a peculiar privilege and dignity which belongs to them as new creatures in Christ Jesus. As such they are nearer and dearer unto God than the unfallen angels. Therefore the riches of the saints are to be estimated by the riches of God Himself!

4. From the declared purpose of God. "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6, 7). If, then, God has designed to make a lavish display of the fullness of His favour unto His people, how surpassingly glorious will such a demonstration of it be! As another has said, "When the Monarch of the universe declares His purpose of showing how much He loves His people, the utmost stretch of imagination will struggle in vain to form even a slight conception of their glory."

5. From the saints being God's inheritance. All creatures are God's property, but the saints are His in a peculiar sense. They are expressly denominated "God's heritage" (1 Pet. 5:3), which imports that all other things compared with them are trifling in His view. On them He sets His heart, loving them with an everlasting love, valuing them above the angels. That affords another standard by which we may measure their future felicity. Well might the Apostle pray that the eyes of our understanding should be enlightened, that we might know, "what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1:18). According as God has glory in the saints, they themselves will be glorious.

6. From the love which Christ bears them. Of that love they have the fullest proof in His infinite condescension to become incarnate for their sakes, in the unparalleled humiliation into which He entered in His producing for them a perfect robe of righteousness, and in His making a full atonement for all their sins. That involved not only a life of poverty and shame, of enduring the contradiction of sinners against Himself, but of suffering the wrath of God in their stead.

Such love defies description and is beyond human comprehension. If He so loved us when we were enemies, what will He not bestow on us as His friends and brethren!

7. From the reward God has bestowed upon Christ. This also affords us a criterion by which we may gauge what awaits the saints. The stupendous achievements of Christ have been duly recognized by the Father and richly recompensed. That reward is one which is proportioned to the dignity of His person, one which is answerable to the revenue of honour and praise which His infinitely meritorious work brought to God, and which is commensurate with the unparalleled sufferings He endured and the sacrifice He made. When God gives He does so—as in all His other actions—in accord with whom and what He is. He has highly exalted the Redeemer, and given Him the name which is above every name. In John 17:22 we find the Lord Jesus making mention to the Father of "the glory which Thou hast given Me." Oh, what a transcendent and supernal glory that will be! And that glory He shares with His beloved people: "the glory which Thou gayest Me, I have given them"! That which pertains to the heavenly Bridegroom is also the portion of His Bride. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with My Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21). The Head and His members form one body, and therefore, "when He who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3:4).

While the Scriptures make no attempt to gratify a carnal curiosity concerning the nature and occupations of that life into which the regenerate enter when they pass out of this world, yet sufficient is told them to feed hope and gladden their hearts. While it is stated that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. 2:9), let it not be overlooked that the same passage goes on to say, "But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God" (v. 10). Yes, He has, to no inconsiderable extent, graciously revealed the same in the Word of Truth, and while we are to beware of lusting to be, "wise above what is written," we should spare no pains to be made wise to what is written. If the unregenerate go to such trouble and expense in manufacturing telescopes and erecting observatories in order to examine the stellar planets, and take such delight in each fresh discovery they make, yet never expect to personally possess those distant stars, how intense should be our interest in those glories of Heaven which will soon be ours forever!

Not only has God been pleased to reveal to His people something of the blissful future awaiting them, but even while still, in this vale of tears, He favors them at times with real foretastes of the same. Though at present we are able to form only the most imperfect and indistinct ideas of the saints' felicity in Heaven, nevertheless, in those moments of high elevation of soul, when the believer is abstracted from external things and absorbed with contemplating the perfections of God, he joins heartily with the Psalmist in exclaiming, "Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee" (Ps. 73:25). Not only at conversion, when the soul rejoices in the knowledge of sins forgiven and of his being accepted in the Beloved, but afterwards, in seasons of intimate fellowship with the Lord, the conscious motions of sin are suppressed, and he is sensible only of the exercise of holy desires, love and joy. Such an experience is a real "earnest" of that which he will enjoy to a far greater degree when he is delivered from the body of this death (indwelling corruptions) and is "present with the Lord," no longer viewing Him through a mirror, but beholding Him "face to face."

It is at the second coming of Christ or at death that the believer in Him enters into the glorified state, and therefore, before examining what Holy Writ has to say upon the latter, we propose to enter into some detail on what it teaches concerning his dissolution. Since the vast majority of the redeemed enter Heaven through the portals of death—for they have been doing so for almost 6,000 years, and the New Testament seems to intimate there will be very few indeed of them upon earth at the Redeemer's return—it is appropriate that we should do so. Moreover, there is a real need for us to, for in certain quarters scarcely anything has been given out, either orally or in writing, for the instruction and comfort of God's people upon the dying of the saint. Not only does nature shrink from the experience, and unbelief paint it in black, but the Devil is not inactive in seeking to strike terror into their hearts. Not a few have been deprived of the blessed teaching of the Word thereon, because they have been erroneously led to believe that for a Christian to think much about death, or seek to prepare himself for it, is dishonoring to Christ and utterly inconsistent with "looking for that blessed hope" and living in the daily expectation of His glorious appearing.

That there is no real inconsistency between the two things is clear from many considerations. Whether the Saviour will return before "the millennium" or not until the close of earth's history—whether His coming be "imminent," or whether certain events must first take place—this is sure—that the Apostle Paul was among the number of those who "waited for God's Son from Heaven" (1 Thess. 1:10). Nevertheless, that did not deter him from communicating a most comforting and assuring description of what takes place at the death of a Christian (2 Cor. 5:1-8). Let us also point out that when exhorting the New Testament saints to run with patience the race which is set before them, the first motive which the Holy Spirit supplies for the same is to remind them that they are "compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses" (Heb. 12: l)—the reference being to those whose testimony is described in the previous chapter, of whom it is said, "these all died in faith" (Heb. 11:13), and where the triumphant deaths of Isaac, Jacob and Joseph are most blessedly depicted (vv. 20-22). We propose, then, to dwell upon the death of a child of God, the accompaniments or attendants of the same, and the glorious sequel thereto.

One of the distinguishing features of the Holy Scriptures and one of the many proofs of their Divine inspiration is their blessed illumination of the grave and the revelation they vouchsafe concerning the hereafter. The light of nature and the best of pagan philosophy could provide no certainty about the next life. The famous Aristotle, when contemplating death, is said to have expressed himself thus: "Anxius vixi, dubius morioa, nesci quo vado," which signifies, "I have lived in anxiety, I am dying in doubtfulness, and know not where I am going." How delightful the contrast of a Christian who can affirm, "having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better" (Phil. 1:23). How profoundly thankful should we be unto God for His Holy Word! It not only reveals to us the way of salvation, makes clear the believer's path of duty, but it irradiates the valley of shadows and lifts a comer of the veil, affording to us a view of Immanuel's land. If God's people made a more prayerful and believing study of and meditated upon what the Word teaches about their departure from this world and their Homegoing, death would not only be divested of its terrors, but would be welcomed by them.

That there is a radical difference between the death of a believer and of an unbeliever is clear from many passages. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death" (Prov. 14:32), upon which Thomas Boston well said: "This text looks like the cloud between the Israelites and the Egyptians: having a dark side towards the latter and a

bright side towards the former. It represents death like Pharaoh's jailer, bringing the chief butler and the chief baker out of prison: the one restored to his office, and the other to be led to his execution. It shows the difference between the godly and ungodly in their death: who, as they act a very different part in life, so in death have a very different exit. . . The righteous are not driven away as chaff before the wind, but led away as a bride to the marriage chamber, carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The righteous man dies not in a sinful state, but in a holy state. He goes not away in sin, but out of it. In his life he was putting off the old man, changing his prison garments; and now the remaining rags of them are removed, and he is adorned with robes of glory. He has hope in his death: the well-founded expectation of better things than he ever had in this world."

Proverbs 14:32 is but one of many passages in the earlier Scriptures which evince that the Old Testament saints were far from being in the dark regarding death or what lay beyond it. They knew that in God's presence is "fullness of joy, at Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore" (Ps. 16:11). Said David, "I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness" (Ps. 17:15). And again, "Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever" (Ps. 23:6). It is true that life and immortality have been brought more fully to light through the Gospel (2 Tim. 1:10), nevertheless, it is clear that from the dawn of human history, the light of Divine revelation had, for the saints, illuminated the tomb. "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory" (Ps. 73:24), which, as a summary, goes as far as anything taught in the New Testament. "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake: some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2). And therefore, it is said of all those who died in faith that, having seen the promises of God afar off, they "were persuaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11:13).

Before proceeding further, let us face the question, Why does a child of God die? Since physical death be one of the consequences of sin, and since the Lord Jesus has paid the whole of its wages, and therefore put it away for His people, why should any of them have to enter the grave? A number of reputable writers whom we have consulted deem that a great and insoluble mystery, while others evade it by saying that such presents no greater problem than sin's remaining in us after regeneration. But neither of those things should present any difficulty: both are designed for God's glory and their good. As Proverbs 14:32 shows, there is a vast difference between the death of the righteous and that of the wicked. Death is not sent to the former as a penal infliction, but comes to him as a friend—to free him from all further sorrow and suffering—to induct the heir of glory into his inheritance. Why should a Christian die? sufficient for the disciple to be as his Master, and "made conformable unto His death." What a fearful hardship had the saints from Pentecost onwards been obliged to remain on earth till the end of time! Surely it is an act of Divine love to remove them from the vale of tears! But could not God have translated them to Heaven without seeing death, like He did Enoch and Elijah? Yes, but they were exceptions; and in such case Christ would not have the glory of raising their bodies from the dust and fashioning them like unto the body of His glory!

Chapter 18 – The Joy of Death and Heaven

We are now to consider some of the details revealed in Scripture about the death of a child of God. It is a most important and practical subject, and, though a solemn one, a very blessed one too; for it is then that the saint enters into glory. Let it be pointed out that if we are prepared for God's summons to pass from this life, then, whether His messenger be death or the appearing of the Lord of life, we shall be equally ready. On the other hand, those who are unprepared for death, yet profess to be daily looking for that Blessed Hope, are woefully deceiving themselves that they will be among the number who shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. What we have here said requires no proof: it is self-evident that since a saint's departure from this scene is in order for him to enter the presence of God, that if he be prepared for that, it can make no difference to his soul whether death or Christ personally be the one to conduct him thither. Let the Christian make his calling and election sure (2 Pet. 1:10) by ascertaining that he has a valid title to Heaven through Christ (Rom. 5:11) and a personal meetness by the miracle of the new birth (John 3:5; Col. 1:12), and he has no good reason to dread either death or the Redeemer's return.

Death may be defined as the dissolution of that union which exists between the constituent elements of human nature: it is a separating of the immaterial part of man from the material, an emerging of the soul from the body. But that severance in the Christian for a while produces no separation of either his soul or his body from the Lord Jesus. The union there is between the redeemed and regenerate members of Christ's mystical body and their glorious Head is indissoluble and endless, and is both the basis and security of every blessing they enjoy in time and eternity. His people are as truly His in death as in life. Their union with Christ is the same, nor is their interest in Him lessened. As the beloved Hawker said, "The covenant rots not in the grave, however their bodies molder into dust." Moreover, that separation which the believer sustains of soul and body at death is but for a season; and among other blessings with which it is accompanied, will be amply compensated on the resurrection morning, when an everlasting union shall be effected between them, nevermore to be broken.

Let us now consider four expressions used in the New Testament in connection with the death of a believer, none of which, be it noted, contains the least suggestion of an experience to be dreaded. (1) The Apostle Paul spoke of his decease as a departing from this world: "having a desire to depart, and be with Christ, which is far better" (Phil. 1:23). Young's concordance defines the word as signifying "to loose up (an anchor)." It is a nautical term, which describes a vessel leaving her temporary moorings. The figure is a suggestive and picturesque one. The hour for sailing has arrived. The anchor is weighed, the gangway raised, the ropes are released, and fond farewells are said and waved to beloved friends who have come to see us off The ship now moves gently away from the quay, down the river, into the vast reaches of the ocean beyond. That is what death is to a Christian: a loosening of those moorings which bound him to the earth, a gliding out into a life of freedom, a going forth unto another Country. This same figure is used again in "the time of my departure is at hand" (2 Tim. 4:6)—the exact hour of sailing has been Divinely appointed!

(2) The Apostle Peter likened his impending dissolution unto the taking down of a tent: "knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed

me" (2 Pet. 1:14, and, cf. John 21:18, 19). In the previous verse he had similarly spoken of his body, declaring that he would continue urging upon the saints their obligations and duties "as long as I am in this tabernacle," or better "tent." The body, for whose wants the majority of our fellows are as anxious as though it were the whole man, is but a tent. The figure is a very suggestive one. A "tent" is a frail structure, designed only for temporary occupation, is suited for use in the wilderness, and is exchanged for a "house eternal in the heavens." In the verse Peter employed a mixed metaphor, as Paul did in 2 Corinthians 5:1-4, where the breaking up of the earthly house of our tabernacle is spoken of as our being "unclothed." Here, then, is the Christian concept of death: it is no more terrible or distressing than the removing of a tent (which is easily taken down), or the putting off of our garments when retiring to rest—to be resumed at the dawn of a new day!

