

Old Thoughts in New Dress

or
Today's Theology for
Laymen

BY

The Rev. Geo. E. Ackerman, D. D.

Author of

*"Man A Revelation of God," "Love Illumined,"
"Christmas Praises," etc.*

Formerly Vice Chancellor and Professor of Systematic Theology in Grant University.

With An Introduction by

*The Rev. H. C. Morrison, D. D.,
President of Asbury College.*

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Dedication.

To all who in any place have listened
to my voice publishing the
Glad Tidings of Salvation
these messages from my pen
are prayerfully dedicated.

The Author.

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INTRODUCTION.

Rev Geo. E. Ackerman, the author of this volume, "Old Thoughts in New Dress," is a devout Christian scholar, a sound and careful theologian. He wields a prolific and illuminated pen. He has written several excellent volumes, some in prose, and one in poetry. This work will be read with great profit to those desiring to know the fullness of the blessing of the gospel. We heartily commend the book to readers everywhere. It contains stimulation for the intellect, and food for the soul.

Ordinarily such books are thought of as being attractive to only ministers and students of ethical or theological subjects, but Doctor Ackerman has so felicitously adapted his phraseology to the language of everyday life that all classes of thinkers will be attracted and held with increasing interest from beginning to end. Every person who cares for an illuminating re-statement of fundamental Christian truths in 20th century terms should read this most timely book. Faithfully,

REV. H. C. MORRISON, D. D.,
President of Asbury College.

OLD TRUTHS IN NEW DRESS.

FOREWORD.

I have called this little book "Old Truths in New Dress," or "To-day's Theology for Laymen." A more descriptive title would be, The Fundamental Findings of Biblical and Theological Scholarship clothed in the everyday language of non-professional people.

All full-orbed men are thinkers. The plainest everyday thinker is a logician. Plato declares, "Thinking is the talking of the soul with itself." Carlyle held that "The universe is the realized thought of God." Phavorinus said, "On earth there is nothing great but man; in man there is nothing great but mind."

The mind is built on a logical plan. And yet, comparatively few thinkers think of thinking logically. Most men want concrete facts and informal speech. Nevertheless it remains true that even men who have never studied

logic, and, as above stated, do not consider, or even recognize the fact of logical processes going on in their own brains, are constantly drawing conclusions from genuine syllogisms, though not fully formulated. Much of the prevalent disposition to avoid careful self-analysis, and the relation of self to God, results from the metaphysical language in which so many books are written.

All thoughtful people are theologians, but vast numbers of them scarcely realize the fact, because of the scholastic terms which have shrouded the plainest soul-facts in mental murkiness and linguistic fog.

The purpose of this book is to present the essential truths of Christianity in such plain language that any person, having an ordinary knowledge of the English language can easily take them in. I do not in any sense undervalue the good opinion of critical scholars, and am not immune to the desire to be considered "learned," or "profound," but my paramount desire in sending forth "*Old Truths in New Dress*" into the vast "world of books," is to be help-

ful to the non-professional classes; and I earnestly pray that multitudes of troubled thinkers may come into the "rest of faith" by reading these pages.

GEORGE EVERETT ACKERMAN.

“Man is only a reed, . . . but he is a thinking reed. A breath of air, a drop of water suffices to kill him. But were the universe to crush him, man would still be more noble than that which kills him.”

—*Pascal.*

“A miracle only means the liberty of God. Calvinism took away freedom from man, but left it to God. Scientific materialism binds the Creator himself. It chains up God as the Apocalypse chained the devil.”

—*Chesterton.*

OLD TRUTHS IN NEW DRESS

CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY.

From the cradle to the grave human life may be appropriately represented by an interrogation point.

As soon as infant eyes can bear the light sufficiently to look up into the face of nurse or mother they seem to say, "Who are you anyway?" As soon as the little hands can pick at the clothing they seem to say in eloquent, though mute motion language, "What are these things made of?" "What sort of a world is this anyhow?"

The young soul is in a mental maze. Mystery besets him on every hand, and the mystery deepens as years advance. Answered questions suggest more difficult ones, and ere long the unanswered outnumber the others. Then the desire to look into the unknown grows with the growth of the known, until the aged

man, rich in intellectual wealth, holding as his mental possessions vast stores of literary and scientific knowledge, looks longingly out through his spectacled eyes endeavoring to pierce the veil which hides from view the unseen.

It is this eager desire to know, to search out the "hidden" that has given us all our progress in the arts and sciences. Intellectual unrest is salutary. Honest investigators are the mental conservators of the world. We rather like "doubters," in the sense of honest inquirers. Doubt leads to soul-disturbance. This stimulates research. Pain of body leads to efforts for bodily relief. Pain of mind leads to efforts for mental relief. There are heaven-born doubts as well as earth-born. All such doubts may be heaven-cured. There is a "balm in Gilead" for every troubled intellect, as truly as for every burdened heart.

Disbelievers we dislike. They are not merely doubters, or inquiring unbelievers, they are disbelievers. They are not seekers of truth, they are deniers of truth. They are not merely the "don't-

knows," they are the "don't-want-to-knows." They seek to destroy faith. They are destructionists, tearers-down instead of builders-up. Doubt confesses its ignorance and wishes to replace it with knowledge. Disbelief, with strange inconsistency calls its ignorance wisdom and glories in it.

There are just two classes of people who would have us believe that there exists a deadly conflict between Christianity and science. The one is composed of those enthusiasts in religion who have made but the slightest advance in scientific or theological inquiry, and yet absurdly assume that they are set to guard the sacred portals against the inroads of what to them seems godless science. The other consists of men who, with shallow brains but apt speech, have succeeded in catching the public ear, and are making a mock of both religion and science in the name of "liberality." Both classes are enemies to mankind; the former because they claim to possess the whole of truth, and it is this spirit which, through all the ages, has shackled truth

and given rise to persecution; the latter because they are hypocrites of the deepest dye. Professing to be lovers of truth, these men are merely lovers of self; professing to be reasoners, they are only scoffers; professing to have personally discovered the facts, they have taken everything at second-hand, and, at the best, can offer nothing but negations. They have not the faintest resemblance to the genuine searcher after truth.

The conflict in which we are now engaged was inevitable; and why may we not rejoice in it, if it do but strike off the fetters which stifle conscience and defraud it of its freedom, and give us a religion strong in the strength of its own inherent virtue?

From the remotest corners of creation, and from the deepest recesses of man's own soul, are being brought the rich results of persevering search. No longer chained, the human mind hesitates not to venture the boldest inquiries. Girded with the power of an all-conquering faith in the harmony between nature and nature's God, lovers

of truth rather than lovers of antiquity and self, are at work,—some on the old-time field of Europe, some in our own fair land; and it matters not what name the world gives them, in what school it places them, with how much of suspicion it regards them, how bitterly they may be hated and maligned, such workers are the need of our times, such thinkers are helping to banish intolerance from the world, and crush out the spirit of tyranny. They are helping to emancipate conscience and enthrone Christ in every heart. They are spreading broadcast among the people principles all athrob with vitality, individuality and immortality.

What though some tares are sown and spring rankly up? The Lord of the harvest will attend to these.

More and more unwavering has become my belief, during these last years, in a sort of divine “conservation of truth.” God permits blatant infidelity to fan the fires of his own furnaces until, the crudities all burned out of man and system, only the genuine metal remains. As it is within the power of

God to cause the wrath of man to praise him, so is it within his power to cause the opposition of infidels to assist in strengthening the bulwarks of Christianity, and in broadening the foundations of Theism. This power he is constantly displaying in every department of science in a manner full of most cheering promise.

Truth is one. The search is one. The searchers shall yet see eye to eye. This is the faith-filled hope and ardent expectation of the author, notwithstanding the fact that he sees very clearly that the Christian world faces an epoch-making crisis of faith. The very foundations of society would seem to be trembling. Honest people, sincere people, Christian people, yea! genuinely holy people, feel the influence of a subtle somewhat in the mental and spiritual atmosphere which troubles them. There may be no occasion for this, inasmuch as all such persons are well assured, and do know, that the "foundation of God standeth sure;" and yet, either with or without real occasion for it, it is here. It creeps into homes, and de-

stroys the sweet fragrance of absolute domestic trust and filial love. It invades the church and de-vitalizes faith, rendering lukewarm the ardent, early love of multitudes. It permeates the Sunday school, and substitutes a refined naturalism for the supernatural, endeavoring to exalt the intellectual above the spiritual.

To the same disintegrating, nameless something may be charged the sad lack of justice in state and nation, the terrible industrial unrest, and the all too-prevalent disregard of ordinary moral rectitude in general society.

Is this indictment too severe and wide-reaching? The present writer thinks it is not. Compare the family life of the present generation with the family life of the preceding generation. There is at once revealed a sad lack of that absolute community of interests which characterized the wedded life of that earlier day. The individualizing of their lives, notwithstanding the fact that by the sacred compact of marriage they became bone of each other's bone, and flesh of each other's flesh, is often

at the root of all manner of marital troubles. Very often the greater the wealth the more arrogant the assertion of "individual rights;" the more abundant the home comforts and luxuries the more jealous the guarding of personal privileges.

The same tendency manifests itself in the children. At an age when they should, with cheerful, filial readiness, follow the guidance of father or mother, they become restless under restraint. They take the initiative in social and business propositions and strike out for themselves, regardless of parental caution or advice.

So prevalent has this become that the "Every-man-for-himself" slogan, which formerly was thought to be criminally selfish even among the roughest of men, has apparently become the motto for American home life.

Let the reader not think for one moment that the author has lost faith in the home life of the rising generation. On the contrary, he expects a genuine revival of the best elements of the former days domestic.

'Tis true, some careful observers tell us there is no longer any real home-life in our cities. But such statements are altogether too sweeping. Marital love and filial affection are not dead; but unless the present tendencies can be arrested danger looms large on the domestic horizon.

The second count in our indictment against this tendency, namely, that it creeps into the church and de-vitalizes faith, must be manifest to all thoughtful observers of ecclesiastical affairs.

Numerical strength, social prestige, and financial power characterize the church today as never before, but intensive devotion and spiritual power are not strikingly in evidence where the most pronounced material prosperity reigns. We build elaborate temples and sustain stately "services;" but, in many of these there is not found the personal consecration of soul, and the propagandist zeal, which characterized the early church.

Unsettling of faith in the fundamentals of Christianity tends to "heart failure." Subtracting from the essential

divinity of Jesus Christ weakens the dynamo of the soul. Questioning the authority of the Bible dulls the edge of the "sword of the Spirit."

To entertain the prevalent sentiment that creeds are an incumbrance, and it matters not what one *believes*, if only he lives a respectable life, neutralizes conviction, glosses over many sinful practices, and opens the doors to all manner of worldliness. The word preached not being mixed with faith in them that hear, returns unto the sender "void," instead of accomplishing that "whereunto it was sent."

Still more serious does this become when the ordained prophets of Jehovah no longer speak with prophetic assurance, because of an emasculated theology. No man who entertains doubts concerning the inspiration of the Bible, and other fundamental tenets of orthodoxy, can speak for God with that divine unction which is required to stamp the message with authority.

The same will be found true as regards the remaining counts in this indictment.

No further words are necessary to establish the fact of the disease. How about the remedy? The anti-toxin for destroying this subtle virus will not be found in legislation, either civil or ecclesiastical.

However greatly stringent rules for holy living may assist in the attainment of a pure church life, they will never bring such to pass without a dominating principle within the individual soul.

However helpful righteous laws faithfully executed may prove in ameliorating the condition of the laboring classes, and in ridding general society of the foul cancers of intemperance, graft, white slavery and kindred vices, they will never complete the work.

The disease lies deep in the brain and heart of individuals. The cure will be found in the establishing of the rank and file of society upon the old foundations.

In order to this, certain basal truths must be presented in such plain, everyday language that the comparatively uneducated reader can fully grasp the meaning, and be built up in his "most

holy faith." It still remains true that the masses of the people desire that which *seems* to them to be the best. They have been befogged by theoretical wrangling, and metaphysical quibbling until they perish for lack of knowledge.

It is quite manifest that familiarity with fundamentals in Christian evidences, and the essentials of philosophic terminology will greatly help the rank and file of the church.

Happy the Christian who is ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh him a reason of the hope that is in him. Ignorance not only breeds superstition, but it is the prolific mother of disbelief in various degrees and of various sorts. Intelligence lets in God's sunlight on the bats and moles of mystic credulity, driving them into the holes whence they came; while it imparts both brilliancy and strength to genuine faith.

"Mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds" is that church which is largely composed of men and women of intelligent faith. Such lis-

teners stimulate the preacher to high thinking, and most earnest spiritual endeavor. *Sincere* doubters will be attracted by such a church. There is something in the mental and spiritual atmosphere which invites the true inquirer, while it frightens the scoffer. Whenever these conditions shall obtain throughout church life in general, *all* society will be uplifted, and permanently influenced for good.

Emphasis must be placed upon the importance of grounding the laity in the fundamentals of the Christian system. Say what men may concerning the failures of the church; admit, as we must, her many imperfections; she is, after all, the conservator not only of orthodoxy, but of civic righteousness and social purity so far as they are conserved; and she *may*, and surely *will* become far more efficient if an atmosphere of intelligent piety, of high thinking, and holy living shall become universal.

“We cannot, then, imagine anything more rational than a Christian’s faith in God. If our faith in history and science rests on rational grounds, with far stronger confidence we may say, ‘I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.’ ”—*Banks*.

“I hold that though there may be no conclusive demonstration of a good, wise, living and personal God there are so many convincing reasons for it, within and without; that, for every mind not devoid of all reason, and desperately conscience proof, the truth which it is least possible to prove is little less than impossible not to believe.”—*Coleridge*.

