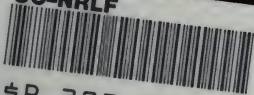


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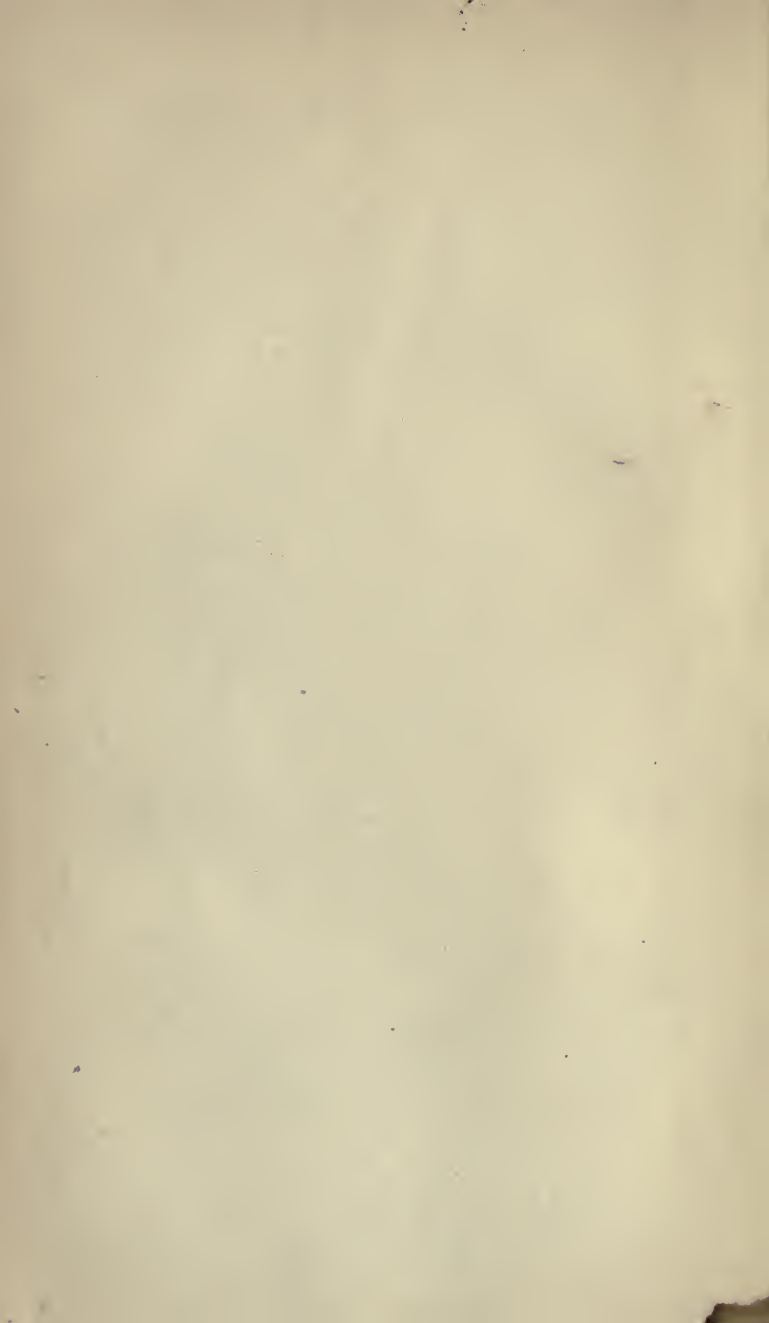
Ivar Tidestrom

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THE BIBLE:

*ITS TRUE CHARACTER AND SPIRITUAL
MEANING.*

BY

Compliments of

REV. L. P. MERCER,

UNION SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH, CHICAGO.

Without a Parable spake He not unto them.—MATT. XIII, 34.



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PREFACE.

The object of these Lectures is to present the teaching of Swedenborg concerning the Sacred Scriptures, in a form likely to reach those who might otherwise remain in ignorance of it; and for this purpose I have used whatever in the collateral writings of the New Church I have found available for argument or illustration. Whatever has thus been assimilated into the scheme and purpose of this presentation, I of course make myself responsible for; but if credit is to be given, I wish to say it very likely belongs to others. It is only fair to add, that the Lectures, delivered from time to time, which have appeared in the *Chicago Times*, called forth expressions of interest from various sources, which suggested the probable usefulness of printing them in this present form.

L. P. M.

CHICAGO, *Advent*, 1879.



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TRUE CHARACTER OF THE BIBLE.



THE BIBLE.

I.

A BOOK OF DIVINE PARABLES.

Without a parable spake he not unto them.—Matt. xiii: 34.

A parable involves two distinct series of ideas; one pertaining to principles, the other to persons and things. The power of the parable lies in this, that its distinct series of ideas are related as man's faculties of abstract and sensuous thought are related. It is a series of spiritual ideas clothed in a series of natural incidents, which by their dramatic force fix the interest and enlist the sympathies, and yield their inner meaning in the ratio of man's ascending thought. As the mind is indrawn from sensuous to spiritual thought, the narrative loses its incidental character, and becomes simply the mirror in which is presented the image of spiritual principles and their relations. The distinctness of this image will be

in the ratio of man's growing wisdom; and meanwhile the picture itself is vivified by the principle personified or the truth embodied. Thus it is that the parable speaks at once to the child and the philosopher; and as the individual ascends the steps of maturer wisdom its meaning opens to his expanding consciousness. The divine parable of the Prodigal is to the child, who hears it first at his mother's knee, a simple story, presenting a vivid picture of personal history; the youth learns to regard it as history teaching by example; the man perceives that the historical form is only an investiture assumed for the purpose of illustration; and yet, throughout this process, the spiritual interest of the story is developing in clearness, till finally the image of the fatherhood, forgiveness and providence of Divine love, which was not wholly absent from the child's first impressions, becomes supreme to the man's thought.

Now, let us reflect whether it would make any difference in the value or intention of that parable if we were to find it recorded among the chronicles of the Jewish kings, or the histories of the Israelitish people. Transfer it to the book of Samuel, give names to the father and sons, think of it as a historical occurrence

and what is changed by the transference? The object and purpose of its insertion in the historic Word, were it found there, would still be the same as of its insertion in the Lord's discourse. Its exquisite portraiture of the tenderness of Divine love toward human waywardness would be the same, and the same, too, the progressive development of its lessons to man's expanding consciousness.

Has it never occurred to you that since the parables, with their spiritual contents, are so often historic in form, that therefore those narrations of the Holy Scriptures which are historic in form may be parables in reality, with an equally important spiritual significance? The proud King Saul, head and shoulders above all the men of Israel, standing in fear with his armies before the giant of Gath, and finally delivered by the youthful David, the ruddy shepherd-boy from the fields of Bethlehem—is it any less a parable than the story of the lost sheep, or the marriage of the king's son, in the Gospels? The touching story of Absalom, caught by his hair in the branches of the oak, may be the veriest history, but it is no less a parable than the story of the Prodigal. They contain the same elements, and serve the same ends; they appeal to the hu-

manity of the simple and the spiritual intuitions of the wise, and present their varied lessons to the varied sorts and conditions of men.

I desire to commend to you this doctrine : That the Bible is a book of Divine Parables ; its early portions are allegory ; its historical records a vast drama enacted by living men as types of spiritual things, with the redemption and regeneration of man for its subject. The advent of the Lord, His sufferings, His death, His gospel, can thus be seen to be in harmony with this drama, which embraces the Deity, and represents the states of every living soul. The Word, teaching us thus, becomes at once spiritual in its subject, in its importance, and in its style ; and is taken out of the arena of controversial criticism, and let out to the higher faculties of man for investigation and devout contemplation. Simple as this doctrine is, catholic as it is to the wisest thought of the church in primitive and modern times, I am unwilling to trust it to the fate of a plausible conjecture, and, therefore, ask your attention to some of the evidences of its truthfulness.