(3) Death is likened unto an exodus. The term is used first in connection with our Saviour: when He was transfigured before His disciples on the holy mount, there talked with Him Moses and Elijah, "who spake of His decease, which He should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:3 1). The Greek word is exodos and is found again in Hebrews 11:22, where it is recorded that, "By faith Joseph when he was a dying [in Egypt] made mention of the departing [exodos] of the children of Israel." It is hardly to be thought that Moses and Elijah would confine their speech unto Christ's death, but would rather converse upon "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow" (1 Peter 1:1 1). Dr. Lightfoot was of the opinion that Christ's exodus included His ascension, pointing out that Israel's exodus from Egypt was a "triumphant and victorious one." The term literally means "exit," and Manton regards its scope in Luke 9:31, as including Christ's death, resurrection (Acts 2: 24) and ascension (Luke 24:51). Peter also made use of the same term when he referred to his own "decease" or exodus (2 Pet. 1:15), thereby giving it a general application unto all of God's people.

Here, then, is another simple but suggestive figure to express the blessedness of a believer's departure from this life. Like the previous one, this also imports the going forth on a journey; but, in addition, the leaving behind of the house of bondage and the making for the promised inheritance—the antitypical Canaan. There is a striking analogy between the death of a Christian and Israel's emancipation from the cruel slavery of Pharaoh. One of the distinct features of the Christian's life in this world is his groaning under the burden of indwelling sin (Rom. 8:23; 2 Cor. 5:2), a crying "who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But death is, for him, a snapping of his fetters, an escaping from the bonds that hold him, a going forth from sin and sorrow into freedom and immortality. Israel's exodus from Egypt was a leaving behind of all their enemies, and such is death for the saint: the world, the flesh, the Devil—all that opposes God and hinders him forever done with. Israel's exodus included their safe passage through the Red Sea, a crossing over unto the farther shore, their faces turned unto the land of milk and honey. How eagerly should the Christian welcome death!

(4) The death of God's people is likened unto a sleep. This is the most familiar figure of all, and since it is used much more frequently in the Scriptures, and because certain errorists have perverted its meaning, we will dwell longer upon it. To the saints in his day the Apostle said, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep" (1 Thess. 4:13). We regard it as a mistake to restrict that to their bodies: obviously it is their persons ("them") which are "asleep"; yet that by no means warrants the conclusion which some have drawn—that at death the soul passes into a state of total inactivity and unconsciousness.

Such a verse proves too much for the case of "soul sleeping," for it would make it teach that the soul died with the body, since "sleep" is here an image of death; which would be in direct variance with our Lord's words, "Fear not them which are able to kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul" (Matthew 10:28). Even in this life, when the body is soundly asleep, the soul or mind is not inactive, as our dreams manifestly evidence.

Whether or not Luke 16:19-31, is a "parable," certain it is that our Lord was there setting forth the condition of both the righteous and the unrighteous immediately after death, and if their souls then pass into a state of oblivion His language would be utterly misleading where He declared the one to be "comforted" and the other "tormented" (v. 25). So, too, His promise to the dying thief had been meaningless unless he was to enjoy the company of Christ in Paradise that day and enter upon all the delights of that place. Further, it would not be true that "death" is one of the things which is unable to separate believers from receiving manifestations of God's love and their enjoyment of the same (Rom. 8:3 8, 39) if they pass from this world into a state of insensibility. Again, Paul, who was favored with such intimate and precious fellowship with Christ in this world, had never been in any "strait" between his desire to remain in the flesh for the sake of his converts and his longing to "depart," had the latter alternative meant the complete suspension of all his faculties, without any communion with God. Nor had he spoken of "the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. 12:23) if they are without life and light, peace and joy, immediately after death.

While rejecting the false glosses put upon this figurative expression, let us be careful the enemy does not rob us of its true import, and thereby deprive us of the comfort it contains. Was it not for the consolation of His disciples (and all His people) that the Saviour said: "I go to awake our friend Lazarus out of his sleep" (John 11:11)? Again, we are told that after the first Christian martyr had knelt down and prayed for his enemies, he "fell asleep" (Acts 7:60)! How much more was conveyed by that statement of the inspired historian than had he merely said that Stephen expired! Amid the curses of his foes, and while their stones were crushing the life from his body, he "fell asleep." Inexpressibly blessed is that! As the sleep of the body brings welcome relief when it is racked with pain, so death delivers from spiritual warfare and puts an end to all the wounding of the believer's soul by indwelling sin. As sleep gives rest from the toils and burdens of the day, so that we are oblivious to the perplexities and trials which harass our waking hours, so death for the saint puts an end to all the things which occasioned him anxiety and distress down here: he is released, henceforth, from all cares and troubles.

No doubt the principal idea which this figure should convey to us is the entire harmlessness of death. What is there in sleep to dread? Instead of being an object of horror, it is a merciful provision of God's for which we should be most grateful. It comes to us not as a rough and terrifying foe, but approaches gently as a kind friend. Christ has removed the "sting" from death (1 Cor. 15:56, 57), and therefore it can no more harm one of His redeemed than could a hornet whose power to injure has been destroyed. In employing this comforting metaphor, God would have His people assured that they have nothing more to fear from the article of death than in lying down on their beds to slumber. Again—sleep is of but brief duration: a few hours of repose, and then we arise refreshed and reinvigorated for the duties of another day. In like manner, death is but a sleep, an entering into rest, and resurrection will be the restoration and glorification of our bodies. Finally, death is likened to a sleep to intimate how easily the Lord will quicken our mortal bodies. The skeptic may ridicule as an impossibility the

truth of resurrection, but to Christ it will be simpler than waking a sleeper. A slumbering person is aroused most easily by one speaking to him, and "the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice" (John 5:28)!

In addition to those figurative expressions, which so manifestly depict the harmlessness of death, God has made many plain statements in His Word for the comfort and assurance of His saints. It is evident from Genesis 15 that He preached the Gospel to Abraham in clear terms: not only the basic doctrine of justification by faith and the righteousness which is imputed to the believer, but also that state of blessedness into which all His people enter immediately upon their death. First, He made known to the "father" or prototype of all the faithful of what Heaven is and wherein the happiness of the saints consists: "I am thy Shield" in this life, "and thy exceeding great Reward" in the life to come (v. 1). For as Goodwin pointed out, “Reward is after the finishing of work, and what is this reward but the blessedness of Heaven? Christ Himself says no other, nor no more, of it, ‘The Lord is the portion of Mine inheritance.’ For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the Cross knowing that ‘in Thy presence is fullness of joy.’” Second, God informed him what the condition of his soul should be: "thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace" (v. 15). No wonder Balaam said, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his" (Num. 23:10).

What a blessed declaration is this: "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints" (Ps. 116:15)—then certainly it ought not to be dreadful in theirs! That verse presents an aspect of our subject which is all too little considered by Christians. They look at it, as at most other things, too much from the human angle—but here we have what may be termed the Godward side of a believer’s death—it is precious in His sight! The Hebrew word yaqar is rendered "costly" in 1 Kings 5:17, "honourable" in Psalm 45:9, "excellent" in Psalm 36:7. It occurs again in "precious stones" (1 Kings 10:10), yea, is used of Christ Himself—"a precious Cornerstone." Whatever form it takes, and no matter what be the attendant circumstances, such is the death of His people unto the Lord: an honourable, costly, excellent, precious thing. Note well the words, "in the sight of the LORD": His eyes are fixed upon them in a peculiar and special manner. Their death is precious unto Him because it releases them from sin and sorrow, because it is sanctified by His own death for them, because it is a taking unto His immediate presence those upon whom He set His heart from all eternity, because they are the trophies of His own victory, and because they then "enter into the joy of their Lord."

In the closing verses of 1 Corinthians 3 a number of things are mentioned as pertaining to God’s children: "all things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours." Those words were first addressed to shame some who sought pre-eminence in the house of God and whose affections were too much set upon things on the earth; yet they are full of instruction and comfort for us today. The ministry of God’s servants, the things God has provided for us in the world, life or death, are equally ours. Death is ours not by way of punishment and curse, but as a privilege and blessing. It is ours not as an enemy, but as a friend. It is our conquered foe, and is not to be feared, for it has neither strength nor sting to harm us: Christ, our victorious Captain, has disarmed it of both —"He hath abolished [rendered null and void] death" (2 Tim. 1:10). Life and death are administered by God so as to fulfil His gracious designs unto His people. Death is theirs because they share in Christ’s triumphs over it, because it furthers their interests and ministers to their wellbeing, because it is a means of their inexpressible advantage, removing them from a

world of ills, conducting them into a world of glory and bliss.

What a word is this: "And I heard a voice from Heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13). Here was a special and immediate revelation from Heaven. It was to be placed upon imperishable record for the comfort of believers to the end of time. "Blessed are the dead": pronounced so by God, happy in themselves. Not "blessed shall they be," at the resurrection morning, though that will be their case; but "blessed are" they at the moment. Why? Because they "die in the Lord": whether conscious of the fact or not, they die in union and communion with Him, His smile of approbation resting upon them. To die in the Lord is “to die in the favour of God, in a state of peace with Him as members of His mystical body” (Thomas Manton). But more: they are blessed "from henceforth," without delay or cessation, which at once gives the lie to their lapsing into a state of entire unconsciousness. “Yea, saith the Spirit.” “Here is solemn confirmation: the Holy Spirit maketh affidavit” (Manton). They “rest from their labours”: not only the toils of their temporal callings, but their conflicts with sin. “‘And their works do follow them’: we carry nothing out of the world with us but the conscience and comfort of what we have done for God” (Manton).

We continue by borrowing a few thoughts (though clothing them mostly in our own language) from Boston’s counsels on why a Christian should be reconciled to death, and then how to prepare for it. Some dread the prospect of leaving behind their wives and children in this cold world: yet they have a reliable Guardian to commit them unto. Says He, "Leave thy fatherless children: I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in Me" (Jer. 49:11). But death will remove me from my dearest friends! True, yet it will conduct you unto your best Friend; and if those you leave are God’s children, you will meet them again in Heaven. But the approach and pains of death are sometimes very dreadful! Not nearly so terrible as pangs of conscience caused by apprehensions of Divine wrath—remember that each pang of bodily disease brings you a step nearer unto a soul made every whit whole. But I am naturally timorous, and the very thoughts of death alarm me! Then familiarize yourself with it by frequent meditations thereon, and especially view the bright side of the cloud, and by faith look beyond it.

That there may be a readier disposition of heart and preparedness of mind, make it your care to "have always a conscience void of offense toward God and men" (Acts 24:16). Walk closely with God, maintain a diligent and strict course in the way of His precepts; and because of the infirmities which cleave to us in this present state, renew your repentance daily and be ever washing in that Fountain which has been opened for sin and for uncleanness. Be constantly engaged in weaning your heart from this world. Let the mantle of earthly enjoyments hang loosely upon you, that it may be easily dropped when the summons comes to depart for Heaven. Set your affections, more and more, upon things above, and pass through this wilderness scene as a stranger and pilgrim. We are ready for Heaven when our heart is there before us (Mathew 6:21). Be diligent in laying up evidences of your title to Heaven, for the neglect of so doing renders uncomfortable the dying pillar of many a Christian. Grieve not the Holy Spirit, so that He will bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God (Rom. 8:16).

Though our specific subject is that revelation with which God favors His people in Heaven, yet because the great majority of them pass thereto through the door of death, and since quite a number of our readers have been denied the comforting teaching of Scripture

thereon, we have taken the opportunity to write upon the same. We come now to consider some of the accompaniments of a Christian's death.

Among these, first place must be given unto the presence of the Lord with him at that time. While it is blessedly true that He never leaves nor forsakes them, being with them "alway" (Matthew 28:20), yet He is with them in a special manner at certain crucial times. This idea seems to be clearly borne out by the statement that God is "a very present help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1), as though He draws nearest of all to us in the seasons of acutest need. Do we not have an illustration and example of that fact when the three Hebrews were cast alive into Babylon's furnace, and the king beheld Another walking with them in the midst of the fire? "And the form of the fourth is like the Son of God" said he (Dan. 3:25).

Again—has not the Lord declared, "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name: thou art Mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee" (Isa. 43:1, 2). How blessedly that was demonstrated at the Red Sea, where God so gloriously showed Himself strong on behalf of His people; and again at the Jordan, which was more definitely a figure of the safe passage of believers through death. Was not the passing of Israel dry shod through Jordan into Canaan a blessed adumbration of the saints' harmless exit from this world and entrance into their everlasting inheritance? As Jehovah manifested Himself most conspicuously on those occasions, so— whether perceived by them or not—He is, in a most particular sense, present with His beloved ones as they walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Said the Psalmist, "I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me: Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me" (Ps. 23:4). Thy rod and Thy staff: "by which Thou governs and rules Thy flock—the emblems of Thy sovereignty and of Thy gracious care" (Spurgeon).

The meaning of those figures is plain: it is by His Word and Spirit that the good Shepherd governs and cares for His sheep, and is their "comfort" in the hour of their supreme crisis. That the believer is granted a special supply of the Divine Comforter at that hour can scarcely be doubted. "The Spirit was given us for that purpose, as a brother is said to be 'born for adversity' (Prov. 17:17). Certainly He who was given for a comfort to you all through your life long, and has delivered you out of all your distresses and fears, will carry you through this; and though your heart should for a while fail you, together with your flesh, yet God and His Spirit will not fail you (Ps. 73:26). The interest of the Spirit's own glory moves Him. No captain rejoices more to bring his vessel home into harbor, after he has sailed it safely through so many storms, than the Holy Spirit rejoices to bring a soul He has wrought upon and who was committed to His trust, safe to Heaven" (Thomas Goodwin). Let it be noted that "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" is given not only in life but also in death (Phil. 1:19, 20)!