“There is necessarily present in us, in virtue of the very fact that our inner and our outer lives stand in constant relation to each other, the consciousness of a Being or Principle which is above both and revealed in both.”—*Caird*.

CHAPTER II.

GOD.

“No man has seen God at any time.” All men have a sense of God. Few men can explain, even to themselves, what they mean by a “sense of God.” Perhaps *no* man can explain it satisfactorily to another man. And yet, all men believe in the existence of a power outside of, and above themselves. Some refuse to spell it with three letters. Some refuse to even begin their assigned name for this nameless *somewhat*, or *somebody*, with a capital letter. They seem to fear the logical results of their own thinking, hence they discount all thought which attempts to reach beyond the confines of the physical senses. They tell us that they believe in science, limiting the word to materialistic phenomena, refusing to consider the supernatural. And yet, as a matter of fact, theology is the science of all sciences. Does the reader doubt that statement?

Some men have been wont to question the right of theology to be called even a science, much less "the science of all sciences." To all such we say you believe in God; and that God is the Creator of the universe, the Author of all life, and the upholder of all things.

For the present we credit you with this belief, because we assume that you are not atheists, not disbelievers; but believers troubled with doubts. Believing thus in God as Creator and Preserver add this simple and universally accepted fact, "science is knowledge systematically arranged," and the conclusion that theology, the science of God, is the science of all sciences is inevitable. Some would limit theology to its strict etymological scope, "Theos," God, "logos," discourse, treatise, or science. Thus circumscribed it appears dry, uninteresting, except to the specialist. We put upon it no such limitations. All life centers in the Giver. God manifest in the flesh was the heart of Life revealed to men. "In Him was life and the Life was the Light of men." The Divine "Logos" is the core of all theolo-

gy worthy the name. Hence every element of man's being touched by the Christ life, which must of necessity include the whole man, is touched by theology. Therefore, not divinity students only, but all classes and conditions of men are interested in theology. Can we find God? We cannot demonstrate his existence. And yet, the normal mind inevitably assumes an uncaused First Cause. We cannot prove this in the sense that we can prove that the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the squares of the other two sides, but we appeal to the very nature of the mind, and affirm that as long as it is in its normal condition it cannot believe that actual existences are without cause. Nor can the mind conceive of a cause causing itself. Steam causes the piston to move, and the piston causes the drive-wheels to turn. But the steam cannot cause the steam. Any chain of finite causes must reach a last link. What next?

The mind looks for a cause which is first of all, a starter. This starter must either be eternal or self-

caused. But, we have seen that the thought of a self-caused cause is contradictory. Hence, the inevitable conclusion: an eternally existing First Cause, the Author and Maker of the universe. And yet we have not demonstrated the existence of God. We did not undertake to. Impossibilities are not our forte. This and many other arguments simply assist our conceptions of God, and strengthen the grip of our conclusions based on the intuitions and personal experience. Perhaps no man can give an exact account of how he came by his idea of God. Nevertheless he knows he *has* such an idea. He cannot remember when he did *not* have it. It seems to be a part of himself. If it were possible to find a being who did not have this idea of God, the strongest reasoner could not prove it to him. Neither could he prove his own individual self-existence to such a one.

But he justly claims that he is not under the necessity of proving it. I know myself as self, and all other beings and objects around me as *not* self, and that is the end of the matter. If I

can know myself as an individual existence, I must be able to know God. It would seem incredible that any man should refuse to admit the certainty of this primary knowledge of self as a knower. But some men who claim to be great "knowers," and yet call themselves agnostics or non-knowers or know-nothings, do refuse to admit it. This refusal shows how desperate these champions of nescience will become in their eager desire to get rid of acknowledging God. Their position appears utterly shallow, in the light of true reason.

Sir George Mivart has truly and tersely said, "Absolute skepticism, with every position that necessarily involves it, is to be rejected as an absurdity. For, if nothing is certain, if there is no real distinction between truth and falsehood, there can, of course, be no useful discussion. If our life may be a dream within a dream, if we may not be supremely sure that a thing cannot both *be* and *not* be at the same time and in the same sense, then thinking may indeed be affirmed to be an idle waste of thought."

This unmitigated shallowness of the agnostics is quaintly exhibited in "Civitas Dei," wherein the author says, "I am most certain that I *am*, and I know this and delight in it. In respect to these truths I am not at all afraid of the arguments of the academicians (the agnostics of these days), who say 'what if you are deceived?' If I am deceived I *am*. For he who *is* not cannot be deceived, and if I am deceived by this token I am. And since I *am*, if I am deceived, how am I deceived in believing that I *am*? For it is certain that I *am* if I am deceived. Since therefore, I, the person deceived should *be* even if I were deceived, certainly I am not deceived in the knowledge that I *am*. Consequently neither am I deceived in knowing that I *know*; for, as I know that I *am* so I know this also that I *know*."

The logical consequence of even a partial denial of the validity of knowledge is a complete denial. There is no half-way ground on which to stand. I am aware that agnostics do not undertake to carry the theory to its logical

conclusions, and are unwilling to admit them when held up to their gaze, but refusal to admit a valid inference does not invalidate it. Those who assume the unreality of the primary knowledge of self, as self, and as a thinking self, must admit the absolute banishment of all certainty from the world, even the certainty of their own assumed "unreality."

I desire all readers, even those who are not accustomed to metaphysical hair-splitting, to see the absurdity of this specious hypothesis so plainly that all the fair-enticing forms into which it has been thrown may no longer exercise the slightest influence upon their thought. To this end let us look a little more closely at what we call knowledge.

Knowledge considered in its fundamental elements and requisites is one and the same in kind whatever may be the object of that knowledge. It is well to keep this very plain truth in mind; for, the primary purpose of agnostics is to prove that man cannot know God. In no other way can this inability be made to appear plausible than by showing

self, the "Ego," to be imaginary. But even agnostics talk of knowledge as something. It is impossible to deny this without rendering all words meaningless.

Now, in order to the existence of knowledge there must be something to be known; and, evidently, there cannot be *something* known without *somebody* to know it, or possess knowledge of it. In other words there must be a thinking person, a knower, and an object to be known, or it is impossible for that which all parties call "knowledge" to exist.

Even Herbert Spencer in his psychology says, "The co-existence of the subject and object is a deliverance of consciousness which taking precedence of all analytic examination is a truth transcending all others in certainty." To which every sane man assents. He cannot do otherwise. Now, bearing in mind that knowledge is one in kind, take a step further. The notion has become prevalent in certain quarters, supposed to be centers of learning, that we can know only material substances,—

only that which can be handled, weighed, or measured, seen, tasted, smelled, or heard. This results, doubtless, from a too constant consideration of the natural aspects of our being. A fact of consciousness is as truly and really a fact, as a loaf of bread, or a block of wood, or any other material substance; and it is a contradiction of terms to affirm that man cannot absolutely know himself as a thinking being, as really as he can know the concrete substances about which he thinks. Those who champion this gross notion argue that it is impossible to know anything which we cannot show to be true by experiment. For the sake of the argument, suppose we grant this. There is a possibility of experimenting upon the immaterial as really, and convincingly, as upon the material. I am sitting in my pulpit on a Sunday morning observing the congregation already assembled, and the late comers as they enter the doors and pass down the aisles. I think of Mr. A., as having come from his elegant home, blessed with perfect health, and having all of this worlds goods that

heart could wish. I think of Mr. B., as having come from a home of poverty, and see that he is in a condition of physical weakness.

In the five minutes thus spent I recognize and take note of a hundred different faces, and call up in thought a thousand different circumstances. I am not conscious of any logical processes of thought. I know these faces instantly. This is actual, primary, fundamental sense—perception through the eyes. This sort of knowing our opponents admit. But now, I submit that my knowledge of my own self, perceiving these faces is just as actual, primary, and fundamental; although it does not come through sense-perception.

While looking upon these I may not have thought of myself as thinking: but, instantly, upon turning the mind within, and asking what I am doing I become conscious of rejoicing in A's prosperity, and of sorrowing over B's hard lot. I am conscious that the rejoicing and the sorrowing exist, as entities, immaterial 'tis true, but "realities" nevertheless, objects of knowledge.

I can pick them up and handle them, "experiment upon them," if you please, weigh and measure them, with a view to determining which is the greater. Then, with this certain knowledge obtained I look for the knower, which is the other absolute requisite for knowledge, and find it to be I, Ego, myself. The existence of this "self" is just as certain as the existence of the faces or the emotions resulting from beholding them. I know this self-existence intuitively. The knowledge is just as actual, primary, and fundamental as that which came through sense-perception.

Now, if I can know myself as an individual existence I must be able to know God. The only way we can apprehend God, is to think of a feeling purposing, reasoning, being, infinite in all his powers and perceptions, like man in kind but differing in degree. Only intelligence can produce intelligence. That intelligence which produces all other intelligences must be infinite and unproduced. This conclusion is inevitable even though not physically demonstrable.

The normal mind cannot rest till it comes to an infinite, absolute, uncaused cause; which must, of necessity, be *personal* and *intelligent*. If further argument were desired we might look into the universe around us, and mark the multitudinous evidences of design. Perhaps one could conceive of a convex lens coming into its present form by chance. A mass of glass might, by some chain of fortuitous circumstances have happened to take such a shape as to focus rays of light, and form an image on a screen. But who could make himself believe that a modern kodak "just happened" to become a kodak? How far-and-away less possible to even seriously think of a human eye having chanced to become an instrument of sight! Earth, sea, and air, yea, our own bodies, are full of witnesses to the infinite First Intelligence.

Some eminent agnostics and other atheistically-inclined skeptics, when pressed for an answer as to where they came from, and how they got here, give about as lucid an answer as did Topsy in Uncle Tom's Cabin. "Don't know

as nobody ever made me, spect I grow-ed." Such humility would pass for more, if assumption and dogmatic arrogance did not so generally characterize their other deliverances.

One other suggestion. Stronger than the ontological, the cosmological, the teleological, and all other such arguments for the existence of God, is the moral argument. Man is conscious within himself of obligation. He feels the force of "ought" and "ought not." We take no account of idiots and the utterly depraved in this statement. This being universally true he cannot avoid feeling that there is someone to whom he is under obligation. This cannot be unless he is in some sense dependent upon that "some one." Whoever that "some one" is he must have a right to obedience, and he must have given a law. Such a one cannot be merely an equal, for the command of an equal could not have the force of law. It must be that that one is The One, the Author of all existence; whose mere will, made known, becomes man's law.

Professor Calderwood of the Edin-

burg University has well said, "The divine existence is a truth so plain that it needs no proof." Hence, as Whitelaw phrases it, "while the atheist asserts that there is no God, and the agnostic professes that he cannot tell whether there is a God or not, and the materialist boasts that he does not need a God, that he can run the universe without one, and the (Bible) fool wishes there were no God, the Christian answers that he could not do without God."

“The expression, the wrath of God, simply embodies this truth, that the relations of God’s love to the world are unsatisfied, unfulfilled. The expression is not merely anthropopathic, it is an appropriate description of the divine pathos necessarily involved in the conception of love restrained, hindered, and stayed through unrighteousness.”

—*Bishop Martensen.*

“The Fatherhood of God means the father regnant. The emphasis must be laid in turn both upon the subject and upon the objective. It is the Father who reigns. Therefore his law is a law of grace and love from beginning to end. Even that which is sternest in its nature and administration is ordained in the interests of love and life. And the Father *is* regnant; for he calls into existence, constitutes and maintains, a world which is absolutely and irrevocably controlled by his own perfection, and controlled in the interests of that spiritual life which love creates and would perfect. Love reigns, therefore, by law, in the interests of life.”

—*Lidgett.*

CHAPTER III.

DIVINE ATTRIBUTES.

We assign, or attribute, or apply to God certain qualities, properties, traits, or characteristics. For these the one general term "attributes" has become the common designation. We speak of sewing machine "parts," of automobile "parts," of bodily "parts;" and, by common consent, we speak of intellect, sensibility, and will as parts of the real man who inhabits the body. This is done for the sake of obtaining a more comprehensive knowledge of the machine, or the animal structure, by securing a careful examination of the individual parts or elements *as* single pieces. We do not forget that the machine or animal is *one*, while we center our study upon each and every part by itself; nor do we forget that God is *one*, while we endeavor to separate out his characteristics or attributes, and examine them one by one.

For this procedure we have Scripture

warrant. For the foundation attributes of God we have Bible proofs, and these proofs accord with reason.

Omnipotence. Omnis equals all. Potens equals power, hence "omnipotence." God is all-powerful. Man has originative power, but it is limited. God's power is unlimited. The things which are impossible with men are possible with God. (Luke XVIII:27). With men it is impossible but not with God for with God all things are possible. (Mark X:27). He wills and it is done. His breath put life into inanimate dust, and his word shall speak life into dead clay. All things doable can be done by Jehovah.

Let the reader note carefully this apparent limitation of God's power. It *is* and is *not* a limitation. Physical absurdities and moral contradictions are impossible to even Jehovah, and yet this does not limit his real power. On the contrary it exalts the absoluteness of his perfections, his power included. The Scriptures tell us plainly that God cannot lie. Had they not informed us

of it we should have known it, as surely as we know our own existence. We also know assuredly that God cannot make two and two equal five, or a square a circle, or black white, in the same place and in the same sense. These manifest facts do not by any manner of means limit God's omnipotence. It is not even thinkable that a contradiction is an object of power, either in man or Jehovah. Let the reader bear this carefully in mind and no uncertainty as to God's absolute omnipotence will trouble him, even though he *does* admit that there are some things which God cannot do.

Omniscience. Omnis all—scio to see or know. Hence omniscience. God knows all things. He is the all-wise one. He is the all-knower. This attribute is abundantly declared in the Scriptures. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." "All things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." "His understanding is infinite."