It must not be forgotten that the number of persons who feel themselves obliged to doubt whether the Bible is a revelation from God,

daily increases. There may be more than one such among you ; and while there are considerations which might be helpful to such minds, which I am obliged, by the limits of this discourse, to omit, I wish it distinctly understood that I regard such doubts neither with disrespect nor sentiments of hopeless pity. They seem to me, in a certain sense, natural to the time, and a necessary consequence of the declining spirituality of the doctrine and interpretation of the Church. The doctrine concerning the Inspiration of the Scriptures which is currently promulgated in this day is untrue ; and interpretations are taught which it were better to disbelieve. But because the Ptolemaic astronomy is exploded, is there no longer a solar system and a starry heaven ? Surely, the rejection of a false theory of revelation need not necessarily lead to denial of the existence of revelation. It should rather turn the mind to investigation, and dispose it affirmatively toward the doctrine which announces more rational claims.

1. I begin then with recalling a truth which seems to be well based in human experience ; *Man's religious instincts lead him to look for and seek a revelation from God.* The consciousness of a mind and life which is an enig-

ma to himself; the universal intuition of God, which no man loses till it is blanketed by his own fallacious reasonings; these two felt facts call for revelation from God to man concerning himself, and God's will with respect to him. There are powers and faculties of the human mind which are not brought into exercise by an exclusive determination of thought to this world of the senses, which will exercise themselves with the problems of existence, and duty, and destiny. These faculties may be more or less developed, but at every stage of their activity they demand a knowledge different from that which the senses can give. They feel their fitness for a world of thought which the senses do not directly open, and they crave its revelation. The skeptic as to the inspiration of the Scriptures, if he have still preserved the intuition of God and the hope of immortality, will tell you how much he desires a revelation in which heart and mind may repose, with confidence and certainty. Many a mind chased by the phantoms of doubt; many a heart tired of following after the fantasies of sense, is crying to-day in your very midst: "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." Even atheism acknowledges the want in ceaseless

attempts and incessant activity to disprove it. Men do not raise armies and keep incessant watch and ward against nothing; and the very struggle which unbelief keeps up from age to age, is virtually an acknowledgment that the human heart needs, yearns for, and is capable of believing in, a Divine Revelation.

2. *Now reflect that the Sacred Scriptures claim to be such a revelation, and from age to age have made good their claim to countless multitudes. It is sometimes denied, I know; but so is the rotundity of the earth, and so is the beauty of art denied by those who have no eye, and the grandeur of music by those who have no ear, and the blessedness of brotherhood by those who have no love. The facts remain; over all the Scriptures is written the name of them, like the name on the vesture of Him whom John saw in vision, "The Word of God." It is the distinct and specific claim of Moses, and the prophets, and the Evangelists, that God spake unto them, and that what they have written is His Word. The claim is plainly there; it is either true or it is not. I confess a great deal of respect for the old argument that the effect of these Scriptures upon the mind and life of the disciple is strong presumption in favor of their claim. Those who are*

really affected by the Scriptures perceive in them a power far transcending that which is felt in any other writing, and such facts of experience are not to be ignored. The simple literal meaning of a verse by no means accounts for the impression it may produce. There are religious faculties in us all, that respond with fear or hope to the statutes and commands, the warnings and promises of Holy Scripture, even though intellectually we profess to believe them the product of men in past time; there is a Divine power in them which has asserted itself to every generation for ages.

3. Consider, then, in view of what the Scriptures claim to be, the Word of God, *whether they can possibly be such without containing the mind of God in spiritual truths utterly distinct from that which appears in the grammatical construction of the letter.* It must be admitted that a large part of the Bible claiming to be the Word of God, is not the Word of God to us unless indeed it be uttered in parable and contain secrets within its bosom ready to be unfolded to the teachable mind. But could any of it be the Word of God without a spiritual sense within the letter? Rationally it is impossible to conceive of a Divine truth descending into the language of men, and taking to

itself an expression in such language without the mediation not of one only but of many distinct series of ideas. If the Scriptures really treated in their letter in all its parts of love and faith, of the Divine Character and human duty, of that which bears directly upon man's spiritual life, and those subjects concerning which alone he needs a revelation, it is inconceivable that such teaching could be given by God to man without containing spiritual arcana, distinct from the series of natural ideas composing the letter. Every writing has the author in it; all that there is in his mind concerning the subject is involved, and possible therefore to be evolved. Thought clothes itself in speech; and abstract intellectual truth clothes itself with the images of sensuous thought before it can put on a garment of language. All our ideas are derived in the first instance from impressions of phenomena; and the images of these become not only the basis of subsequent thoughts, but their appropriate sign and expression. Our intellectual conceptions, which are born on the one side of sensuous impressions, must on the other hand think themselves out, or clothe themselves with sensuous images, before they can find expression. How then shall truth divine,

transcending the faculties of sense, communicate itself in the language of men without first investing itself with angelic ideas, and then with corresponding natural images? The object of such a communication being to make known things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man to conceive," the human mind would be incapable of apprehending them, except through the medium of sensuous representatives and corresponding signs. The language of a Divine Revelation must, therefore, from the nature of its message, be parabolic. Even its natural images of moral righteousness can be only images of spiritual graces and Divine perfections. But much of the letter of Scripture treats of specific events, and is limited in its application to the occasion past. It does not treat of such subjects as man needs to have revealed. How then can it be the Word of God, as it claims, unless it is also, as it claims, "settled forever in the heavens?"—unless it contains an internal meaning which is apprehensible to angelic intelligence, or spiritual thought? Possessing at least two distinct series of ideas, as it must thus do to be the Word of God, it is parabolic in reality, and spiritual in its object, and eternal in its inter-



est. Whether couched in the form allegory, history, precept, or prophecy, the Word must have the regeneration of man for its one great object. The variety of its immediate subjects must have been selected as adapted to its single object, the spiritual instruction of mankind; and, therefore, whether its form be allegory or history, must be determined by the adaptability of one or the other to secure the attention and fix the interest of men in time, but whether one or the other, it must contain the secrets of spiritual wisdom in truths which could not be spoken without a parable.

This we believe, that the Word of the Lord is so written, and that the Bible is thus a book of Divine Parables, plenarily inspired by virtue of the informing wisdom through which as a medium, the very spirit of God vivifies even the letter of its myths, its histories, its statutes and its promises. Its inspiration and divineness are not acquired by the miraculous mode of its composition, and have nothing to do with the infallibility of its science, or its history, or the personal purity of its characters; but by the indwelling spirit of God, and Divine spiritual truth from Him. The inspiration of the writers of the Scriptures was temporary, and for a specific purpose; the inspi-

ration of that which was written is eternal. It is the indwelling mind of God and Divine truth from Him in all its gradations. It is this eternal and perpetual inspiration of truth in the Scriptures themselves which constitutes them the Word of God; which makes them reach beyond the necessities of the occasion on which they were given; and by virtue of which they furnish food for the angels in heaven as well as men on earth. The Word in its "beginnings" or first principles, is "with God" and "is God;" but to make itself apprehensible to finite minds, it must clothe itself with garments woven from the fibers of angelic and human thought, constituting a spiritual and a natural sense, to suit the states respectively of angels and of men.

When men on earth rejected Him who was the Word made flesh, they divided His coat, and found a vesture woven from the top throughout without a seam. This essential Word appearing as the Son of Man, clothed with an inner garment, and over this an outer robe, pieced and seamed, represents the Word which is the Divine truth itself, clothed in the vesture of angelic wisdom, which constitutes the spiritual sense of our written Bible, and over this the outer garment of its letter, pieced from

the contributions of human myth and history, that could serve the Word of life for clothing. And like the Lord's vesture, which it really is, the inner spiritual sense of the Word is woven throughout without a seam ; while men dispute and divide the letter, the vesture of angelic wisdom constitutes one harmonious serial and continuous garment of light. Amid all the difficulties which beset literal criticism and the doubts which overhang natural thought, this glorious fabric of spiritual truth awaits man's faculty of perception. It may appear with greater or less clearness as men are more or less instructed concerning it. The more spiritually-minded the reader the deeper and fuller will be his perception of such spiritual signification. The deeps in his own soul will answer back to the deeps in God's word. Space and time and person will recede in the contemplation of Holy Scripture, and spiritual principles, and states, and progression of state will become the subjects of thought. He who thus looks in God's Word for that which is the subject of faith, can realize its histories in his own mental progressions. He may learn the stages of his regeneration in the story of creation ; the Divine evolution of spiritual faculties, affections and thoughts, from the chaos of the natural mind. He can read

the processes of his Spiritual growth in the journey of Israel; be instructed by the Law in his pilgrimage, and enter the heavenly Canaan under the leadership of a higher Joshua. A greater than David can give him the possession of Mount Zion; and a more glorious King than Solomon build within him a more glorious temple.

