

# Reason to Revelation

BY

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Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up  
thy voice for understanding;

If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her  
as for hid treasures;

Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord,  
and find the knowledge of God.

For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of His mouth  
cometh knowledge and understanding.



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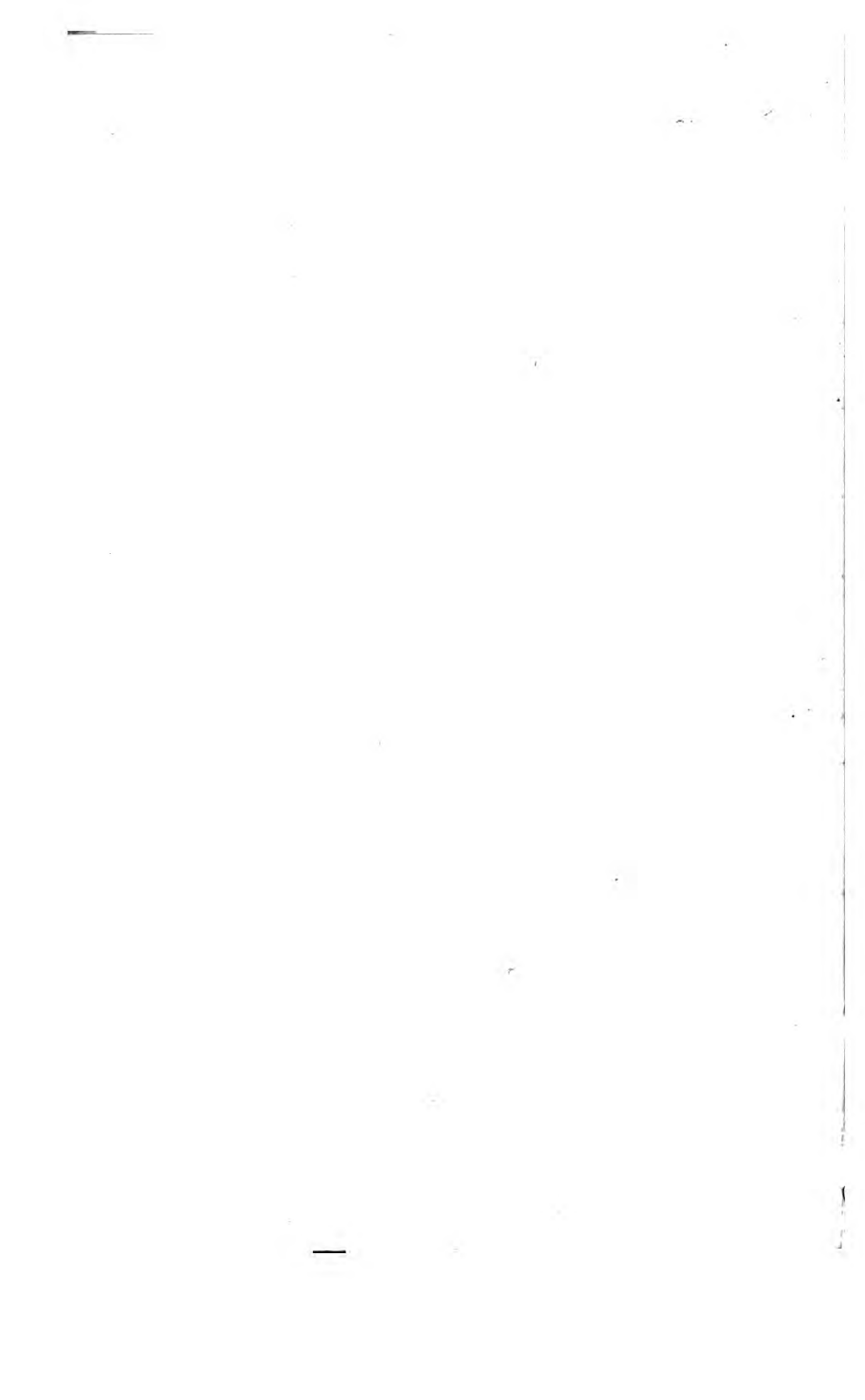
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## INTRODUCTION

This little book is a message to thoughtful inquirers and honest doubters, written from their own point of view.

The writer is a prominent lawyer in Washington, long trained in the reasoning processes by which most men try to get at truth. Having found by experience that the old verdict, "The world by wisdom knew not God," is still true, and having come to the glorious light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by the shorter and truer way of faith and the direct illumination of the Bible and the Holy Spirit, he is stretching out a brother's hand to help others to the wonderful emancipation that has come to him.

Knowing of his remarkable conversion within the past two years, and the transformation it has wrought in his own life, in his family and in an ever-widening circle of Christian influence and great usefulness, the writer heartily commends his striking appeal to that large class of gifted and attractive men and women who are honestly seeking for God by the dim torchlight of human reason instead of the daylight of the Sun of Righteousness.

A. B. SIMPSON.

## FOREWORD.

The writer of the following pages believes (upon experience) that a right use of reason will inevitably lead the reasoner to the **unqualified** acceptance of revelation, and that such use of reason is its chief end. He is well aware that, for the most part, his fellowmen do not apply their intelligence to the discovery of their standing before God, but occupy their marvellous mental faculties with matters which belong wholly to the temporal and changing order of things. The indifference of a large part of mankind to the solemn questions of eternity is, in itself, a phenomenon sufficiently striking to challenge "scientific" examination and discussion, particularly when we consider the enormous advantages which admittedly result to those who accept the Scriptures as divine revelation, and submit to their guidance and control as such. Of this phenomenon, and of all that is perplexing in the painful and protracted drama of humanity, these same Scriptures contain the *only* explanation. Of this (the writer believes) every one will be convinced who earnestly applies his reason to a comprehension of the

teachings of Scripture. To assist in such application of the reason is the object of the publication of these pages by one who has made no study whatever of theology, who has spent twenty-five years in the practice of the law, and who has made about every *other* application of his reasoning faculties before employing them to test the claim of authority which the Scriptures advance and the reasonableness of the teachings which they contain.

These pages are, in reality, detached fragments from the record of a soul's experience, rather than arguments constructed with a view to persuading others to accept the conclusions which the author has reached. Therefore, it is his hope that some readers, who find in these pages a reflection of their own experiences when trying to solve the problems of life solely by the light of reason, will be induced to venture upon that path which is as "the dawning light that shines more and more unto the perfect day," (Prov. IV, 18, R. V.)

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE INTELLECTUAL APPROACH TO REVELATION

**Notes on Intellectual Difficulties in the Way  
of Accepting Christ as the Incarnate  
Word of God and the Saviour of Mankind,  
and the Bible as the Written Word of  
God.**

The Incarnate Word (or Expression) of the invisible God, and the Written Word (or Expression) are so linked together that the acceptance or rejection of the one necessitates the like treatment of the other. Christ witnesses to the Scriptures, and they to Him.

Let it be said at the outset that in speaking of "intellectual" difficulties, we do not imply that the possession of superior intelligence is *itself* a difficulty. If any man thinks that it is his gigantic brain that prevents his full acceptance of the gospel, he both flatters and deceives himself. What is needed generally is not *less* intelligence, but *more and better*.

Let us read carefully Chapters I and II of I Corinthians, noting especially those passages

which speak of the part which the intellect, or the reasoning faculty, may play in bringing men into covenant relations with God; and let us assume provisionally that (as the Scriptures assert) man has lost the knowledge of God, and that all unbelievers are as men "having no hope and without God in the World" (Eph. II, 12). We will see as we read these chapters that the writer thereof was certainly correct in some of his propositions, and, as the meaning is more clearly grasped, we may be able to give *intellectual assent* to *all* of them.

Particular attention should be given to the following passages:—

Chap. I, 21. "The world by wisdom knew not God."

Chap. I, 24. "The foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of men."

Chap. I, 27. "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise."

Chap. II, 4-5. "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of *man's wisdom*, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not stand in the *wisdom of men*, but in the power of God."

The "wisdom of men" does not afford a secure foundation for any doctrine, as every student of science knows full well. But a

faith which stands in the "power of God" has a secure foundation. That foundation is in Christ, and this is the deep teaching of this portion of the Word; for we read (Chap. I, 24), that Christ is "*the power of God*," and elsewhere that "*other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ*" (I Cor. III, 11).

Finally we quote:—

Chap. II, 13, 14, "which things" (i. e., "the deep things of God," v. 10), "also we speak, *not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth*, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual, but 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."

To some of these dogmatic assertions the natural reason will give immediate assent; but the others are not, perhaps, so obvious. At this point we wish to use merely our natural intelligence, which *must be* the first means which we employ in our investigation, and without the concurrence of which no step should be taken.

Our inquiry turns reason *upon itself*, as well as upon things which transcend reason; and

hence the attitude of the inquirer must, at the very outset, be one of humility, keeping in mind the *instability of "scientific" conclusions and inferences touching all matters that lie outside of sensible phenomena.*

The attitude of many persons is that they cannot ("will not" would generally be more accurate) accept revelation as true, until *convinced* thereof intellectually. An examination of the tenability of this position is within the scope of our discussion, and here we must bring to view the fact that man's order is "let me *see* and I will believe" (Mark XV, 32), whereas, if Christ really speaks for God, *His* order is "*believe* and thou shalt see" (John XI, 40). The natural mind is quite equal to recognizing that this *may* be the true order of cause and effect in the spiritual realm; for while the powers of the natural mind are *not equal to the demonstration of the truths of revelation*, they are *equal to a recognition of this inability*. The best "thinkers" have most clearly recognized the limits of the "knowable," and hence, a refusal to accept anything that cannot be intellectually demonstrated, would put up an impassable barrier to any acquaintance with spiritual truth.

The position defined above (insistence upon

seeing before believing) is, therefore, untenable. In fact, in all the important affairs of life we act by faith first, receiving the evidence afterwards. If one refused to believe in the sense of sight, or that it was possible to perceive objects remote from the perceiver, and should demand that, before believing anything so improbable he should first understand the mechanism and working of the organs of sight and be convinced intellectually of the complicated and obscure theory and laws of light; and if, in consequence of such mental attitude, he persisted in remaining immured in a dark room, his case would be a difficult one, and perhaps hopeless. To convince him might be impossible; but how easy to say "come and see." Or if one refused to partake of food until he were convinced intellectually that he possessed within his body an elaborate apparatus capable of extracting from food-substances certain components, transforming these into bone, sinew, muscle, nerve, blood, etc., and distributing the various products to the appropriate parts of his body, his position would be considered unreasonable, and he might (and probably would) starve and die before his arbitrary conditions could be complied with.



The case is not otherwise in spiritual matters. As in the above illustrations, *faith must precede evidence*; so in spiritual matters, *evidence invariably follows faith*. The man who brings the gospel message does not come with an elaborate explanation which only a doctor of theology could follow. He brings the simple invitation, "come and see" (John I, 16), "take and eat" (I Cor. XI, 24).