These and hundreds of similar scrip-

tures are in perfect accord with common sense. Certain would-be philosophers, following that fitting chimera called the "absolute," have eliminated all personality from the conception of God, and brought themselves under the necessity of holding that all these scriptures which attribute knowledge to God are figurative. But this is an utterly groundless assumption, called in to bolster up a false theory. If, when the Bible speaks of God as knowing, seeing, and understanding, it does not mean exactly what it says, it has *no* meaning, and all parties are "out of court." Let these pantheists, positivists and absolutists of every name and degree either accept these scripture words at their recognized value or proclaim themselves blank agnostics, and thus drop out of sight as to this discussion.

One feature of God's omniscience troubles many thoughtful thinkers; namely, his foreknowledge. "He knoweth the end from the beginning." How, then, can any individual man, or a whole race of men, make the end any different? He knows what will be the

end of this day to me; how can I make it different? He knows where I shall be at the end of this year; How can I bring it to pass that I shall be elsewhere? He knows in what condition of mind and heart I shall be at the close of this earthly life; by what power in heaven or earth, in angels or men; yea, by what power in even God himself can that dying condition be changed? He knows where I shall spend eternity. Is not, therefore, my destiny absolutely and irrevocably fixed?

Many scholarly and devout men have thus questioned; and, after long and heart-searching, brain-exhausting study, have concluded that God, from all eternity, has predestined certain individuals to eternal life and certain other individuals to eternal death. On the surface, their conclusions seem warranted by the facts, and because of the serious difficulty which many readers have doubtless had, and still *do* have concerning this element in Jehovah's omniscience, I here suggest a very simple solution, which cleared my mental sky very quickly, after all other reasoning and illustrations had failed.

The whole difficulty arises from failure to distinguish between "must be" and "will be." Certainty and necessity are not the same. If I had absolute knowledge—divine knowledge—of what a supposed thief would certainly steal tonight, my knowledge would not compel him to steal, would not necessitate the stealing, would not be expressed by the statement, "He *must* steal, but by the statement, "he *will* steal." Some earnest reader may say, "Yes; I see the point; but, if, together with your absolute knowledge, you had absolute power, such as God has, you ought to prevent the stealing, otherwise you practically necessitated the theft by not exercising your power." By this reasoning you leave the question at issue, and raise another, namely, God's responsibility in making man a free moral agent—which does not belong here at all. The one and only question here is, how can God know all future events and yet not make them absolutely necessary, and this question is completely answered to the satisfaction of any and every open mind, just as soon as a dif-

ference between certainty and necessity is clearly recognized. In the hope of making this troublesome feature more plain I add another very simple illustration. Suppose that from his knowledge of his boy's character a father knows absolutely that when he asks that boy what he was doing on the street last evening he will lie about it. But you say the father cannot know absolutely. Very true, but the supposition is that he *can* and *does* know even as absolutely as God knows. Very well then, even this "will be" remains only "will be," and is utterly different from "must be." That father did not compel that boy to lie; or, to phrase it otherwise, the absoluteness of the parental foreknowledge did not necessitate the action.

Omnipresence—Omis, all-where and all-when.' God is everywhere at all times. Reader, do you comprehend that statement? I do not. No man can comprehend it. Perhaps even the angels in heaven may yet be "desiring to look into" this (1st Peter 1:12) and find themselves unable. Manifestly the

thought of an individual person everywhere present at the same time, and at all times, passes finite comprehension. For this reason some refuse to believe it, although compelled to admit that the Scriptures in plain and unequivocal, unmistakable terms declare that God is everywhere present. This refusal is unreasonable, for there are numerous facts and phenomena which no man can comprehend, that are universally believed. The speculators and philosophers have never unsettled our belief in them, nor *can* they do it. The same is true of our belief in the ubiquity, the everywhere-presentness of God. Although the human mind cannot have a complete conception of an unlimited presence, cannot explain how a person can be present at all times in all places, yet this is not a bar to faith in the truth of the plain teachings of the Bible, that God is a person. The great Jehovah, creator and upholder of all things, is not "a diffusion of essence," as these dreamers would have us believe; but a personal God, a whole person, present at every moment in every place. This

is not credulity. It is *reason* founded on both faith and genuine philosophy. Every one of earth's millions, if a true worshiper, adores *all* of God, not merely an infinitesimal part of Him, a fraction of Him, the denominator of which would be a number representing the total of all worshipers.

Immutability. God is changeless. "I am the Lord, I change not." "With Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Many thinkers have difficulty in reconciling this attribute with God's activities. Others fail to see how immutability is possible for a being who loves and hates, rejoices and mourns; in a word, a person who feels. This difficulty arises from failure to properly define the word changeless. When we say that God is unchangeable we do not mean the changelessness of deadness, of utter stagnation; but the changelessness of fundamental character, and every primary content of personality which originates thought or action. Thus defined and clearly understood, there is not even a suggestion or hint of contradiction in

terms between God's unchangeableness and God's activities. Let no reader fear lest by establishing the fact of immutability we make God a pulseless, loveless, motionless, non-acting being, who cannot even know events in succession. Any such conclusion is truly without foundation in either logic or fact. God is all the time active. His emotions and volitions are in constant use. He knows all things even the end from the beginning—as already clearly shown—but he knows events as they occur, and facts as they exist from time to time. He observes the actions of every person and adapts his dealings to every individual case. The idea of an "eternal now," as applied to God, is a chimera, a fiction of the imagination, formed out of the "stuff that dreams are made of," which stuff seems to be abundant in some quarters supposed to be learned. We need simply to keep constantly in mind the distinction between essential character and individual acts or states of mind. As to the former God is absolutely immutable. He is immutably loving, immutably holy, immutably

just, and so on through the entire category of essential characteristics; but he responds in both state of mind and act to the varying states of His creatures, and to their varied needs and deservings.

Eternity.—No man can comprehend the meaning of this word. Define, explain, elucidate as we may, and we find that we have simply multiplied words without enlarging knowledge; that we have made use of involved sentences *about* the thing without explaining it; and instead of rendering the meaning more lucid by our attempted elucidations we have “darkened counsel with words.” Scripture testimony is abundant. “Before the mountains were brought forth or ever thou hast formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.” “A thousand years in thy sight is but as yesterday when it is past.” “The eternal God is thy refuge.” But why multiply references? No adequate apprehension of God is possible without this attribute. Moreover thought inevitably goes beyond the mere conclu-

sion that he has lived always and will live forever. We mean by "eternity" as an attribute of God, absolutely necessary being. It belongeth to God to exist, and it is absolutely impossible to think of Him as not existing. There are no words to explain the facts, but He Himself has said that he is the "I am," the "Eternal One," that inhabiteth eternity, and this should satisfy every candid mind.

Unity.—We mean by unity, that there *is* not and cannot be any other God. He not only *is* sole, only, alone, but in the very nature of the case, he *must* be so. No other *can be, can exist*. If there were another, neither one would be supreme. The Psalmist says, "Thou art God alone." Isaiah says, "Thou art God, even thou alone." Jehovah Himself says, "I am God and there is none else." Isaiah 44:22. Not alone does the voice of Scripture proclaim the unity of God, but all nature, the universe, God's larger book, eloquently declares the same. The more extended a man's observation, and the more critical his study of the phenom-

ena of the material universe, the more profound his convictions as to this unity. One united and one all-comprehending power is seen in the countless parts which make up the universal whole. That large class of physical scientists and materialistic philosophers who have been making such herculean efforts to get rid of a personal God, have unconsciously strengthened our argument for the unity of God as testified to by Nature. Their most favored name for their philosophy of the universe is "monism," meaning "all in one and one in all. "Monism" and "monistic philosophy" have dotted the pages of materialistic writings most profusely in recent years. They have utterly failed to prove this theory, but the facts they bring are most cordially welcomed by us as decidedly helpful. Perhaps Haeckel stands among the foremost of these, and in order that the reader may understand the position he occupies I quote a brief passage from the concluding chapter of his "Evolution of Man," entitled "Results of Anthropogeny." He has conducted us through twenty-

five long chapters, and exhibited the strongest possible phases of evolution, and the monistic philosophy, and here he sums up the whole matter. "This monistic philosophy asserts that everywhere the phenomena of human life, as well as those of external nature, are under the control of fixed and unalterable laws. Man is not *above* Nature but *in* Nature. The real materialistic philosophy asserts that the vital phenomena of motion, like all other phenomena of motion, are effects or products of matter." Here the reader notices the surprising inconsistency of this great monist; and, no doubt feels induced to discount his abilities; but be not too severe upon him. He is simply making a masterly effort to extricate himself from the dilemma into which his theories have brought him, and is not to blame for some manifestations of discomfiture. You or I would, perhaps, do the same if in the same hard case. Dr. Diman, one of the most trenchant writers of modern times, says, "The strongest intellectual attraction of materialism consists in the fact that it is

a system of monism. It apparently satisfies the craving for unity, which is so deeply implanted in the human mind, and which receives new support with the progress of knowledge. We may assume without hesitation that a monistic theory is the expression of rational thought. But the evident argument against materialism is that it does not meet this very want. If reason pursues its search for unity it cannot stop with physical force, for a universe of physical force would be simply an aggregate of forces. Behind the multiplicity of natural forces there must reside some single, original and indivisible power. But when we have reached this conclusion we are on the threshold of the great truth that the universe had its origin in mind." Careful and weighty words are these, from the pen of a profound thinker. As before indicated we welcome the facts presented by the monists, being thankful for the added force they give to our arguments for the unity of God, and at the same time showing up their glaring inconsistencies. In fact, about all that is really necessary

to show up the inconclusiveness of any theory launched against Christianity is to expose its contradictions, as elaborately set forth by its foremost advocates.

Spirituality.—The Bible says God is a spirit. We readily understand from this what He is *not*. He is not matter, has no material body. But have we learned anything as to what He is? Can any man define spirit? Manifestly not, for human language has no terms in which to describe it. Our words all partake of the materialistic. They were not made to fit spirit. The words we apply to even the human mind, or spirit, smack of the material. We say of a man, "He has a brilliant mind," but we do not mean that his mind shines like the lamp; or, we say of a man, "He has a sweet spirit," but we do not mean that his spirit is composed of sugar. And yet, although we have no word-dress with which to clothe our conception of the human spirit and, consequently, cannot define it, we *do* have some notion of what a human spirit is; and, removing all limitations, we exalt

this conception to infinity and rest in the satisfying consciousness that we have reached up to some adequate apprehension of the Father of spirits.

These are the so-called natural attributes of God. Concerning the moral attributes, holiness, justice, truth, mercy, wisdom, goodness and love, much might be of interest, but these are so manifest that no person need have any doubt or uncertainty concerning them; hence we need not give them any formal consideration.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” *John*.

“The Word ‘became’ must not be so understood as to support the belief that the Word ceased to be what he was before; and the word ‘flesh’ must not be taken to exclude the rational soul of man. The clear apprehension of the meaning of the phrase, so far as we can apprehend it, lies in the recognition of the unity of the Lord’s person before and after the incarnation. His Personality is divine. But at the same time we must affirm that his humanity is real and complete. He, remaining the same person as before, did not simply assume humanity as something which could be laid aside; He became flesh. He did not simply become ‘a man, he became ‘*man*.’ The mode of the Lord’s existence on earth was truly human, and subject to all the conditions of human existence, but he never ceased to be God.”—*Westcott*.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GOD-MAN.

What think ye of Christ? Two thousand years will soon have been numbered since men began to ask this question. Never, during all these years, has it awakened more thought than at the present time. Around the babe of Bethlehem raged the storms of royal wrath, and round the question of the virgin birth are now raging the storms of philosophic controversy. The man who spoke as never man spake was beset on every hand and at every stage of His public life by self-appointed censors, and arrogant disputants, and His teachings are now assailed by the same classes with unmeasured venom and violence. Around the God-man have clashed, and still *do* clash, the swords of sharpest criticism, and over the brow once crowned with thorns, now glory-crowned, the thunders of coarse infidelity roll, and the lightnings of polish-

ed intellectualism flash. In a word, the most intensely heated controversies of all the ages have raged around Jesus of Nazareth. It has seemed impossible for any man, since the earthly days of the God-man, to write extensively on any ethical subject, or upon *any* subject touching the intellectual and moral life of man, without recognizing Him. Not only by these, but by those incomparable narratives, the four gospels, and all the other books of the New Testament, Christ as a fact of history is 'witnessed. Is it reasonable to suppose, is it even *thinkable*, that there never was such a man? Some scholars of apparently sound mind profess thus to think, hence the question demands consideration, although we feel compelled to discount their sanity, or their sincerity. To state the matter formally we say: There *was* such a person as Jesus of Nazareth. Even pagans have testified to the facts of Christ's life and death. Dionysius of Mara tells of the crucifixion. Tacitus, the great historian, born but a few years after Christ's death, says, in so many words, when re-

lating how the Christians suffered under Nero, "The founder of that name was Christ, who suffered death in the reign of Tiberius under his procurator, Pontius Pilate." A little later one of the greatest Jewish historians wrote: "Now there arose about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call Him a man, for He was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as received the truth with gladness. He was the Christ, and after Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned Him to the cross, His first adherents did not forsake Him, for He appeared to them alive again the third day."