2. The soul is rid of sin. There shall in no wise enter into the new Jerusalem "any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination" (Rev. 21:27). No serpent shall find admittance into the celestial paradise, nor will any who are still polluted by him. Not only the holiness of God, but the happiness of the saints also require that they be freed from all evil ere they enter Heaven, or otherwise their bliss would be marred. Their communion with and delighting themselves in the Lord is hindered down here by the sin which still cleaves to them. From the moment of the new birth until the moment a regenerated person leaves this world, "the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh," and since those two principles of action are "contrary the one to the other" it follows that he "cannot do the things that he would"

(Gal. 5:17), and daily has he occasion to lament, "O wretched man that I am." Even when the power of God subdues the ragings of sin within His children, they are not delivered from its inbeing. But when the Divine summons to the soul comes to depart hence, it is entirely delivered from inbred corruption. The conflict is then ended; the victory over sin is complete. No propensity to evil remains, no guilt of conscience or defilement shall ever again be contracted.

"Although the whole troop of evils, like the army of Egypt, will pursue me (as it did Israel) to the borders of the sea, death ends the warfare—'The Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever' (Ex. 14:13). O the inconceivable blessedness which immediately opens at death to every redeemed and regenerated child of God!" (Robert Hawker). Yet it is not death itself which effects this blessed purification of the soul. That is evident not only from the cases of Enoch and Elijah, who were caught up to Heaven without dying, but of those saints, too, who will be alive on earth at the personal return of Christ (1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:17). No, it is produced by the supernatural operation of God. It is the Lord Himself fitting His "temple" (2 Cor. 6:16) for His fuller and final possession. It is to be noted that Christ cleansed the temple at Jerusalem twice: at the beginning of His ministry (John 2:15-17) and again near the close thereof (Luke 19:45), which adumbrated His twofold cleansing of the hearts of His redeemed. At conversion they are purged from the love, the guilt, and the dominion of sin; at death they are delivered from its very inbeing and presence.

3. Enlarging of their faculties. We regard that expression, "the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. 12:23), as denoting not only their being purged of all evil and misery, but also of their being capacitated to take in immeasurably more good and happiness than ever they did previously. Sin has not only greatly impaired the vitality and functions of the body, but it has considerably injured the health and defiled and limited the faculties of the soul; and therefore the latter will experience a grand elevation when rid of the incubus of sin. As the resurrected body will be possessed of powers far transcending its present ones, so when the soul is glorified its faculties will be much greater—the understanding no longer beclouded, the affections purified, the will emancipated. In its present state the soul, even when engaged in spiritual acts, is sadly cramped and hampered, but upon its dismissing from the body, the Holy Spirit will strengthen, enlarge, and elevate the faculties of the soul, raising them up to a suitability and harmony with their new life in Heaven. Then will the believer know even as he is known (1 Cor. 13:12).

It was, we believe, to this gracious operation of the Spirit that David referred in Psalm 23:5, where, after describing his passage through the valley of the shadow of death and before mentioning his dwelling in the house of the Lord forever, he declared: "Thou anointest my head with oil: my cup runneth over." In Old Testament typology "oil" was the outstanding type of the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 John 2:27), and as the Lord Jesus was anointed by the Spirit at the beginning of His ministry (Acts 10:3 8) and again at the completion of it (Ps. 45:7; Acts 2:33), so the believer is anointed by Him first at conversion (2 Cor. 1:21, 22) and then receives a fuller infusion of Him at death. Then it is that mortality is "swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. 5:4)-words which are "as applicable unto the condition of the soul then, as at the resurrection they are applicable to the condition of the body" (Thomas Goodwin). As that eminent expositor pointed out: "In 1 Corinthians 15, where the change of the body is insisted on, Paul says, 'this mortal shall put on immortality; this corruptible, incoruption,' but here he says 'swallowed up of life,' which is the proper happiness of the soul." We will condense below the rest of his remarks

thereon.

“Though the soul in the substance of it be immortal, yet take the condition of life which it now leads and it may be most truly said to have a ‘mortality’ adhering to it, yea, inhering in it as the adjunct of it. There is a mortal state the person is in. There is an animal life, as one calls it; there is a dying life, a life of death, in which as to a great part the soul now lives; and it is this present state, or this dying life of the soul, which causes believers to ‘groan, being burdened,’ and which the Apostle here terms ‘mortality,’ but which he assures us will, at its dismissal from the body, be ‘swallowed up of life’—that which is life only, and only deserves the name of life: the true and eternal life, life indeed. For what is life? ‘This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent’ (John 17:3). It is a peculiar life of living in God, as knowing Him and seeing Him face to face.” The soul which hitherto had been so trammeled by sin shall then be taken into a life so rich, so full, so overflowing with abundance, as to rid it in a moment of all misery and imperfection, freeing and perfecting all its faculties.

4. Perfuming of their persons. This too is intimated in Psalm 23, a part of which we have somewhat anticipated. It seems to us that each experience described in verses 4-6 receives a general fulfillment throughout the life of a saint, and a particular one at his death. Thus, "though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death" well expresses his journey through the wilderness, for though men term this world, "the land of the living," it would be far more accurate to designate it "the land of the dying." The shadow of the grave is cast heavily across it; nevertheless, such language also suitably describes the believer’s passage through the article of death. "I will fear no evil": why should he? A "valley," in contrast with a "mountain," suggests easy travel, and a "shadow" cannot harm him! Moreover, the "shadow" necessarily presupposes the presence of light. Unbelief may talk of "the dark valley of death"—not so David. It was far otherwise with him: the Light of life (John 8:12) was there, as his words acknowledge: "for Thou art with me"—to support, to guard, to comfort, to rejoice. "With me" now in a peculiarly intimate and special way.

The One present was Jehovah, whom David knew and owned as "my Shepherd" in the opening verse. But observe a striking alteration in his language in the latter part of the Psalm. In the first three verses all the pronouns referring to the Lord are in the third person: "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me. He restoreth my soul." But in the last three verses David changes to the second person: "Thou art with me. Thy rod [not "His" rod] and Thy staff. Thou preparest a table before me, Thou anointest my head." Why the variation? Ah, there is something inexpressibly blessed in that change. During life the believer speaks of the Lord —"He leadeth me"; but as he enters the valley of the shadow he speaks to the Lord, for He is there by his side! How much we miss through our careless and hurried reading of God’s Word! How we need to weigh and ponder every jot and tittle in it. Sometimes the tense of the verb, at others the number of the noun marks that which is most important for us to observe; here the change of pronouns brings out a precious line of truth.

Having acknowledged the presence of the good Shepherd in the valley and the comfort derived from His gracious care, the Psalmist next went on to say: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." In Scripture, the "table" always speaks of fellowship, and that of the most intimate kind (Luke 22:21), and here it tells of the Lord’s communion with the dying saint, and the loving and full provision He has made to supply his

every need. His "enemies" may refer to the forces of evil, who would make their final assault upon him if they could. But they are prevented from doing so, for God has promised "the end of that man is peace" (Ps. 37:37). His enemies are not only thwarted, but mocked by the Lord in this "table." Then as he emerges from the valley, the believer exclaims, "Thou anointest my head with oil"—as Moses did the heads of the priests as they were on the point of entering upon their tabernacle privileges and duties (Ex. 28:41; 29:7), thereby preparing them for the presence of God. Thus the Redeemer puts upon the soul His own blessed fragrance as it enters into the courts above. Then David exultantly declared, "and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever." Thus this remarkable Psalm portrays the saint's happy life (vv. 1-3), comfortable death (vv. 4, 5), and blissful eternity (v. 6).

5. An angelic convoy. This is clear from our Lord's statement in Luke 16:22: "And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." Abraham is the father of all them that believe (Rom. 4:11), and is here shown to be in Paradise. His "bosom" speaks of the place of peculiar privilege (John 1:18; 13:23): the once-despised beggar, counted unworthy of a seat at the rich man's table on earth, is accorded a position of honour on high—placed next to the eminent Patriarch. The same gracious provision has God made for the safe conduct of each of His people in their journey from earth to Heaven: "He shalt give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways" (Ps. 91:11). Angelic ministry occupies, most probably, a far more extensive place in the lives of believers than any of them realize. "These encamp about them in the time of their life, and surely will not depart in the day of their death. These happy ministering spirits are attendants on the Lord's bride, and will doubtless carry her safely home to His house. The Captain of the saints' salvation is the Captain of this holy guard: He was their Guide even unto death, and He will be their Guide through it, too" (Thomas Boston).

What we are now considering presents another most blessed though little-known contrast between the death of the righteous and the death of the unrighteous. The souls of the former are carried to Heaven by the holy angels, the souls of the latter are seized by demons and taken to Hell. In Luke 12:20, Christ declared that God would say to the rich boaster, "Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul" (margin, and see Greek). Upon which, after affirming, "the devils take others' souls away," Thomas Goodwin, the Puritan, asked: "Who are they?" And his answer, "Hell is a prison (1 Pet. 3:19) and the judge delivers to the officer, and the officer casts into prison (Luke 12:58). This 'officer' is the Devil that hales souls to that prison." In this convoy or guard of angels for the redeemed, saints are conformed to their Head, when He was "carried up to Heaven" (Luke 24:5 1). "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: The Lord is among them . . . Thou hast ascended on high" (Ps. 68:17, 18). "Angels were the chariots in which Christ rode, and these the guard that attends believers" (Gill). Thus, the soul of the saint is conducted in state from his earthly house to his heavenly abode.

Immediately after death, without any interval of waiting either long or short, the ransomed soul is inducted into Paradise. The heir of glory enters at once upon his eternal inheritance: "absent from the body, present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8). This needs emphasizing in certain quarters, where the idea seems to obtain that the glorification of the saint's soul awaits the time of the glorification of his body. We do not like to see Protestants employing the term "intermediate state" (in contrast with "the eternal state"), for it savors too much of the imaginary

"Limbo" of the Romanists; greatly preferring the "disembodied" and the "resurrection state." Immediately at death spirits of just men are "made perfect" in knowledge, in holiness, in blessedness. Mortality is then "swallowed up of life": as Goodwin expressed it, the soul "is now all life and joy in God the Fountain of life." As we shall seek to show, the request of Christ in John 17:24, receives its fulfillment in the experience of His redeemed as soon as they leave this earth—the beatific vision is then theirs.

In the very moment of his dismissal from the body, the Saviour receives His redeemed into the actual possession of that eternal heritage which He has purchased for them. It was this reception for which the expiring Stephen made request when he said, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit" (Acts 7:59), and as Thomas Goodwin pointed out: "He not only receives it into His own bosom, but He brings it to God and presents it to Him with a joy infinitely more abounding than can be in us. Then it is that Christ is glorified and rejoices in us, and so we may be said rather to die to the Lord and His interest than to ours." Then it is that He "sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied." While at a later date Christ will present the entire company of His people to Himself a glorious Church, "not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. 5:27), yet He does so to each individual member of it at death, as His words to the dying thief clearly implied. Oh, what praise is due unto Him for having extracted the sting from death and robbed it of all its terrors! What cause have we to exclaim, "Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

What has been before us should surely make it easier to bear the trials through which a Christian may now be passing: at longest they are but for a moment in comparison with the eternity of bliss awaiting him. How faith should feed upon and hope anticipate the same! With what contentment should such a prospect fill us! What little reason have we to envy the deluded worshippers of Mammon, even though such now be clothed in purple and fine linen and fare sumptuously every day. How the contemplation of what God has prepared for them that love Him should wean their hearts from the perishing baubles of this world. How the certainty of being "with Christ" forever should make them desire to depart from this scene. How the knowledge that at death they will be forever done with sin and sorrow should make them willing to die. Why should any believer be reluctant to long to go unto the eternal Lover of his soul, especially when he learns from Scripture what full provision God has made for his passage to Him and that it is an easy and pleasant one? Oh, that all our ambitions and longings may be swallowed up in that of the Psalmist's: "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD" (27:4).

Chapter 06 – Addressed to Reason and Conscience

That the Living Oracles of Truth are addressed to the reason of men as well as their conscience is definitely established by the fact that God Himself appeals to prophecy in proof of the unrivalled character of the communications He made through His servants. Their messages were retrospective as well as prospective, treating of things of the remotest antiquity as well as of those which lay centuries ahead, and thus commanded the entire horizon of history past and future. Their Divine Author places such peculiar value and attaches such importance to those supernatural disclosures as an evidence of inspiration that not less than seven times in the prophecy of Isaiah alone He challenges any false faith or idolatrous cult the world over to produce any revelations like unto His. "Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring forth and show us what shall happen: let them show the former things, what they be, that we may consider them and know the latter end of them, or declare us things for to come" (Isa. 41:21, 22).

"Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them" (Isa. 42:9). "Let all the nations be gathered together and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and show us former things? [such as the creation of the earth, and everything else recorded in the book of Genesis]: let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified [in their claims]; or let them hear, and say, it is truth" (Isa. 43:9). "I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of My mouth, and I showed them; I did them suddenly, and they came to pass" (Isa. 48:3). None of the seers of false religion can show either "the former things" or the "latter things": their outlook is restricted to the present. Only the Omniscient One can endow His messengers with a vision which reaches back before history began and which looks forward to ages not yet historic.