4. I ask now your attention to *the testimony of Scripture, and the tradition of the Church, to the truth of this doctrine.* The present troubles of dogmatic orthodoxy have arisen from ignoring the primitive doctrine of the Word, and insisting upon its literal sufficiency and infallibility, unmindful of the numerous instances in the Bible in which that Word is asserted to be figurative, typical, a collection of parables. 1. We continually find the *Scriptures* themselves in their very letter, directing the reader to elevate his mind above the merely literal expression—above the natural ideas and images which compose its outward language, and to explore the truly Divine wisdom that is contained within. “Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold the wondrous things out of thy law.” “The law of the Lord is perfect; converting the soul.” Perfect in the infinitude of its significance; and

the universality of its adaptability to man's need! Worthy of God and suited to man! "Give ear, My people, to My law; incline your ear to the words of My mouth. I will open My mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old." Then follows the summary of the history of Israel; and what must we infer if not that the whole history is one vast parable; that it was overruled by Divine Providence so that it might be a parable; that because it was such a parable it was therefore written; that because parabolic of spiritual things it has been preserved; that because those spiritual things have permanence and relation to ourselves they may therefore be opened to us? "History is philosophy teaching by example," says Napoleon; but this is more. It is spiritual philosophy teaching by symbols—a Divine drama; God the arranger of the types, His object the spiritual instruction of His children, the tribes of Israel and their enemies only the *dramatis personæ* on the natural stage of exterior life, playing symbolic parts, and leaving their memories and their deeds pregnant types for universal man. A literal people, representing the spiritual people of God; their history, the progressions, trials and conflicts, the triumphs and failures of the soul. "It is the

spirit that quickeneth (saith the Lord); the flesh profiteth nothing; the words I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." "O fools and slow of heart to believe (he said,) ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." 2. The *Apostles* recognized this character of Holy Scripture. They declare that the deluge, the ark, and Noah and his sons, are "figures," types; the "Jews after the flesh" were but types of the "Jews after the Spirit;" the tabernacle and its ceremonies were but "symbols of the true;" Jerusalem below the type "of Jerusalem that is above, the mother of us all;" the earthly Zion the figure of the "Mount Zion, that city of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem;" Abraham and his two sons were "an allegory;" Melchisedec the type of Christ, and so were the high priests. 3. The *Fathers* in the primitive church developed the idea to great lengths. Mosheim, himself an opponent of allegorical interpretation, is compelled to confess that it was predominant in the early centuries of the church.

Indeed, no truth of history is more certain

than this: that for fourteen hundred years few who received the Scriptures at all ever thought of denying that they contain mysteries in their bosom, which do not appear upon their surface. In the first three centuries the men most renowned for piety and erudition "all attributed a double sense to the words of Scripture, the one obvious and literal, the other hidden and mysterious, which lay concealed as it were under the veil of the outward letter. The former they treated with the utmost neglect, and turned the whole force of their genius and application to unfold the latter." In the following ages of the church it is true that some were dissatisfied with the interpretations which had been given by others, but the existence of a spiritual sense was not denied, nor the principle of allegorical interpretation abandoned. It prevailed with such constancy and predominance, down even to the fifteenth century, as to justify Bishop Horne in stating "*that such spiritual method did universally prevail in the church from the beginning.*" The value of such figurative interpretations as were thus furnished to the church is not the matter on which I would insist, but the catholicity of the doctrine of "a double sense." In proportion as this doctrine is denied, faith in

the inspiration of Scripture has declined. In the ratio of men's belief that the literal sense of Scripture is its only sense, have they denied that it is the Word of God. If it contains no Divine and spiritual sense distinctly within the letter, large portions of it cannot be Divine in any sense. Its mistakes in science and history destroy its claims to infallibility as science and history; its contradictions are inconsistent with its divine origin, except there be an underlying harmony; and much of it is so obscure in its figures as to elude all the laws of rhetorical interpretation. The fundamental principle of modern Biblical criticism is, that "Scripture, like other books, has one meaning—the meaning which it had to the mind of the Prophet or Evangelist," and "no second or hidden sense different from that which appears upon the surface." From which it follows: 1. That it has no Divine sense at all, unless that be the same as human sense. 2. That much of the only sense which is contained in Scripture is non-sense. This is very different from the faith of St. Paul, who says, "our sufficiency is of God, who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." The Fathers followed a

better principle when they said, "the law of God is spiritual, and they have not the true law who do not take it spiritually;" and "that the true meaning of the sacred writers was to be sought in the sense which is within the letter."

In the development of this subject, I should be obliged next to present and consider the chief objection to the admission of a spiritual sense in the Scriptures, namely, the absence of uniformity among the interpreters; the great danger of vagaries of our own being foisted upon or pretendedly drawn from them—the lack of any rule of consistent interpretation. It must be borne in mind, however, that this objection applies with equal force to the gospel parables themselves, which are commonly esteemed to be the most perfect form of Divine teaching. It no more applies to the difficulties and dangers of spiritually interpreting the narratives, which are historical in form and parabolic in reality, than it does to those confessed parables which are the matchless mirrors of spiritual wisdom. The difference is only one of degree, not of kind. The objection, however, is a valid one, and if the spiritual sense of Holy Scripture dwells in its histories as in its parables, there must be some law

of its inhabitation, which being known, would serve as a rule of accurate interpretation.

We must leave the subject here at this time, with a promise. In my next lecture I shall endeavor to show that there is an exact law of Correspondence between spiritual principles and natural phenomena; that in this law all language has its origin and all symbolism its explanation; that the Scriptures are divinely given in accordance with it, and the knowledge of the law becomes a key to their heavenly secrets.

Meanwhile, I wish to leave with you, if I may, an impression of the importance just now of determining the world's thought, away from the sensual criticism that can never enlighten but only confuse and extinguish faith. It seems to me of the utmost importance that faith in the plenary divine inspiration of the Scriptures should be established in reason and based in intelligence; and I admit indeed that this can never be realized till the old naturalistic doctrine of historical and literal infallibility is destroyed; and I admit further, that historical criticism is rapidly and effectually accomplishing that result. But when you have razed your old crazy habitation you have not built your new home. There is positive as

well as negative work to be done; construction must follow upon destruction. And it seems to me time that men were encouraged to build a positive faith in spiritual truth as revealed from the Lord. Such a structure of faith can only be permanent, indeed, as it is founded upon rational doctrine; but a first and presently important exercise is the determination of thought to divine ideals. Leaving those things which are behind, press forward to those things which are before; reach out to those grand universal spiritual truths which shine with the clearness of the day-spring in numerous places through the veil of the written Word, and resting in these, search for their illustration in the disguises of Scripture history and prophecy and song. Jewish history and Mosaic cosmogony is unworthy of your immortal vocation, but search rather for the wisdom of the Son of Man and the illustrations of spiritual experience in the "parables" and "dark sayings of old." The trials of skepticism, the deeper skepticism which overwhelms the heart in the daily struggles of life when God seems a myth and Providence a cheat, the clouds of sense which close in upon us now and again like the shades of eternal night; these can only be dissipated by lifting our thought up into the

clearer air of spiritual contemplation and looking for divine instruction on the other side, that is, the inside of the Divine Parables of Eden, and Canaan, and Egypt, the history of Israel, the life of the Son of Man, and the vision of the Seer of Patmos. Believe me, that as the Scriptures are thus analyzed the function of criticism, important as it has been, will pale; and the obscurities of doubt, dark as they may be, will lift; and the inquiries of faith, sincere as they are, will yet transcend what it hath entered into the heart of man to conceive. God and heaven close into these sacred parables, and as thought is determined from what is incidental and dead in itself, the gates will open into the heavenly places which reflect the counsels of God. Amen! .