Adrian, Pliny, Juvenal, Trajan and other noted writers, haters of the Nazarene, so clearly testify to the fact of his life and death on earth that, had we no testimonies of Christian writers, we could defend our position against all deniers of the reality of the historic Christ. This is another cheering instance of how God often causes the wrath of man to praise him. The bitter attacks, the outrageous slanders,

and the unmitigated lies told about Jesus Christ by men so nearly contemporaneous with Him are convincing proof that He *did* live among men, and *did* die on the cross, as foretold in the Old Testament, and as stated in the New Testament. As if this were not sufficient we have the confirmatory proof found in buried tablets, bearing unmistakable inscriptions, and a multitude of other mute, though eloquent, witnesses of almost every conceivable archaeological sort. As an example of these I give you the following, written in Hebrew on a plate of brass found in the city of Aquilla in the kingdom of Naples in 1280. "Sentence pronounced by Pontius Pilate, Intendant of the lower Province of Galilee; that Jesus of Nazareth shall suffer death by the cross. In the 17th year of the reign of the Emperor Tiberius and on the 24th day of the month of March in the most holy city of Jerusalem, during the pontificate of Annas and Caiphaz, Pontius Pilate, Intendant of the Province of Lower Galilee, sitting to judgment in the presidential seat of the Praetor, senten-

ces Jesus of Nazareth to death on a cross between two robbers, as the numerous and notorious testimonies of the people prove, 1st (that) Jesus is a misleader. 2nd, He has excited the people to sedition. 3rd, He is an enemy to the laws. 4th, He calls Himself the Son of God. 5th, He calls Himself, falsely, the king of Israel. 6th, He went into the temple followed by a multitude carrying palms in their hands. Orders from the first centurion Quirrillis Cornelius—to bring Him to the place of execution. Forbids all persons rich or poor to prevent the execution of Jesus. The witnesses who have signed the execution are:

1. Daniel Robani, Pharisee.
2. John Zorobabel.
3. Raphael Robani.
4. Capet.

“Jesus to be taken out of Jerusalem through the gate of Tournes.”

In view of the multitude of such testimonies that *have been* and are *still being unearthed*, how significant are the words of the Master, “If these should hold their peace the stones would imme-

diately cry out." But all these are only corroborative of the Gospels. These are our completest defense, and they have stood the test of the years. They are more impregnable today than ever before. The fiercest assaults of infidelity have availed nothing. The most stubborn and prolonged warfare of the higher critics waxes and wanes, and from time to time changes front and modifies its tactics; but succeeds only in covering part of the shame and confusion of repeated repulse. As Chesterton so tersely says, after showing up the virulence and folly of such attacks, "And yet, Christianity hangs in the heavens unhurt, its opponents succeed only in destroying all that they themselves hold dear. With their paralyzing hints of all conclusions coming out wrong they do not tear the book of the recording angel. Not only is faith the mother of all worldly energies, but its foes are the fathers of all worldly confusions. They have not wrecked divine things, and in my vision the heavenly chariot flies thundering through the ages, the dull heresies sprawling and

prostrate." Again and again within recent years some advanced (?) thinker has written out of existence "the Man of Galilee," and for a brief period, has enjoyed the sweet luxury of lecture-room applause or reviewer's adulation, only to find after a few brief months that the historic Christ occupied a larger place than ever before; while he, the "advanced thinker," must invent some new scheme if he would save his waning fame. As that versatile Christian scholar, Prebendary Rowe, so well says, "There are only two possible alternatives: The portraiture of the Christ of the Gospels is either the delineation of an historic reality or it is an ideal creation. The first of these alternatives satisfies all the historic conditions of the case, the second none. Nay, more; it involves a mass of hopeless contradictions and absurdities, in the possibility of which reason refuses to believe. It follows, therefore, that the portraiture of the Christ of the Gospels is the delineation of an historic reality.

II. *Christ was a man.* Having joined hands with every other ism

willing to aid in destroying Christianity, naturalism, as has been shown, is engaged in a most persistent endeavor to subtract from the essential divinity of Jesus Christ. This causes orthodox believers to so often engage in defending the divinity of their Lord, that they are in danger of forgetting His humanity. This is hurtful to the religious life. We do well to dwell lovingly upon His essential humanity. It was by and through His life in the flesh that He manifested God to man. He was no less really a man because He was God. Not man merely, but *man* nevertheless, having a human brain and a human body. His soul was sinless but human. His mind was untrammelled by perversions of the moral nature, and yet He grew in wisdom and knowledge, even as in stature. He never flew into a passion, but His indignation against wrongdoing and evil thinking was fierce and strong. He did not lapse into melancholy over trials and afflictions, but his grief found vent in tears, after the most common earthly fashion. By Thy tears and groans of mortal agony, Thou Son

of God, hast Thou revealed to us Thy humanity, as Thou couldst not otherwise have done. Seeing and hearing these, we come into the "fellowship" of suffering, and feel the heart-throbs of a brother man under the majesty of the omnipotent God.

III. *Christ was God.* "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God." Jesus said unto them, "Verily, verily I say unto you, before Abraham was I am." "He is before all things and by him all things consist." Futile the attempts of Arians, Socinians, Unitarians, or any other deniers of Christ's essential divinity to explain away the manifest meaning of these Scriptures. No candid mind can consistently fail to say with Faber:

"Jesus is God! There never was
A time when He was not;
Boundless, eternal, merciful,
The Word the Sire begot."

As a sample of what contortions the plainest scriptures undergo at the hands of these critics, note the following: They undertake to make the plain

declaration of Christ Himself, "Before Abraham was I am"—to mean simply, "Before Abraham was born I existed in the purpose and plan of God." What arrant perversion of language is this! Take another example, "The same was in the beginning with God." They torture this into the following, "In the beginning of Christ's ministry He was." That is, they say, His sentiments, sympathies, and purposes were with God, were accordant with the divine will, and He was God to His church, that is, He was the head of the Christian church, the founder of the Christian religion.

For shame! that men calling themselves thinkers, 'advanced thinkers,' 'higher thinkers,' should resort to such subterfuges! By means of such juggling almost anything can be read *into* or *out of* the Bible. Another trick is to read a 'the' and an 'a' into the English which are not in the original and make the following:

"In the beginning was the Word and *the* Word was with *the* God and the Word was *a* God." This they under-

take to defend by an appeal to Greek construction, but they most miserably fail. The merest tyro in etymology can easily satisfy himself by a look at the first few verses of John's gospel, in any Greek Testament, that there is no such "the" or "a" in the original, while those who have not learned Greek can accept with all confidence the assurance of the foremost masters of that ancient language that there is no warrant either in etymology or construction, for inserting either one.

"Son of God."

The essential divinity of Jesus is also set forth in the title "*Son of God.*" Scores of times, in both the Gospels and Epistles, this title is used. He says, "My Father," not "Our Father" in these passages. His is a sonship such as no other human being enjoys. He is the only-begotten of the Father. Some devout believers have stumbled over this title, feeling that to be a son is to be less than the father; hence, not fully and completely God. We freely admit that concerning this, as concerning many phases of divine truth,

the human mind cannot exhaustively comprehend the relation herein expressed; but the declaration is so often and so unequivocally made, both by the Master Himself and the inspired apostles, that we cannot reasonably discount it. In reality, looking beneath the surface, so far from this expressed relation being a stumbling block, or a bar to faith, when rightly construed, it falls into perfect harmony with the whole tenor of teaching on this subject. We believe in a trinity in unity, a oneness of essence in a plurality of manifestations. In the method, or manner, of the existence of the Divine Three in One, and One in Three there is a distinction, a relationship. That between the Logos and the Father is called Sonship. Christ was not created. He is the son by eternal generation. This distinction is as important as is the greatness of the mystery, which enshrouds it. Around the question of the virgin birth of Jesus wages the polemical warfare of the present day with increasing fierceness. Pens dipped in darkest hate assail the plain unequivocal statement in proph-

ecy, in fulfillment, and in creed, "Born of the Virgin Mary"; and pens tipped with loving faith, reinforced by irrefutable facts, are meeting and repulsing all such assaults. A German preacher, Schrempf by name, was dismissed from his pastorate in 1892 because he refused to use the sentence, "Born of the Virgin Mary," when repeating the Apostles' Creed. A controversy immediately began, and has continued to increase in bitterness ever since. With mock magnanimity, the radicals in higher criticism offer to relieve orthodox believers of the burden of this belief in the virgin birth. They tell us, forsooth, that non-acceptance of this creed does not subtract from the belief in Christ's sinlessness and supernatural character; then with strange inconsistency proceed at once to minimize both. This disposition of mind has permeated the evangelical churches, and many ministers are disposed to weakly apologize for this foundation fact. Such a mental attitude toward this, one of the fundamental tenets of our holy Christianity, invariably leads to discounting

the absolute divinity of Jesus. Say these apologists, "It is not essential to Christ's sinlessness, for that would have been secured equally though Christ had been born of two parents; and, it is not essential to the incarnation." And yet, as above stated these critics *do* discount His divine characteristics. Professor A. B. Bruce states a fact patent to all students of this controversy. "With denial of the virgin birth is apt to go denial of the virgin life." Wherefore should we stumble at the doctrine of the virgin birth of Jesus, any more than at the resurrection of Jesus? Both were incomprehensible miracles. Perhaps the virgin birth was the more incomprehensible of the two. But admit the miraculousness of it, and no matter as to the extent of man's inability to comprehend it. If the very God was to be manifested to the world in the person of the Son, made flesh, what more appropriate method of manifestation than that a pure virgin should be made the means of that manifestation, through the generative power of the Holy Ghost, so that He, the Eternal One, should in

His incarnation, be absolutely very God and very man. The method of the miracle appeals to the ethical sense, and logical fitness of things. The Scriptures unhesitatingly affirm that He was the Son of God made flesh. This is true of both Old Testament and New Testament testimony. Hundreds of years before the Bethlehem event Isaiah wrote, "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel." Matthew and Luke pointedly cite this as fulfilled in the actual birth in the manger. With careful detail and unusual reiteration, by direct statement and unmistakable inference, they affirm that a pure virgin having been overshadowed by the Holy Ghost, conceived and bore a Son, *the One* clearly foretold by prophets of old. Moreover these portions of the Gospel narratives are among the most abundantly attested as to genuineness, being found in all the most ancient manuscripts. Some candid inquirers have been disturbed because Mark and John do not give these accounts. This unrest is needless, for even

a casual consideration of the method of these two gospels will show that neither one undertakes any account of Christ's early days in the flesh. Mark begins at once with His public life, and John with a few bold strokes tells the facts of God's coming in the flesh; but, knowing that the details have already been ample, as given by others, moves right on into the account of His words and works. The following weighty words by Professor James Orr, D. D., of Glasgow, Scotland, sum up the case strongly: "The birth of Jesus was not as in ordinary births the creation of a new personality. It was a divine personality—already existing—entering on this new mode of existence. Miracle alone could affect such a wonder. *Because* His human nature had this miraculous origin, Christ was the "holy" One from the commencement. (Luke 1:35). Sinless He was, as His whole life demonstrated; but when, in all time, did natural generation give birth to a sinless personality? The belief in the virgin birth of Christ is of the highest value for the right apprehension of

Christ's unique and sinless personality. Through God's infinite mercy He came from above, inherited no guilt, and needed no regeneration, or sanctification; but became Himself the redeemer, regenerator, and sanctifier, for all who receive Him." Another title frequently ascribed to Christ, which marks Him as divine, is

Jehovah.

This title is so freely applied to Him that the mere mention is sufficient. The same is true of the title, "*Lord*," used in its highest meaning.

Further proof of the essential divinity of Christ is, that divine attributes are ascribed to Him and accepted by Him. *Eternity, omniscience, ubiquity, omnipotence, immutability*, in fact all the attributes which belong to God the Father belong, on Scripture authority, to God the Son. Beyond all this His works prove Him to be *the God*, and not merely *a God*. Behold Christianity! Whence came it? It is Christ built into folks. The astonishing revelation which began with His presence in the flesh, and has continued to grow in extent and

power right up to now, through His presence in human lives, is all-comprehensive proof of His Divinity. As Professor Warfield of Princeton states, "It is historically impossible that the great movement which we call Christianity, which remains unspent after all these years, could have originated in a merely human impulse; or could represent to-day the working of a merely human force.

First, The world was made by Him; 2nd, He brought the dead to life by His own power. He did not ask the Father to raise Lazarus, but said with personal, primary authority, "Lazarus, come forth." 3rd, He pardoned penitent sinners. This was His supreme credential.

Better to the Christian than all other proofs of Christ's divinity is the consciousness of personal salvation. However skeptics may cavil and undertake to minimize the elements of certainty in the inner convictions of spiritual experiences, the one who is conscious of them is as certain of their reality as he

is of any physical fact. He may not analyze them, and cannot by any possibility explain them to the man who has them not; for the very manifest reason that the non-possessor has no means of understanding the language of personal salvation. To him such inner consciousness of the divine presence is an enigma, an airy, unsubstantial somewhat; while to the pardoned sinner the absolutely satisfying witness of God's spirit with his, that Jesus saves is the basal adamantine truth on which he securely stands. He knows his feet are on the rock. "Jesus saves" is still the adamant under his feet in the maturity of his Christian experience. And, when earth recedes his anchor holds within the veil and his testimony to a personal, all-sufficient, divine Saviour is given with his latest breath.

"Jesus thy blood and righteousness,
My beauty are my glorious dress,
Midst flaming worlds in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head."

“You easily observe, I therein build on no authority, ancient or modern, but the Scripture. If this supports any doctrine it will stand; if not, the sooner it falls the better.”—*Wesley*.

“The Bible, therefore, is the Word of God, because all parts of it were actually used by the Holy Spirit in the historic process of redemption, because He brought these parts together into an organic record of redemption, and because He lives in the whole Bible today, richly relating it to the Christian consciousness.”—*Curtis*.

CHAPTER V.

GOD'S BOOK.