It may be objected that these illustrations are not analogous, because man has the testimony of others to convince him of the effect of food-substances, and of the powers and functions of the digestive apparatus. On reflection, however, it will be seen that, notwithstanding the testimony of others and the previous individual experience, the placing of food in the mouth is an act of *faith*, and the proof of its effect can come only afterwards. That other food-substances at a previous time were acted upon by the unseen organs, according to unknown processes, and produced certain observable results, affords *not the slightest proof of what will happen* as the result of swallowing the next morsel that may be eaten. Such testimony would be ruled out of a human court.

On the other hand, if it be said that such

testimony *does* give the confidence which justifies eating and which makes it foolish in the extreme to refuse food, we answer, "precisely so"; and precisely so ought the testimony of the millions who have believed and hence received the effect of their faith (I Pet. I, 9) give to others all the confidence required to induce them "to taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps. XXXIV, 8), especially to *all such as have spiritual appetites unsatisfied*.

Therefore, reason,—rightly interrogated and truthfully responding,—tells us that the way declared in Scripture to be the way of access to the things of God, is not different in kind from familiar roads that lead to physical results, though the *explanation* may be hidden in both cases.

Furthermore, reason, or the natural mind (called in Scripture the "carnal" mind) recognizes that the *explanation* of visible phenomena lies in a region which is inaccessible to the physical senses; and that it has no means of exploring that region so as to bring its contents within the reach of the senses. Thus the mind conducts the inquiring soul to the shore of a great ocean and says to her "That which you seek lies beyond, and I have no means of crossing."

Here, then, we have reached our obstacle. We have trusted the intellect *just as far as the intellect can conduct us*; and now our guide has repaid our confidence by frankly admitting that she can serve us no further. We are fortunate if our intellect has thus faithfully and honestly served us, instead of falsely pretending to know the way, and rashly venturing to conduct us in a cockleshell of a craft, without chart or compass, over an ocean of mystery.

*What now will the seeking soul do?* Will she cast around for some other guide to conduct her in a region where the intellect is confessedly unable to penetrate? or will she sit down on the shore, and refuse to proceed further unless *reason furnishes the conveyance and guides it?* This latter alternative is virtually the agnostic position, which is an exceedingly uncomfortable one and difficult to maintain.

But cannot reason aid us at this critical point? Certainly she can, for while she cannot herself guide us any further, she can *pass upon the credentials of the one who now offers to be our guide*, namely, *Faith*; and she can superintend every step of the journey. In *nothing* will faith do anything that is contrary

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to reason, or that brings about intellectual confusion.

But let us, at this stage of the inquiry, refer again to our Scriptures. When we read that "the world by wisdom (natural intelligence) knew not God"—

that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God"—

that one cannot "by searching find out God" or "know the Almighty to perfection"—and that His ways are "past tracing out," reason perceives and admits the truth of these statements. If we have not already done so, we can clearly verify all these and like statements; for they merely assert those limitations of the natural mind which we have been considering, and which the natural mind itself distinctly recognizes.

We may draw, from what has gone before, another conclusion, namely, that whoever made the statements quoted above *knew, to this extent at least, what he was talking about*; and a presumption is at once raised in favor of other statements from the same source.

Along with the *negative* statements quoted above, which assert emphatically the inherent incapacity of the human mind to search the deep things of God, we find certain equally

emphatic *positive* assertions to the effect that there *is a way of access to these truths*; we find that way clearly defined; and we find the assertion made with great emphasis that there *is no other way*.

Thus, we read, that Christ Jesus is of God made unto us *wisdom* and righteousness (I Cor. I, 30); that your faith should stand *not in the wisdom of men*, but in the *power of God* (I Cor. II, 5); that God hath revealed them (the hidden things) unto us by His Spirit, who searcheth all things, *yea the deep things of God* (I Cor. II, 10); and that spiritual things are *spiritually discerned* (I Cor. II, 14).

Nowhere else, in any book, or from any other source, do we obtain anything purporting to be a message from the Creator declaring a way of access to eternal life, and to a knowledge of all truth. *That message is here or nowhere.*

In this Book it is declared that *all persons* may have access to this truth and *may know the certainty thereof*. The way of doing this is pointed out very definitely. We read (John VII, 17), "If any man will do his will he shall know the doctrine, whether it be of God." "The fear of the Lord is the *beginning* of

wisdom; a *good understanding* have all they *that do His commandments*" (Ps. III, 10); and "Hereby do we *know* that we know Him if we keep His commandments" (I John II, 3).

If one recognizes the fact that he lacks understanding and capacity for receiving and comprehending these spiritual things, this Book meets the objection squarely by *pointing out how the deficiency may be supplied*. These things are gifts, to be had from the Great Giver, the "El Shaddai" (All Bountiful One); Thus:—

"If thou *criest after knowledge*, and liftest up thy voice for UNDERSTANDING; if thou *seekest* her as silver and *searchest* for her as for *hidden treasures*; then *shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord*, and find the *knowledge of God*, For the Lord GIVETH *wisdom*" (Prov. II, 3-6). "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering" (James I, 5).

"Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find," are methods *too simple* for the "highly cultivated intellects," just as "wash and be

clean" disappointed and even irritated the princely leper, who was the giant intellect of his time, and a fitting type of the intellectual and cultivated classes of the day, who need cleansing as much as he. Fortunately for Naaman, there was a servant near by who did not have his master's great intellect, but who was able to speak a word of *common sense*, to point out the folly of refusing to try a remedy so simple. Surely "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."

The Book is most explicit in declaring the method of obtaining these gifts. We have already seen that "Christ is the wisdom of God," and we are told that He is the "unspeakable gift" (II Cor. IX, 15), and we are further told that "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not *with Him* also freely *give us all things*" (Rom. VIII, 32).

Certainly a Book which contained these and *innumerable other statements whereby its stupendous claims may be tested by any one and every one*, would long ago have been utterly cast aside by humanity *if it had not in every generation survived the tests whenever applied*, and if there were not in every generation countless thousands, who could witness, as

an *actual experience*, to the certainty of all these promises.

The mind which has arrived at an approximate understanding of its own limitations is prepared to admit certain possibilities:—as, for example, that He who gave to man existence and a desire for the truth concerning himself and his relations to his Maker, *may* have provided a way of access to that truth. That mind will be the more ready to accept this supposition tentatively because, if there be no way of satisfying the demand or desire of humanity for access to this truth, it would stand as an *extraordinary exception to the general rule; inasmuch as for every other demand of human nature an adequate and accessible provision exists.*

Furthermore, we may expect that, if the Creator has provided *a way*, He must be sought *by that way*, and not by one which man might prefer. "In Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James I, 17).

Here, then, we have reached a new point of departure, and we may adopt a familiar intellectual process, namely, that of accepting an hypothesis provisionally, and then applying to it the tests of fact and experience.



The mind is capable of being influenced to conclusions not only by generalizing from its own experiences and sensations, but also by means of the *testimony of other persons*. In many of the most important affairs of life we act upon the trust we repose in the statements of witnesses. This has already been touched upon.

If, then, the above unqualified assertions, such as *that they who do the will of God shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God*, indicates a way of acquiring an experimental knowledge of the truth, we should expect to find such testimony available from those who have tested them.

Such indeed is the case, since in every age there has been, and is now, a *host* of witnesses testifying *by word and deed* to the truth of these assertions.

God has said that He will not leave Himself without a witness; and this means, not only that He will not be left without testimony to His glory, truth and faithfulness, but also that man, honestly seeking Him, shall not be left without access to those who have experimentally tested the way, and who are competent to testify about it.

Thus far then we conclude from experience and authority:

(1) That God cannot be reached by a reasoning process, or by any mere effort of the intellect; in other words, that the natural man *cannot* know the things of the Spirit of God;—

(2) Hence, that God and truth are inaccessible, unless there be a way of access independent of the avenues of investigation which are open to the physical senses;—

(3) That in a Book, claiming to be a record of God's messages to man, a way is described which is open for trial, to all who are *willing* to try it;—

(4) That countless thousands, living and dead, do testify and have testified, by word and deed, that this way is indeed all that it claims to be, and does lead to all that it promises.

These things being true, it is manifest that he who fails to find the way to a knowledge of God, and of His truth respecting the soul, is one *who refuses to trust the witnesses enough to try the way*.

The man who, when a way is pointed out to him as leading to a certain place which he desires to reach, both refuses to try the way

and also disputes the truth of the assertion, and the existence of the place, is irrational, and cannot be dealt with on rational grounds. He is the man of our illustration, who will not move out of the dark room until he shall be intellectually convinced of the *fact* of light, and made to comprehend its phenomena and laws.

Thus far reason can guide and serve us. She can conduct us to the borderland of spiritual truth and approve the credentials of the only one who offers to guide us in that region. "*Thou wilt show me the path of life*" (Ps. XVI, 11). The acquisition of the truth, or heavenly Wisdom, will never be by an intellectual process, but by an act of the *affections*. "CHRIST JESUS is of God, made unto us WISDOM" (I Cor. I, 30), and this we gain by acceptance of HIM.

Nevertheless, a right use of the intellect will *assuredly* lead the sincere soul to the point where a glimpse can be caught of Him who is the Chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely. Thus desire and love are kindled, and the soul that was dead is quickened by the life of the Living One, who lived and died, and, behold, He is alive for evermore (Rev. I, 18).

"I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord. He that believeth on me, *though he were dead*, yet shall he live. And he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John XI, 25-26).

## CHAPTER II.

### TWO OPPOSING VIEWS OF THE MEANING OF LIFE.

"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, "Yea, and hath God said ye shall not eat of any tree of the garden?" And the woman said unto the serpent, "Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch of it, lest ye die." And the serpent saith unto the woman, "Ye shall not surely die, for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof then your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil."—Gen iii. 1-5 (R. V.).

(See also Matt. iv. 1-11; Luke iv. 1-13.)

There are two contrasted views of the meaning of life. One view regards life as a process of gradual improvement, both of the individual and of the race. The life of the individual is regarded as a school in which he learns (or has an opportunity to learn) lessons from the schoolmaster,—experience,—thereby improving his character and bettering his condition—physically, morally and spiritually.

According to this view the progress of the race is regarded as one of development, or

evolution; and while science does not expressly recognize the spiritual side of man's being, and does not really concern itself with the *character* of the end toward which this evolution is tending (i. e., whether it be good or bad) the disciples of science seem generally to regard the progress of the race as one toward better conditions, both materially and morally or ethically.

This view does not point to any very definite conclusions or results, or commend any definite mode of life. Even so far as it regards character at all, it gives no particular help in carrying on the process vaguely called "character building." The individual is left pretty much to the play of "cosmic forces"; and, not being able to derive any help from the generalities in which this progressive or evolutionary view finds expression, is likely to become a mere bit of drift-wood.