II.

THE DOCTRINE OF CORRESPONDENCE: A KEY TO DIVINE PARABLES.

Who is worthy to open the book and loose the seals thereof?

—REV. V : 2.

THERE are two questions which must inevitably come to the front in the theological discussions of the near future; one respecting the *Person of God*: the other the existence of a *Word of God*. In regard to the first, the old theistic argument may for a time be successfully opposed to speculative atheism, but it will never prove satisfactory to its advocates, because the God which it postulates is unknown. If there be a God, the first likely hypothesis is, that He shows Himself exactly to instruct mankind; and the aspiration of theism to a creed of God, must, in proportion as it is earnest, search for Him where perhaps He may be found, in those Scriptures which claim to be a revelation from Him.

Thus discussion must, ultimately, pass over to the question as to the existence of a Word of God; and the real question here, is not as to the truth of the science or history in the Bible, but as to the existence of a Spiritual Sense from which it is divinely inspired and holy in every part. The Bible considered in its letter, and from its letter alone, does not justify the expectations which men have a right to base upon its claim. This has been clearly and repeatedly admitted in the past, and is the present boast of literal criticism. "If we who profess Christianity," said Dr. Wordsworth, "do not recognize the life-giving virtue of the Spirit in the Old Testament, we cannot expect to retain the letter of the Old Testament; we shall soon lose our belief in its unity, integrity, veracity and inspiration." The prediction has been verified. There is no intelligible and definite belief in either Old or New Testament as in any real sense the Word of God; neither indeed, can there be, unless the Bible be a book of Divine Parables containing a distinct series of spiritual truths related to the ideas of the letter, as the soul of man to his earthly body. If this be denied in the Church, what it calls the Word of God must fall into the hands of the Critics, whose

method is to wrap it in the grave-clothes of literalism, with the fragrant spices of a few fine compliments on its venerable character, "as the manner of the Jews is to bury." No expedients can prevail to ward off this issue. In the "battle between the Word of God and the Critics" the real question should be distinctly presented. Does the Bible contain an internal spiritual sense distinct from the letter? If not, it will be taken away from the Church altogether; nothing can save it. If it does, there must be some law of its inhabitation, which being known would serve as a rule of accurate interpretation.

Without any sort of doubt, the master position in this controversy belongs to that doctrine which shall not merely assert the existence of a spiritual sense in the Bible, but prove itself able to expound it. The existence of a spiritual sense has been ably asserted in the past; but the want of an adequate and consistent rule of interpretation, the consequent liability to see ones own vagaries and fancies in the mirror of Scripture, and to mistake them for its genuine spiritual truths, has always been urged as an objection to the doctrine. The objection has indeed much force, unless it can be shown that there is a law of Inspiration

which may be known and studied as a rule of interpretation. The results of the spiritual methods of interpretation which have more or less prevailed in the Church from the beginning, have been of unequal value, depending upon the clearness of the interpreter's perception. "These secrets of divine Scripture we trace out as we may," confesses Augustine; "one more or less aptly than another, but as becomes faithful men holding this much for certain, that not without some kind of foreshadowing were these things done and recorded in the Word; and that to Christ only, and His church, the city of God, are they to be referred in every instance." Wanting a strict rule of interpretation these men were dependent upon their insight which was more or less clear in the ratio of their sympathy with divine and spiritual realities. Wonderful things they have seen indeed, almost justifying Ruskin's saying, that "the Seers of the world are greater than its thinkers." But if this be true at all, it must be true because there is a reality and order in what they "see," capable of being known, analyzed, and brought within the field of systematic thought. What poets and Seers perceive, the thinkers will doubtless sometime reduce to science and doctrine. All spiritual

interpretation of Scripture has assumed that there is an analogy between the visible and invisible worlds; that "the systems of both worlds run parallel," as says an old writer, "so that the realities in the superior have their respective shadows in the inferior, and are fitly represented by them." The perception of this analogy has heretofore depended upon the faculty of imagination and spiritual insight; but if it should be discovered that it is based in a law of creation, that it is accurate and susceptible of analysis, reducible in fact to the terms of rational thought, then would the study of the spiritual sense of the word be based in the clearest rational induction.

This we affirm is discovered in the Science of Correspondence which is revealed for the Church, and by which it may be demonstrated that Holy Scripture is so written that each expression corresponds to a distinct spiritual idea, and that the series of these constitute its divine content and inspiring soul.

There is a relation of some sort existing between the objects of the natural universe and the subjects of the spiritual universe, the things seen by man and the thoughts and affections of man. Of this the least reflect-

ing must be convinced. While common sense looks at things, or visible nature, as real and final facts, imagination sees in them the reflection of our faculties and states of affection and thought, and uses them as types or words for the expression of these. Man sees himself in the mirror of the world. He beholds his cunning in the fox, his courage and daring in the lion, his innocence in the lamb and dove, his intelligence in the horse, his stubbornness, or as the case may be, his patient endurance, in the ass, his sensuality in the swine. It is as though each single faculty of his own mind, raying forth from him, had embodied itself as the characteristic feature in some animal form; requiring thus the whole circuit of the animal kingdom to stand as the embodiment and representative of his affections. He beholds his changing moods in tree and flower, and the entire round of phenomena. Daylight and darkness, storm and calm, sunshine and cloud, have all their perfect counterpart in the changing states of the human soul, which, when it would describe its own secret workings, points to these outward and visible movements of dumb nature as the most expressive symbols and shadows of itself. All language is based

upon this intimate relation between the inner world of the human soul and the outer world of natural phenomena. Even the abstract terms of language, used purely to express the relations of intellectual ideas, are derived from names of sensible things and their relations. We *see* truth, we *hear* laws, we *weigh* arguments, we have mental *tastes*. We are *inflamed* with passion, and *chilled* by antipathy; we *warm* to a subject, and are *cool* toward the disagreeable. We find reproaches *cutting* and *bitter*; our feelings are *lacerated* by *stinging* sarcasms, and we are *melted* into tenderness by *soft* compassion. What men value as substance has thus, as Emerson says, a greater value as symbol. "The whole world is thoroughly anthropomorphised as though it had passed through the mind of man and taken his mold and form; the huge heavens and earth are but a web drawn around us, the light, skies and mountains, are but the painted vicissitudes of the soul."

The doctrines of the New Church show that these relations and suggestions are founded, not in fancy but in fact, in a *universal law of Creation*. The law is this: that the whole scheme of sensible things is created by Divine Influx through the spiritual world; the beings



and objects of the spiritual world standing thus in the position of mediate or secondary causes, which are imaged and represented in their effects. This relation between spiritual causes and natural effects we call "Correspondence;" anything in this world of the senses being said to "correspond" to the spiritual cause in the world of souls through which it is created or produced. I dislike exceedingly to import philosophical terms into popular discourse; but to grasp this idea with clearness and accuracy, the mind must carefully distinguish between discrete and continuous degrees. Current theology shuts its eyes to all such terms; and current science makes no such distinction; and the expounders of both are likely to declare their indifference. But let him who would be wise learn to think accurately. There are continuous degrees which exhibit gradation on the same plane; as greater or less degree of light, or heat, or pressure. So, likewise, there is greater or less degree of clearness in intelligence or understanding; or greater or less facility of expression in speech. These degrees exhibit, however, only differences of continuity on the same plane. But the degree which distinguishes the understanding from the speech is discrete and not con-

tinuous. The thought does not shade off into the expression. It may be more or less clear on its own plane, and the expression may be more or less clear on its plane; but the planes are distinct, and that which distinguishes them is a discreet degree. The thought descends into the speech and clothes itself, and takes on a new form and function on a lower plane of existence, without losing its own form and function in the mind itself. It is the efficient cause of which the speech is the effect. The thought is spiritual, the speech is natural. They belong to correlated planes of existence, which do not shade off one into the other, but are discrete and distinct. Such is the relation of a spiritual cause to its natural effect; such the relation of the soul to the physical body; and such the relation of the spiritual world to the natural world. The spiritual world is in the physical world, and principles are in phenomena, not as one box is in another, or an ether in a vessel, but as the soul is within the body; corresponding part to part and function to function, yet wholly distinct and discrete as to their planes of existence. Thus God creates the human soul as the recipient of His Divine love and wisdom, and beholds in it His image; and through the

soul, as a form receptive of His life, He creates the body, and in this again the soul beholds its image. But the soul is not God, nor is the body the soul. They are related only by Correspondence; but this relation is organic and inherent. In the body, therefore, as to its form in general and in particular, and as to its gestures and play of expression; the soul may behold its own functions and its varied activities—its understanding in the eye, and intellectual perception in the function of the eye; the will, with its complex emotions, in the functions of the heart, and its quickened feelings in the quickened pulse. This is Correspondence. As the soul and body thus correspond, so do the principles and objects of the whole world of souls correspond with the things and movements of the external world of the senses.