The Bible is our chart and compass. In the narrow and technical sense theology has nothing to do with discussing the genuineness, authenticity, and inspiration of the Bible. But practically it has much to do with these and many other lines of Christian evidences. Much may be learned of God, as has already been shown in the previous chapter, outside of the Bible. This, all Theists, that is, all who believe there is a God, whether Christians or not, freely admit. Theists who are not Christians are wont to hold that all the knowledge of God necessary to man can be obtained without the Scriptures. They contend that Nature is sufficient, that God has adequately revealed Himself in Earth and Sea and Sky, in the wide domain of vegetable and animal life, and especially in man himself. This we refuse to admit. The reason they take

this position is that if they can show that the Bible is unnecessary they can seriously discount its claims. We gladly concede, if it be a concession, that God has revealed Himself in multitudinous forms and wondrous ways in all of Nature. The tiniest flower, with fragrant breath, whispers its Creator's praise. The loftiest mountain, lifting his majestic head into the skies, pronounces the name of God. We yield to no non-Christian Theist in the exaltation of the true worth of the teachings of Natural Theology. But these teachings are not sufficient. Hence the necessity of a book revelation. We may grant that man needs no further assistance than the book of nature to lead him to a belief—

1st. That God exists.

2nd. That the soul is immortal.

3rd. That somehow the good will be rewarded and the evil punished in the hereafter.

But, we insist that this is not enough. Man is conscious of obligation. That consciousness speaks of a being to whom he is responsible. Man is con-

scious of demerit—guilt. This points to punishment. Nature says nothing about pardon. Her teachings all indicate certainty of punishment. If a dog eats strychnine he dies. If a man eats strychnine he dies. There is no pardon. If a man inhales a contagion-laden atmosphere and disease, with remorseless grasp, fastens upon him, he must invariably suffer, no matter how *sorry* he may be. If he lose an arm by an accident, even though he were not in any sense to blame, he cannot restore it, no matter though he seek so to do even with “strong crying and tears.” Nature has many voices to speak of God, but no ears to hear man’s cry for help. Natural law knows nothing about such words as “innocence” and “guilt.” Her language is the language of inexorable certainty, absolutely unchangeable by any mitigating circumstances. “But,” says the advocate of the complete adequacy of natural religion, “Man is so constituted that he naturally expects pardon from God.” Suppose we grant that this is true, his position is not materially strengthened; for, even though

man, by the very constitution of his nature, should be led to expect pardon, he never could, without the Bible, learn the conditions necessary to secure it, nor how to go to work to meet those conditions, even if known. Nature alone may teach man of God, but cannot teach him of Christ—of a Saviour—coequal with God. Nature may reveal an omnipotent Creator, but never could have shown us the Comforter.

Furthermore, reading the Book of Nature leads no man to pray; for as already shown, her laws are absolutely uniform, unless changed or suspended by super-natural power exercised in a manner which the Naturalist refuses to admit. "Ask and ye shall receive" is utterly unknown in Nature's creed, is entirely foreign to her teachings.

Another count.—A general oversight of the universe, a sort of onlook by the maker of the great machine, may be a just inference from Nature's creed, but no such thing as a special Providence would ever suggest itself. These manifest facts, which, I think, will be admitted by every reader, plainly indicate

how barren is the field, and how dark the sky of those who have no warmth or light save that of Nature.

Elaboration of these facts *might* prove exceedingly interesting, and doubtless *would* to the technical reader; but it is unnecessary, and this writer's desire is to *help* the non-professional thinker over his real difficulties, rather than to please the dialecticians.

Now, I appeal to one and all, to the most critical and to the least critical, is it thinkable that a just God, even the sort of God Nature alone points out, would create such a being as man, having a consciousness of obligation and responsibility, having a feeling of guilt after wrong-doing, accompanied by a desire for forgiveness; and having a sense of moral desert following right-doing, accompanied by a longing for reward; is it even thinkable, I ask, that God would create such a being, endowing him with all these capacities and characteristics, and then leave him without adequate information? No! Ten thousand times No!! Verily, God's own honor demanded that the revelation in

the book of Nature be supplemented and completed by the Book of Inspiration.

Good Morals.

The necessity of a book revelation is further shown by a consideration of the fact that natural religion alone is not sufficient even for good morals. This is not equivalent to saying that non-Christian Theists are immoral men. But many of them are indebted to the book much more largely than they are willing to admit. Our appeal is to history and observation. Races and nations destitute of the Bible have, it is true, in some instances, developed a sort of morality. But, how inferior has been the best type of Pagan ethics compared with the Christian code! And how wondrously have Pagan ethics been improved wherever and whenever the Bible has become monitor and guide. We admit that some individual pagans, in various times and places, have formulated very excellent moral codes, and proved themselves worthy of great honor; but such exceptions only prove the rule. Looking at such people as a whole

we are appalled by their moral condition. And yet, it is exactly what we should expect; for nature's method is one of experimentation; and, depending on her teachings alone man must transgress in order to find out that transgression brings penalty. This involves the practice of sin, which leads to a habit of sinning. We freely admit that the old adage, "Experience is a good teacher" is true, and we also remember the other part, "but the rates of tuition are very high."

STILL ANOTHER FACTOR.

Even though natural teachings were sufficient for the purpose of good morals and religion, only the favored few would be benefited thereby. Even in the midst of Christian civilization and enlightenment, at the present day, when the light of literature and science shines from almost every hilltop and illumines well-nigh every valley, comparatively few people understand, or stop to consider, even the simplest arguments drawn from the material universe.

Only a very small fraction of the great aggregate of humanity have the requisite knowledge, and most of those who *do* possess the knowledge lack inclination or time for such study. Considering all these facts I think it will appear entirely clear to every thoughtful reader, that, so far from a book, revelation being improbable, it is exactly what we should expect.

Do we desire proofs of the divinity of the Bible? They are abundant. Evidences external are so numerous and convincing, as found in miracles wrought and prophecies fulfilled, that the exceeding great wealth of internal evidence seems unnecessary. Look at the prophecies recorded in the Old Testament. Behold their past fulfillment and their present unfolding, and doubt if you can the Divine guidance of the hand that wrote them!

Shrewd guesses were they! Some have so declared, but have utterly failed to substantiate the claim. We grant that any person may announce beforehand an event which is wholly contingent and absolutely unknown to any be-

ing but God, and it may come to pass exactly as predicted. It is a co-incident unless he may have been supernaturally informed, which invalidates the presupposition. But suppose a man foretells an extended series of events, and they come to pass in the exact order, and under the exact circumstances, and at the precise time announced hundreds, or even thousands, of years before. Mere co-incident cannot by any possibility account for these.

Such, substantially, is the putting of the case by one of the brightest men of the age. Now, such proofs that the writers of the Bible were divinely guided are abundant. To instance them would require more space than the proposed size of this volume would warrant. Think of the prophecies concerning the dispersion of the Jews, and the retention of their distinctive characteristics! The fulfillment is going on constantly before the eyes of all nations.

Walk the streets of Chicago, Boston or New York; or even smaller cosmopolitan towns or cities, and you see proof of thousand-year-old utterances. Germans

come to our shores, and in a comparatively few years become Americanized. The Englishman, the Frenchman, the Italian, the Norwegian, lose themselves in the more or less homogeneous mass. The Jew abides, however widely he may wander. He *stays* though he *goes*. He is sui-generis, whether under tropic skies or upon Arctic frosts, on occidental plains or oriental mountains.

Much remains to be fulfilled, but the impregnable fortress of the already fulfilled is a sufficient guarantee for that which remains. Especially does prophecy center in Jesus Christ. And how wonderful the exactness of fulfillment! Minutest details are sometimes given, and minutely were they fulfilled in Him, both in that unique life of service, and that sacrificial death. Count up the Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming One. Over Three Hundred will be found. Some one who claims to have made careful count says, Three Hundred and Thirty-three.

Christ is the center of Old Testament prophecy, as He is of New Testament history. From Genesis Third to Mala-

chi Third, He fills out the historic and prophetic profile. Not only do the Three Hundred and Thirty-three predictions unite in Him, but even the rites and ceremonies find in Him their only interpreter. Nay, historic characters prefigure Him, and historic events are the pictorial illustrations of His vicarious ministry. The Old Testament is a lock of which Christ is the key.

The prophetic plant becomes a burning bush, as twig after twig of prediction flames with fulfillment. The crimson thread runs through the whole Bible. Beginning at any point you may preach Jesus. The profile, at first a drawing without color, a mere outline, is filled in by successive artists, until the life-tints glow on the canvas of the centuries, and the perfect portrait of the Messiah is revealed. "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." He is the summation of all prophecy.

Miracles.

The proof from miracles is equally

conclusive. It is so voluminous that the merest glance is all that is possible in this volume. Many and varied definitions of the word "miracle" have been given. Perhaps the following comes as near meeting the requirements as any. A miracle is a sensible effect requiring supernatural power and performed for a moral purpose. The Scriptures call them powers, signs—wonders. I am speaking now of physical effects—material miracles. Of course the conversion of a soul is a greater work than any physical phenomenon, no matter how wonderful, or beyond the power of any and all human agencies; but, in the agreed-upon acceptation of our present word, all spiritual phenomena are ruled out.

Miracles, as now presented, belong within the domain of sensibility. Some say they are violations of Nature's laws. Not so. The Author of Nature can intervene amidst His own creations when He desires to authenticate His revelations or His messengers, and bring to pass sensible results out of the ordinary course of natural events with-

out reversing Himself, or violating His own laws. Even man can suspend a law of Nature by the exercise of a higher power, or a stronger force. He does so ten thousand times in any day of active life. He catches a falling object. What has happened? He has intervened and suspended the law of gravitation. He splits an apple. What has happened? By human intervention he has overcome the law of cohesion. Surely God can do as much.

Perhaps no objector to miracles has done the enemies of the supernatural better service than Hume. All subsequent deniers of the validity of miracles have copied him. His statement simmers down to about this.

1st. Miracles are contrary to human experience. Major premise.

2nd. It is not contrary to human experience that human testimony should prove false. Minor premise.

3rd. Therefore, miracles cannot be substantiated by human testimony.
Conclusion.

His play upon the words "human testimony" is very shrewd, very "catchy,"

and has caught its thousands. But the bubble is easily punctured. It sounds like logic—1. Major premise. 2. Minor premise. 3. Conclusion. It is only “sound” or “seeming.” Look at the major premise. He assumes the whole question in controversy. The question is, have miracles been experienced? This is the experience after which we are inquiring. He very blandly builds his whole syllogism on the assumption that there has been no such experience.

Thus, by a glance at his major premise the reader can clearly see that his reasoning is without reason, his apparent logic is devoid of logic, and his conclusion without anything from which to conclude. And this is the best that infidels have been able to do. The proof that miracles were wrought, “miracles” in the fullest meaning of the word, were wrought by Christ in attestation of the truths He taught and the revelation He made of Himself, and commissioned others to make of the plan of salvation, are so numerous and convincing that the combined efforts of men of no faith and men of half faith, have been utter-

ly unable to weaken, much less destroy them.

To crown all the others we have the miracle of Christ's resurrection, witnessed to by such irrefragable testimony, that all the attacks made upon it have only strengthened its hold on the brain of the world. As all other prophecies find their culmination in Him, so all other miracles reach their climax in Him; when, triumphant over death and the grave, He comes forth to mingle with His followers, and give to them abundant evidences of His divinity, and of the absolute validity of every claim made by Him; and commissions them to go and disciple all nations.

The other so-called external evidences I will leave untouched. A few paragraphs must suffice for the presentation of the internal evidences; although volumes might be written without exhausting the subject. The Bible is its own witness. Out of its own page shines unclouded truth. Entire volumes have been written upon the undesigned co-incidences of the Bible. Even its apparent discrepancies become

its invulnerable armor of defense. If the affidavits of four witnesses in court should be taken concerning a series of events continuing through three years, connected with the life of an individual on trial, and should be found to be in the same words, any jury would seriously discount the evidence, although sworn to as eye-witnesses. But if every one of the four affidavits was found to contain all the salient facts, without contradiction, stated in words differing in form and shades of meaning, with many minor facts and circumstances set down in some and omitted in others, and even the chronological order of events differing in some respects in all four, the jury would agree, on the first ballot, that all four men were telling the unvarnished truth.

The Gospel Records bear these *prima-facie* evidences of authenticity. Other portions of the one great whole show equally unmistakable internal proofs. The references to the manners and customs of the people, to their conduct of civil affairs as well as military, are so lucid as to appear positively luminous in their self-evidencing quality.

These circumstantial allusions alone, falling into the narrative so ingenuously, and yet so true to what contemporaneous history, as well as later researches, and the eloquent "finds" of Archaeology teach us; would, in and of themselves, constitute an uncontrovertible proof of the trustworthiness of the writers. Failing to invalidate the proofs, either external or internal, destructive critics have for many years been endeavoring to show that the Bible, as we now have it, is not the Bible of the ancients; that many of the books now put down as canonical are of later origin, and never were written by the authors whose names they bear. But their efforts are vain. The struggles of the destructive critics to silence the "canon" of Scripture are painful. Their warfare upon one another is even more distressful. It would seem that every thoughtful man would conclude that to have forged such writings and foisted them upon the world would have been utterly impossible. Moreover, old manuscripts, dating back almost to Apostolic times, still exist. Some of the

men who wrote them lived amid the scenes which they depict. Old inscriptions on monuments and in tombs, hidden for ages in buried cities, are being constantly unearthed and deciphered, which add their voices to the already abundant testimony to the absolute trustworthiness of the revealed word. Languages have died, systems of philosophy have changed, and scientific treatises have become effete, but the Bible remains; its validity growing more manifest, its glory untarnished, the dew of eternal youth upon its brow, and overflowing life welling out from a thousand primeval springs, making glad the waste places of earth. "The word of God abideth forever."

“The substance of inspiration may be said to be that Scripture is divine in form as well as in content.”—*Banks*.

“Holy Scripture being the book of the records of our religion, our relation thereto is not merely scientific, but also in the highest degree one of moral responsibility. We will not deny the human element with which it is affected, but we will not, with vandalic delight, destroy that which is holy. We will interpret Genesis as theologians, and indeed as Christian theologians; that is, as believers in Jesus Christ Who is the end of all the ways and words of God.”
—*Franz Delitzsch*.

CHAPTER VI.