The opposing view is that of the Holy Scripture, upon which it rests. According to it, the conditions, in which mankind now exist, and during all historic times have existed, and which are unequivocally pronounced *evil*, are not *natural* conditions out of which the individual or the race is being evolved or developed, but are *unnatural* conditions, re-

sulting from disobedience of God's commands and the entrance of Sin into the world. It claims that sin is handed down as an inherited taint from generation to generation.

This view sees no hope at all for an individual to rescue himself out of the condition of evil, either by the process of "character building" (whatever that may mean) or by any other process. On the contrary, it uncompromisingly says that no man is able to save himself from sin, while not denying that some men are able to refrain from immoral conduct and to perform deeds of philanthropy and self-denial.

It sees no hope whatever for the race along the line of natural progress or evolution. On the contrary, while it recognizes the great advance which the progressive nations are making in bettering their *material* conditions, it cannot see that men are making any gain in righteousness, and improving morally, or becoming less cruel and selfish, or that crime (while changing its nature) is diminishing in extent. Discoveries of natural laws have not contributed at all to the knowledge or the practice of the laws of holiness, and have *no tendency that way*.

Particularly does this view disclose that,

*apart from the influences exerted by the teachings of Christ and by the Scriptures*, the world is becoming worse, rather than better. It points, too, to the fact that the much-boasted progress of civilization is confined to those nations wherein the Bible is recognized as the Word of God, and is in proportion to the deference paid thereto. Compare, for instance, the progress of Spain, where, among Christian countries, the circulation of the Bible is least, with England and the United States, where it is greatest.

According to this Scriptural view of life there is a definite and clear explanation of the nature, origin and consequences of sin, and a definite and clear way of escape out of sin and into a life of righteousness. It teaches that man has a great spiritual adversary whose chief aim is to prevent men from reposing their trust in God their Saviour. It teaches that, because the first man yielded to the wiles of the tempter, his offspring are all born into a state of alienation from God, and that everything which is called evil is simply an incident of that state. It teaches that to continue in this state of sin wherein man was born, results in eternal death, i. e., everlasting separation from God. It teaches that God has



provided a way so clearly marked that "the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein" (Is. XXXV, 9), whereby whosoever *will* may pass from death to everlasting life, this way being by belief in and acceptance of Jesus Christ as the individual Saviour. It teaches that,—being thus born again of "incorruptible seed", *into the righteous man, Jesus Christ*,—the natural result of birth *from the unrighteous man, Adam*, is reversed. It thus sets forth a clear, definite, consistent and (to one who reverently examines it) a marvelously satisfying plan of redemption, applicable to all men and offered to all men for either acceptance or rejection.

### CHAPTER III.

#### A FEW REASONS WHICH SUPPORT THE SCRIPTURAL VIEW

The following observations are addressed mainly to those who have already accepted the Bible doctrine, and are not designed as an argument in support of that view as opposed to the evolutionary view. It is, however, pertinent to notice one or two very conspicuous facts which, to one who is really halting between two opinions, may prove helpful in making a choice:

I. The teaching that the tendency of man's heart to evil, and the crimes, vices and degradation, which abound in every community of human beings, are *natural* conditions, incident to the early stages of man's being, and are destined to be outgrown or overcome as the result of continued struggle and effort, has no authority to support it, and is not deducible from any established facts. It is, at best, but an hypothesis for which no very good reason has ever been advanced, and for which no analogy has been discovered.

The opposing view certainly accounts for existing conditions equally well, and has the

advantage of authority which *claims divine origin*. Even those who do not recognize these claims (the vast majority of whom *have never investigated them*) must concede that they have survived with great vigor the attacks of many centuries, and show at this time as much vitality as ever.

2. The teaching that vice, crime, immorality, selfishness, disease, poverty, and other symptoms and effects of sin are conditions incident to the nature of man as originally created, is contradictory to the analogy of *all other created beings*. In every other species of animate things, plants or animals, *the species and every individual member thereof can safely trust to its natural tendencies to lead it to its highest possible attainments*. Not one of them has to outgrow or contend against inherited tendencies to evil. Whatever is necessary to its preservation and development it does by instinct; whereas man, who alone boasts himself of his attainments, can learn only by long and painful efforts to do indifferently what humbler orders of creation can do without instruction. It is not too much to say that what chiefly characterizes man is an inveterate tendency to go astray, to err, to make mistakes and blunders, and to entertain

error. Something has happened to man which has not happened to other created beings, all of which (except so far as they have become involved in man's downfall, or have become victims of his cruelty) are in every way perfect.

3. The evolutionary view encourages no effort, but tends to listlessness and indifference. "Character building" is a thing much talked about, but little engaged in. One who honestly examines his own progress or that of the persons he knows best, must admit that there is rarely any substantial betterment resulting from the mere *effort* to be good, nor sufficient result from such efforts to offer any encouragement to persistence in them. This view is, in fact, not a settled conviction with any considerable number of people, and not the result of any examination of the facts which it seeks to explain. It is rather a negative state of mind regarding the most serious questions of life, the result of ignoring those questions and occupying one's self solely with temporal affairs.

On the other hand, the Bible doctrine gives a most decided stimulus and encouragement to one who seeks deliverance from the evil conditions within and around him; and the con-

vincing fact is that *it bears fruit in the lives of all who accept it*. The test of results is one upon which we place reliance in all other affairs. Certainly one cannot afford to ignore that test in this question of life and good on one hand, and death and evil on the other. God says to every man, "See, I place before thee this day life and good, and death and evil" (Deut. XXX., 15); and he bids us to judge of the eternal consequences of this choice, by what He tells us in His Word, and *by what we can see for ourselves of the temporal consequences*.

Let everyone therefore take into serious consideration the deep significance of this fact, that, while that which claims to be God's teaching keeps *all* who accept and live by it in righteousness, peace and happiness *in this present life*, and leads everyone who embraces it *away from* sin and all its consequences; the opposing view has its adherents and disciples in every stage and state of human wickedness and degradation. "Therefore," as Moses urged in his farewell message to the Israelites, from which we have already quoted, "choose LIFE" (Deut. XXX, 19). Certain it is that *no one who has chosen the view which claims divine sanction ever came to harm thereby*.

## CHAPTER IV.

### ORIGIN OF EVIL

If, as the Bible teaches, there is a powerful personage in a state of rebellion against God, that personage having been the spiritual overseer of the portion of the universe to which this earth belongs; and if that personage has not as yet been deprived of his power or restrained from all interference in human affairs, it is to be expected that he could best further his purposes by disguising himself, and, if possible, concealing his very existence. No one, so much as Satan himself, is interested in spreading the doctrine that he is a myth, or at best but an allegorical figure representing an abstract principle of evil. This doctrine has gained great headway in recent years, and to its spread has contributed the custom of representing Satan as a creature of hideous and repulsive, and sometimes even ridiculous, appearance,—a figure too contemptible and absurd to be taken seriously by “*intelligent*” persons.

Therefore, it is in the highest degree important to know what the Bible does teach about Satan. Assuredly, everything there

recorded about him was for our instruction and protection; and while it evidently was not God's purpose to instruct us fully in the "mystery of iniquity" (2 Thess. II, 7), He *has* told us that there *is* such a mystery, and has given certain information regarding the person by whose agency iniquity came to be, and by whose wiles the human family were plunged into it.

Again, it is important to know the Bible teaching about this personage because, when that teaching is understood, one is less disposed to "spiritualize" the meaning thereof, and more disposed to believe that there is literally a powerful spiritual being who, being at enmity with God and actually contending with Him, is seeking to strengthen his own position by gaining as many adherents as possible among the children of men. The importance of this consideration lies in the fact that, if Satan be a *person*, conducting a literal campaign for the possession of men's souls, we are at once placed at a great disadvantage if we are blinded to this fact and induced to believe there is no such person.

Let us notice at the outset that the Satan of Scripture is not a vulgar, degraded creature who lures men into vicious

practices and into promiscuous crimes and immoralities. On the contrary, there is every reason to believe that Satan would, if possible, keep his followers from indulgence in vice and folly. There is no reason whatever to believe that he countenances, or himself indulges in, such practices. On the contrary, being of exalted wisdom, he knows that these extreme results of disobedience and sin are not calculated to commend his system, or to advertise its merits. They can never serve as inducements to tempt men away from God, but, on the contrary, serve rather as the horrible warnings of the consequences of sin.

Satan's wisdom and cunning are seen rather in the philosophies, systems, doctrines, cults and religions, which aim to teach man that *he can stand, and progress to his best possibilities without help from God.* Whatever serves to induce men to neglect and turn away from God's appointed means of redemption, and at the same time holds before him lofty aims and high ideals, better serves the purposes of the adversary than all the coarse habits and gross indulgences which fasten upon those who, having swerved aside from the true and living way, are hurled by the



momentum of their impetus to the extreme consequences of their deflection.

With this thought in mind we can profitably study the brief, but sufficient, record of the temptation in the Garden of Eden.

— The first recorded utterance of the tempter in his conversation with the woman suggests that there were some preliminaries leading up thereto; but this significant question, "Yea, *hath* God said ye shall not eat of *every* tree in the garden?" throws a great flood of light upon the Satanic method. As we meditate upon the subtlety of this question it becomes more and more evident that the suggestion it conveys is, and has been through the ages, *the cause of all the trouble of mankind*. "Has God *really* said?" is the point of divergence which is the beginning of all alienation from God; and when the tempter has caused this sort of questioning of God to be regarded either as meritorious, or at least as "honest doubt", his object is assured.

There is no one who has lived and sinned who has not experienced the benumbing effect of this question. "Why should I not? for after all has God really said you shall not eat?" conveys a suggestion that is very easily ac-

cepted, and that effectually stills the warning voice of the Spirit.

Indeed, we have systems of religion which not merely question that God has said "ye shall surely die"; but which actually proclaim *that He has said no such thing*, and that all men, whether they obey or disobey, whether they accept Christ or reject Him, will be saved. We have religious systems which not only raise the question, "Yea, hath God said?" but declare that He *has not* said what the Scriptures represent Him as saying; and that the Scriptures are in large part a collection of fables and myths, or, at least, are permeated with errors and mistakes. Not only that, but some of these systems call themselves "Christian". What a masterpiece of Satanic constructive skill!

What we have particularly to notice is that the view of the adversary which is given us in the third chapter of Genesis is not the picture of a repulsive demon, trying to beguile man by some coarse temptation. Far from it; we are here given a view of one who urges upon mankind the pursuit of high aims, aspiration toward increase of knowledge, the noble ambition of becoming as gods. The tempta-

tion offered is "that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil". *Self-improvement* is the object presented.

It is clear then that, if there be among men to-day any followers of the Satan of Scripture, they are not the wretched habitues of saloons and resorts of the vicious. We must look for his followers among those who claim the ability to teach men, who speak in the name of science, who deify the intellect, and who, while generally conceding the existence of a Great First Cause,—because necessary to account for matter and energy,—set aside God's claims upon the trust and obedience of His intelligent creatures. Indeed, the agnostic position of neither affirmation nor denial cannot be better represented than by the question "Yea, *hath* God said?"