If there be any such relation, so organic and necessary as to render the external world of the senses a mirror of the soul, and of the love and wisdom of God, it is manifest that a Science of Correspondence is possible; that is, a specific and systematic knowledge of these relations, and the significance of things. Such a science the doctrines of the New Church offer in evidence,

and appeal to its completeness, consistency and adequacy as an explanation of the Word and Works of God. I am aware, of course, that there are those who are called wise who would object to this doctrine on the ground that it rests upon an assumption that is not in the nature of things provable. For while the natural world has from the beginning furnished man with images and representatives of his mental processes, there has been no well-based recognition of this truth that they are effects of spiritual causes. Man has rather sought to emerge from the confusion of his sensible experience by ascribing the phenomena of nature to all sorts of imaginary causes, as atoms and motion—none of which, however, he supposes to be discernible by any of his senses, which only take cognizance of the sensations excited by such supposititious atoms of matter. Strange it seems, that those who have been so loud in denying a God, because his existence was not, as they deemed, susceptible of demonstration, should also have been most positive in maintaining the existence of elemental matter which, upon their own showing, is equally incapable of detection, let alone demonstration. The intuition of God has, however, a wonderful basis in human

nature; and when men shall turn their thoughts to Him as the perpetual source and center of all substantial being, whose out-flowing life, by the medium of the spiritual world, creates and sustains the entire Cosmos of sensible phenomena, then the law of Correspondence will be seen as a grand and comprehensive generalization, covering fields of study that have not been dreamed of in our philosophy.

The knowledge of the correspondence of heaven with earth, was the intuitive possession of the men of the most ancient, or Adamic, dispensation, and was retained as a science, and taught by tradition long after that dispensation of the Church had closed. The Divine Mind with its treasures of love and wisdom, was to their preception written out in the forms, colors, motions, sizes, distances, and their endless variations in the Kingdoms of nature. They needed no written Revelation, "for the invisible things of God were clearly seen from the Creation of the world, being understood by the things that are made." The Apostle expressly says that men originally thus "knew God," but ceasing "to glorify him as God," and becoming vain in their imaginations, they gradually lost this knowledge, and their hearts were

darkened. And as man lost the intuitive perception of correspondence, he fell into the lower mental state of merely believing on the authority of tradition, that such and such objects had such and such signification. The knowledge of Correspondence being thus, preserved as a science and transmitted by tradition, served as a basis for the reception and understanding of a written Word of God; until its spiritual uses were prostituted to purposes of magic, and the night of idolatry set in, when men worshipped the shadow instead of the substance. I shall speak again more fully of this matter in tracing the history of Revelation; suffice it to say now, that it was primitively the origin of all language, and in its perversion gave rise to the fanciful mythologies of the ancient nations, while on the other hand the Word of God is given strictly in accordance with it, and is now opened in its spiritual sense by means of it.

It is enough to ask for this doctrine that it be examined as a hypothesis. Every theory is in supposition till it demonstrates its ability to explain the facts it assumes to cover. We must admit the possibility provisionally or we cannot proceed. This is common to all investigations in which a hypothesis is undergoing

trial, or a theory proof, or a truth demonstration. And this doctrine of the internal sense of Scripture as the essential revelation, and the myth, or history, or law as its assumed body in the world, submits itself to be tried by the usual methods for verifying a hypothesis. It is not an arbitrary system, or the substitution of a new dogma for an old, but assumes to rest upon a law of being, and, therefore, to be capable of examination and verification. Whether there is such a spiritual sense in the Scriptures as is claimed, is therefore mainly a question of fact. No one can tell whether it is there or not until he examines them under the guidance of the principles offered, just as he would investigate any claim of science by an examination of the facts under the guidance of the hypothesis proposed.

We are mainly concerned with the doctrine at this time, as a principle of interpretation, and I shall proceed to offer some illustrations of its application. But it must be remembered that this Science, which is to furnish us with the alphabet and grammar for the study of the spiritual sense of the Word, is not to be grasped and mastered in a moment. It is no merely speculative and visionary theory, but a truly consistent and universal system, or it

is nothing. The presentation which I have given of its fundamental principles is the merest statement, and any illustrations which can be crowded within the limits of this discourse will be necessarily crude. It will be easily admitted by most persons that there is some sort of analogy or resemblance between mental and physical things, as between heat and affection, and between light and truth, which common language continually expresses; and many will feel that in passing beyond the bounds of this moderate, common-sense use of analogy, we plunge into folly and mysticism. I am required to caution you against any such conclusion, for the claims of this Science are either true or they are not, and they are altogether too pretentious to be set aside by a hasty inference. The doctrine is explicit: God speaks the Word from Himself as by real efflux He makes all things from Himself; and the whole external world, the work of God, presents there a basis for the spiritual interpretation of Holy Scriptures, the written Word of God,—the external objects, events, and imagery of which the letter is composed corresponding with the spiritual principles, which are their organic causes, the series of which constitute its spiritual sense. Written accord-

ing to correspondence with the exactness of a law, by the knowledge of the law it may be interpreted with the accuracy of a Science. In rough statement as a rule of interpretation the law may be formulated thus: *That the things signified bear the same relation and subserve the same uses in respect to the soul, as do their natural representatives in respect to the body.* What the eye is to the body, the understanding is to the soul; and when, therefore, it is said "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the whole earth," His Omnipresence and Providence by virtue of His wisdom and understanding, is the Spiritual meaning. We are taught to pray, "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law," when the enlightening of the understanding in the truths of the Word, is meant. "Let thine eye be single," or "if thine eye offend thee pluck it out," is to warn us against the duplicity of a perverted understanding, and the necessity of putting away from us those false principles which cause us to offend against the truth. What the ear, in like manner is to the body, the will as a faculty of perception and obedience is to the soul. Wherefore our Lord's words so often repeated, "He that hath

ears to hear, let him hear," mean, whosoever perceives the Divine command let him obey. The unregenerate will, which is averse to learning and obeying the Divine Truth, is described as the "uncircumcised ear," which "cannot hearken;" and it is said "the Word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it." The hands, as instruments of bodily energy, denote the ability of the soul; and the "Arm of the Lord" is His Divine Omnipotence; the "right hand of God" is the power of His love, and the protection of His Providence is described by the "Everlasting Arms." So the feet, as the support of the whole, denote the lowest principles of the mind and its precepts of life; wherefore, "washing the feet" signifies the purification and reformation of conduct, and "walking in the Lord's paths" denotes actual external obedience to the literal commandments of righteousness. Bread, as the food of the body, represents the Divine goodness, or righteousness, for which man should hunger; and it is said "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," because man is not to yield merely to the impulses of goodness, but is to regulate these by the Divine truth, which is

the form of Divine goodness, and which can alone build up the soul in righteousness. Therefore the Lord who was the Word, made flesh, is "the living bread which came down from Heaven," whose "flesh is meat indeed and whose blood is drink indeed," being the actual sensible manifestation of His Divine Goodness and Truth; and therefore the Lord is really present in the Holy Supper, because the bread and wine correspond to His "flesh and blood," which we veritably eat when we appropriate His Goodness and Truth into our souls. This is felt by every worthy Communicant, and is intuitively perceived and known by many. But the law is universal, and applies as well to the other Sacrament of Baptism; its whole efficacy is founded in the Correspondence of water and washing, and its perception in heaven. Water is in its various uses, what truth is to the soul. Thus, water in baptism or washing, corresponds to truth purifying the soul; water as drink, to truth refreshing and nourishing the intellect; water as rain, to those divine truths of living consolation which fall upon the parched soul as dew from heaven; running waters, to truth seen and accepted as flowing from its divine source; stagnant water, to truth cut off from its source; foul and bit-

ter waters, to truth perverted and profaned ; and water collected in seas, corresponds to the vast ocean of external truth, or mere science in the memory, gleaned by the senses from the things that appear, which accumulate it as we may, still remains but a vast sea, heaving, tossing and leading no whither ; but which rightly employed is a vast storehouse from whence the sun of love for wisdom may lift up into the mental firmament the supplies to feed "the rivers that run among the hills," the living streams of truth which bless and fertilize the mind, in the channels of whose thoughts they flow.