INSPIRATION.

Having in the last chapter established a fair presumption that a just God would furnish man a book more complete than nature, because such a guide was necessary, not only for religion but even for morality; and having, as the author ventures to assume, clearly shown the divinity of this book, we now proceed to inquire as to its inspiration. Concerning most books we are compelled to inquire as to both their genuineness and authenticity. Doubtless most of my readers understand that a book may be genuine and not authentic. They also know that a book may be authentic and not genuine. Also, that a book may be both genuine and authentic. To be genuine a book must have been written by the one named as the author; and to be authentic it must tell the truth. Manifestly it is possible for either of these conditions to be met without the

other, or both may be fulfilled in one. Many a genuine book, i. e., written by the man named as the author, and under the circumstances under which it claims to have been written, has been found to be full of false statements; hence, not authentic. Many a book containing only the truth has been found to be the work of an entirely different man from the one named as author; hence, although authentic it is not genuine. Now, concerning the Bible, we need only ask, "Is it inspired." For, if it be inspired it is certainly both genuine and authentic. It is not merely a book, it is *the Book*, "Biblos," as though there were no other book. And yet, this is not arrogance, as for example, when some one tailor, in a city where there are numerous tailors, calls himself *the* tailor; for, no other book is worthy to be compared with this one. Mark its marvelous unity! And yet it is made up of sixty-six books written in three different languages, by at least thirty-six different men, of exceedingly varied positions in life, and all grades of education, from lowly fishermen to

the trained physician, and from the mountain shepherd to the skilled logician. They were engaged in the work some sixteen hundred years. Some of the books are prophetic and others historic. Some of them take the form of personal letters and others of poetry. And yet the various parts never contradict one another. There are discrepancies and minor differences, which will be discussed subsequently, but no essential contradictions. The whole sixty-six books, poetry, epistles, prophecy and history, fall into line, and march with amazing unanimity to the goal of all truth. A golden chain, every link of which bears the crimson seal of the covenant made in Eden and consummated on Calvary, binds all into one so completely, and withal so naturally, that even the most violent enemies of orthodox Christianity, and the most destructive critics, are compelled to acknowledge its superiority.

Inspiration.—We say the Bible is inspired. What is meant by this much-used, much-abused, and little understood word? All Christians believe the

Bible to be inspired, but so much dust has been thrown into the air by would-be critics and unwise apologists, and so many words used by controversialists, and even commentators, which obscure rather than elucidate the meaning of this very important word, that multitudes seem to have lost their bearings. Even some preachers in orthodox churches fail to distinguish the difference between the inspiration furnished to Moses and that vouchsafed to the makers of the constitution of the United States; between the Spirit who spake through David, and the muse that touched the heart of Milton, or even James Whitcomb Riley. They seem to miss the fact that "illumination" is not equivalent to inspiration when the latter word is accorded its full content. "Inspiration" equals "illumination" plus a very large factor not found in mere illumination. The Holy Ghost dwelling in every fully saved person is a wondrous enlightener, teacher, and illuminator, but every Christian, even every Christian fully surrendered to the Holy Ghost, is not therefore "inspired"

in the full meaning of this word, however greatly his mind may be quickened, illumined, taught, and however strangely his heart may be warmed. Moreover, God may reveal truth to a man whom He does not inspire. This will appear entirely clear to every reader who distinguishes between mere impartation and impartation plus commission to impart it to others, either by speech or by writing. God revealed many things to many men, in the olden times, to whom He gave no specific orders for communicating them to others. To some He gave both information and inspiration—inbreathing accompanied by direct order to outbreathe the *same*, i. e., holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Doctor Pope's statement concerning this distinction is clear-cut. "Inspiration," distinguished from revelation, denotes the specific agency of the Holy Ghost in the creation and construction of the Holy Scriptures." Another careful writer, Dr. Hodge, puts it as follows: "The effect of revelation was to render its recipient wiser; the effect of inspiration was to

preserve him from error in teaching. Revelation is the act of communicating divine knowledge by the Spirit to the mind. Inspiration is the act of the same spirit controlling those who make the truth known to others." Dr. Lee's statement is as follows: "By inspiration I understand that actuating energy of the Holy Spirit, guided by which the human agents chosen by God have officially proclaimed His will by word of mouth, and have committed to writing the several portions of the Bible." The statement in II Peter 1:2, as given in the revised version, has peculiar force. "No prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." Another passage on which strong reliance is placed by advocates of inspiration is in II Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction in righteousness." Many devout readers of the revised version have felt that the rendering therein given weakens the force of the statement; namely: "Every Scripture inspired of

God is also profitable for doctrine, for reproof for correction in righteousness." But it does not in reality weaken it. On the contrary the force is rather increased, for the fullest rendering according to this revised version is, "Every Scripture, being inspired of God is also profitable for doctrine." By fair inference the great apostle assumes that there would be no question about the *fact* of inspiration, hence this universally assumed fact is simply thrown in by an incomplete parenthesis as a foundation for the statement that every scripture is profitable, not all alike profitable, not all profitable alike for all things, but all profitable. We are specially glad that the Greek bears so nicely the translation "every" instead of "all." The individuality of the various scriptures is thus made to stand out in striking distinctness. The fact remains that the original presents just as strong claims for one version as for the other. Eminent linguists agree that both proclaim the same truth; hence no Christian need be disturbed. The following formal pronouncement of the Presby-

terian General Assembly, after thoroughly examining and weighing all the arguments against the inspiration of the Bible, ought to carry immense weight with all thoughtful readers:

“The Bible as we now have it in its various translations and revisions, when freed from all errors and mistakes of translators, copyists, and printers, is the very word of God, and consequently wholly without error.”

The specious and somewhat catchy phrase, “The Bible *contains* the word of God” has no firm standing ground, save as a very incomplete statement of the great fundamental truth that the Bible *is* the word of God.” Now, as is true with reference to most mooted questions, extreme theories are held concerning the *method* of inspiration.

Extremes are dangerous. As has been variously indicated in preceding pages, all genuinely evangelical Christians believe that “holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,” believe that the writers of both the Old and the New Testaments were so guided and controlled by the Holy

Spirit that they did their work as God desired to have it done. In a word, they believe that the writers and the writings were both inspired. But, as to the *how* of it, who shall tell us? The ultra-liberalists say the writers of the Bible enjoyed only a sort of exalted spiritual fervor, and unusual intellectual uplift, which enabled them to rise above themselves, just as great orators and writers of today sometimes do; but they were equally liable to exaggerate facts and draw erroneous conclusions. The ultra verbalists, or mechanicalists, say that the writers were mere amanuenses; every thought absolutely directed, and every word put down with the precision of a modern linotype machine. Few thinkers of recognized standing in the literary world hold either of these extreme views; but, closely approximating both of them are many men learned and devout. These, however, seem to have fallen into the error of thinking that to the extent that we eliminate the Divine we admit the human, and so far as we shut out the human we welcome the Divine; that is, they regard the two

as mutually exclusive. This error works mischief. So far from these two elements antagonizing each other, they are mutually helpful and co-operative. The human and divine agencies work together. This conception gives us what is sometimes termed the dynamic theory of inspiration. It matters not what we call it. This is the golden mean, the safe middle ground. This view is held by such a vast majority of present-day scholars, and has been so generally held by the greatest minds and ripest hearts of past years, and is in such perfect accord with all ascertained facts, that it is worthy of the acceptance of every man, until he shall have proven it false or shown us a better theory. Those extremists who are disposed to minimize the divine element in the written word in order to give fuller place for the human element, or *vice versa*, may do well to consider the following:

“Jesus was the God-man, truly human, truly divine. Who will venture to minimize either one of these two co-existing, co-ordinate, absolutely perfect natures? The Bible is a divine-human

book, God-made, man-made. It is for man and through man. It came from God, and bears throughout its entire sixty-six parts the unmistakable insignia of its origin; and yet, from Genesis to Revelation the "Marks of the molds" may be clearly seen. Let him who has the temerity to subtract from either the divine or the human in the Logos attempt the same upon the Biblos. There has been a large crop of hastily grown scholars in recent years, who are endeavoring to do both; but, surely no devout, open-visioned Christian should be found consorting with such. This dynamical theory exalts faith and satisfies reason, her highest corollary. The two walk arm in arm up the shining way of truth, the infallible word their unfailing guide."

“Conscience, quickened by the law of God, has to look at death, and because alive to its *divine* meaning, not to its physical antecedents. What is God’s voice in death to a spiritual being? It is what the apostle represents it—death is the wages of sin. It is that in which the divine judgment of sin comes home to conscience.”—*Denney*.

“Now if I do that I would not it is no more I that do it but sin that dwelleth in me.....O wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from this body of death?”—*Paul*.

“It is not said anywhere expressly that God is reconciled to us, but that we are reconciled to God, and the sole reason thereof is because He is the party offended, and we are the parties offending. Now the party offending is always said to be reconciled to the party offended, and not on the contrary.”—*Owen*.

CHAPTER VII.

SIN AND PERIL.

I. Sin is a fact. It is here. God is not the author of it. The method of its getting into existence has been variously explained. Some charge it up to bad angels. Some lay it to Satan. Some put the blame on Mother Eve. Before we can accept the theory of the first class, they must tell us who made the bad angels. If the second class would establish their theory, they must answer the question, Who created the devil? In order to agree with the third party we need to be satisfied as to the whence and wherefore of Eve's power to sin. Perhaps no man can answer these questions in a manner satisfactory to all other men, however completely he may satisfy himself. Nor is it necessary that they *should* be answered. Sufficient for us that God in His infinite wisdom knew that in order to a real personality there must be alternative power, the power to

choose between right and wrong; and He preferred to create man a *person* rather than a *machine*, however perfect. This power of choice, given of God, resulted in disobedience and all subsequent sin, and yet the author of the full power of personality was not the author of the exercise of that power, or sin. Theorizing and argument may be interesting, and are often helpful. But the fact of sin and its remedy are what vitally concern every human being, who has come to years of accountability. That humanity is not perfect is manifest to all. Society is sick, smitten with a loathsome disease. Something has fallen into the wheels of the moral universe and set all the machinery ajar. If you see a locomotive lying on end, half buried in the debris of its own wrecking, you do not need to be told that something has gone wrong. It is not answering the end of its making. When you see a man lying in the physical, mental, and moral condition, which characterizes multitudes of the human family, you do not need even the Bible to tell you that something has gone

wrong, that he is not answering the end of his creation. The fact of sin, in and of itself, would establish the fact of law and a lawgiver; even if not so conclusively proven otherwise. Non-conformity to law is the very essence of sin. Wilful non-conformity to God's law is sin against God, whether it be in conduct or in character. Let the reader note carefully that I say "wilful non-conformity"; for, necessitated non-conformity is not sin in the real sense of the word. There may be a vast difference between *innocence* and *right*, and a difference equally vast between *guilt* and *wrong*, in the true concrete, everyday meaning of the terms, no matter how we may split hairs concerning them, when viewed in the abstract. Practically the right or wrong of an action hinges upon its relation to the will of God, whatever may be the dictum of theoretical ethics. Not so the question of innocence or guilt. This is determined by the motive, or intention, of the doer. In a word, the moral quality of an action is not in the overt act. Previous to the overt act there must

have been in the mind of the doer an image, or conception, of the act. But it is not in this second part that the moral quality resides, for this is merely the action existing as a conception awaiting actualization. Nor can we discover this moral quality, for which we are seeking, even in the determination to do the act, if we look upon the determination simply as a resolve to do it as a mere action, without reference to the effect. But when we trace the overt act back thus through the mental image, and the determination to materialize it, to the *purpose* of the determination, here we find the moral quality which we denominate good or bad. No matter what the outward action, as far as the *moral* quality of the actor is concerned; but, what was his intent? An illustration may serve to more clearly bring out my meaning. Let us suppose:

First. A man resolves to build a fire (here we have the purpose formed).

Second. His mind creates an image of the fire (here we have the conception of the act).

Third. He kindles the fire, and it

burns as expected. (Here is the overt act).

But, thus far no reader can decide what quality of moral action I am supposing. He needs to know the motive of the kindling. Let him shut this book, without looking any further, and he will remain in complete ignorance of the moral quality of the supposed case. But when he reads on, and finds me saying that I have in mind a man resolving to burn his neighbor's barn, and actually kindling the fire to carry out that purpose, he at once says, "The action was bad." Had it been that he was building a fire to warm some poor suffering person, the same reader would have just as quickly said, "The action was good."

Again some actions have no moral character. Men injure one another in various ways, maim and sometimes kill them, without any moral desert entering into their actions.

Another illustration may serve to make this more clear. I look out of my study window and see a man walking through a blinding snowstorm. No

question arises as to the moral quality of the walking. But suppose some one says to me, "That man has just heard of a family a mile away, who are in great need, and he is carrying them food and money." At once something within me says, "What a good deed"! The storm is no worse than it was before my friend informed me of the facts, and the man does not walk any differently, but now my whole nature goes out toward the kind-hearted, unselfish man, who will face such a storm to give his food and money to strangers in need. Further—in order that an action shall possess moral character the actor must not only have the self-originating power of action, but he must be entirely free to *act*, or *not* to act. Moreover, he must understand the nature of the act to such an extent, that a feeling of "ought" or "ought not" enters into his mind. Moral results will inevitably follow such an action, and also natural results. We hold that every really sinful action, from the earliest to the latest, had in it these elements. Man has tendencies to evil, but he is not compelled

to follow them. He has the power to say *no* to Satan. If he does not say it he is guilty. He has also the power to say *yes* to God. If he does *not* say it he is guilty. Through ignorance he does many things contrary to the will of God; but, knowing it not he has no feeling of "ought not," and, although the natural results of his transgression will follow, he is not "guilty" in the true sense of that word. This makes room for shielding feeble-minded people and children behind the sinful nature inherited from Adam. But no others need apply, for every normal mind, of sufficient maturity to feel the full force of obligation to God, is under no necessity to sin, in the true sense of sinning; for, although by reason of the fall the race is very far gone from original righteousness, man still has intelligence, power, will, and good desire, sufficient to enable him to make use of the help provided and rise instead of falling further. Some have held and do now hold, and insisently teach, that man is totally depraved, and they torture the Scriptures into putting the extremest

meaning upon this and kindred expressions. They seem to forget that man cannot be even seriously *thought* of, much less *analyzed*, as to character and moral desert, apart from the grace of God; which grace was vouchsafed to our first parents by promise, and has been freely extended to all men ever since. God, by His grace thus freely given to every man, is *in* every man, a quickener of natural deadness, an enlightener of his moral blindness, and an invigorator of his weakened will. Hence, in the true view, he is not totally depraved but possesses many recuperative factors.