Therefore, whether or not Genesis was divinely written and preserved, and whether in this chapter its author is describing an historic incident (as the writer believes), or merely giving us an allegory, he certainly has produced a marvelously accurate representation, in a marvelously concise manner, of the now existing spirit of Anti-Christ. That which is most aggressively arrayed against

Christ and His teachings, is not the spirit of lust, or vice, or crime (whose slaves, as a rule, loath their bonds), but the spirit of skepticism, whose motto might well be, "Yea, hath God said?"

Man has other foes, to be sure. The world has its warfares and modes of attack, and the flesh likewise. These are clearly defined and easily recognized. It is, however, a great mistake and fraught with danger, though a common one, to confuse the *world* and the *flesh* with the *devil*. The third member of this hostile trinity is distinct from the other two. His inducements are not the vanities, follies and frivolities of the world, nor the lusts and passions of the flesh (though he is responsible for all these), but *the appeal to the intellect, urging it to be independent of God, to venture in its own strength, and to work out its destiny without Divine aid.*

From histories, both sacred and profane, it would seem that, for four thousand years after the episode in the Garden of Eden, Satan was entirely successful in his contest for the possession of human souls. Even including the chosen race, so carefully separated from the rest of mankind to be God's peculiar people, out of whom the promised Redeemer

was to come, it is not possible to see that any headway had been made by humanity. Every form of wickedness prevailed without restraint or diminution; and thus all things continued as from the beginning.

But, with the birth of Jesus, a new phase of the spiritual conflict began. Satan, whom the Scriptures designate as the god and prince of this world (John XII, 31; XIV, 30; VI, 11; 2 Cor. IV, 4; Eph. VI, 12), who could impede for three weeks the movements of God's messenger on his errand to the prophet Daniel (Dan. X, 13), and who is so exalted that even the Archangel durst not bring against him a railing accusation (Jude 9), beheld now the approach of the One coming in Divine power, assuming to be the Deliverer of Man, and "made manifest that He might destroy the works of the devil" (I John III, 8).

Emptied of the glory which He had with His Father from the beginning, in all respects a man, partaking of man's infirmities, essaying to fight over again *upon the plane of humanity* the battle which the first man had lost, this last Adam had to face the tempter's power. No doubt the adversary considered that he had good prospects of prevailing in this encounter. No *man* had yet been able to with-

stand his assaults. We see by reference to the 4th chapter of Matthew that the Satanic character is the same as that exhibited in Genesis. There is no temptation to do *wrong*, but first of all an appeal to the exercise of power, and a suggestion of doubt as to the identity of the Saviour. "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."

This was a repetition of the line of attack which succeeded in Eden, namely, a temptation to doubt God's word. The scene followed immediately upon the baptism of Jesus, and the last verse of chapter three records the voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased".

The tempter insinuates a doubt of the word spoken by this voice, and suggests that the fact of Sonship can be *proved* by a display of divine power. The reply of Jesus is a grand assertion of *the sufficiency of God's word; and in replying He takes the impregnable position that what God hath spoken stands in need of no corroboration*. Safe and secure is he who rests upon the word of God.

Satan's remark seems to say "Can it be that *you*, a famished man in the wilderness, are the Son of God? However, if it be so, prove it,

and at the same time relieve your necessities."

In the conflict in Eden the first assault was successful; but now the first assault in the wilderness has failed, and the second attempt consists in an appeal to Jesus to exercise that very quality of *trust in God*, which He had used in repelling the first temptation. The invitation to cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple, and to trust God for deliverance, was supported by a quotation from the 91st Psalm (an incident upon which the appropriate comment has often been made). The reply to this temptation was, "It is written again, thou shalt not tempt Lord thy God."

Finally, to complete the significant number three, and to prove our Redeemer as one tempted *at all points*, we have the third temptation, namely, the offer of universal rule over the kingdoms of the earth, upon the one condition of acknowledging the authority of Satan.

We read that he showed Him "all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and saith unto Him, all these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me" (Matt. IV, 8, 9).

It is in the highest degree significant that Jesus *did not question Satan's claim of lordship over these realms*, or dispute his power to

make good his offer to bestow them. It would have been a very silly performance on the part of the adversary to offer as a temptation to the Son of God something that was not his to give. Satan was thus recognized as being, as he is elsewhere described, the prince of this world; and undoubtedly, had his offer been accepted, he could have withdrawn from direct sway over the minds of men. No doubt this offer was intended to be taken as a compromise. It was made after two failures to find a flaw in his Opponent's armor, and it recognized the necessity of making large concessions as the price of compromise.

The force of this temptation seems to lie in the prospect it offered of accomplishing immediately, and without the humiliation and agony of the cross, that which Jesus came to earth to accomplish. But His first purpose was to do the will of His Father; and so, using the sword of the Spirit for the third time, He repelled the adversary, and insured the coming of the day when the kingdom of this world shall become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ; and insured that the manner of its coming should be, not by acknowledging Satan's authority, but by destroying it.

That this was a very real and serious trans-



action, and that the issues were fraught with tremendous consequences, cannot be doubted. The presence of the incarnated Son of God on earth had for its object, long foretold, to set up His kingdom and to rule supreme over mankind. The adversary thus offers to make the attainment of that object comparatively easy, and to avoid the necessity of treading the path of humiliation and agony that led to the cross. Doubtless the temptation was very real and serious; and as one studies the simple record with candid mind, laying aside all prejudices and desiring simply to know the truth, the scene becomes clear and distinct, and the truths which are reflected from it serve to interpret much that is hard to understand concerning the course of this world, and the natural tendencies of man.

Realizing then, that Jesus rejected this offer of the adversary (the last concession he could make) and deferred His hour of triumph until the day when, in the good purpose of His Father, the kingdom of this world should become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ (Rev. XI, 15, R. V.), the necessary effect of that rejection was *to leave all the kingdoms of the world in the possession of the enemy*. This is a fact of vital importance. Let

us endeavor to grasp its truth and significance, and let us be the more insistent to lay hold thereon because we know that same enemy will mislead us with reference thereto, if possible. This fact was fully recognized by the apostles who referred to Satan quite naturally as the god of this world and the prince of this world.

Can there be anything which is of greater importance for us to know than to recognize and identify the ruler and god of the world in which we are placed? Certainly the attitude of the Christian toward the world and all its affairs must be determined by the truth that it is under the dominion of God's enemy, lying in the evil one (I John V, 19, R. V.), and realizing this truth he cannot fail to see that "*friendship with the world is enmity with God*" (James IV, 4).

We cannot add anything to the seriousness of this statement. If the reader is not impressed with the fearfulness of a state of enmity with God, let him earnestly seek for a realizing sense thereof; for if the Scriptures be not all a delusion and a lie, we are here in the presence of a question than which none more awful can confront the soul of man.

As to the teaching of Scripture on this sub-

ject, there is no room for doubt at all. In addition to the passages cited above, we are told that "if any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him" (I John II, 15—see verse 16) ; and Christ Himself says, "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me" (John XIV, 30). If the reality of this be obscured at all, and completely hidden from many, it is doubtless because "*the god of this world* hath blinded the minds of them which believe not" (II Cor. IV, 4).

This being the explicit teaching of Scripture, let us look into the world as we see it to-day, with a view to determine whether, in this important matter, the teaching of Scripture be erroneous. Certainly if Satan be the dominating spiritual influence of the world, the effects of his rule must be clearly discernible. It requires no extended investigation to determine that the satanic influence is indeed in full control, and that all the ambitions, ideals, occupations and diversions which the world places before men are of a nature to prevent a vital relationship between man and God, and to reduce the semblance of such relationship, where it remains at all, to *just what God's enemy would have it*,—namely, a dead and empty form.

If we have a false conception of that exalted spiritual being whom the Scriptures term "the god of this world"; if, under the influence of that false conception, we regard the gatherings of men and women of the world,—particularly the social gatherings,—as innocent, because of the garb of outward respectability which they wear, we shall grievously misinterpret what we see. But if we remember that Satan's business is, not to lead his followers into vice and crime, but merely to make them *independent of God*, and to prevent them from accepting God's offer of salvation through Jesus Christ, we will see on every hand evidences of the supremacy of Satan's power and influence. We will also perceive that he is indeed the prince of this world, and that his subjects are faithfully doing his will,—particularly those who, while not recognizing God, or looking to Jesus Christ for salvation, are leading reputable lives, and enjoying the esteem and respect of their fellow men.

When Jesus repelled the offer of Satan it was with these words, "Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve"; and so war was declared between Christ and His followers and Satan and his followers; and

the latter was left in possession of all the kingdoms of the world during this dispensation. The follower of Christ is he who obeys this command of his Leader, who *serves only the living and true God, and waits for His Son from heaven* (I Thess. I., 9, 10).

Through all the centuries since that day, in the ears of each generation, and so that all may hear, has been sounded the summons, "Come out from among them *and be ye separate*, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be to you a Father, and ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" ( II Cor. VI, 17, 18).

## CHAPTER V.

### THE BELIEVER AND THE WORLD

To those who accept the teachings of the Bible to the extent of believing that the natural way of man tends to darkness and death, and that God has opened, to all who will accept it, "a path of life" (Ps. XVI, 11)—a "true and living way" (Heb. X, 20), it must be evident that the schemes of the adversary of mankind would naturally be contrived with the object of preventing men from accepting and entering upon that way of life.

If, then, Satan be ingenious, wise and cunning (and otherwise we would have nothing to fear from him) he could not possibly contrive methods better calculated to accomplish his object than the occupations, pursuits, pleasures and diversions which make up the lives of men and women in the world.

It must also be evident upon reflection that, to achieve any great measure of success, these *diversions* (well named, since they serve to divert men from seeking the safety of their lives) *must have at least a guise of innocence*. They must be such that the great mass of men can find a plausible defense and justifica-

tion for them. It must be possible always to raise the question, "Yea, and *hath* God said ye shall not eat?" And SO WE FIND THE CONDITIONS TO BE.

Satan did not, in Eden, nor does he now, offer as temptations things immoral and vicious *per se*. He does not incite men to vice, crime, lust and debauchery. These things are not the allurements which draw men away from God. They are *the results* of wandering.

On the contrary, Satan tempts men with "high ideals"; he urges them to advance in knowledge of good and evil, and to become as gods. His chief purpose is to induce men to attempt self-improvement in ways not sanctioned by God. Having accomplished this with any soul, he need henceforth only provide occupations which crowd out serious thought, and specious arguments wherewith to repel any faithful witness and messenger of God who may sound a warning and seek to call that soul out of the world, and into the only ark of safety. Such an one gradually becomes "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. III., 13).