Again—that the Word of God is addressed to the reason of men is proven from the fact that appeal is made to the miracles recorded therein. "And many other signs [i.e. miracles—Acts 2:22] truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples (who have recorded many of them] which are not written in this book. But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing, ye might have life through His name" (John 20:30, 31). The record of the various wonders wrought by God are given in Scripture not merely to furnish information, but to convince us that He is the Author of the Book which chronicles the same, and to bring our hearts and lives in full submission to His authority—and that we receive as our personal Lord and Saviour the One who is Himself God manifest in flesh, and therefore the final Spokesman from Heaven. Those whom God employed as His penmen gave to the world a Divine revelation, and He accredited the same with due evidences, so that any receiving them are left without excuse if they despise and reject them.

Now it should be quite evident that if God is to give a personal communication unto fallen man, who is full of unbelief and skepticism, it will be supported with something more than the ordinary evidence of human testimony—that it will be supplemented by extraordinary evidence. A Divine revelation will be confirmed by Divine insignia. If God is to speak audibly to those who forsook Him, it can only be in a way out of the common course. If He commissions messengers to declare His will, they must possess such credentials as demonstrate that they come from

Him. Each Prophet sent from Him must be authenticated by Him. Those bearing supernatural messages will reasonably be expected to possess supernatural seals and be accompanied with supernatural phenomena. If God directly intervenes to instruct and legislate for the children of men, then clearly revelations and miracles must cooperate and combine. But here the Infidel will at once demur, and deny that miracles are either possible or credible.

Nothing is easier than for an atheist to affirm that since the universe exists by eternal necessity and is subject to no change, that miracles cannot take place; but it is impossible for him to make anything approaching a satisfactory demonstration of that assertion. We do not propose to enter upon a lengthy discussion of the subject, deeming it sufficient to appeal to what has been presented in the previous chapters as proof that God is, that He created the universe, and is now presiding over it. And then to point out, first, that what men term "the course of nature" is nothing but the agency of God. To declare that either a suspension or an alteration of the laws of nature is impossible, is to endow those laws with the attributes of Deity, and to be guilty of the absurdity of saying that the Lawgiver is subordinate to His own laws. The workman is ever superior to his works, and if God be the Creator and Governor of Heaven and earth then He must be free to interfere in His own works whenever He pleases, and to make such interference manifest, by suspending or altering those laws by which He is pleased normally to regulate them.

“What is called the usual course of nature, then, is nothing else than the will of God, producing certain effects in a continual, regular, constant and uniform manner; which course or manner of acting being in every moment arbitrary, is as easy to be altered at any time as to be preserved. . . . To assert the impossibility of a miracle is absurd, for no man can prove, nor is there any reason to believe, that to work a miracle is a greater exercise of power than those usual operations which we daily witness. To restore life to a dead body and to bring it forth from the grave is not attended with any more difficulty than to communicate life to a fetus and to bring it forth from the womb. Both are equally beyond the power of man; both are equally possible with God. In respect of the power of God, all things are alike easy to be done by Him. The power of God extends equally to great things as to small, and to many as to few; and the one makes no more difficulty or resistance to His will than the other” (Robert Haldane).

To proceed one step farther. In a world which is upheld and governed by the living God, miracles are not only possible but credible, because probable. If the arrangement of nature be designed for the glory of its Maker and the good of His creatures, then it becomes in the highest degree likely that when any end of extraordinary importance is to be attained, that the laws of nature in their uniform course should be altered and made subservient to that event, that it should be heralded and evinced by extraordinary manifestations. Not only will the laws of the natural world become subservient to any great moral end, but they will be made to promote it. Since the laws of nature be under the direct management of their own Legislator, then not only may He moderate those laws at His own pleasure, but it is reasonable to conclude that He will make those modifications palpable and visible to His creatures when He purposes to effect some unusual influence upon them. Miracles could only be incredible if they were contrary to God’s known perfections or contradicted some prior revelation of His will.

“Everything we see is, in one sense, a miracle: it is beyond our comprehension. We put a twig into the ground, and find in a few years’ time that it becomes a tree; but how it draws its nourishment from the earth, and how it increases, we know not. We look around us, and see the

forests sometimes shaken by storms, at other times yielding to the breeze; in one part of the year in full leaf, in another naked and desolate. We all know that the seasons have an effect on these things, and philosophers will conjecture at a few immediate causes; but in what manner these causes act, and how they put nature in motion, the wisest of them know not. When the storm is up, why does it not continue to rage? When the air is calm, what rouses the storm? We know not, but must, after our deepest researches into first causes, rest satisfied with resolving all into the power of God. Yet, notwithstanding we cannot comprehend the most common of these appearances, they make no impression on us, because they are common, because they happen according to a stated course, and are seen every day. If they were out of the common course of nature, though in themselves not more difficult to comprehend, they would still appear more wonderful to us, and more immediately the work of God.

"Thus, when we see a child grow into a man, and, when the breath has left the body, turn to corruption, we are not in the least surprised, because we see it every day; but were we to see a man restored from sickness to health by a word, or raised to life from the dead by a mere command, though these things are not really more unaccountable, yet we call the uncommon even a miracle, because it is uncommon. We acknowledge, however, that both are produced by God, because it is evident that no other power can produce them. Such, then, is the nature of the evidence which arises from miracles; and we have no more reason to disbelieve them, when well attested and not repugnant to the goodness or justice of God, only because they were performed several ages ago, than we have to disbelieve the more ordinary occurrences of Providence which passed before our own time, because the same occurrences may never happen again during our lives. The ordinary course of nature proves the Being and Providence of God; these extraordinary acts of power prove the Divine commission of that person who performs them" (T. H. Horne).

Finally, miracles are not only possible and credible, but, as indicated in an earlier paragraph, in certain circumstances they are necessary. If there was to be a restoration of that intercourse with God which men had severed and forfeited by their defection, it must obviously be by supernatural means. Divine revelation, being of an extraordinary nature, requires extraordinary proofs to certify it. Since it was not to be a revelation made separately to every individual, conveyed to his mind in such a way as should remove all doubting, but rather a revelation communicated to a few and then published to the world, it follows that miracles were called for to confirm the testimony of the messengers of God, to convince others that they spoke by higher authority than their own, and therefore the necessity of miracles was in proportion to the necessity of a revelation being made. By the miracle performed through His servants God gave proof to those who heard them that they were not being imposed upon by fraud when they claimed to utter a, "Thus saith the Lord."

A miracle is a supernatural work. It is something which could not be produced by the laws of nature, and it is therefore a deviation from their normal operations. A miracle is an extraordinary Divine work, where an effect is produced contrary to the common course of nature. God was pleased to perform such prodigies to testify His approbation of those who acted as His mouthpieces, to avouch their messages— the miracles they performed were their letters patent. Whatever God has confirmed by miracles is solemnly and authoritatively ratified. The miracles wrought by Moses and Elijah, and by the Apostles of the New Testament were such as were manifestly beyond the powers of any creature to produce and therefore they

attested the Divine origin of their messages. Obviously, God would not work such wonders through imposters or in order to confirm lies, but only to witness unto the truth of a Divine revelation—see Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:4; though miracles were both probable and necessary to authenticate unto men a revelation from God, yet it could not reasonably be expected that such sensible tokens or marks of Divine interposition should be renewed in every age or to each individual in the world, for that would completely subvert the regular order of things which the Creator has established. Nor was there any need for such a continual repetition of miracles. Once Christianity was established in the world, those extraordinary interventions of God ceased. It was fitting that they should, for God does nothing unnecessarily. The Jews, every time they heard the Law read to them, did not expect a recurrence of the supernatural happenings of Sinai: those were one solemn confirmation of the Ten Commandments, which were to serve for all generations. Likewise, the Christian doctrine is the same now as it was in the first century, and will remain unchanged to the end of the world: we have a sure and authentic record of it in the Bible. Miracles, like any other facts, may be certified by reliable testimony.

It is by means of testimony that we obtain by far the greater part of our knowledge, and the trustworthiness of such testimony may be as conclusive as sense or mathematical demonstration. Evidence is necessary to establish the fact of revelation, though revelation existed before a line of Scripture came to be written. Those to whom the revelation was not personally made are required to believe it on the testimony of those who received it from the mouth of God. And it is just as unreasonable and illogical not to credit those witnesses as it would be to decline the trustworthiness of the atlas. I might as well refuse to believe there is any such country as New Zealand because I have never seen it for myself or personally spoken to those who have lived there, as reject the Bible as a Divine revelation because I did not personally witness the miracles God wrought to attest its original penmen, nor have had personal converse with them. It is only by the evidence of testimony of their contemporaries and then through historians that we know such men as Alexander and Napoleon ever existed.

"On the same grounds of historical testimony, but furnished to us in a measure far more extensive, and connected moreover with a variety of other kinds of evidence, we are assured of the fact that Jesus Christ appeared in the world and that He was born, and lived, and died, in the country of Judea. This is attested by contemporary historians, and no man acquainted with history can be so absurd as to admit the reality of the existence of Julius Caesar and at the same time deny that of Jesus Christ. This is admitted by the greatest enemies of Christianity; and it is also acknowledged on all hands that the Christian religion which is professed at this day took its rise from Jesus Christ, and in the age in which He lived. Till then it is never mentioned; but from that period it begins to be noticed by historians, and shortly after becomes the subject of public edicts, and later produces revolutions in government, both more important and more permanent than that which Julius Caesar effected" (Robert Haldane).

We have pointed out that our knowledge of and belief in all those events of the past which we did not personally behold are based upon the testimony of witnesses, and that we who live in this twentieth century have far better and surer evidence—judged from an historical standpoint—to be assured that Jesus Christ was an historical reality, than we have for believing that Julius Caesar existed. The only objection made against that fact which has even the appearance of substance is, that whereas the history of Julius Caesar followed the ordinary

course of events, that of Jesus Christ was radically different, so much so that the latter makes a far greater demand upon our credence than does the former. Those who preceded us have shown that this objection, so far from presenting any real difficulty, only serves to render our belief easier, for it calls attention to just what should be expected in such a case, thereby rendering it more credible. Had the career of Jesus Christ flowed in normal channels—were there no extraordinary features to mark it, then we should indeed have good reason to suspect the records of it.

If Jesus Christ were the Son of God incarnate then we should naturally expect Him to be born in a way none other ever was. If He came here on a unique mission, of supreme importance to the whole human race—a Divine Mission, having for its purpose a climacteric display of God's perfections, and the saving of His people with an everlasting salvation—then His life would obviously be without any parallel, yea, characterized by the supernatural. The very nature of His mission required that miracles should attest His teaching. Those very miracles being matter of fact, evident to the senses of those who witnessed them, of such a nature they could not be misunderstood, were, equally with common occurrences, the subject of credible testimony. They were not of a momentary nature, but permanent in their effects. They were not performed in secret, but in broad daylight in the midst of multitudes. They were not few only, but numerous. They were not performed only in the presence of friends but before enemies, and under a government and priesthood which bitterly hated their Performer and the doctrine He supported.

The miracles wrought by the Lord Jesus were, both in their beneficent character and in their wondrous nature, worthy of Him who did them and of the mission which engaged Him. They were not performed as spectacular displays of power, but directed to such gracious and practical ends as feeding the hungry and healing the sick. Moreover, it is to be carefully borne in mind that those wonders were specifically predicted centuries before He was born at Bethlehem. Wrought as they were in the open, before friends and foes alike, had there been any deception practiced, it must have been detected But the fiercest of His detractors were compelled to acknowledge their reality (John 11:47; 12:18, 19), though ascribing them to a diabolical influence. It is an historic fact that Christ's miracles were not denied in the age in which they were performed, nor for many centuries afterwards. They are related to us by eye-witnesses and are inseparably connected with the rest of the history of which they form apart. They are in perfect accord with what the rest of the Bible reveals of the power and goodness of God.

When Moses beheld the bush burning and not consumed, and heard the voice of the Lord speaking to him therefrom, not only were his senses convinced, but the awe-inspiring effect upon his heart was self-attesting evidence that the living God was there revealed to him. But those to whom he related that startling experience, especially when he declared he had then received a Divine commission to act as their leader, would require some convincing proof that God had indeed spoken to him. When the Lord bade him return into Egypt and inform the elders of Israel that the God of their fathers had appeared unto him in Horeb, Moses was fearful that his report would be received with skepticism, saying, "They will not believe me, nor hearken to my voice." Whereupon the Lord, in His condescending grace, told him to cast his rod on the ground, and it became a serpent; and take it by the tail and it became a rod in his hand; so that repeating these miracles, "they may believe that the LORD God . . .hath appeared unto thee"

(Ex. 4:1-5). Thereby the mission which God had entrusted unto Moses would be confirmed beyond all dispute.

Upon this particular point we know of none who has written more lucidly and convincingly than Mr. J. C. Philpot, from whom we shall now quote and paraphrase. “In such a matter as Divine revelation, which, being supernatural, is to fallen men naturally incredible, there is a necessity that the ordinary evidence of human testimony should be as it were backed and supplemented by extraordinary evidence, that is, the evidence of miracle and prophecy . . . Let us see the combined effect of testimony and miracle when Moses goes to execute his mission.” “Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel. And Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that He had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped” (Ex. 4:29-31).