A. What, then, really came to man through Adam's fall?

a. Was Adam's sin my sin, and the sin of every sinner who has ever lived? It would scarcely seem possible that thoughtful, clear visioned men, could seriously entertain such a question. And yet many good men answer yes. Not merely "good men," but scholarly men answer yes, and set up voluminous defenses of their affirmation. This is another striking instance of the fatal

and far-reaching errors into which pre-conceived theories will carry even conservative thinkers. There is no mistaking their meaning, for they call their theory the "identity" theory. Adam was the race. In him inhered the moral qualities of every subsequent individual. Had it not been championed by many master minds in the past, and did it not still linger to trouble multitudes of devout souls, we might consider it too absurd to need more than a rhetorical question, and plain statement to satisfy reasonable minds of its folly. Its advocates are extreme fatalists in morals, and have wrought endless mischief in many quarters. Every argument that proves the falsity of materialistic fatalism may be turned against this wretched theory; hence we need not give it more attention here.

b. Did Adam so absolutely stand for, or represent, the race, that all men are fully responsible for his acts?

Many learned and devout men have answered "yes." Their theory is called "*representation.*" If they had not been both intelligent *and* pious they would

certainly have been considered irreverent, or even profane. For, the plain English of such a theory, stripped of all superfluous words, is that the actions of a man who lived thousands of years ago, settled my destiny for all eternity, and that this is in accord with God's plan. As has been said, "According to this theory Adam acts *for* the race; *his* acts are *their* acts, and the results of his action accrue to the race. Also Christ acts for the elect. *His* acts are *their* acts and the results of his acts accrue to them. Hence it follows, as a matter of course, that man's only probation began and ended in the garden. No member of the human family ever *had, has, or can* have another probation. All fell in Adam. All were doomed to eternal death because of his transgression. Then, in the covenant of grace, it was promised on the part of God, on condition of Christ's obedience unto death, "That His elected people should have eternal life. Their salvation from death eternal, and elevation to eternal life, was made dependent not at all on anything that *they* should *be* or *do*, but

wholly on the active and passive righteousness of Christ. No son or daughter of the first pair has any part in either his destruction or salvation. Those who are lost were lost in Adam, and those saved saved in Christ. The lost were doomed to the necessity of sinning, and the saved were elected to the necessity of repenting, believing and loving. They were elected to faith, to holiness, and to salvation. The covenant of works and the covenant of grace covered the whole ground. The one was commenced and consummated in Eden, the other on Calvary. Adam and Christ are the only responsibly active agents in the whole matter.”

We had hoped that one great branch of the Calvinistic family of churches had gotten rid of this theory, but conservatism still holds sway, and the representation theory remains the written dogma.

Abettors of this doctrine endeavor to relieve it of its most frightful aspects, by saying that God *thinks* of every man as actually guilty of the sin of Adam. But, in all reverence, I sub-

mit that to suspect any school boy of thinking as far from the manifest facts on any subject, as they charge God with thinking on this subject, would be insulting to the boy's reasoning faculties. Much confusion has arisen here as elsewhere because of failure to distinguish between *consequences* and *punishments*. Consequences of consumptive parentage come to children. Consequences of parental profligacy come to children. Are weak lungs and poverty, therefore, to be construed as punishments? Even so moral characteristics are being constantly transmitted. The children suffer the consequences; but who is unwise enough to really think God is punishing the children for parental iniquity? Surely no one, unless he is suffering from the bias of early training—suffering the "*consequences*" of inherited tradition or early implanted error. True, the Bible says, "The iniquities of the fathers shall be visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation," but this is simply the declaration of a *fact*, the affirmation of a universal law, and only rash advocates of

a weak cause would undertake to torture it into a threatened punishment of the children for their fathers' sins.

II. Sin has brought peril. What is this peril? The Scripture tells us it is death. By this term we understand them to mean "eternal death;" for, although physical death, as we know it, came by sin, *the death par eminence*, which "passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," is soul death. This spiritual death, as far as it is experienced during *this* life, in alienation from God, and the smiting and agony of remorse, in that deadness in trespasses and sins so strikingly depicted by St. Paul, is only a faint foreshadowing of eternal death. What then, *is* eternal death? Theorizing amounts to nothing in endeavoring to answer this question. Rationalism has no reply. Revelation is the only source of information worthy of notice. We there learn that the lost shall be banished forever from the presence of God and the angels. This involves the loss of an infinite good. We learn further that the lost shall be in endless and immeasurable woe. Com-

plete details are not given, although language seems to have been exhausted in endeavoring to find words to adequately express the extent and intensity of that suffering. Manifestly the full meaning of eternal death is beyond human conception; and far more manifestly is it entirely beyond the possibility of expression. This being true the peril of sin is inconceivably great.

Several very plausible methods of subtracting from this peril have been suggested.

First. *Restorationism.*

Its advocates hold that sooner or later every alienated soul will be restored to Divine favor, and enjoy Heaven through all eternity. They undertake, by a kind of very irrational rationalizing to establish this position; for, unfortunately for them, their theory has no scripture foundation on which to base their arguments. They say that most men have very limited opportunities in this life for becoming fit for heaven; therefore it must be that they will have another and a better chance hereafter. The

conclusion does not logically, or legitimately, follow the premise. But, suppose we thus grant the possibility of a "second probation," merely for the sake of their argument, and it will be plainly seen that the restorationists have not strengthened their position; for, a state of probation cannot be one of compulsion, therefore any man who had sinned away the first chance might sin away a second, and a third, and a fortieth or a millionth. If you say "He will *surely* reform *sometime*," we reply, "Nay, you cannot consistently say '*surely*,'" unless you bring in compulsion, which contradicts the very terms used. Restorationism, or second probation, at its best estate is altogether unsubstantial. Both scripture proof and analogical argument are squarely against it. Much has been made of the fact that the Greek word "aionios," (used by our Lord in Matt. 18:8, and 25:41-46, and translated "everlasting" in the authorized and "eternal" in the revised version), literally means "age-long," but an examination of the twenty-five places in which it is used in the New

Testament reveals the fact that it is twice used of the Gospel covenant, once of the consolation brought to us by the Gospel, twice of God's own being, four times of the future of the wicked, and fifteen times of the present and future life of the believer. No one thinks of limiting its duration in the first four cases, and in the last; why, then, do so in the other one? The dilemma becomes acute in considering the words of our Lord recorded in Matt. 25:46, where precisely the same word is used concerning the duration of the reward of the righteous and the retribution of the wicked; for, only by violent perversion and distortion can the same word, in the same sentence, possess a different signification. It is certainly somewhat illogical for those who make so much of the love of God to argue that punishment will prove remedial hereafter in the case of those whom Divine Love has failed to influence here. Not only is there not the slightest hint in the teaching of our Lord that future punishment will prove remedial, or corrective, but His words concerning Ju-

das are inexplicable on that supposition. (Matt. 26:24). The doctrine of universal restoration springs from a natural desire to wish the history of mankind to have a happy ending, as in most story-books; but it ignores the fact that by granting man free will God has set a boundary to His own omnipotence; for, it is a moral impossibility to save a man against his will. Surely eternal sin can only be followed by eternal retribution! for, if a man deliberately chooses to be ruled by sin he must inevitably be ruined by it. Not only is there no vestige of foundation in our Lord's words for the doctrine of Universalism, there is also no shadow of a suggestion of any restoration of the wicked hereafter. So far from this being the case the parable of the rich man and Lazarus rings the death-knell of any such hope. Abraham is there represented as saying to Dives: "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they which would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us." (Luke 16:26). Only a parable,

but intended to teach truth. The whole drift of Christ's teaching confirms what we learn from these isolated passages; that future retribution is not merely an incidental but a fundamental part of the Gospel message. It is the dark background on which its loving invitations and tender expostulations are presented, and the Gospel message loses much of its force when this doctrine is left out. But, worst of all, the earnest exhortations to immediate repentance and faith lose their urgency if the ultimate result will be the same in case those duties are postponed beyond the present life. Is it seriously contended that Judas will eventually be as John, Nero as Paul, Ananias and Sapphira as Priscilla and Aquila? Ruskin well terms the denial of hell "the most dangerous, because the most attractive form of modern infidelity." But is it so modern? Is it not an echo of the devil's insinuating doubt, which led to the fall of man?

Restorationism is so pleasing to the procrastinating human heart, that it has a large and increasing following.

The shadowy hope of a second probation is lulling many unconverted men into spiritual slumber, and causing the fires of religious zeal to burn low upon the altars of many Christian hearts. We have more to fear from this than from any other false ism now afloat.

The following sturdy statements by Spurgeon are in point here: "When a man gets to cutting down sin, paring down depravity, and making little of future punishment, let him no longer preach to you. Some modern divines whittle away the Gospel to the small end of nothing. They bring down salvation to mere salvability, make certainties into probabilities, and treat verities as mere opinions. As for me I believe in the colossal; a need as deep as hell and grace as high as Heaven. I believe in a pit that is bottomless and a heaven that is topless. I believe in an infinite God and an infinite atonement." This depth of conviction and solid hold on the fundamental verities was a large factor in making Spurgeon great.

Second. *Universalism.*

The advocates of this once popular, but now waning ism, hold that there is no punishment at all after death, nor any state of trial. Every account is squared in this life. They profess to thus exalt the goodness of God. They claim that inasmuch as Christ died for all His death absolutely *insures* salvation to all. The reader will very readily see that this theory makes all the entreaties and warnings of the Bible either meaningless or insincere. According to this ism Jesus Christ Himself warned of peril when there was none, entreated men to flee the wrath to come when there was no such wrath from which to flee. If the life and death of Christ absolutely secured, made certain, the salvation of everybody, the scriptures are either a riddle or a sham, or a mixture of both; for they fairly groan with descriptions of the condition of those who die in their sins, and throb with exhortations to escape the deplorable consequences of final doom. So familiar are these

scripture passages to all who will read this book, that there is no occasion for quoting them. That Universalism is simply a good-natured, mild-mannered, kindly wish, built upon the shifting sands of sheerest folly, is clearly apparent to every unbiased reader of the Bible.

Third. *Annihilation.*

It would seem scarcely possible that any normal mind could believe in annihilation. And yet there are some who *claim* thus to believe, and believing thus, to find a great relief from the orthodox view of the eternal state of the finally impenitent. Perhaps it *would* relieve the situation, and mitigate the exceeding peril of sin, if we could be assured that those who were unfit for heaven at death would pass entirely out of existence. But, not only is there no scripture to support such a theory, but every analogy of nature and scores of very plain passages join to overthrow it. Not only so, but it is positively repugnant to the fundamental intuitions of the mind itself. Belief in immor-

tality is inborn, inheres in the very constitution of man's nature; hence, only when a man becomes abnormal can he by any possibility believe in the annihilation of *any* human being.

All these and all other attempts to subtract from the infinite peril of sin are utter failures. The way of escape will be presented in the next chapter.

“Justification is not the remission of sins alone, but also the renewal of the inner man by voluntary reception of the grace and gifts, by which man from unrighteous becomes righteous, and from being an enemy becomes a friend, that he may be an heir according to the hope of eternal life, by the righteousness of God by which He makes us righteous.”—*Miner*.

“It is a philosophical as well as scriptural truth that if Christ can save from sin at all He can save from *all* sin. He can sanctify His people wholly, in body, soul and spirit. He redeems such as trust in Him from all iniquity, fills them with all the fulness of God, keeps them from falling, and presents them faultless before His presence in glory with exceeding joy.”—*Potts*.

“’Tis done, Thou dost this moment save,
With full salvation bless;
Redemption through Thy blood I have,
And spotless love and peace.”

—*Wesley*.

CHAPTER VIII.

SALVATION.

Having discussed sin and its peril, in the last chapter, we now seek a view of the remedy. Just as certainly as men feel themselves sinners do they feel the need of deliverance from the peril of sinning. The fundamental principles of the moral law are so plain that the clear thinking mind cannot mistake their meaning. Any man may train himself to disregard those principles, but in his more serious moments he feels and knows that God's authority is infinite, and violation of His law is an infinite evil, from which no mere human power can save him. Hence he finds within himself exactly what the Word declares, "A certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." So universal is this feeling that no nation, in any age, has been found that *has not* been and is not *now*, crying out for a

saviour. Groping through the thick darkness of error and superstition they have formed many, and sometimes grotesque, mental images, and have given to them a multiplicity of names; but any one of them carefully analyzed indicates a heart-cry for help—for a deliverer, a daysman, a Being who can give peace of conscience. If the reader has not already done so, let him read "Christ and other Masters," by Hardwick, or "Ten Great Religions," by Clark, and he will find an almost mind-wearying array of proofs, both positive and inferential, of this fact. The entire human family, under a sense of having wronged the Author of their being, and thus having become estranged, alienated, thrown out of harmony, desire to come into harmony—get upon friendly relations again. One of the most explanatory definitions of conversion is "coming into harmony with God." Reconciliation is the most common word used to express this felt need. the word "atonement" is used but once. This, however, makes no essential difference; for in every passage but one,

the original is the same in root meaning; namely, a bringing again into a state of friendship. How was this to be made possible? How could a holy God let sin go unpunished? This has been *the* question of the ages. Many answers have been attempted. All have failed except the scripture answer. God gave His Son "that He might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." A few brief statements concerning some of these erroneous theories of pardon may prove helpful to those of my resaders who have not been accustomed to investigating these doctrinal questions.