Attention to these considerations must make it very plain that the "world" which we are admonished to leave, whose friendship is en-

mity with God, and which no man can love who has the love of the Father in him, does not include merely the haunts of vice and crime. The world, with whose kingdoms and glory Satan tempted Christ, was not made up of the dens of iniquity and sinks of corruption. These things could not tempt Christ, neither do they tempt even an unregenerate man until the sin of unbelief has run a long course.

Indeed, it is clear that such things would not serve the purpose of making men forget God. Men would instinctively turn from them. If Satan had no better baits than these we should not require such frequent and solemn warnings. It is precisely because the world has things to offer to the moral man, to the well-disposed man, to the kind-hearted man, to the charitable man, that it is so successful in separating men from God.

Seeing then that, if men are to be deluded as to matters of their highest good, the means must wear the guise of innocence, and so have the *power of deception*, we are prepared to inquire whether the life of the world is one that is calculated to separate man from his Maker and his Redeemer. And here it may be asserted with conviction born of experience that *such is the case*.



The writer of these lines has spent many years in the way of the world, and but a few in the Way of God. He knows the former thoroughly, and the latter already well enough to know that it is indeed the way of life, while that which he has forsaken is the way of death. He knows from experience, as well as by revelation, that "there is a way that seemeth right *unto a man*, but the end thereof are *the ways of death*" (Prov. XVI, 25). This subject is to him a very serious one, because, many friends with whom he has associated, seeing little that is positively evil in their way of life, who are respectable, kind and lovable, who enjoy the esteem of the community, who give to charities, and who frequently sit through a service in a church edifice, regard his separation from "the world" as fanaticism, and not at all *necessary* to the Christian profession.

The change in the writer's experience above referred to has afforded to him a clear revelation of what is meant by "the world" in the passages which we are considering. The separation therefrom has not been the result of discrimination, but *the inevitable consequence of turning toward God*. It was no conscious turning away from former occupations, inter-

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ests, and amusements that brought about this change; but simply a conscious turning *toward* God. When this was done, the changed attitude incidentally *placed those things behind him*. It was a fulfilment of the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah (XXX, 21), "And thine ears shall hear a word *behind thee* saying, 'this is the way, walk ye in it.'"

This characteristic of conversion is stated with the nicety and precision that characterize all statements of Scripture, when Paul writes to his Thessalonian converts, reminding them how they "*turned to God from idols*"—not from idols to God (I Thess. I, 9).

Or to state the experience otherwise, the writer did not seek or desire to empty himself of these worldly interests, habits, etc., but rather to let Christ into his life to govern and direct it. The entrance of this new life has simply crowded out all desires, interests, aims and occupations which are inconsistent with it.

To convince the men who are resting in the well-cushioned, comfortable places of the world, or the men who are striving with all their energies to oust the present occupants and to secure the same for themselves, that they are spiritually "dead", being separated from God, would be an almost hopeless under-

taking. To ask them to forsake these things and to separate themselves from them would provoke only pitying contempt or derision, and would excite a doubt as to the pleader's sanity. *No man gives up the best things he has knowledge of.* Nor would it avail him to do so. The reader, therefore, is exhorted not to give up the world, but to *accept Christ*. One must give up the world at death, but when one *accepts Christ*, and is thereby born again, he begins at once to die to the world (i. e., to separate himself from the world), simply because, by the simple and natural development of that new life which is born—"not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever" (I Pet. I, 23)—the old life is overpowered. He finds to his amazement (and yet he should have expected it) that the spiritual or eternal life has its own processes, operating in a normal way, without his volition, to work out their normal result, which is, by a gradual operation, to transform (literally "transfigure" or "metamorphose") the new creature more and more into the image of Christ, from glory to glory (II Cor. III, 18). He finds also that there are causes that may expedite, may hin-

der, or may arrest this process ; as, for instance, that "the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches" choke the word and render it unfruitful (Mark IV, 19) ; but it is not our purpose to enter into this subject of *progress* in the Christian life. We are here concerned with the *beginning* of that life,, and are endeavoring to explain that what appears, from the standpoint of the world, a cutting-off of seemingly innocent recreations, entertainments and pastimes, is in fact but the pushing out of old perishable rubbish to make room for possessions of real and permanent worth. This *must be* the effect of the new life if unhindered in its development.

If, therefore, one says "I do not see why I cannot be a Christian and remain in the world," it would ordinarily be a sufficient answer to say, "Be a Christian, and you will find out." Nevertheless, there be many who profess Christ and yet hold to the world, not realizing that they are attempting to serve two masters.

To all who remain in the world, therefore, whether confessing Christ or not, it is important to know *what the way of the world is*. Particularly to the former is it important to

know this, since otherwise one may be cultivating friendship with what is at enmity with God.

Without attempting to furnish either a definition or a catalogue of worldly things, it would seem safe to say that anything which *excludes God* belongs to the prohibited and condemned world. Every man knows whether he is living for God or not; and if he be, how much of his life is *for* God. Every man knows whether or not God has the first place in his life, and whether or not he is looking to Jesus to raise him up at His coming. If his time and energies be devoted for the most part to money-making pursuits, and the remainder to entertainment and amusements, his life is a worldly and Godless life, even though he attend church services with more or less regularity, and give more or less liberally to the poor. If his affections are upon worldly things, if his highest aim is to better his condition in the world, to increase his riches, to improve his standing, to glorify himself and his family, and to drink his fill from the cup of worldly pleasure, he is as much at enmity with God as if he were living a life of depravity.

No man of the world, who is honest with

himself, can fail to recognize that *God is not found in any of the places to which he resorts*; not in the clubs, not in the receptions, not in the counting houses and business offices, not in the theatres; and, indeed, frequently not in the churches; for what man who is saturated throughout the entire week with the affairs of the world can discharge them from his mind during the little hour set apart for worship? Is it not a fact that the attention wanders, and that the mind is even then occupied with idle speculations, with vagrant thoughts, or with the subjects that have engrossed it during the week?

Is God in the social gatherings? Imagine what the effect would be of introducing some spiritual topic at a fashionable dinner! Gather up the conversation at such a function, and let each participant say whether he would even like to own his own part of it. Step aside with the women and hear what they talk about! Remain behind with the men and listen to their jests and anecdotes! Can a man take part in such gatherings and be a disciple of Jesus? No *honest* man can say so.

How small the distance that separates such scenes as these from one of actual vice, and how easily that distance is crossed! How

many of the polished men in the drawing-room ever mention God's name, except to blaspheme? How many scarcely even attempt to disguise from their social acquaintances the actual corruption of their lives? Can one who has Christ in his heart possibly fail to be aware that friendship with these is enmity with God?

Do you say that those who have accepted Christ may be found in such gatherings? It may be so; but *are they developing the Christ-life in that atmosphere?* No one will claim that; *nor will any pretend that they are doing the unbelieving world the slightest good.*

The existence of a state of friendly intercourse between the Church and the world is the most dangerous of existing spiritual conditions. Between believers and unbelievers there is no apparent distinction in fact. Those classed as believers include every shade of opinion from the borderland of negation to a vague pantheism. With the great majority of these it is but a matter of mental pose and of indifference. This deplorable condition of uncertainty of faith is the result of a violation of God's law of separation. "Be ye separate," is His command to His people, and, as are all His commands, it was given for their safety

and welfare. There are many who advocate the commingling of the heavenly-minded with the worldly-minded, upon the plea of its benefiting the latter class ; but, alas, it does not work that way. The leaven (always the type of evil in the Scripture) which the woman hid in three measures of meal, permeated the whole mass. Such is always the effect of introducing that which is evil among that which is good. The good is corrupted, and the evil not diminished or even diluted.

We read in Genesis VI. that when the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, they took of them wives of all which they chose. The offspring of this union of that which is of God with that which is of the world were prodigies of wickedness.

The only way in which God's children can secure their own safety and benefit their fellow men, is to take a stand "*outside* the camp" (Heb. 13, 11-13), and standing thus on God's own ground invite and urge those who are aliens and enemies to COME UNTO HIM.



## CHAPTER VI.

### MAN'S RELATION TO THE EXISTING ORDER—SEEN AND UNSEEN

In handling recently some old papers, I came across the following pages, written more than eleven years ago. It was a great satisfaction to me to find and to peruse this forgotten record of a state of mind illumined solely by the rush-light of reason, and to note its striving (so earnestly, yet so hopelessly) by the aid of that light alone, to perceive the meanings of life and the relations of man to the order of things whereof he is a part. This paper cannot fail to have some interest to everyone upon whom like questions have pressed, and who has not yet learned that their answers are only to be had from revelation. Others may be able to go farther in this quest by the aid of reason alone; but for myself I admit that this was my supreme effort to reach an answer to such questions as "Who am I, and what is my relation with the rest of creation, and with the Power that gave existence to me and to it?"

The addendum written in 1895 indicates an

excursion into theosophy; but, of course, I found no satisfaction in that misty system. The succeeding eight years were marked by a decided drift away from *all* spiritual matters, ending in a lapse into utter indifference thereto, and an entire absorption in business affairs and other temporalities and worldliness. This state lasted until, through the mercy and unmerited favor of God, and as one of the results of turning to God from idols *to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven* (I. Thess. I, 9), I learned that sure and satisfactory answers to my questions were to be found in the inspired Scriptures. Had there been near me, when the accompanying paper was written, some one who knew the Scriptures and how to teach them, I might easily then have stepped into the light, for I was very near it. The use of mere reason had brought me to recognize the identity of the *mortal* man as a *constantly changing association with a changing order*. Could my attention then have been directed to such Scriptures as I. Cor. I and II, on the limitations of human wisdom, and Jno. XVII, 3, etc., on the nature of eternal life, I would doubtless have grasped at that time the truth that the identity of *immortal* man consists in the

vital connection—not with an unchanging *order* merely, but,—with an unchanging Person—“Christ Jesus, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever” (Heb. 13, 8).

One, who has come to see that temporal or mortal life consists in knowing temporal objects, is prepared to grasp the truth that eternal life consists in knowing eternal objects. Hence it is scientific in the true sense, and a legitimate outcome of this train of reasoning, to say “*this* is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou has sent” (John 17, 3).

It will be seen that, even at that time, the writer recognized the limitations and insufficiencies of science, and that an appropriate sphere remained for what he termed “religion”; but the most impressive part of the paper (upon re-perusal by the same mind illuminated by the true light) is to note how *utterly ignorant he was of the nature of the religion of Jesus Christ*, and how completely he missed its mission, which is—not “to guide the conduct of man, to improve the aims and ideals of humanity”, etc., but, rather—to save His people from their sins, to quicken those who, through sin and disobedience, are given over to death, and in a word, to *give*

eternal life; for "the *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. VI, 23). (See also John XX, 30-31, stating that his gospel record was written "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God", and that "believing that ye might have *life* through His name").