"First, there is testimony: ‘And Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses.’ Next there is miracle: ‘And did the signs in the sight of the people.’ Thirdly, there is belief: ‘And the people believed.’ Fourthly, there is worship: ‘they bowed their heads and worshipped.’ Thus we see that the weakness of testimony ["weak" under such circumstances as those—a single weakness unto an unexpected and unprecedented occurrence: A.W.P.] is made up for and supplemented by the strength of a miracle. Without testimony, the miracle would be purposeless; without a miracle, the testimony would be inefficacious. Testimony is to miracle what Aaron was to Moses—‘instead of a mouth’; and miracle is to testimony what Moses was to Aaron—‘instead of God’ (Ex. 4:16). But why should a miracle possess this peculiar strength? For this simple reason: that it shows the special interposition of the Almighty. Thus the magicians, when baffled and confounded, confessed to Pharaoh, ‘This is the finger of God’ (Ex. 8:19).”

Another instance of the place and value of miracles in connection with testimony is found in 1 Kings 18. Half a century before, 10 of Israel’s tribes had revolted from the throne of David. Jeroboam their king had set up the worship of the golden calves in Dan and Bethel, which marked the extremities of his kingdom. Two generations had grown up in idolatry and, "for a long season Israel [in contradistinction from Judah] had been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law" (2 Chron. 15:3). But in the days of the wicked Ahab, God raised up the Prophet Elijah, and His messenger announced that, "there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word" (1 Kings 17:1), and for three years there was an unbroken drought (James 5:17), which resulted in famine and great distress. Yet when the Lord’s hand was lifted up in such manifest judgment "they would not see" (Isa. 26:11), but Jezebel slew the Prophets of the Lord (1 Kings 18:13), while Ahab vowed vengeance upon Elijah himself. Nor did the common people evince any sign of repentance.

Elijah gave orders that all Israel should be gathered together unto mount Cannel, with the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of the grove. He then came unto the people and said, "How long halt ye between two opinions: if the LORD be God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him. And the people answered him not a word" (1 Kings 18:21)—apparently because they were nonplussed, perceiving not how the controversy might be determined. Whereupon the servant of God proposed, "Let them therefore give us two bullocks: and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay on wood, and put no fire under; and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under. And call ye on the name of

your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let Him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken" (vv. 23, 24). The controversy should be decided by a miracle! Nothing could be fairer than what Elijah proposed; no test more convincing than the one here put to the proof. The people unanimously assented, and forthwith the trial was made.

For hours the prophets of Baal called upon their god to answer by fire, but there was no response; they leaped up and down at the altar, cutting themselves with knives till the blood gushed out upon them, but there was not "any that regarded"—the desired fire fell not. After their vain pretensions had been fully exposed, Elijah, to make more evident the miracle that followed, called for four barrels of water and poured it on the bullock which he had cut up and upon the wood until, "the water ran round about the altar, and he filled the trench also with the water." Then Elijah prayed unto the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob saying, "Let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel, and I Thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy Word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that Thou art the LORD God, and that Thou hast turned their hearts back again" (vv. 36, 37). Nor did the Prophet supplicate in vain. "Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when the people saw they fell on their faces, and they said, The LORD He is the God; the LORD, He is the God" (vv. 38, 39).

Now what we would particularly note in that memorable scene on Carmel is the light which it casts upon the evidential value of miracles. That was made unmistakably plain in Elijah's prayer. The supernatural fire which came down from Heaven in the sight of that vast assembly, consuming not only the bullock but the very stones on which it was laid, and the water in the trench round about the altar, was designed to make manifest, first, that Jehovah was God in Israel. Second, that Elijah was His authorized servant. Third, that his mission and work was according to the Word of the Lord. Fourth, that God still had designs of mercy in turning the hearts of Israel back again unto Himself. Here, then, is another case in point where the evidence of testimony was ratified by the evidence of a miracle. The mission of Elijah was authorized by the miracles performed in answer to his prayers: the special interposition of God attested the Divine origin of his message, for obviously the Lord would not work such wonders in answer to the petitions of an impostor. God was pleased to perform those prodigies to testify His approbation of those who served as His mouthpieces, thereby leaving "without excuse" all who turned a deaf ear unto them.

Herein we may at once perceive how futile and senseless is the method followed by the "Modernists" and "Higher Critics." They are obliged to acknowledge the canonicity of the books of the Bible, for the whole of the Old Testament was translated into the Greek more than 200 years before Christ. While there is independent evidence for the existence of the books of the New Testament from a very early date in the Christian era: yet they refuse to believe the miracles recorded in them. But that is utterly irrational. One has but to read attentively either the Pentateuch, the four Gospels, or the Acts, to discover that their historical portions and their miraculous portions are so intimately related we cannot logically accredit the former without accrediting the latter. They necessarily stand or fall together: if the history is true, so also are the miracles; if the miracles be spurious, so is the history. We could not delete the miraculous plagues upon Egypt and the supernatural destruction of Pharaoh and his hosts at the Red Sea

without rendering completely meaningless the historical portions of the book of Exodus. The same holds good of the book of Acts: remove the miracles recorded therein, and much of the narrative become unintelligible.

The same feature obtains in connection with the wonders wrought by the Saviour. “Take, for instance, the raising of Lazarus from the dead. How can we separate the narrative from the miracle, or the miracle from the narrative? To see this more clearly, let us look at the narrative as distinct from the miracle. How simply, and so to speak naturally, is it related, and with what a minuteness and particularity of circumstances, which could not from their very nature have been invented. The name of the sick and dying man; the place where he lived, not far from Jerusalem, and therefore open to the closest investigation and examination; the names of his two sisters; the absence of Jesus at the time; the deep grief of Martha and Mary, and yet the way in which it was shown, so thoroughly in harmony with their characters elsewhere given (Luke 10:38-42). The arrival of Jesus: His conversation with them; His weeping at the tomb, and the remarks of the bystanders—what an air of truthfulness pervades the whole! There is nothing exaggerated, nothing out of place, nothing but what is in perfect harmony with the character of Jesus as reflected in the mirror of the other Gospels.

“But this narrative portion of the sickness and death of Lazarus cannot he separated from the miraculous portion—the raising of him from the dead. The first precedes, explains, introduces, and harmonizes with the second. Without the narrative the miracle would be unintelligible. It would float on the Gospel as a fragment of a shipwrecked vessel on the waves of the sea, furnishing no indication of its name or destination. So without the miracle the narrative would be useless and out of place, and of no more spiritual value than the sickness and death of a good man who died yesterday. But narrative and miracle combined, interlaced and mutually strengthening each other form a massy web which no Infidel fingers can pull to pieces. What we have said with respect to the miracle wrought at the grave of Lazarus is equally applicable to the other miraculous works of our blessed Lord. Narrative introduces the miracle, and miracle sustains the narrative—their combined effect being to prove that Jesus was the Son of God, the promised Messiah of whom all the Prophets testified” (J. C. Philpot).

To the miracles which He wrought, the Lord Jesus again and again appealed as evidence of His Divine mission. Thus, His forerunner, while languishing in prison and dismayed by his non-deliverance therefrom, sent two of his disciples unto Him with the inquiry, "art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" To which our Lord made reply, "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleaned, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached unto them" (Matthew 11:4, 5). The Lord there authenticated the Gospel which He preached by the supernatural works He performed: those displays of Divine goodness and power being the plain and irrefutable evidence that He was the Messiah "who should come," according to the unanimous declarations of the Old Testament Prophets. On another occasion, after mentioning the testimony which John had borne unto Him, the Redeemer said, "But I have greater witness than of John: for the works which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me" (John 5:33, 36).

When the unbelieving Jews came and said unto Him, "How long dost Thou make us to doubt? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you, and ye believed not; the works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me" (John 10:24, 25). If it be

asked, How could any eye-witnesses of those mighty works refuse to believe if they were indeed proofs of His Divine mission? Because, since they rejected His teaching, God blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts (John 12:37-40). But others were convinced. Many believed in His name, when they saw the miracles which He did (John 2:23); and on the feeding of the great multitude with five loaves and two small fishes, we are told, "Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world" (John 6:14). Said Nicodemus, "We know that Thou art a Teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with Him" (John 3:2): such displays of Divine power demonstrated that His mission and message were Divine.

Another striking illustration and exemplification of the value of miracles authenticating one employed upon a Divine mission is found in Acts 2. Less than two months after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and His subsequent departure from this world, we find the Apostle Peter declaring openly, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you as ye yourselves also know" (v. 22). This was not said to a company of Christians in private, but to a vast "multitude" in Jerusalem (vv. 5, 6). It formed part of an appeal made to the whole mass of the Jewish populace, and it was not contradicted by them, as it most certainly had been if Peter were making an empty boast. The Apostle was reminding them that Christ had dispossessed demons, raised the dead, not in a corner, but in the most public manner. Those miracles were incontestable, and the significance of them could not be gainsaid: they were so many testimonies from God of His approbation of the One who wrought them. They declared and demonstrated that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah and Saviour. They certified His mission and doctrine. Much failure attaches to us at every point. Our paramount desire to enjoy intimate and unbroken fellowship with the Lord, though sincere, is neither as intense nor as constant as it should be. Our efforts after the realization of that desire, our use of those means which promote communion with Him, are not as diligent and wholehearted as is incumbent upon us. Our pressing forward unto the mark set before us is often most feeble and faulty. But there is no failure with our God: His purpose will be accomplished, He will perfect that which concerns us (Ps. 138:8).

Chapter 19 – The State of Saints in Glory

We have shown that there is a real and radical difference between the death of a believer and that of an unbeliever, and having contemplated some of the accompaniments of a Christian's departure from this world we are now ready to consider how he exists in the disembodied state. It is not to be wondered at that the unregenerate should be thoroughly befogged at this point, for they are so materialistic that they find it very difficult to form a definite concept of anything that is incorporeal and intangible. But those who, by God's grace, enjoy a real communion with Him who is "Spirit" (John 4:24), ought not to flounder on this matter, for they have proved by experience how much more important is the soul than the body, and how infinitely more real and satisfying are spiritual objects than the perishing things of time and sense. So far from regarding his soul as a mysterious, nebulous and indefinable thing, the believer looks upon it as a living, intelligent, sentient being—his real self We should view a disembodied soul as one which has cast off its earthly clothing and is now appareled in a garment of light, or, to use the language of Scripture, "clothed in white raiment" (Rev. 3:5; 4:4).

At death the soul of the saint is freed from all the limitations which sin had imposed upon it, and its faculties are then not only purified, but elevated and enlarged. It will be like a chrysalis emerging from its cramped condition, or a bird liberated from a cage, now free to spread its wings and soar aloft. It is true the body is a component part of man's complex being, yet we must endeavour to view it in a due proportion. Which is the more important: the tenant or his tenement, the individual or the tent in which he resides? It must be borne in mind that the soul derives not its powers from the body. That is clear from the Divine account of man's creation: after his body had been formed, and as a separate act, God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7). The mind is the noblest part of our being, and therefore it must find exercise and satisfaction in the disembodied state, otherwise we should not be "blessed" or happy (Rev. 14:13) immediately after death. "It is the mind maketh the man; it is our preferment above the beasts that God hath given us a mind to know Him" (Thomas Manton).

"The soul can and does operate without the use of bodily organs in its present state, and in many things stands in no need of them. The rational soul thinks, reasons and discourses without the use of them. Its powers and faculties need them not: the will is directed and guided by the understanding; and the understanding has to do with objects in the consideration of which bodily organs are in no way assisting. As in the consideration of God, His nature and perfections; of angels and their nature; and of a man's own spirit, and the things of it—it penetrates into without the help of any of the instruments of the body. It can consider of things past long ago, and of things very remote and at a great distance; and such objects as are presented to it by the senses, it reasons about them without making use of any of the organs of the body. And if it can operate without the body, it can exist without it; for since it is independent of it in its operations, it is independent of it in its being. Since it can exist without it, it can act in that separate state of existence without it. Wherefore since it dies not with the body, it is not affected as to its operations, by the absence of it, nor at death becomes insensible as that is" (John Gill).

Yet, obvious as is what has been pointed out above, the majority of Christians seem to

suppose that it is impossible for us to form any definite ideas of what it is to be disembodied, or of that state into which the saint enters at death, or of what the medium is by which he will know, enjoy, and have fellowship with the Lord in that state. While they remain content with such slothful ignorance, it is not to be expected that any further light will be vouchsafed them —"According to your faith be it unto you" (Matthew 9:29) holds good at this point as much as it does anywhere else. Not a curious and unbridled imagination, but a Scripturally informed and regulated faith ever has to do with God and His written Word. If His Word be searched prayerfully, diligently and expectantly for Divine instruction on these things it will not be confused. From some of the accounts given in the sacred volume we may gather some real apprehensions on these subjects, yea, much more than is generally attended to. To these accounts we shall now turn.

The case of those servants of God who were favored with ecstatic raptures and supernatural visions while their bodies were inactive and senseless shows most clearly that the soul can function without any assistance from the body. Micaiah said unto the king of Israel, "I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of Heaven standing by Him, on His right hand and on His left" (1 Kings 22:19). Though the Prophet was in the body, it was not with his natural eyes that he gazed upon such a scene as that. Again, a similar sight was granted Isaiah, and in addition he listened to the very words of the seraphim as they cried unto one another, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory" (Isa. 6:1-5), and yet the eyes and ears of his body could no more have "seen the King, the LORD of hosts," nor heard those acclamations of Divine homage than could those of our bodies lying cold in death. God is Spirit, incorporeal: and His ineffable glory cannot be seen by the corporeal senses of any creature: it was therefore a visionary representation which was made to the spirit of His messenger.