Such analogies may impress you as the very reverse of exact ; but it is not true. They are general and superficial, as I have presented them ; but the exactness lies in this, that not only these general meanings, but the more specific and definite shades of meaning which belong to these symbols, are of universal application. The key fits, whether applied in Genesis, or Isaiah, or the Gospels, or the Apocalypse. Swedenborg by means of it, and under Divine illumination, opened the Spiritual Sense of Genesis and Exodus, and of the Apocalypse, and in the course of his writings applies it to the various portions of

Holy Scripture, with a fullness and consistency of results which is the best test of its truth. It is to these results we appeal, and upon a knowledge of these that we base our faith. It is the key that fits. Applied to texts, the meaning of which is perfectly clear in the letter, it reveals a spiritual meaning within them, full of beauty, simplicity, and wisdom, which was before sealed and hidden. Applied to obscure passages, that in their letter teach no doctrine that applies to human duty and righteousness, it will show hidden within them riches of wisdom, of universal, useful application. Applied to contradictory texts, it will show their real harmony under their apparent contradiction, and make one to complement and fulfill the other. All this has been demonstrated in the expositions of the Church, and the demonstrations are capable of unlimited multiplication. Examine in illustration, the declaration, "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made." Nothing can be clearer in the literal sense than this general truth, that the Lord is the Creator of the Universe; but it concerns us much more to know how the heaven of angels is created and the kingdom of heaven implanted in the soul. It is for this surely that we need a

Revelation from God, and to this, these words in their spiritual sense must refer. Creation signifies spiritual creation or regeneration; the "Word of the Lord" denotes all Divine Truth, by which He who is love itself reveals Himself and His laws to man; and "the heavens" signify that celestial state of man's soul which is implanted and formed by regeneration. Thus we are taught that it is by the Word of the Lord, or the divine truths which He reveals to man, that His heaven of peace and righteousness is created within us, even as at the first. When the Lord's Word says, "Let this, or let that, be!" "Do this, or shun that!" then if *it is so*, if we *do* what He commands, light will appear in our darkness, a firmament in the midst of the waters, all living things of heavenly life, the image of God and heaven itself in the soul. For a mere record of fact in the letter, we have in the spiritual sense a living lesson and promise for every soul who is asking "What must I do to be saved?" And can we not see that such an interpretation, instead of discrediting the letter as some seem to fear, really glorifies it as the soul glorifies the body? Or again, take the expression of trust: "I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me." In the letter it conveys only a general

truth, but in its spiritual sense a most specific discrimination as to the Divine operation in the salvation of man. Every name applied to designate the Lord, has a most distinct signification in respect to man. Thus the name "God," designates the Lord, with respect to His wisdom and power, the Lord, that is, as revealed to the intellect; and while man loves evil and self above all things, he cannot otherwise apprehend the Lord. He can, in his unregenerate state, only call upon "God," because he can only understand the Divine as revealed by His power and truth to the intellect; but "Jehovah shall save him." For the name "Jehovah" signifies the Lord as to that love which is the very life and being of God, and though God first appears to us as the Divine Truth, it is Divine Love that must save us. When we *call upon God*, the *Lord shall save us*; or when we trust in the Lord's power and truth, and obey His Divine Commandments, we shall realize that He is Life, and rejoice in His salvation.

If, then, these plain declarations of the letter of Scripture reveal a spiritual meaning within them, so full of practical beauty and use, how much more shall we need the help of this Science of interpretation in that large portion

of the Word which is wholly obscure? "The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs." "Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills be joyful together before the Lord." Such figures not only indicate in general the life and joy which should animate the mind receptive of love and faith, but they specifically and precisely correspond to particular and definite states of the mind. These may indeed be figures, but they are more than figures; and, as every one knows, there are symbolic expressions in all parts of the Word which cannot be interpreted by any rhetorical rules of speech. In illustration, I will cite the Sixth Chapter of Revelations, to which the correspondence of the *horse* will alone serve as a key. The horse is used as a representative of the intellectual faculty or understanding of man to which it corresponds; color, whatever it be, denotes the quality, and the rider or director, the guiding power of the mind. In the Apocalyptic Vision referred to, the opening of the first seal exhibits "a white horse," the symbol of purity of understanding or faith, while "the Word" rules in the mind, crowned as its guide and director, "going forth conquering and to conquer." In this is presented the first state of the church, pure in

faith when the Word of God prevails. The second seal opened shows a red horse, representing the deterioration of the understanding of truth from the pride of intelligence; and the Word becomes then a source of contention and division. In the opening of the third seal the horse is black, representing the entire darkening of understanding in the church, through the influence of evil. The power of the Word has so far declined that "a measure of wheat" and "three measures of barley" are sold for "a penny," denoting the low estimation in which spiritual good is held. The fourth seal shows the climax of decline, in the "pale horse" whose rider is "death." The understanding is not only darkened, but the Word is perverted; the Divine Truth, which is "the Sword of the Spirit," is turned into falsity, "the sword of the adversary," with power to destroy. Here the evil principles of the heart have prevailed to turn the powers of the understanding into a curse.

Thus briefly it may be seen how this Scripture, otherwise meaningless, becomes in its spiritual sense, an orderly, serial and instructive vision of the successive decline of the church as to the understanding of the Word; while in the nineteenth chapter of the same

prophecy, the restoration of understanding in the church is represented by the white horse, whose rider "is faithful and true," clothed in a vesture upon which is written the name of Him, The Word of God. These illustrations are but suggestions of the power and life of the Word in its spiritual sense; but I shall supplement them with other evidences in the discourses to come.

One word in conclusion, as to the importance of this Science of interpretation with respect to the thought of our time. The skepticism, the doubt, the perplexity of our day, need for help not less thought, but higher—a rational analysis of the whole character and purpose of the Word. You will discover, that when any one, teacher or disciple, becomes uncertain as to the real presence of a Divine message in the Scriptures, and doubtful of their origin in Divine inspiration, then all his religious thought becomes vague and uncertain. If the Church is to revive with power, if faith is to continue to exercise a function in the life of man and of society, the Word of God must be vindicated, not as history, but as a world of truth and spiritual law, with an order and harmony of its own, corresponding to the order and harmony of the world of science. This

is the purport of the doctrine of Correspondence to the Church. It resolves the Scriptures into their fundamental principles, and leads directly to unity of faith in the universals of truth respecting righteousness. The grand, universal principles of spiritual life are to be found in the heavenly senses of the Holy Scripture.

They are shadowed in its letter, it is true, but they are also apparently contradicted there. It is in the generalizations of the spiritual senses that they receive their illustration and justification; and thus it is here that the great need of our time and the great heart-wish of the best of men are met and satisfied.