I firmly believe that there are millions of thoughtful men and women to-day who, like the writer eleven years ago, believe in the existence of a spiritual universe to which they are related, but who have given up all attempts to come into definite relations with it, and are occupying themselves entirely with affairs of this present world, *simply for lack of clear teaching as to the declared object of the Gospel of Jesus Christ*. I firmly believe that many of these would be drawn into the ranks of His followers if they could be but reached with a knowledge of the fact that He does not offer to *reform* or *improve* the old nature, but to give man a *new* nature (II. Cor. V, 17). Much of the perverted and powerless teaching of the day is due to weak-kneed and cowardly theology, so prone to desert the Gospel standard whenever science makes an assault upon it. Hence, when science with practical unanimity, offered the theory of

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evolution as an explanation of all existing orders of animate and inanimate creatures, and as promising a gradual bettering of the conditions of mankind, the custodians of the Gospel message, in large numbers, hastened to put themselves in line with this new teaching. We have seen the results of this side movement of Christianity, which may be expressed as the substitution of the words "improvement" and "reform" for the Gospel word "*re-generation*". Science moves easily from one position to another. A new generation of scientific men finds evolution not to be what their predecessors thought it; but religion does not so easily regain a lost position. Hence the sorry plight to-day of the professing Church, and its lack of power with the more intelligent classes of men and women.

Here follows the document that has given occasion to these comments:

*August, 1893.*

"The results of scientific investigation within the last half of the 19th Century have done much to raise the expectations of humanity as to the further results that may be looked for in the immediate future. We are often called upon to admire the advances that have

been made and the new ground occupied in almost every department, and no one will dispute that science to-day is a very different thing from what went by that name fifty years ago.

"In counting up our gains, in calculating wherein and to what extent we are richer in knowledge than our fathers were, we naturally look first to the state of knowledge regarding the higher concerns of man,—the truths that pertain to his spiritual, moral, and mental states. In applied sciences, in the contrivance and perfection of devices that inure to physical comfort, convenience, and health, in the elaboration of machinery of all sorts, in appliances for the control and utilization of the forces of nature, the achievements of this period have been without parallel, and may justly be regarded with complacency. In these directions, i. e., in dealing with matter at first hand, in discovering its properties in various groupings and combinations of elements, and in applying these discoveries to the improvement of man's physical state, the progress of science has been admirable, its results positive, tangible and beneficent, and its future radiant with the promise of still higher achievement. But these results, gratifying as they are, do

not by any means satisfy the cravings of the mind for certainty, or at least for clearer light, upon certain questions of the highest import. What has science to tell us as to the real nature of the universe and of things in themselves? What of the end toward which development tends? What of man, his origin and destiny, the source of his emotions and aspirations? What of consciousness,—that mirror in which the universe is reflected, and whose reflections constitute the only universe we know or can know objectively? What of life, that golden thread in which no break has been discovered, and which yet seems to be everywhere beginning anew? *What of God and the Soul?*

“Many would say that these questions, or some of them, lie outside the domain and province of science. Yet upon each and all, to a greater or less extent, science has assumed to throw her search-light, and has claimed to reveal some pertinent facts that have remained hidden up to this time. Moreover, the mass of mankind have been called upon in the name of *science* to surrender and reform beliefs and opinions which had long been accepted upon *authority*, and which were believed to have the solid basis of Divine revela-

tion. In other cases, where science has been unable positively to affirm, she has been constrained apparently to deny, or at least to cast doubt; and so attractive has been the attitude of negation, or attempted equilibrium between two opposite opinions, that many of the foremost thinkers of the day have elected to group and classify themselves under a generic name which signifies 'not to know'.

"The principle that science is 'agnostic', with respect to certain questions of the deepest import, can be shown, I think, to be a valid one, and not without utility, if consistently applied (which is never the case) by those who proclaim it. The domain of science is generally recognized to be that portion of the universe which is accessible to the mind through the avenues of the physical senses, and which, from its nature, is capable of producing an impression upon the brain through surface contact with the termini of some of the sensory nerves. Science properly concerns itself with questions regarding things capable of being known objectively, and to which the eye, or ear, or sense of touch, or of taste, can find access. If by 'agnosticism' is meant simply that there is a portion of the universe, in some way related to man, and therefore a legitimate



subject of inquiry by him, which science cannot investigate, and in which it cannot '*know*' anything, no objection, not even a theological objection, could be raised to the proposition. To the question, 'Canst thou by searching find out God?' science and religion are agreed that a negative answer must be given.

"But when men, whose high attainments warrant them to speak for science, abandon this safe position, and attempt, by processes of reason, to show that there is *no* domain to which man is related except that which is accessible by the physical senses (in other words, that which is purely material), to assert that man's consciousness cannot receive knowledge through any other sources, and that there is *no* light to guide either his conduct or his inquiries but the light of reason, such men are false to their fundamental principle, and, ceasing to be agnostic, become infidel or atheistic. Scientific men may properly say that the field of their investigation is limited by the imperfection of the physical senses, and that beyond it they cannot *scientifically* know anything. In this sense (the proper and consistent sense of the term) every Christian theologian may be a scientific agnostic; but objection is properly entered when men of science

proclaim, or assume, in their discussions that the field of all possible inquiry and knowledge is confined by the same limits that bound the field of scientific research.

"The nature of life and its origin, and particularly the nature of consciousness, are matters into which science probes in vain, from which it returns baffled at each attempt, and towards which scientific men, as such, are properly agnostic. Yet consciousness and life are *facts*, indeed the most obvious of all facts. These are the facts in and by which all other facts, which constitute the body of knowledge, exist. Even careful science points out that the *best* of its deductions may be qualified by utter ignorance of a most important factor, namely, *the true relation between the observer and the thing observed*. What is it that 'wells up in us as consciousness'? Science cannot tell us, but does not for that reason dispute its existence. We can, therefore, with great certainty, hold to the fact that there *is* a field of inquiry to which man is most closely related, and into which science, by reason of its self-appointed limitations, cannot enter. In his consciousness, man recognizes not only the images of external objects, the faces of his friends, the features of the landscape, ~~the~~ the operations of physi-

cal force, the movements of animate and inanimate things, and the vast trains of reflection that proceed from these sources; but also recognizes *responsibility and duty*, the source and tendency of which he would gladly know; he recognizes ideas, emotions, impulses—not having their origin in any impressions of the external senses; he recognizes the existence of his own marvelous faculties as pointing to the operations of a power still more wonderful; and his mind spontaneously frames a host of questions, the very existence of which and of his ability to ask them, tend to prove the possibility that the answers are *somewhere within his reach. But where shall he find them?*

“Philosophers have predicated much of the ‘intelligibility of nature’, and have expended much effort in seeking to establish the truth of the doctrine; but to most men such attempt appears a waste of energy, since nearly all mental effort is predicated upon the assumption that nature *is* intelligible, and all *successful* effort is a proof of it. Like the famous postulate of all science, ‘the uniformity of nature’, which, while admittedly undemonstrable, is nevertheless the foundation upon which every scientific utterance is based, the mind by its

own inscrutable processes takes cognizance of the fact that *nature is intelligible*. Were it not so, could the impulse to try to understand her have ever come into existence?

"If, then, man has relations, into the nature of which the instrumentalities of science cannot investigate, are we therefore cut off from all possibility of knowing the things of deepest concern to man as an individual and as a race? Shall science forbid *any* inquiry not conducted by her imperfect methods and by her crude appliances? And may she challenge any and every doctrine not resulting therefrom? True science *never has*, and never will, take a position that can be sustained only by ignorance and prejudice; and the most enlightened men of science are fully impressed with the fact that, in setting in order the confusion now existing in her own departments, in producing something like harmony from the conflict of her most cherished theories, and in solving a few of the many problems that have baffled the ingenuity of the most advanced thinkers of the day, science will have sufficient to occupy her attention and to tax her energies for generations to come. When science has defined the ultimate particle of matter, thus elucidating the basic theory of

modern chemistry, has settled, one way or another, the theory of light vibrations and determined the nature of its medium, and has explained the interaction of separated bodies in space, and the laws of motion, she may, perhaps, find leisure to consider the problems of man and the soul. Until that time, despite unprofitable controversies touching doctrines and dogmas of no practical importance, religion will occupy its appropriate sphere, and continue in the future, as in the past, to guide the conduct of man, to improve the aims and ideals of humanity, and, more than that, to furnish the reasons and inducements that should impel all men to unselfish aims, pure lives, and right conduct. Man's body, brain and organs are known to be composed of the same substances as the inorganic world around him, and of which he is a part. His mind, soul, spirit or consciousness are doubtless but a part of, or identical in substance with, an universal mind, soul or consciousness, in which all things material and immaterial have their existence. We do not know things in themselves. All we know consciously are our thoughts *about* things. The *thoughts* then are the realities out of which our universe is constructed. But what is the material (which a

well-known skeptical philosopher—Prof. W. K. Clifford—calls ‘mind stuff’) out of which thoughts are made?”

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“I began these notes upon an idle day, in the attempt to exhibit to myself the real state of my mind upon matters which occupy much of my thought, chiefly upon the question of man’s immortality, and to determine to what extent the teachings of modern science, so far as I am acquainted with them, affect the basis of the hope of another life or state of existence beyond the grave. Instead of leading up to this question, my thoughts appear to have wandered into a general discussion of the limits of scientific inquiry, but the discussion is not wholly irrelevant, for it would tend to show that *science cannot answer this question*. Science, however, can and does affect the basis upon which the hope of immortality rests, and can and does aid in giving shape to the idea of immortality as it exists in the mind. It has, for example, something to say touching the resurrection of a material body, and about the continuance of impressions created in the experience of this life. The question I would ask myself is, “What do I mean, what idea do I have, when I say that *I* expect to live

after dissolution of the body?" Obviously, the answer to this question depends largely upon my view of what constitutes *personal identity*. What is this "I", of whose future life I am inquiring? I do not, of course, expect my physical body, with its organs and senses, to survive death, and thereby I relinquish to destruction a large element in what constitutes my present individuality, whereby I know myself and am known to others. Back of this body and its senses, and the recipient of all the impressions of the latter, is the organ of intelligence and memory. Its possessions and experiences, and the tendency of its actions, certainly constitute a large part of my identity. Every event of life of which the memory or impression survives, every form and face and thing with which I am familiar, every association, tie and relationship with persons and with objects, and the feelings and impulses whereby I am moved in my conduct toward them, have their existence *solely in the impressions produced upon my physical senses*. If I be not a mere collection of partly remembered experiences and more or less distinct impressions strung upon the perishable thread of memory, these at least constitute a very important part of what I am at this moment. If

all these memories, if all knowledge of those with whom I have associated, were blotted out, what would remain? and would I be able to identify that remainder as *myself*? In other words, can I conceive of or define myself except by the consciousness of my past and present relations with other individuals, and with external objects? And if not, what possible form can the thought of continuity of existence after death take?