Ezekiel tells us while among the captives by the river of Chebar, "the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God" (1:1). At the close of the first chapter of his prophecy, he describes one of those celestial revelations. He says, "And above the firmament that was over their heads [i.e. the cherubim] was the likeness of a throne as the appearance of a sapphire stone, and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a Man above it. And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of His loins even upward, and from the appearance of His loins even downward, and I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord" (vv. 26-28). From the words we have placed in italics it is obvious that the Prophet was under the supernatural influx of the Holy Spirit, and that his spiritual faculties were granted a visionary sight of the Saviour before He became incarnate.

The experiences of Daniel also supply some illumination on the matter we are now considering: the capabilities of the soul abstracted from the body. First, he informs us: "I saw in the night visions. . . the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool. His throne was like the fiery flame and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him" (7:7-10). "Then I lifted up mine eyes and looked, and behold a certain Man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine

gold of Uphaz. His body also was like the beryl and His face as the appearance of lightning, and His eyes as lamps of fire, and His arms and His feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of His words like the voice of a multitude. And I Daniel alone saw the vision" (10:5-7). A sight of Christ was there presented to the eyes of the Prophet's mind. They were opened and raised to an extraordinary degree; and they were closed again after the vision passed. His faculties were supernaturally elevated, or he could not have seen Christ thus. He tells us, "there remained no strength in me" (v. 8), so that he was in the body. As his body did not prevent his seeing this vision, neither will the absence of ours prevent us seeing Christ by sight and vision of soul.

A very similar, though perhaps not identical, case is that of Peter, of whom we read that, "he fell into a trance, and saw Heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four comers, and let down to the earth; wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise. Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into Heaven" (Acts 10:10-16). The dictionary defines a trance as "a state in which the soul appears to be absent from the body, as to be rapt in vision," because at such a time, all the normal activities (save that of the heart) and sensibilities of the body are suspended. The most remarkable feature of this incident is that Peter was not only able to see and hear, but also to reason and speak, to express his religious prejudice—and his, "Not so, Lord," demonstrates that sin has defiled our inner being, and that the soul needs to be purified before it can be admitted into the immediate presence of God on high.

Still more pertinent is the case of the Apostle Paul. In 2 Corinthians 12 he relates an extraordinary experience with which God had favored him. He declares, "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years, ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful [or "possible"—margin] for a man to utter," and this he recites as an illustration of "visions and revelations of the Lord" (vv. 1-4). It is remarkable that twice over in those verses, the Apostle should register his inability to determine whether or not he was in the body at the time he was translated to Heaven and heard and saw such wondrous things. If the soul were incapable of recognizing objects when it is detached from the body, then most assuredly Paul had never been at any such loss as he here mentions. From the language employed it is clear that the soul is capable of attending to the most important and blessed things of all when it is out of the body, and thus that death will not deprive it of its capabilities and sensibilities.

Finally, the experience which the beloved John had in the Isle of Patmos supplies us with further help on this point. He, too, was favored with a vision of Christ, an account of which he gives in the first chapter of the Revelation, and the effect which it had upon him. The glorious form of the Saviour shone forth before him beyond what it did on the mount of transfiguration. The splendor of it was more than the Apostle could bear in his embodied state—"when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead" (v. 17). He described how the Lord Jesus acted toward him and what He said to him: "And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not" (v. 17). He

tells us that immediately prior to this supernatural experience, "I was in the spirit" (v. 10), or, more literally, "I became in spirit": that is, he passed out of the condition of normal human consciousness into the supernormal. The same expression occurs again in Revelation 4:2, "I became in spirit and, behold, a throne was set in Heaven": he was elevated to a new mode of consciousness and sphere of existence—in which mortal imperfections had no place—in which all bodily activities and sensations were completely suspended, and in which the soul was wholly under a Divine influence, entirely abstracted from all corporeal things, being fully controlled by the spirit.

It appears to the writer that from the accounts cited above, from both the Old and New Testaments, we may form some real, definite, and spiritual conceptions concerning the saints in their disembodied state. The soul will be detached from all occupation with natural things and entirely fixed upon Divine objects. The mind or spirit will be lifted above the natural or mortal state and be illumined and engaged with supernatural things. As those saints were favored with visions of Christ while in their bodies, yet their bodies were of no use to them at the time, so all of the redeemed when dismissed from their bodies are granted a view of Christ for which their physical senses are not needed—such a complete and immediate view of Him as fills them with admiration and adoration. If it be asked what will be the medium by which disembodied believers will know, enjoy and have fellowship with the Lord, the answer is furnished by, "Now we see in a mirror [American R.V.] obscurely, but then face to face" (1 Cor. 13:12). The "mirror" is the Word (Jam. 1:23-25) and the medium of perception is faith; but in Heaven the soul will have an unobscured sight of Christ and the whole invisible world will be opened, so that we shall see as we are seen or "know as we are known," by means of intuitional light and knowledge, crystal-clear intellectual and spiritual views of Christ and the Father in Him, by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

At the separation of the soul from the body it, or better he or she, enters into a state of which he has had no previous experience, yet the anticipation of the same should not occasion the slightest uneasiness—for Christ Himself passed out of the world and entered that state the same way. It is no untrodden path, for thousands of God's people have already gone over it. Immediately upon its dismissal from the body, such a change passes upon the soul that regeneration is then completed by being instantaneously and forever delivered from the whole being of sin and death. As we cannot enter Christ's spiritual kingdom of grace except by the new birth and a translation out of darkness into His marvelous light, neither can any of His redeemed (prior to His second coming) enter the kingdom of Christ's glory save by death. At that moment mortality is swallowed up of life. While death will bring a great difference in me, it will make none in my Saviour to me. "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living" (Rom. 14:8, 9). While I am in the body Christ ministers to me and supplies my every need, and when He summons me to leave the body, that will afford Him opportunity to express His love to me in a new way, introducing me into Heaven, there to behold His glory.

Luke 16:9 represents another aspect of the experience of saints upon their leaving of this scene. "And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting." As Goodwin remarked, "Those everlasting habitations there mentioned are in Heaven, where there are many mansions." This

verse is part of the parable of "the unjust steward," and here the Lord made a practical application of the same. He bids His disciples emulate the wisdom (though not the wickedness) of him who has an eye to the future. The "mammon of unrighteousness" is the coinage of this world, in contrast with the "true riches" of the Spirit. The saints are to expend their earthly means, however small, in works of piety and charity, and thereby "make to themselves friends." "Our Lord here exhorts us to provide for ourselves a comfortable reception to the happiness of another world, by making good use of our possessions and enjoyments in this world" (Manton). The soul's passage out of this life is termed a "failing"—of the body—and its entrance on high as a being welcomed home by those to whom he had ministered upon earth. "The poor saints that are gone before to glory receive them that in this world distributed to their necessities" (Matthew Henry).

The above verse is one of several which makes it clear that there will be the personal recognition of the saints in the next life. The question was asked Luther a little while before his death whether we should know one another in the other world, to which he answered by observing the case of Adam, who knew Eve to be flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone whom he had never seen before. "How did he know this," asked Luther, "but by the Spirit of God, by revelation?" And then he said, "so shall we know parents, wives and children in the other world, and that more perfectly." To which we may add, How otherwise can those of whose conversion and edification Gospel-ministers have been the instruments be their "joy and crown of rejoicing" in the day to come (1 Thess. 2:19) unless the one is able to identify the other? A further hint on the subject is supplied by the Apostles knowing Moses and Elijah on the mount, for they had never beheld them previously nor seen any statue or picture of them, for such was not allowed among the Jews.

It has long been our conviction that the glorious scene which the three Apostles witnessed on the holy mount was designed (among other ends) to furnish us with a glimpse of the blessed condition and delight of the glorified So ravished was Peter by the sight that he exclaimed: "Lord, it is good for us to be here" (Matthew 17:4), and would fain have remained there. As Manton said: "So was he affected with joy in the presence and company of Christ, and Moses and Elijah appearing with Him, that all his natural comforts and relations were forgotten." They were granted a foretaste of the life to come, for those who enter that blessed state will never desire to come out of it. The account of the transfiguration is prefaced by the statement: "And after six days" (Mathew 17:1) and, "It came to pass about an eight days after" (Luke 9:28): thus it was a seventh day (the perfect number!) event—a foreshadowing of the eternal Sabbath. The central figure was Christ Himself in resplendent glory. Talking with Him were Moses and Elijah: the one who had survived death, the other who had never expired—types of those saints alive on earth at Christ's second coming.

Not only does the above incident teach us that the departed saints preserve their individual identities and are recognizable, but the fact that the Apostles were permitted to see them, and to hear their discourse with Christ intimates that the society of saints is a part of Heaven's blessedness, and that the Old Testament saints (represented by Moses and Elijah) and those of the New (the Apostles) are all together with Christ. Is not the same fact indicated by our Lord's words, "I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 8:11)? Still another passage which witnesses to the truth that the company of the redeemed and our

fellowship with them is an adjunct of Heaven's blessedness is Hebrews 12:22, 23, where among other privileges we are said to have come to "the spirits of just men made perfect." That same passage also makes mention of "an innumerable company of angels." If the Bethlehem shepherds were filled with joy as they heard the heavenly hosts praising God, what delight will it give us to mingle our voices with the angelic choirs! Yet these things are but secondary, for as Rutherford well said: "The Lamb is all the glory in Immanuel's land," or, as Matthew 17 shows us, Moses and Elijah soon faded from the Apostles' view, and they "saw no man save Jesus only" (v. 8)!

Though God has not given us the Scriptures in order to gratify an idle carnal curiosity, it has pleased Him graciously to reveal sufficient in them to satisfy the spiritual aspirations and expectations of His people concerning the life to come. Nevertheless, it is neither the prayerless nor the indolent who apprehend and enjoy much therein. We have shown from the Word of Truth that the saint dies in union and communion with the Lord, that an angelic guard of protection and honour conducts him to the Father's House on high, that he is there greeted by those believers whom he had befriended upon earth and who have entered before him into their inheritance, and that Christ Himself receives him and presents him faultless before the throne of His glory with exceeding joy. We have seen that the company of the redeemed and our fellowship with them, yes, and with the holy angels also, constitutes a part of Heaven's blessedness, yet that such privileges are entirely subordinate to the blissful communion we shall have with Christ Himself. The supreme and climacteric joy will be found in that One who occupies both the central and supreme throne in Heaven. Nor would any saint have it otherwise. Christ is the One who loved him and gave Himself for him, and therefore He is not only his Saviour, his Beloved, but his "All" (Col. 3:11).

Well might the Psalmist, under the Spirit of inspiration, exclaim: "O how great is Thy goodness which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee, which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee" (Ps. 31:19). A part of that which God, in His eternal purpose, designed for His people is entered into and enjoyed by them during their earthly pilgrimage; but far more is "laid up for them" for their eternal felicity. The good or best wine is reserved for the end—for the marriage feast (John 2:l0)—and its inexpressible excellence is indicated by the, "O how great!" Then it is that we shall participate in the consummation of God's "so great salvation": we shall be as happy and as blessed as it is possible for creatures to be. "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house, and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures. For with Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light shall we see light" (Ps. 36:8, 9). It is blessed to note that in the Hebrew word for "pleasures," there is the plural of "Eden." As Home said: "In Heaven alone the thirst of an immortal soul after happiness can be satisfied. There the streams of Eden will flow again." To drink of that "river" (cf. Rev. 22:1) we understand to signify to be favored with an unclouded knowledge of God and a pure affection to Him.

There are two of the Divine titles which ought to appeal particularly unto believers: "the God of all grace" (1 Pet. 5:10) and "the God of glory" (Ps. 29:3). The former is much the better known one, yet it is the latter which receives the most prominence in Scripture. There we read of "the Father of glory" (Eph. 1:17), while the Son is styled "the King of glory" (Ps. 24:7), and "the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:8), and the Comforter is termed "the Spirit of glory" (1 Pet. 4:14). Those appellations speak not only of what God is in Himself essentially, but also of what He is in His relations and acts unto His dear people. As S. E. Pierce pointed out, "the God of glory

expresses what He hath prepared for us, what He will bestow upon us, and what He will be to us in the house eternal in the heavens." "Glory" imports an excellency (Matthew 4:8), yea, a height of excellency (2 Pet. 1:17), and therefore that place and state of blessedness into which believers enter immediately after death, and into which their Forerunner was "received," is designated "Glory" (1 Tim. 3:16). It is striking to note that the Hebrew word (tabod) means both "weight" and "glory," as though to tell us that what seems so nebulous unto men is that which alone possesses substance and solidity—explaining the Apostle's expression, "an exceeding weight of glory," in 2 Corinthians 4:17.