First. *Pardon Impossible.*

Some argue that pardon is utterly impossible, under such a system of government as Theism teaches. Analogy supports their argument; for, the reason executives are given power to pardon criminals is for the purpose of providing a way out, when errors have been committed, or unforeseen circumstances have changed the case. But our omnipotent and all-wise Ruler can

neither make mistakes nor find out new facts; hence, say they, "There is not, and needs not be, any occasion for changing any verdict." The argument is sound; and, as has been shown in a former chapter, pardon cannot be clearly made out by the light of mere natural religion, and rationalistic procedure. But we are not left to these. Revelation adds her voice unmistakably declaring the possibility of pardon.

Second. *Pardon by Prerogative.*

Other theorizers go to the extreme of saying that, God, being infinite in power, can do as He pleases; and, being infinite in love, He will certainly "please" to forgive everybody, and treat the worst man as well as the best man." These extremists have neither scripture nor reason, logic nor common sense, in their favor. Any sane man can see that this plan introduced into mundane affairs, would soon demoralize all government, degrade all law, revolutionize society, and introduce anarchy. The same dire results would accrue at the court of heaven under this system;

hence, no further words are necessary for its refutation.

Third. *Pardon on mere repentance.*

A very respectable number of thoughtful persons claim that the only antecedent condition necessary to pardon is repentance. They seem to have forgotten that the relation existing between God and the transgressor is not the same as the relation existing between private individuals. If that were the case it might be sufficient for the transgressor to say, "I am sorry, please forgive me." If the manner and voice indicated perfect sincerity pardon would very properly be freely granted. But such is not the case; such is not the relation between God and the sinner. God is a great ruler. Under Him are millions of responsible beings, endowed with free will. His relation to them is not merely personal but governmental. To grant pardon merely on condition of repentance would come at last to the virtual nullification of all law and government; for, every culprit would be sorry sooner or later, even though not

until he heard the clang of prison doors, or felt the pinch of the noose, or presence of the electric chair. It avails nothing for the advocates of this theory to reply, "We mean genuine sorrow on account of sin itself, not mere regret on account of the consequences of sin." For, this sort of repentance is impossible to man in sin unless the grace of God through the merits and sufferings of Christ moves him thereto. Godly sorrow on account of sin is unknown, aside from the gifts and calling of God unto repentance, by and through the infinite merits of the Crucified One.

Fourth. The True Theory.

The only true theory of salvation is that which makes Christ's death an absolutely necessary antecedent of pardon. There are many ways of explaining the *how* of it, and the *extent* of it; but all evangelical Christians stand on common ground as to the necessity of the all-atoning sacrifice. "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission." "I am God, and beside me there is no Saviour." Had it been possible

to satisfy the requirements for pardon and salvation in any other way, or by the sacrifice of any less a being than the Son of God, reason would have forbidden the thought of Christ's death. Even Jesus Himself cried out in that supreme garden agony, "Oh my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." But it was *not* possible. This fact fully establishes the vital connection existing between the death of Christ and the salvation of the sinner. We should greatly enjoy knowing exactly what this connection is, but inspiration has not definitely informed us, and nothing less than Divine knowledge will suffice in this matter. And yet, although absolute certainty cannot be reached, we think the Bible furnishes light sufficient for all unbiased readers. Very poor reasoners are they who claim that because we cannot explain the philosophy of the fact we have no rational ground for believing the fact. The ordinary operations of the human mind are beyond the possibility of a complete explanation; yes, many of the phenomena, even in the material world,

baffle the most advanced science when it comes to a demand for exhaustive analysis. How great, then, appears the folly of refusing to accept a plain statement of scripture concerning one of the greatest mysteries in the plan of salvation, simply because a complete explanation has not been vouchsafed by Jehovah, and is not possible to man. Sometimes the approach to a clear understanding of a confessedly difficult problem may be greatly simplified by considering some of the inadequate, or positively erroneous, attempted solutions.

The Problem.

How did the death of Christ make the pardon of sin possible?

First. The first erroneous answer is found in the "moral influence" theory. Those who take this view of the atonement claim that the central and all-sufficient reason for the sufferings and death of Jesus was to so move upon the affectional nature of man that he would be constrained to turn from sin to holiness, because of uncontrollable love

for such a self-sacrificing Christ. This is a most plausible theory, and has won multitudes of advocates, and called forth the most captivating and comforting treatises, the most flowery eloquence, and the sweetest poetry. It is exceedingly agreeable to the sensibilities, and readily wins over the will against all the protests of the intellect. The sublime and gracious fact of the wonderful influence of even an inadequate realization of Christ's sufferings, upon the heart of the awakened sinner, which the abettors of this theory hold forth as the whole of the atonement, is gladly accepted by us, who hold to the true solution; but we know assuredly that their view is only partial, that the moral influence theory is entirely inadequate. We can accord full value to the part without accepting it as the whole; for, axiomatic certainty supports us in the contention, that the whole is greater than any of the parts. As a matter of fact this moral influence theory *subtracts from*, instead of *adding to* the "appeal of love." Instead of enhancing the emotional element it

relegates it to a subordinate place. The appeal that reaches the coldest hearts to bring contrition, and the warmest hearts to thrill them with unutterable love and joy, is the presentation of a love that was infinite, manifested by an infinite Christ, dying on the cross as the sole, the only possible sacrifice for sin that was absolutely incurable by any other means. Moreover, the plainest passages of scripture are fatal to this theory. A few of these may serve the reader as reminders of many.

“The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many.” “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” “Whom God sent forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood.” “Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” “God sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins.” “Him that knew no sin He made to be sin on our

behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

This word “propitiation” is a term of striking significance. The plain teaching of scripture proves it to have a two-fold aspect. It looks God-ward as well as man-ward. Needless is it for objectors to affect surprise, that we should think God “needed to be propitiated.” God says so by the mouth of the holy men of old through whom He spoke. At-one-ment and reconciliation are kindred terms. “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself” and Himself unto the world. True, God loved the sinner before Christ died. But, viewing His relation to the sinner in its legal phase, we see that He could not be reconciled to man without the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ.

Second. The second erroneous answer is the extreme opposite of this moral sacrifice theory, namely: It satisfied retributive justice by fully meeting its “claims.” According to this theory retributive justice, under the divine law demands exactly what is due. Penalty must be inflicted. Not to inflict it

would be to abdicate His throne. Pound for pound, ounce for ounce, grain for grain, every atom must be meted out, and it *was* meted out upon Christ. He bore our sins in His own body on the tree, in the sense that the penalty of each and every sin, of each and every human being, was atom for atom laid upon Him. The theory seems to have scripture support, but it is *only seeming*. This is that "man of straw," set up by unwise apologists for the atonement, which can be so easily demolished by infidels, who then imagine that they have invalidated the whole doctrine; and, with its demolition, have destroyed the very foundations of the Christian system. It seems a pity that good men, lovers of the Triune God, and enthusiastic champions of Christianity, should ever have adopted such errors, and thus put upon the atonement a needless burden, and one impossible to be borne. If it were true that precisely the punishment due must be inflicted, all thought of vicariousness must be given up; for, in that case it must needs be inflicted upon precisely the deserv-

ing one. This manifest necessity of thought defeats all substitution, and entirely invalidates the reasoning of the strongest champions of their own position. And yet, advocates of this answer are *the* men of all others who hold to substitution in its strictest sense, namely, a substituted penalty, which is error, instead of a substitute *for* a penalty, which is truth; for that is just what Christ *was*, a substitute *for* penalty. The weakness of this answer is further and more plainly seen when we consider that, according to it, Christ met *all* the demands of justice to the uttermost farthing, even as in a commercial transaction; hence, every sinner *is* and *must* be, cannot help himself from being, *saved*. The abettors of this theory undertake to break the force of this conclusion by affirming that the merits of Christ's death are applied only to the elect. But this is in plain contradiction of scripture, in the interest of a theory, and cannot stand.

Third. The true answer is—

Christ's death vindicated God's justice by satisfactorily declaring His

righteousness, and securing the welfare of men and the glory of God. By this it made pardon possible without subverting the order of the moral universe and dethroning Jehovah; both of which must have inevitably resulted, without such satisfactory declaration by the death of the God-man. This theory of the how of the atonement is fully supported in that matchless argument of the great apostle at Romans 3:24-26. "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God, to declare, I say, at this time, His righteousness; that He might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." This meets the requirements of the case, but neither a moral influence theory at one extreme, or a "substituted penalty" theory at the other extreme can. The sinner is guilty. He did the deed. He was accountable. He deserves to suffer. Did the death of

Christ undo the deed? Of course not. Did the death of Christ take away the doer's accountability? Certainly not. To ask these questions is to answer them with a universal negative. Does the death of Christ change the sinner's deserts? An equally emphatic "No" rises spontaneously in every thoughtful mind. What, then, *does* the death of Christ do? It so declares God's righteousness as to make it legitimate for God to remit the penalty.

Again we emphasize the central fact, that the Divine sacrifice was not the penalty, but took the place of penalty, was substituted *for* penalty. It satisfies justice by securing its ends, not by handing over the counter a million dollars in gold to pay a hundred million debts of one penny each. Keep ever in mind the brief putting of the case made possible by emphasizing the "ed" on the word substituted and much haziness will be dispelled. The death of Christ was a substitute *for* a penalty, not a substituted penalty.

Answering those who object to

all substitutionary theories of atonement a recent trenchant writer says: "It is said by them that the 'doctrine of substitution' supposes that which is impossible. Guilt cannot be transferred from one person to another. Punishment and penalty cannot be transferred from a guilty person to an innocent one. An innocent person may be *charged* with sin, but *if* innocent he will be innocent still, and not guilty. An innocent person may suffer, but *if* innocent his suffering will not be penalty." Such is the objection. The Christian world in believing that a substitutionary atonement has been made by Christ, believes, say these objectors, a thing which is contrary to the necessary laws of thought. The reader will observe that this objection has to do wholly with the definitions of the words 'guilt' and 'punishment' and 'penalty.' It is, perhaps, worthy of the serious attention of the theologian who wishes to keep his terms "free from offense"; but it has no force beyond the sphere of verbal criticism. It is true that guilt, in the sense of personal

blameworthiness, cannot be transferred from the wrong-doer to the well-doer. It is true that punishment, in the sense of penalty inflicted for personal blameworthiness, cannot be transferred from the wrong-doer to the well-doer. This is no discovery, and it is maintained as earnestly by those who believe in a substitutional atonement, as by those who deny it. Let us use other words, if these are not clear, but let us hold fast the truth which they were once used to express. The world is so constituted that it bears the idea of substitution engraved upon its very heart. No man, or woman, or child, escapes from suffering inflicted for the faults of others. In thousands of instances these substitutionary sufferings are assumed voluntarily, and are useful. If, now, we shall teach that Christ suffered in order to deliver us from suffering which we richly deserve, we shall avoid all strife about words, and shall maintain that coming into the world as a member of our race He suffered to the utmost, by subjecting Himself to the common rule of vicarious suffering, in-

stituted by God in the formation of human society bound together by ties of sympathy and love, and existing in daily operation from the dawn of history till the present time. Thus, if Christ suffered in order to deliver us from sufferings which we richly deserved, it was also in order to deliver us from sin by reason of which we deserved them. "He was manifested to take away our sins." "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

A further fact.

No mere human suffering could meet the conditions. A most mischievous error is abroad, in even orthodox churches, in the form of an undefined, though oft-repeated sentiment, that God cannot suffer; hence, only the human nature of the Master could suffer. This dreamy sort of theory which "mildly mouths" about the "Divine passivity" is closely related to that absolutism which denies all personality to God. How any unbiased reader of the Bible can become possessed of any such notion, or allow such a notion to pos-

sess him, is beyond the writer's comprehension. "And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart." "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." "God is angry with the wicked every day." "Who knoweth the power of Thine anger?" These and multitudes of other scriptures utterly destroy all sane belief in the passivity of God, showing as they do that He grieves and rejoices, feels complaisance and indignation, suffers and has pleasure. This innocent looking theory, leading to the notion that only the human nature of Jesus suffered in Gethsemane and on the cross, emasculates our faith, and robs Gethsemane of its meaning and Calvary of its glory. Nay, *Nay!* More than the humanity of Jesus suffered on the cross. The divine and human constituted one person, a Theanthropic person, "theos"—God, "anthropos"—man—the God-man, and He suffered, "the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." No man can explain *how* God can suffer; but, once more the reader is reminded of the fact that failure to explain the "*how*" of any phe-

nomenon does not involve a denial of its actuality. Inasmuch as the Scriptures plainly teach that God does both rejoice and suffer grief, which, I think, is manifest to all, there is no reason in logic or revelation for refusing to accept Christ on the cross, and in Gethsemane and the wilderness, as well as at the tomb of Lazarus, or on the Mount of Transfiguration. Accepting Him thus He becomes a Divine, all efficacious Saviour, making universal atonement for all men. Many of the results of this all-sufficient sacrifice come to all men alike. Personal existence, infant salvation, and possibility of pardon, belong to those unconditional benefits. Other results depend upon the man's own will, and come only to those who meet the conditions. These include justification, regeneration, witness of the spirit, sanctification, and final triumph; all of which are made possible, and are freely offered to every child of Adam.

This is the Great Salvation.

May God grant that every reader of this book may enjoy full salvation here and eternal glory hereafter.