It is here, also, that partial and antagonistic views of truth are seen to be parts of an harmonious whole, and thus it is here that freedom and diversity of opinion become justified in the seen and proven organic unity of all truths. It is here, also, that our conception of Divine Revelation is enlarged to include all Sacred Scripture whereby God has left Himself a witness among every people of the world; and thus it is here that the argument against the inspiration of the Bible, drawn from the correlation of truth in all the great religions of

the world, receives its own illustration, is explained and turned to the support of that it would overthrow. Inspiration doubtless needs to have a wider definition than has previously been given to it; but this will be found in the spirit that quickeneth. It is the generalizations of science which lie back of, and above all specially operating laws, that enlarge our conceptions of the universe; but the wide knowledge of suns and systems does not destroy our faith in the planet on which our feet rest, and into which open our daily functions. Even so the universal principles of spiritual life, which are opened in the new analysis of Sacred Scripture show us the deeper grounds of faith, and the harmony and final unity of all truths in all religions, at the same time that they justify and fortify our faith in the least commandment of our own Holy Bible. It is here in the spiritual sense of the Word that we come to that universal truth which the best religious sense of our day is seeking to justify, that all in every land who fear God and keep his commandments, as made known to them, shall be saved of him.

Merely natural truth has its limitations; it is partial, and determined to particular times, and places, and persons.

This is the nature of the literal sense of Holy Scripture and of all doctrine derived from it. It presents an amazing variety of expression, partial and limited appearances of truth, and seemingly contradictory commands. The unity of all these things lies below the surface, in the doctrines of the spiritual sense, which are as true on earth as they are in heaven, in one age as in another, for one man as for another. Presenting everywhere illustrations of love to God and love to the neighbor, as the sum and substance of true religion, in the church and in heaven, the doctrines of the spiritual sense are essentially Catholic and comprehensive; they include and harmonize all truths, and all expressions of truth, and are destined therefore to dissipate the falsities which men have derived from the appearances of the letter of Scripture, to redeem the Church from the schemes of councils, and to restore it in simplicity and unity of faith. Unto this end, so we believe, "the Lion of the tribe of Juda," even the Lord Himself, "hath prevailed to open the Book and loose the seals thereof;" that "the Christain Church which is founded upon the word, may again revive and draw breath through heaven from the Lord." Amen.

III.

THE LAW OF DIVINE INSPIRATION; OR, HOW THE WORD IS WRITTEN.

It is the Spirit that quickeneth.— John vi : 63.

WHEN our Lord, standing before His disciples in His Risen and Glorified body, would representatively show forth the giving of the Holy Spirit, “He breathed on them and said, receive ye the Holy Ghost.” He breathed upon them because breathing was an external representative sign of inspiration; for the Holy Spirit is the divine principle proceeding from the Lord, which, when it is received by man, is mentally or internally inspired into his understanding and life. Even so, God breathed into man at the first, “the breath of lives;” and so He continually inspires all men by the influx of His life. It is this Holy Spirit or divine sphere proceeding from the

Lord that "quickeneth," both the spirit of man, and the things that are made, and the Word that is written. This breathing forth of His Divine Spirit is real and actual; it is the perpetual influx into angels and men of the truth of His wisdom, in which is life, and whose life is the light of man. Coming to man through the angelic heavens, and finding a reception in his will and mind, it inspires him with heavenly love and intelligence and power. Coming to the Prophet in its divine mission, not to the individual but to heaven and the church,—with the overmastering purpose of revelation, not to the man but to men,—it fills him with the prophetic spirit, clothing itself in the chambers of memory, speaking through him what it listeth, and recording by his hand what it will. Coming again in unceasing streams of life and truth into that Word which is written, it vivifies and inspires the otherwise dead letter, and makes it to be—not merely to mean, but actually to be—"spirit and life."

In this general statement you will perceive the promise of a more definite and discriminating doctrine of Inspiration than that which is current. In general, Inspiration is the influx of the Holy Spirit of Wisdom and

knowledge, which gives light to the human understanding, and life to all men; but its operations and results are different, according to the specific end it seeks, and the conditions which prevail. We are to make a distinction between (a) the Inspiration which is common to all good men, and (b) the Inspiration of Prophets and Evangelists, and (c) the Inspiration of the Word written through them. The confounding of these things, which are distinct, is as hurtful as it is common; and we can have no true doctrine of the Inspiration of the Word of God until these distinctions are made clear.

1. Inspiration can not be understood, not even *the inspiration which is common to all men*, excepting as life is understood; for Inspiration proceeds in all its forms and under all conditions from the influx of Divine life. It can not be at all understood except as we apprehend the two fundamental facts of human life. Of these, the first is, that our life is God's life, given to us and received by us. The second is, that the Divine life is so given to us that it appears as our own life, and really abides in us as our own, and is used as our own, and becomes what it is in us by our free determination. And we may reconcile these

two facts in the single proposition: that man is a substantial form, receptive of Divine life in such a way that he may voluntarily use it. The Lord is the only life. He is the cause of causes, and by real efflux makes all things, not from nothing, but from Himself; and by real and constant influx into the things made He sustains and moves them. He is life in Himself, and life proceeding. Speaking truly and absolutely according to the fact, there is no more self-existent, independent life in the highest angel, in man nor animal, than there is in a block of granite. All that is created, all that is not God, is mere form and effect; and the only respect in which one created form differs from another is wholly a difference of form, or capacity to receive life and determine it to uses. All motion, all activity, whether of planet, plant, man or angel, all thought, all affection, is caused by the influx of the divine of the Lord into forms. The life is one; the manifestations differ with the differences in the receptive forms. In learning this fundamental truth, however, we have not reduced the mystery of life. Its manifestations present all the variety that they did before; we have only learned to refer this variety to difference of organization. This is a truth which science

in its own way, and in its own field, recognizes; which it applies in the whole realm of sensible things. It is the combination and relation of molecules of a definite structure which constitutes the difference between charcoal and the diamond. It is the combination and relation of cells, of a definite structure which governs in the manifestations of plant-life, and, in a still higher degree, in the manifestations of animal life. And this relation between the structure and quality of substances, and between the organic form and the quality of life manifested, is more perfectly developed with advancing discovery.

We shall be prepared to learn, then, what science, from the nature of its plane and methods of investigation, could never teach us;—that there are spiritual forms of various orders and degrees, capable of receiving and manifesting Divine life in love, intelligence and use, in the ratio of their perfection; and that man as the complex of these, is a spiritual organic form in the image and likeness of God. The doctrines of the New Church teach that spirit is as real and substantial as matter is, but on a prior and superior plane of existence. It has corresponding attributes on its own plane, and is as capable of organization as

matter is. The spiritual world is a world of spiritual substances, organized in forms, capable of variously receiving and manifesting spiritual life. Man as a spiritual being, is an organized form of spiritual substances, corresponding in functions with the complex organism of his physical body. He has successive degrees or planes of faculties corresponding with the successive degrees of Divine love and wisdom emanating from God, and receptive of them; and he has in each a will and understanding receptive of love and wisdom as such; and this complex organism is so adjusted to the reception of influx, that the life flowing in appears to be in him as his own, and becomes in him voluntary life. Divine life, which is love and wisdom itself, flows into the human will as love and there becomes the man's own, and is whatever love, desire, affection, or impulse, good or bad, it must become by his own determination of it to ends. So it flows as wisdom into his understanding, and there becomes whatever of thought, opinion, belief, or imagination, true or false, it must become by his own use of it. Thus man, as a spiritual being, is such an organic form, that life flowing in from above becomes his to use, and is thereafter, in the will, and in its activity, voluntary life. Thence



is man's freedom; which it is not easy to define. That he has it we know; and that it is inseparable from the appearance that life is his own to do with as he will, we know. This appearance is the very groundwork of individuality, fundamental to all spiritual development, and carefully protected in the order of Divine Providence. It is a wonderful effect produced from the fact that life appears only where it is revealed, and it is revealed only where it is re-acted. It enters man altogether unperceived, because it enters by his unconscious higher degrees. Those degrees previous to their development are like the unoccupied apartments or stories of a house; man does not live in them, nor has he any practical knowledge of their value. Life enters man by his inmost or supreme degree, in which not even the celestial angels are conscious, and is therefore unperceived in its entrance and descent until it comes into the plane of his conscious and voluntary life. This at first is the very lowest plane of his natural faculties; and being there first manifested, that appears to be its origin, and it appears to be his own, and he is free to use it as his own. Every impulse of affection and every thought of truth which is inspired into man is so presented as to respect and conserve

this freedom; for, by means of it alone can man acquire by his affections and thoughts and deeds, any moral or spiritual character whatsoever.