"Glory" is connected with that which is exceedingly lovely to look upon, for when we read of "the glory of his countenance" (2 Cor. 3:7), we know it was no ordinary beauty and radiance which illumined the face of Moses when he came down from the mount, but one that was too dazzling for the beholders to gaze upon, so that he had to cover it with a veil (Ex. 34:35). So, too, Paul tells us that when the Saviour appeared to him on the way to Damascus, "there shone from Heaven a great light upon me." No ordinary light was it, for he added: "I could not see for the glory of that light" (Acts 22:6, 11). Thus it is in Heaven itself: the celestial city "had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" (Rev. 21:23). What then must be "the riches of His glory" (Eph. 3:16)! During their sojourn here believers are made partakers of "the riches of His grace" (Eph. 1:7), but in the life to come God will "make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory" (Rom. 9:23) and they are "His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

That a revelation of God in Christ unto His saints in glory will satisfy every longing of the renewed heart is implied in the request of Philip, "show us the Father, and it sufficeth" (John 14:8), for that is an indirect acknowledgment that there is such a sufficiency in viewing Him as will be enough to completely content all the insatiable desires of the soul. Three tenses are used in connection with the saint's absorption with Christ's excellence. First, "we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14), which is realized at our conversion, when a supernatural revelation of Christ is made to the heart. Second, "But we all, with open face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18), which is a progressive experience in the Christian's life, as by the exercise of faith upon the personal and official perfections of Christ, as they are set forth in the written Word and under the gracious agency of the Spirit, we are transformed being assimilated to His holy image. Third, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am: that they may behold My glory" (John 17:24), which is realized when they are removed from earth to Heaven.

We are, from our regeneration to our glorification, taking in Christ into our renewed understanding. It is but little that we now apprehend of Him, yet the least degree of spiritual apprehension of Him received into our hearts from the Word of Truth renders Him more precious to us than the gold of Ophir. Imperfect though it be, yet even in this life the genuine Christian has a real and solid, convincing and affecting knowledge of Christ. By the gracious operations of the Spirit, his faith is called into exercise in such a manner that it obtains both evidence and subsistence of the things of God in the soul (Heb. 11:1). As the eye of the body conveys to the mind an image of the object beheld, so faith (which is the eye of the soul) takes in a true knowledge of Christ, so that He is "formed within" him (Gal. 4:19). Thereby he procures

as accurate a knowledge of His Person as he ever will in Heaven. When the believer shall see Christ "face to face," it will be identically the same Person he formerly beheld by faith, through a mirror obscurely. It will be no stranger to whom he needs an introduction that the believer will meet with on high, but One whom he savingly knew here below, and with whom he enjoyed an all-too-brief, yet real and precious, fellowship.

Let there be no mistake upon this point: in this life every born again Christian experiences the truth of those words: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). That does not mean he will not desire a more complete knowledge of Christ, deeper draughts of His love, sensible enjoyments of Him—but that a satisfying portion is now his. He "thirsts" indeed, yet not for any other portion, but for larger measures of it. He will never more be without that which will abundantly meet his every longing. The saints in Heaven know more of Christ, but they do not know Him more truly than they did on earth. By the Spirit the mind is enlightened to receive the true and saving knowledge of Christ, and we are brought to believe on Him with all our hearts. By Him we are "given an understanding that we may know Him that is true" (1 John 5:20). The Spirit is graciously pleased to reveal Christ to us as He is set forth in the Word—nevertheless, each of us yearns with Paul "that I may know Him"—more perfectly (Phil. 3:10).

Further and grander manifestations of God will be enjoyed by saints in Heaven than on earth, yet this will be different only in degree, and not in kind, from that which is vouchsafed His people in this life. It will indeed immeasurably exceed in fullness and clarity anything which they are now capable of enjoying, but for substance it will be the same. Grace is glory in the bud; glory is grace in full fruition. The good wine of the kingdom is sampled by them now, but their cup of bliss will then be full to overflowing. Even here the Spirit shows us "things to come" (John 16:13), but there we shall enter into the full possession of them. That communion with Christ in glory which the redeemed enjoy at present, those refreshings in which they participate from the fountain of His love—are termed "the firstfruits of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:23)—samples of the harvest of blessedness awaiting them as a cluster of the luscious grapes of Canaan was brought to Israel before they entered the Land (Num. 13:23). Such experiences are also termed "the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. 1:22). An "earnest" is a small token of the whole yet to come, a partial payment of the thing itself; what we now enjoy is a foretaste of the coming feast.

“The fullness of the felicity of Heaven may appear if we compare with it the present joys and comforts of the Holy Spirit. Such they are as that the Scripture styles them strong consolation (Heb. 6:18), full joy (John 15:11), joy unspeakable and full of glory (1 Pet. 1:8), abounding consolation (2 Cor. 1:5). And yet all the joy and peace that believers are partakers of in this life is but as a drop in the ocean, as a single cluster to the whole vintage, as the thyme or honey upon the thigh of a bee to the whole hive fully fraught with it, or as the break and peep of day to the bright noontide. And yet these tastes of the water, wine, and honey of this celestial Canaan, with which the Holy Spirit makes glad the hearts of believers, are far more desirable and satisfactory than the overflowing streams of all earthly felicities. And there are none who have once tasted of them, but say as the Samaritan woman did: ‘Lord, give me that water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw’ (John 4:15). So also the first and early dawnings of the heavenly light fill the soul with more serenity, and ravish it with more pure joy, than the brightest sunshine of all worldly splendour can ever do” (W. Spurstow, 1656).

To see God in His Word and works is the happiness of saints on earth; but to see Him in Christ face to face will be the fullness of their blessedness in Heaven. None can doubt that the Apostle Paul was favored with the most intimate, exalted and frequent communion with Christ down here; yet he declared that to depart and be with Him is "far better" (Phil. 1:23). He did not say, "to depart and be in Paradise," but "to be with Christ"! So again—"absent from the body, present with the Lord"—not, "safe at home in Heaven." From earliest times it was announced, "unto Him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. 49:10). That receives a threefold fulfillment at least: at conversion, when they are drawn to Him by the power of the Father (John 6:44); in the assembly to worship Him by the power of the Spirit (Matthew 18:20); at death or His return, when He brings them to Himself on high. "My Beloved is gone down into His garden to gather lilies" (Song. 6:2). Christ comes into His "garden" (the local church) sometimes to plant new lilies, and at others to crop and gather old ones, to remove them into His paradise ("garden") above. "Gather My saints together unto Me, those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice" (Ps. 50:5).

"Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me" (John 17:24). Too many of our moderns would postpone the realization of that request until the "Eternal State," but there is nothing in Scripture which intimates that the saints will have to await the resurrection morning ere they shall gaze upon their glorified Lord. It should be quite clear to the reader from all that we have set before him that the obscure, partial and transient enjoyment of Christ which is his in this life is turned into a clear, full, perfect and permanent enjoyment of Him immediately after death. The beatific vision will then be his—designated such because, having been freed from all the darkness and limitation which indwelling sin places upon the soul, he will then be able to take in his full measure of bliss. At first his vision of Christ will be wholly spiritual and intellectual: after the resurrection it will be corporeal also. In Heaven the Son will be seen in all the surpassing dignity and splendor of His Person, His perfections shining forth in cloudless luster. "Then how should believers long to be with Him! Most men need patience to die; a believer should need patience to live!" (John Flavel).

On high the Christian will have an immediate, uninterrupted and satisfying view of the Lord of glory. In Him the Incomprehensible Three will be manifested in the uttermost display of Their excellencies, before all the holy angels and saints. It is that which will be the supreme blessedness of Heaven, and which each believer shall forever behold, filling him with such concepts of the Divine glory as he can never express. He will be eternally admiring the same, rejoicing in it, having communion with God over it, praising Him for it. The heart will then be everlastingly fixed upon Christ as its Center. The glory of Christ is very dear unto the saints. They have a spiritual perception of it now, but a far greater apprehension of it will be theirs when they are removed from this vale of tears and are "present with the Lord." Then shall they behold the King in His beauty, and that supernatural sight shall be theirs forever. Paul could go no higher than, "so shall we ever be with the Lord." Not merely beholding His glory as spectators, but taken into intimate fellowship with the same.

How overwhelming must be the first open sight of Christ! What will our feelings be when, without any intervening medium, we shall behold the Son of God? Who can fitly visualize our first meeting with the eternal Lover of our souls? What stretch of imagination can comprehend the experience of soul as we behold Him who is "altogether lovely"? No doubt the Christian

reader has, like this scribe, attempted to anticipate those moments when he will first gaze upon that Blessed One whose visage was (through pain and suffering) more marred than any other's, but which now shines with a splendour exceeding that of the mid-day sun, and which will beam with love as He welcomes to Himself another of His redeemed. Doubtless, when we behold His glorified humanity, which is personally united to the Divine nature, and is exalted far above all principalities and powers, we shall be lost in wonder, love and praise. If the wise men fell down and worshipped Him when they saw Him as "a young child with Mary, His mother, in the house," what will be our feelings when we see Him seated upon the Father's throne? Such views shall we then have of His excellence as will satiate our souls with holy admiration and joy inexpressible.

Our efforts to anticipate that blissful experience will be aided somewhat if we bear in mind that we shall then be completely rid of sin and that selfishness of character which mars even the regenerate in this life. "Everything we now enjoy, though even of a spiritual nature, is tinged with self If we contemplate the glories of God in His trinity of Persons, as revealed us in Christ: if we feel our souls going forth under the Divine leading of the Holy Spirit in sweet communion with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ—if the soul be led to bless God, when at any time receiving love-tokens of pardon, consolation, strength, or any of the 10,000, times 10,000 marks of grace, like the dew from Heaven, coming to us from the Lord—in all these, self and self interest is mingled. But there is an infinitely higher source of pure unmixed felicity, which the disembodied spirit will immediately enter upon when all selfishness is lost in the love of God" (Robert Hawker). There the soul will be lifted up above itself, absorbed entirely with God in Christ, independent of what He is to us and all that He has done for us.

Christ, the God-man Mediator, is the grand Center of Heaven's blessedness and the all-engrossing Object of its inhabitants. "In the midst of the throne, and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb, as it had been slain" (Rev. 5:6). And the hosts surrounding Him sing: "Thou art worthy to receive honour, and glory, and blessing" (vv. 11, 12). It is the contemplation of this most glorious Christ which will constitute the holiness and happiness of the saints for all eternity. To behold His beauty will be infinitely more than all the benefits we derive from Him. Our refined and enlarged intellectual and spiritual faculties will be so engaged with and exercised upon Him that it will be impossible for us to fall again into sin. In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead personally. In and through Him the Triune God is displayed before elect angels and saints, reflecting on them the full blaze of the Divine perfections. It is a Christ who is "The brightness [effulgence] of God's glory" (Heb. 1:3) that we shall forever enjoy. Christ is the Medium and Mirror in which the redeemed shall see God. "In Him we shall behold the manifestation of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as far as the invisibility of the Divine essence can admit of revelation" (Robert Hawker), and so far as finite creatures will be capable of apprehending it.

As all the glory of the sun is inherent in itself and is only apparent in the object it shines upon, so all the glory of Heaven centers in Christ and is treasured up in Him for them—as all grace is (2 Tim. 2: 1)—and He imparts it unto them. Our blessedness in Heaven will not be independent of the Lord, but conveyed to us out of His fullness. "Christ's glory, as the God-man, is that of the Godhead dwelling personally in Him. That glory is founded upon the union of the human nature with the nature of God. This glory breaks forth and shines through His human nature, as if the sun were encompassed with a case of clear crystal—how glorious would that

crystal be!" (Goodwin). Christ's glory is so inherently and essentially in Himself that He is designated "the Lord of glory," and His ineffable beauty will be so beheld by us as to be reflected upon us, as the countenance of Moses shone with a more-than-natural light after his communion with Jehovah. Christ has indeed an incommunicable glory, yet according to our capacity we shall be partakers of the glory which the Father has "given" Him (John 17:22).

Chapter 20 – Conclusion

The glorification of the saint commences upon his departure from this world, but it is not consummated until the morning of the resurrection, when his body shall be "raised in glory" (1 Cor. 15:43). Then will he be fully "conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29). It is observable that in the process of conforming, the members of Christ's mystical body partake of the experiences of their Head. As He suffered on this earth before He entered into His glory, so do they, for the rule holds good here that the servant is not above his Master, who purchased all that the servant is to enjoy. As His glorification was in distinct stages, so is theirs. His glorification began in His victory over sin and death, when He came forth triumphant from the grave. It was greatly advanced when he ascended and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Yet that did not complete it, for He is awaiting a more thorough conquest of His enemies (Heb. 10:13) and the completion of the Church which is His "fullness" or "complement" (Eph. 1:23): "When He shall come to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believe" (2 Thess. 1:10). Ours begins at regeneration, when we receive "the Spirit of glory" as an earnest of our inheritance. It will be greatly augmented at death, for the soul is then purged of all defilement, and enters the Father's House. But our complete glorification will not be until our bodies are raised, reunited to our souls, and "fashioned like unto His glorious body."

As Christ Himself is not in every way complete (Eph. 1:23) until the entire company of His redeemed are about Him and fully conformed to Him—for not till then will He "fully see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied"—neither is the glorification of Christians complete until their souls and bodies are united together again, for Christ redeemed the body as well as the soul (Rom. 8:23), and if the Old Testament saints were not perfect without New Testament believers (Heb. 11:40), then by the same reason the soul will be imperfect without the body. The charge God gave to Christ was not only to lose none of "them" given to Him by the Father (John 18:9), but also that He should lose "nothing" of them, but "should raise it up again at the last day" (John 6:39). As Goodwin pointed out, "God hath the soul of Abraham with Him above, yet still He reckons to have not Abraham, that is the whole of him, until the resurrection; from thence Christ argued that Abraham must rise because God is called Abraham's God (Matthew 22:32)." The hope of Christ Himself, while His body lay in the grave (although His soul was in Paradise) was fixed upon the resurrection of His body. "Therefore My heart is glad, and My glory rejoiceth: My flesh also shall rest in hope. For Thou wilt not leave My soul in Sheol [the unseen world], neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show Me the path of life" (Ps. 16:9-1 1).