"It hardly seems possible to return any but a negative answer to this question; and at first thought, it would seem that naught would remain if all memory of associations were blotted out. But this is a point well worth dwelling upon, for can we reasonably suppose that impressions of the senses will remain after the senses themselves are destroyed? that the pictures will survive the annihilation of the canvas upon which they are painted? Surely we cannot; and unless the soul have a memory distinct from that imperfect faculty with which our objective consciousness is acquainted, I see no escape from the conclusion that, *with the dissolution of the mental fabric, must go all those cherished figures and patterns that our life-loom has woven into it.*

"The possible powers of the soul is a specula-



tive subject which the progress of my thought has not yet reached, and I return to the more tangible powers of the mind and of the objective senses. I have suggested that little of the individual would survive the supposed extinction of all his accumulated recollections. But further thought must show that *little would in fact be extinguished*. There would remain the same *powers* that crystallized experience into a seemingly coherent structure and gave it shape and form, and with those powers, how speedily would the individual erect a *new structure* that would fully take the place of that lost!

"Love is not a faculty of the brain, nor the creature of the physical senses, though the senses make communication with the beloved object, and the mind preserves its picture with sufficient definiteness to quicken the emotion. We all at times think we recognize (faintly, it is true,) the existence, or at least the possibility, of more perfect modes of communication than those which the senses give us, and of closer, fuller knowledge of the real personality of our loved ones than we can obtain by mere observation of their actions towards us and towards others. Objectively, we can know nothing of the feelings of a beloved wife or

child, except by the bodily motions that they seem to make. But who is there so spiritually dull and dead as not to know and feel—not through the eye or ear—the ties of affection, the band of sympathy, the powers of influence that subsist between himself and others? And what are these associations, and relations and remembered experiences, which seem to constitute our whole being, the possible loss of which we would contemplate with a shudder as practical annihilation? Do not the whole extent and scope of our associations in this life embrace but an insignificant portion of creation? Are there not millions living, millions who have lived, millions yet to be, with whom we have as yet had no conscious contact? Is the experience of this life so sweet, so comprehensive, so satisfactory in all its details, and so creditable to ourselves, that we would demand *its* continuance as the only possible future lot that would seem worth hoping for? I think that when we consider the minute period of time which the whole limit of our association covers, and the correspondingly minute portion of the universe with which those associations subsist; when we consider the seeming element of chance that has determined the period and the location of our

bodily existence; when we consider among the stores of our memory how much there is that is trivial and insignificant, how much that rouses only regret and mortification, how much more that revives only impressions of pain and suffering, we will be ready with resignation to contemplate the possible loss of all those impressions, which exist only in the brain and by reason of fortuitous rates of vibration of a particular nerve, responding momentarily to conditions not determined by any volition of our own. Senses, nerves and brain-cells do not constitute *me*. They are but instruments, and at best very defective ones, whereby I am able to communicate with a restricted portion of the external universe. Neither, as we have seen, do the impressions transmitted and recorded by these instruments constitute *me*, since I can in thought eject them all, and substitute an altogether different set of impressions, without affecting identity.

"Evidently, then, the *Ego*, that which survives all change and chance, and is the same irrespective of events, is in its nature altogether too obscure and subtle to be defined and contemplated by the objective faculties. We may accept this conclusion, since it is the

one to which most thinkers pursuing the subject are led. As at present constituted, I am only capable of contemplating objects which can, through the sensory nerves, produce an impression upon the background of consciousness. The *Ego*—i. e., the soul or persisting part of man—is not capable of acting upon the nerves and organs of sense, and hence cannot be contemplated in the ordinary way.

*August, 1895.*

“In all this, as I peruse it again after the lapse of two years, there is something very like the esoteric doctrine as expounded in Sinnett’s ‘Esoteric Buddhism’, and in the ‘Bhagavad-Gita’, works with which I have lately become acquainted. In striving by the unassisted powers of my own reason to grasp at the truth touching the essential being of man, I seem to have arrived at conclusions that are centuries old,—but not necessarily sound, for all that. The conclusions I had reached two years ago with reference to personality, and identity, I believe to be those I entertain to-day, so far as they go; but believe also that I can now take more advanced ground. That the physical memory and everything it includes and implies—as impressions

of forms, relationships and associations—dissolve with the basis upon which these rest, i. e., the physical brain, I still hold to be reasonable, to be fairly inferrable from what we know of the brain and its operations, and to be probably true. But is the experience of the individual registered *only* on the physical brain? If a man be a soul, existing before the formation of the present body and surviving its dissolution, then the whole question of another life assumes a different aspect. The subject now is beyond the domain of science and its method, and becomes purely speculative. I shall not here record the grounds of my belief that the human personality, or *Ego*, is a soul, and that the soul neither began nor will end with the body. Such is my belief, and that belief is not merely opinion, but settled conviction, which I deem it unlikely will ever be disturbed.\* The conclusion with which I comforted myself two years ago for the possible extinction of all remembered experience, including the knowledge and recognition of those we love, was that the *Ego*, with the same faculties and senses, could in a few years acquire possessions of the same sort

\* So much for convictions not based on divine revelation.

and equally precious, particularly as, for all that now concerns us, none of these possessions existed for us a few years ago. I find, however, the suggestion then in my mind, (viz., that the soul might have a memory distinct from, and much more perfect than, the corresponding physical faculty, and the existence of such a faculty) seems much more probable to me now than then. The fact that, in our physical consciousness we find no trace of any experiences of the soul and no recollections of any events except physical phenomena, does not in the least preclude the existence of the supposed faculty. We know well that the memory contains and retains much that does not lie on the surface of consciousness; and often events, which may not emerge into view for years, are suddenly remembered, showing that they were always in the consciousness. We also know that the physical consciousness is periodically suspended, and its continuity interrupted during sleep. These analogies suggest that a soul, with faculties corresponding to, but of a much higher order than those of its body, may inhabit the latter.

“Thus it is by no means necessary, for any conclusion we have thus far reached or deemed probable, to believe that death terminates all

relations and associations with individuals known to us in this present life. As our bodies perish, so will theirs; and as our bodies are momentarily changing, never for two consecutive hours the same, so are theirs. What we now *know* of them, therefore, is of a very limited and perishable character, because the cognizer and the one cognized are changing.

"Through all these physical changes, however, enough persists and remains for recognition; and when they are at an end, then (it is my belief) that which persists through all these changes will not only be recognized, but will be known better than when in its mask of flesh."

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November 21, 1904.—It is highly interesting and entertaining to the regenerated man to read these speculations of eleven years ago. Their perusal aids him in realizing how blessed it is to exchange the conjectures of the human mind for the *verities* of the *Word of God!!*

## CHAPTER VII.

### CONCERNING BIBLICAL CRITICISM

Many of the most acute minds of the day are expending their energies upon an occupation which is call "criticism" of the Old and New Testament Scriptures. In a recent work\* it is stated that about eight hundred volumes in the English tongue are published annually as the result of this biblical criticism. It is, therefore, impossible for any one person to read all that is published on this subject, even were he to devote his entire time thereto. Nevertheless, an inference could be drawn as to the character of a Book which can attract to itself so much attention from the most learned and most intelligent of mankind. Can it be that the Book which does this is of merely human authorship? If so, why has no other human production done the like, even in the time of its freshness and power? But the most wonderful feature of this extraordinary interest is that it is exhibited with reference to a collection of writings upon

\* The Bible, the Word of God.—*F. Better.*



which the dust of many centuries has accumulated. Is not the concentrated and life-long interest of men of scholarship and intellectual vigor in a book so ancient, a clear evidence that it possesses some quality that separates it from all the other books that have been produced throughout the ages? And what is that unique quality, if it be not the result of unique, that is, of *Divine*, authorship?

The inference here suggested does not lose support by reason of the fact that the greater part of this mass of criticism is devoted to the object of destroying, or weakening, the faith of men in the Divine origin of the Bible. The inference rather *gains* support from that fact in any mind not completely occupied by pre-suppositions. What sort of a book must it be whose claim to Divine authorship furnishes material for investigation and discussion by the greatest scholars and the most acute intellects (and the critics themselves confess to being all this), in the "enlightened" twentieth century, to which that claim has come down showing no trace of the infirmities of age?

What sort of a book must it be whose claim to Divine authorship not only provokes so much adverse attention, but is actually able

to stand against the mightiest efforts of those giant minds?

The plain man, who can make no pretensions to scholarship, and who cannot possibly investigate the premises of the critics, or comprehend either their speculations, or their mental processes, can nevertheless trust himself to give the right answer to the foregoing questions.

And what is the meaning of this prodigious conflict? How does it come about? Whose interest is it to wage such a warfare about the character and authenticity of an old book? How can we account for the extraordinary fact that the contest goes on for century after century? Who keeps it alive through the ages, and puts it into the hearts of men to turn every intellectual weapon against the doctrine of Divine authorship of the Bible? What is the cause of this extraordinary phenomenon, the parallel of which is not to be found on earth? Come, ye men of science, who are skilled in the processes of inductive reasoning, take these patent facts and trace out, or at least suggest, an adequate cause! It is a legitimate occupation for the philosopher and logician to furnish an explanation which will account for these facts. The question is, why do so many

men make it the object of their lives to overthrow the claim of *this particular book* to the exercise of supreme authority over the actions of mankind?

While awaiting a "scientific" explanation of this extraordinary phenomenon, the plain man will do well to content himself *with that which the Book itself furnishes*. The declared object of the New Testament is to present a Person, Jesus called the "Christ," as the Saviour of all who accept Him. That the object of the New Testament is to present Jesus Christ as the Redeemer, is obvious on the most cursory inspection. His explicit offer is to restore those who believe Him to vital relations with the God and Father of all, and He expressly declares that no one can come to the Father in any other way (John XIV, 6). That this is likewise the object of the Old Testament, Jesus Himself declared on many occasions, and is clear upon careful examination.

The mission of Jesus, then, as stated in this Book, is to give eternal life to as many as accept Him. (See John III, 15; VI, 47; X, 28; XVII, 2-3; Acts XIII, 48; Rom. VI, 23; I Tim. I, 16.) Moreover, the *observable* results of the acceptance of Jesus, and of obedience to

His commands, have, through all the centuries, been of the most advantageous character. No one disputes this. It is universally admitted that the teachings of this Person embody the loftiest principles and the purest ethics. Believers and unbelievers alike admit that never man spake like this Man (John VII, 46), and that His influence upon humanity in respect of all that is counted "good" has been incomparably greater than that of all others who have lived on earth.

But what is there in this to excite, against the volume which is occupied with Jesus Christ, unparalleled hostility and fierce opposition? Clearly we have no explanation of this in the facts of His life, doctrine and influence. On the contrary, a comprehension of the declared mission of Jesus Christ and of the results of His life and teaching, serves but to deepen the mystery. We can conceive of men refusing to *believe* Jesus and His message, refusing to heed His invitation, and ignoring the gift that He offers; but we cannot, with only these facts before us, conceive of a *single man* turning aside from other avocations to attack the authenticity and accuracy of the records that describe His life of service and His words of truth and power. Motive

seems to be wholly lacking. Much less can we account for the number, variety and persistence of the efforts put forth by vast numbers of men who are, in one way and another, seeking to overthrow or to weaken the confidence of their fellow-men in the authenticity and accuracy of these records. Truly it is a situation calculated to excite the *profoundest astonishment*; and the fact that the situation does *not* excite profound and widespread astonishment is *one of its most astonishing features*.