That expectation of the Saviour's was also shared by the Old Testament saints. This is evident from the language of Job: "And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another" (19:26, 27). And again from the words of David: "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake with Thy likeness" (Ps. 17:15). As the death of the body is likened unto "sleep," so the figure of "awaking" is used of its resurrection. Not until then will entire satisfaction (of spirit and soul and body) be the saint's—for only then will the eternal purpose of God concerning him be fully realized. Note how comprehensive and sublime was this expectation, to "behold Thy face," which proves that Old Testament believers

possessed as much light on the subject as we are now favored with, for the New Testament contains nothing higher than "they shall see His face" (Rev. 22:4). Not only so, but they turned it into practical use, and lived in the blessed power and enjoyment of the same. In Psalm 17:14 David makes mention of the "men of this world" who flourished like a green bay tree and had all their carnal hearts could desire of natural things. But far was he from envying them or being discontented with his lot because he realized they had "their portion in this life," and said, "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness"—he anticipated the joy of the life to come

To behold God's face by faith is both our duty and comfort in this life, yet that can only be as we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ and as we maintain practical righteousness by obedience to God's revealed will. To behold the Lord by open vision will be our occupation and enjoyment in the next life. But what is meant by, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness"? Not a few have experienced difficulty in supplying an answer. Their spiritual instincts tell them those words cannot mean that the soul will find its contentment in God's image then being perfectly stamped upon itself; yet at first glance that is what they seem to signify. Manton appears to have given the true interpretation when he said: "In Heaven we look for such a vision as makes way for assimilation, and such assimilation to God as maketh for complete satisfaction and blessedness." There will be no self-satisfaction there, but rather entire absorption with and satisfaction in Christ. "That blessedness consists of three things. 1. The open vision of God and His glory: the knowledge of God will then be perfect, and the enlarged intellect filled with it. 2. The participation of His likeness: our holiness will there be perfect: this results from the former— 'we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is' (I John 3:2). 3. A complete and full satisfaction resulting from all this. There is no satisfaction for a soul but in God: in His face and likeness, His good will toward us, and His good work in us" (Matthew Henry).

It is solemnly true that the wicked will also yet behold the face of God in Christ, for it is written, "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him": yet how vastly different will be their case! They will look upon Him but briefly and not perpetually, with shame and sorrow and not with confidence and joy—upon their Judge and not their Saviour. So far from such a sight filling them with satisfaction, "all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him" (Rev. 1:7), yea, they shall say to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6:17). None will be able to stand, be he king or subject, rich or poor, save those who "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." These latter are "before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple, and He that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them. They hunger no more, neither thirst any more. . . For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water" (Rev. 7:15-17), finding His joy in ministering to them, as theirs will be in such ministry.

"At the resurrection there will be a glory upon the body as well as upon the soul: a glory equal to that of the sun, moon and stars. The body which is sown in the earth in corruption, a vile body, corrupted by sin, and now by death, shall be raised in incorruption, no more to be corrupted by sin, disease or death. What is sown in dishonor, and has lost all its beauty and glory, and become nauseous and fit only to be the companion of worms, shall be raised in glory —in the utmost perfection and comeliness, fashioned like to the glorious body of Christ—and

shine like the sun in the firmament of Heaven. What is sown in weakness, having lost all its strength, and carried by others to the grave, shall be raised in power—strong and hale, able to move itself from place to place—and will attend the service of God and the Lamb without weakness and weariness—there will be no more complaint of this kind: 'the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.' What is sown a natural body, or an animal one, which while it lived was supported with animal food, shall be raised a spiritual body: not turned into a spirit, for then it would not have flesh and bones, as it will have; but it will subsist as spirits do, without food, and no more die; then it will be no encumbrance to the soul, as now, in spiritual services, but assisting to it, and befitted for spiritual employments and to converse with spiritual objects." (J. Gill). When the glorified soul and the glorified body are united, there will then be a full accession of glory to the whole man, and his enjoyments will then be entered into in a larger and more sensible manner.

Let us now consider the various features of a saint's glorification, or those things which constitute his eternal bliss. First, a perfection of knowledge. This is clear from "now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known." This does not mean we shall become omniscient, or possessed of infinite knowledge, but that our knowledge will be free from all doubt and error, and as full as our finite faculties will permit. We shall not only enjoy a greater means of knowledge, but our capacity to take in will be immeasurably increased. That sight of God in Christ which will be ours will not only irradiate our minds but enlarge our understandings. We shall perceive the glory of God with the eyes of our mind fully enlightened. The rays of that glory will shine into our souls so that they will be filled with the knowledge of God, and with the whole good pleasure of His will, in all His vast designs of grace unto us. That which is revealed in Scripture, and upon which we now exercise faith and hope, shall then be fully experienced by us.

Second, a perfection of union and communion, both with Christ and fellow believers. Henceforth, there will be no more differences of opinion, cooling of affections, or breaches between Christians. Then will be fully realized that prayer, "that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one" (John 17:22, 23). The very reading of those words should fill our hearts with holy amazement, and the actualization of them will fill us with adoration. The oneness between the Father and the Son is such that they partake of the same ineffable blessedness, each enjoying it equally with the other. And that is the likeness, by way of similitude, of the final union between the Redeemer and the redeemed—ours will be like Theirs! As the union between the Father and the Son is a real, spiritual, holy, indestructible, and inexpressibly glorious one, such will be that between Christ and His Church in Heaven. There is a grace union between them here, but it is the glory union which is referred to in the above verses. "He will be theirs, and will bless them forever. He will be all around them and within them, the light of their understandings, the joy of their hearts, the object of their perpetual praise" (John Dick). Christ will remain the everlasting bond of union between God and the saints.

Third, a perfection of love. Even now Christ has the first place in their hearts (otherwise they would not be real Christians), yet how often their affection toward Him wanes. Real need has each of us to pray, "O may no earth-born cloud arise, to hide You from Your servant's eyes." But, blessed be God, such a thing will be unknown there. It will be impossible to constantly contemplate the excellence of God without continually loving Him. "In this world the

saints prefer Him to their chief joy, and there are seasons when their hearts go out to Him with an ardor which no created object can excite, with desire for the closest union and the most intimate fellowship. But this flame will glow more ardently in the pure atmosphere of Heaven.

“The fervour of his affection will never abate, nor will anything occur to suspend it or turn it into a different channel. God will always maintain the pre-eminence and appear infinitely greater and better than all other beings" (John Dick). There will be a perpetual cleaving of heart to Him without change or weariness, a love that never ceases working communion with God.

Fourth, a perfection of holiness. “Now they are in part made ‘partakers of the Divine nature,’ but then they shall perfectly partake of it. That is to say, God will communicate to them His own image, making all His goodness not only pass before them, but pass into them, and stamp the image of all His own perfections upon them, so far as the creature is capable of receiving the same; from whence shall result a perfect likeness to Him, in all things in and about them” (Thomas Boston). “If our view of the glory of Christ by faith is assimilating now, and ‘changes into the same image from glory to glory’ (2 Cor. 3:18), what will a full view, a clear sight, of Him do? Then will the great end of predestination—to be conformed to the image of the Son of God—be completely answered. The soul, with all its powers and faculties, will bear a resemblance to Christ. Its understanding will have a clear discernment of Him, the bias of the mind will be wholly toward Him, the will will be entirely subject to Him, the affections will be in the strongest manner set upon Him, and the memory will be fully stored with spiritual and heavenly things” (John Gill).

Fifth, a perfection of glory. Of old it was promised, "The Lord will give grace and glory" (Ps. 84:11): as surely as He has given us the one, will He the other. "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto He called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2:13, 14). That was what God had in mind for His people in eternity past:

nothing less would satisfy His heart. Observe well that it is "the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." Our glory cannot be independent of Him, but the glory which the Father has given Him, He gives us (John 17:22), so that we share His very throne (Rev. 3:21)! As He is the Head of grace, ministering to our every need, so He is the Head of glory and will communicate the same to us in Heaven. He will shine forth in all His glory so that His bride will reflect the splendor of it. Angels will be spectators of it, but not the sharers. It will be a glory revealed in the saints which is beyond all comparison (Rom. 8:18; 2 Thess. 1:10), and a glory put upon them which is inconceivable (Ps. 45:13; Rev. 21:11), so that, "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3:4), in shining robes of ineffable purity and beauty.

Sixth, a perfection of joy. “Joy sometimes enters into us now, but it has much to do to get access while we are encompassed with sorrows; but then, joy shall not only enter into us, but we shall enter into it, and swim forever in an ocean of joy; where we shall see nothing but joy wherever we turn our eyes” (Boston). Our joy will be pure and unmixed, without any dregs of sorrow. "In Thy presence is fullness of joy, at Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore" (Ps. 16:11). The object of our happiness will not be a creature, but God Himself. The presence and communion of the Lamb will afford us everlasting delight. All that the spouse is represented in the Song as longing for, she will then have, and a thousand times more. Christ will then say,

"Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matthew 25:21), sharing with us His own joy. Perfect serenity of mind, complete satisfaction of heart, will be ours, without interruption forever. As we are told that in that day the Lord God, "will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing" (Zeph. 3:17), so will it be with His people.

Seventh, a perfection of praise. In Revelation 15:2, the heavenly saints are seen "having the harps of God"—the emblem of praise. At present our best worship is faulty, for both our knowledge of God and our love to Him are sadly defective—but when we come into His presence and are filled with all His fullness (Eph. 3:19), we shall render to Him that which is His due. Then shall we fully realize our infinite indebtedness to His grace, and our hearts will overflow with gratitude. A glorified soul will be far better capacitated to estimate and appreciate the wondrous riches of His grace than it can be in its present state, and therefore our adoring homage will be immeasurably more fervent and raised to a higher pitch. The infinite perfections of the Triune Jehovah, His love unto the Church collectively and to each of its members individually—the revelation and manifestation of His glory in Christ, the salvation which He provided for them at such fearful cost to Himself, contain an all-sufficiency for perpetual praise and thanksgiving throughout the endless ages. His praises can never be exhausted: for all eternity we shall find fresh matter in Him for thanksgiving.

"And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him. And they shalt see His face, and His name shalt be in their foreheads" (Rev. 22:3, 4). That is not only the final but the ultimate word on this glorious subject. In the beatific vision it is not upon His "back parts" we shalt look, as did Moses upon the mount (Ex. 33:23), but we shall "see His face"! We shall not be limited to touching the hem of His garment, nor to embracing His feet, but shall actually and personally feast our eyes upon His peerless countenance. That sacred head which once was crowned with thorns is now adorned with diadem resplendent; and that blessed face which was covered with the vile spittle of men will forever beam with love upon His own. Oh, what an ineffable sight! No longer will our eyes be clouded by sin or dimmed by old age. Nor will such bliss be ours for a brief season only, but forevermore. There will be a perfect and perpetual influx of delight as we view Him in the inconceivable radiance of His manifested glory.

"They shall see His face." There will be many other objects to behold, but nothing in comparison with Him! Those mansions which Christ has gone to prepare for His beloved must be indescribably lovely. The holy angels, the cherubim and seraphim, will be present to our sight. The Patriarchs and Prophets, the Apostles and martyrs, some of our own dear kindred who were washed in the blood of the Lamb. But chief and foremost, claiming our notice and absorbing our attention, will be our best Beloved. Then it is we shall receive the fullest and grandest answer to our oft-repeated prayer, "God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us" (Ps. 67:1). To see the King's face is to enjoy His favour (2 Sam. 14:24, 32). But it also signifies to have the most intimate and immediate communion with Him, that we shall then be the recipients of the fullest and most lavish discoveries of His love—beholding Him with both the eyes of our understandings and of our glorified bodies. All distance will then be removed. Every veil will then be done away with. All we longed for perfectly realized.

Nothing will then be lacking to the absolute completeness of our happiness; and, what is far better, nothing will be lacking to complete the happiness of Christ. That "joy" which He "set

before Him" or held in view, as He "endured the Cross" (Heb. 11:2), will then be fully His, for we shall not only be with Him, but like Him, conformed to His image. "His name shall be in their foreheads." Then will it openly appear to all beholders that they belong to Him and bear His holy image, since they shall perfectly reflect Him. As the "name" represents the person, so we shall bear His likeness, giving expression to those who see us who and what He is. We shall be publicly acknowledged as His (cf. Rev. 14:1).

Christ will everlastingly delight in the Church, and the Church will everlastingly delight in Him. There will be mutual intercourse, an unrestrained opening of the heart one to another. In communion communications are made by both parties. One party bestows favour upon another, and the recipient reciprocates by giving back to the donor, according to the benefit received, grateful acknowledgment– those communications, from both sides, flowing from love and union. Thus we read, "Now ye Philippians know that. . . no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only" (4:15). Paul and the Philippian saints were united in heart and had spiritual fellowship together in the Gospel (1:5). Out of love to him, they communicated in a temporal way, they being, the active givers, he the passive receiver. Then, in return for their kindness, the Apostle communicated by acknowledging their beneficence, thanking them for it. This may help us a little to form some idea of what our communion with Christ in Heaven will be like. As the vine conveys sap to the branch, so the branch responds by bearing leaves and fruit. Christ will continue to be the Giver, and we the receivers. This will issue in the overflowing of our love, and in return, we shall pour out praise and thanksgiving, adoration and worship.

“He and I in one bright glory
Endless bliss shall share;
Mine, to be forever with Him;
His, that I am there.”

THE END