But the Book itself offers an explanation which has at least the merit of being adequate to explain all the facts; and we do but act upon a sound philosophical principle if we accept *this* explanation until facts are advanced which conflict with it, or which it fails to explain. Nevertheless, the explanation is one of the parts of the Book which excites the greatest opposition and hatred among the critics; and *only* the explanation given by the Book itself can explain the critics' hatred of both the Book and the explanation.

The Book says that the present condition of the human race, who (excepting Christians) are living "without God in the world" (Eph. II, 12), is the result of disobedience to the

commands of God by the parents of the race; that these were persuaded to disobey by a spiritual being of exalted wisdom and beauty (Ezek. XXVIII, 12-15), who placed before them the alluring prospect of intellectual improvement to be effected by the acquisition of knowledge, and who assured them that the knowledge thus to be acquired was desirable, and that death would not be the consequence of its acquisition (Gen. III, 1-6).

One who follows the explanation thus far, and studies the record of the fall as given in the third chapter of Genesis, must be impressed by the fact that human nature to-day—six thousand years after the events there recorded—exhibits as one of its most pronounced tendencies the quest for *improvement of self*, without regard to whether or not the ways in which that end is sought have been sanctioned by God. He must also be impressed by the very general tendency of mankind to accept, in one form or another, the adversary's first and successful lie, "Ye shall not surely die". The doctrine is even taught from the Scriptures, and by religious teachers calling themselves "Christians".

The Book further says that this adversary is still active in the affairs of men, and aims

to be their spiritual leader (John XII, 31; XVI, 11; II Cor. IV, 4; Eph. II, 2; VI, 12). His object, therefore, is in direct opposition to that of Jesus Christ; and hence the prodigious and age-long conflict that rages around this old Book. Throughout the centuries the same spirit has been manifested in a fierce, unrelenting hostility to the records which bear witness of Jesus. With *ten thousand* books, representing the mightiest efforts of the mightiest intellects, the adversary has assailed this *one Book*; and these assailing volumes are now issuing (many of them from so-called "Christian" publishing houses) at the rate of eight hundred a year—not to speak of the thousands of longer or shorter articles in the secular, religious, and quasi-religious periodicals. Fortunate is the believer who realizes that he has the shield of faith wherewith to quench all the fiery (ignited) darts of the enemy (Eph. VI, 16).

Of all these assaults the most dangerous, doubtless, are those conducted under the mask of friendship, with the pretense (often apparently believed by the assailants themselves) of improving the Book, increasing its influence, and rendering it more credible. The parallel between the Incarnate Word and the

written Word is remarkable; and to complete it, the latter must, at last, like the former, be betrayed by a kiss.

Here, then, is an explanation which is adequate to account for the attacks of all sorts that are made upon the Bible, either as a whole or upon parts of it. The purpose of the enemy of mankind, whom Jesus Himself called "the prince of the world" (John XII, 31, etc., *supra*), has been and is to divert men from accepting God's offer of salvation through Jesus Christ. To accomplish this it is only necessary to destroy confidence in the Bible as the Word of God; and with any individual soul that destructive work is begun when the presence of mistakes, errors, myths or legends, or of anything in the Bible calculated to raise a doubt about it, is admitted.

But the hurtful effect of criticism is not chiefly that it tends to create doubts in the minds of believers. Its principal result (and doubtless its main object) is to confirm the unbelieving in their unbelief. Unbelievers do now, and they will to the end, ridicule the unequivocal statements of Scripture which testify to the existence and activity of him "that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world" (Rev. XII, 9); but



no candid unbeliever can deny that the scriptural explanation accounts fully for the facts cited, and that the confusion and doubts raised by biblical criticism are a very effective means whereby the "god of this world" (if he be the instigator of it) "hath *blinded the minds* of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (II. Cor. IV, 3-4).

What then shall we do with criticism? This is a practical question of great moment. Clearly we cannot acquaint ourselves with the multitude of theories, conjectures, and objections, which the critics are so industriously putting into circulation, investigate their source, and then search for the replies thereto. Doubtless our enemy would gladly have us thus occupied. And how shall we deal with the "honest doubter" who has become infected by some of these microbes of unbelief, and who professes that he "would be glad to believe" if some one would kindly resolve his doubts and overcome his objections? It would be as hopeful an undertaking to relieve the typhoid patient by isolating and destroying separately each individual bacillus, as to make a believer out of a doubter by dealing separately with

his doubts. The *unbelieving heart* affords a culture wherein the germs of doubt multiply at a rate that defies any such treatment.

What then?

This: let the believer, for his own part, ignore criticism and "its results", as clearly of the enemy. Let him rest securely in his belief that the Book is truly the Word of God, and *devote his time and energy (not to investigating discoveries of alleged errors therein, but) to ascertaining what God has to say TO HIM through His Word.* Let him believe that the God who caused the record to be written was able to preserve its integrity against all casualties, and is both willing and able to use it to-day as the vehicle of His message to every one who seeks to know His will for the purpose of doing it (John VII, 17). He who maintains this attitude toward the Book, will find in it all the light he needs upon the problems of life, and all the help he needs in meeting them. *Millions of witnesses, living and dead, testify to this as a fact of experience; and anyone can verify it who wills to do so.*

To the doubter, honest or otherwise, let him say, "Get acquainted with this Book, and through It with the One of Whom it testifies;

and ask God to show you whether indeed it be His Word or not. Thus you will get *certain* information, and only thus; for every work of God is its own witness. Denials cannot destroy it and proofs cannot establish it. "Believe and thou shalt see" (John XI, 40). To quote from the Author referred to at the beginning of this paper:

"We must first believe in the Bible in order to understand it, and not want to understand it before we believe in it. Pascal says: 'God wants to be loved (hence believed) before He manifests Himself as He is.'"

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE CHURCH'S LACK OF POWER

Why does the Church lack power and influence with men, seeing that she has a message direct from God and which is of *vital* interest to every man born into the world, and seeing that she has an infallible Word, and the presence and supernatural aid of the Holy Spirit in carrying on the work of her Ascended Lord?

Some answers to this question, which have resulted from an examination of the conditions observable in the world, will be here briefly noted.

1. The lack of power is due in large measure to the fact that the Church, instead of observing a rigid line of separation *from* the world, has been more and more *conforming to and mixing up with it*. The mixing of the spiritual with the carnal and worldly is necessarily attended by a loss of power by the former, without benefiting the latter.

The fact that the Church is living on friendly terms with the world is enough in itself to account for lack of power to convert the latter. "The friendship of the world is enmity with

God" (James IV, 4). If this be true, the attitude of a very large part of the professing Church is one of actual, if unconscious, hostility toward God.

Obviously, the remedy is to come out from among them and be separate (II Cor. VI, 7); to go forth out of the assemblies and organizations of men, to join Christ without the camp, bearing His reproach (Heb. XIII, 12-13), and vigorously to eject from the Sanctuary of God every custom, device and institution which is borrowed from the world and which has been adopted with a view to making the "man of the world" feel at home in the church.

2. Christ promised to be with His church to the end of the age, while she was engaged in a particular business, namely, baptising in the name of the Holy Trinity, and teaching men to *observe ALL THINGS whatsoever He had commanded* (1 att. XXVIII, 19-20); and he also promised that, when engaged in the business of preaching the gospel to every creature, the church should have visible signs of divine confirmation (Mark XVI, 15-20). Loss of power, therefore, would inevitably attend failure to carry on *this business*. The church is not attending properly to this business, but

(1) is engaged in enterprises other than preaching the gospel; and (2) is not teaching men the *whole* gospel, i. e., not teaching them to observe "*all things*" that Christ commanded. Under the first head come faults of commission, and under the second faults of omission.

*First.* The Church, besides preaching the gospel and teaching Christ's commands, is trying to *entertain* men, and to secure their attendance and financial support by furnishing attractions borrowed from the world. In this way the gospel message is partly neglected and partly obscured.

*Second.* The complete gospel message is not presented. The gospel by and to which men were converted in Apostolic days was "to turn to God from idols, to serve the living and true God *and to wait for His Son from heaven*" (I Thess. I, 9). The principal part of the gospel message, the part that occupies more space in Scripture than any other subject, namely, waiting and watching for the second coming of Christ, is very generally neglected by the professing church. Where the second advent is referred to at all, the place generally assigned to it is at the end of the millennium,—a doctrine never heard of in the first seventeen centuries of church history, and which ob-

viously makes "watching" or "waiting" for this event an absurdity. Thus the church is absolutely deprived of her "blessed Hope" (Titus II, 13), and all the benefit and power which attend it. Thus the continuity of the heavenly trio is broken. It is no longer "now abideth faith, hope, love, these *three*". One, whose part and place it was to clasp hands with the other two, has been dropped out of sight, and the two that remain have lost their power. *Faith* dwindles to a sickly thing, and the *love* of many has grown cold.

3. The Church has lost sight of the real character of her earthly mission, and instead of being as a bride in traveling dress, with all preparations made to meet her Bridegroom in the air, she is busy making arrangements for a prolonged and comfortable stay on earth. Her watchword is no longer, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh!" (Matt. XXV, 6), but "My Lord delayeth His coming" (Luke XII, 45).

Is it strange, then, that the Church does not make any headway in her self-appointed undertaking of converting the world, and that the fact is rather that the world is converting the Church? If we look about us to-day, we will understand the significance of Christ's

question, "When the Son of man cometh, will He find faith on the earth?" (Luke XVIII, 8).

4. Lack of power must result from loss of faith in the Bible as the Word of God. The criticism which, instead of seeking the restoration of the original and perfect text which has become partly defaced through man's carelessness and infirmity, is seeking to undermine the confidence of mankind in the oracles of God, is doing more to diminish the power and influence of the Church than all the attacks of infidels and skeptics.

The indifferentism, which lies and spreads like a spiritual paralysis upon mankind, can be traced directly to their sinister influence. It is not one man in ten thousand who pays any attention to the niceties or to the contentions of the destructive criticism; but there is scarcely an intelligent person among the mass of the indifferent who does not entertain the opinion that somehow scholarship has done away with the authority of Scripture, or at least has raised a strong doubt about it; and that the claims of the Bible to exercise authority over men may properly be deferred until the critics have determined whether those claims are valid at all, and if so, to what extent.



5. Among many assemblies there is no *evangelical* effort. Wherever, to the ordinary church activities, there is added a persistent and direct seeking after the souls of them that are perishing, a quickening of spiritual life throughout the assembly, and a great increase of spiritual power is the result. Every church should be not only a center of spiritual supply for its own congregation, but a center for real soul-saving work.

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