The Inspiration of Divine life into every man, is, therefore, of two kinds. First, immediate, sustaining in him the faculty of willing and thinking; and second, mediate, presenting emotions and thoughts accommodated to his voluntary reception. The first communicates the life by which he lives, and is free to direct his living. The second inspires him with good emotions and true perceptions, and thus assists his freedom. Having made this distinction, we shall be prepared to see something of the nature and method of that inspiration by which every man who will, may rise into goodness, intelligence and heavenly usefulness.

The Holy Spirit of truth comes down through heaven into man's conscious and voluntary life, and is there presented as emotion and thought, which are perceived no otherwise than his own; because it has been finited and humanized by its descent through those who are above man and nearer to God. These are the angels, who also exist in successive heavens, according to the faculties

which are opened in them corresponding to the discrete degrees of Divine truth from the Lord. Some are higher than others, and nearer to God; some are lower and nearer to man. Those who are highest and nearest to God first receive the Divine truth as it flows forth from Him into forms receivable by them. It clothes itself in their minds with thought and becomes their wisdom; and thus mediated it is perceptible to angels lower than the highest; and by a similar process, through the successive planes of being, the truth becomes the thought and wisdom of those in the spiritual world, who are lowest among the good and wise there, and nearest to man. In their minds it has become such that it may descend into the thought of man, and be given up to his faculties and his freedom to be used as his own thought and intelligence. This is "the light which coming into the world enlighteneth every man." From this is all of man's thought, invention, imagination and reason, greater or less, higher or lower, according as he, in his freedom, receives it and uses it. He may turn it into darkness, misapply it, and pervert it into foolishness; or he may receive it with joy, use it with diligence, and rise by its means above

his ordinary level of preception and wisdom. It is this inspiration which lifts the poet above his knowledge, and the preacher above his own wisdom, and shows to both worlds of truth which they have never explored in actual experience. It is this inspiration which fills the mind of the inventor with forms he has never seen, and enables him to copy that in his mind he could never create unaided. It is this which illuminates our minds at all times, combining new forms of thought, and increasing our intelligence and wisdom in proportion to our dutiful and orderly use of it, without compulsion, freely and in the full sense that it is our own.

This inspiration can only minister to the development of character and latent possibilities of intelligence as it is thus freely received and determined to the uses of life; and, therefore, man is always kept unconscious of it as inspiration. The nearest approach to a consciousness of it which he ever has is when he perceives unwonted light and mental activity; and then when he reflects about it and compares this illumination with his customary obscurity he calls it inspiration. That it is; and the light of it waxes and wanes according to his voluntary discipleship and obedience.

2. But *the Inspiration of Prophets and Evangelists is different from this.* That kind of Inspiration comes when the Divine wisdom flows into the understanding of the man, but does not become his own. When God would reveal His truth in its own correspondent images, He clothes it as before in its descent through the heavens of angels with the thoughts and perceptions apprehensible to them, and thus accommodated enters into the understanding of one whom He has chosen for an especial instrument, and of whom He takes possession. The influent wisdom, then, so far as its purposes require, uses the senses, the mind, the memory, the thoughts, the habits of thinking, the beliefs and the imaginations of the man; but uses them all to effect its own purposes. These purposes respect the good of men, and not of the individual; and the revelation is made, not to him, but through him, by an Inspiration that controls him. And because all lower and sensuous knowledges, thoughts and images correspond to those which are higher, the influent wisdom uses whatever it finds in the man's mind to express higher and spiritual truths. And every thought and word thus selected and adopted is such as to be exactly Correspondent with the divine

truth within. So that the form given to the truth in heaven, the thoughts which it put on in the minds of the angels, and the senses in which they understand it, and the truth itself as it is in God, are all within the literal expression furnished from the mind of the human instrument. Thus the Holy Scriptures were written, and when the record was made, or any part of the record at any time, the prophetic spirit was withdrawn, and the prophet remanded into his own voluntary life. His inspiration was miraculous, if you please; it was at least special and for a specific purpose, controlled by the will of God, and not his own will. What he wrote under such Inspiration is verily the Word of God, and is itself Inspired.

3. This brings us to speak of *the Inspiration of that which is thus written*; which is too often overlooked because of failure to distinguish between the inspiration which is common to all, and that which is peculiar to the sacred penman. When the inspiration of the Scriptures is spoken of, it is commonly meant simply that they were written by inspired men; and the inspiration of the writers is not regarded as different in kind from the inspiration of teachers and commenta-

tors. But it *is* different in kind; and the *Inspiration of the Scriptures* is a Divine fact, superior to either of the other kinds of inspiration, for it is plenary and complete. If we say, then, the Word of God is Inspired, we say what we mean—that the thing written is Inspired, independently of the mind of the penman who wrote it. The Inspiration of the Word results from the peculiar Divine control of the writer, and consists in the Divine wisdom it contains, which alone giveth spiritual life. “The words that I speak unto you they are spirit and they are life.” This is the real principle of their inspiration. It does not derive its Inspiration from the writer, but from the Living Word Himself, who is thus able to impart to this last and ultimate expression of His truth, this letter of Scripture which may be read and heard of man, certain qualities that make it the basis and foundation of heaven, and the means of inspiring all men with light divine and life eternal.

Of these the first is, that this literal word is a body, a definite expression of Divine wisdom, and an adequate instrument of Divine life. It is not merely a writing, but a creation, an emanation from God proceeding by discrete degrees of the spiritual world

and the mind of man, and resting in representative histories and images, which also by its presence it makes Divine. Even that side of revelation which is formally human is essentially divine because of the presence of the divine and spiritual within it. "Although its literal form is molded by man's *state*, it is not determined by his *will*. The materials for this temple of the Divine presence have indeed been supplied by man, but its Maker and Builder is God. The stones may have been rough-hewn in the quarry of the human mind, but no sound of human hammer or axe has been heard in the sacred edifice while building. No doubt the Scriptures are different in their outward form and appearance from what they would have been if the state of mankind at the time had been less degraded. The letter would then have been a more perfect image of its spirit; would have contained no indications of an angry God; no command to slaughter nations and seize upon their heritage; no sanction of concubinage; no worship of God by offering Him the blood of slain beasts." These things, however, only show the condition of those to whom it was first accommodated; and are evidences of its perfection, if so be even these con-

tain within them a spirit as pure and holy as the most perfect form of revelation could contain. We shall consider hereafter the principle of adaptation and accommodation to human states upon which the letter of the Word is necessarily selected; but it concerns us now, mainly, to observe that because it is selected through man and not by the will of man, and because whatever its outward appearance, it is correspondent with and representative of the truths of Divine wisdom, it therefore necessarily contains them and is inspired by them. It is because it is inspired with a distinct spiritual sense that its essential life is able to descend to man while reading it devoutly in the letter, and thereby to bring him into conjunction with heaven. Without a spiritual sense, without the living Word Himself present, the written Word could not, indeed, have this conjoining power; but, inspired as it is, its conjoining power is not dependent upon man's ability to enter into the spiritual sense by the Science of Correspondences, or any other means of mere study. It is rather in this, that as man devoutly reads the letter, the angels enter into the ideas to which the letter corresponds. The letter of the Word, its histories, images, symbols, precepts and com-

mandments, when read by man or entertained in his thoughts; forms in his mind that basis and foundation for heaven which his natural mind, perverted as it is, could in no other way present to the Lord. Into this orderly receptacle the Divine influx of life and spirit, which is personal to every man, can be imparted, and the man be led into vital communion with angels and conjunction with the Lord.

The literal sense and the spiritual sense are one, as body and soul, because they correspond; and therefore when man devoutly reads the Word in its letter, "internal truth flows in and is conjoined with external, man being ignorant of it." This is the source of that peculiar power in the Word, of which every devout reader is sensible, which can not be accounted for by the ideas of the letter alone, and which, therefore, the infidel ridicules as superstition. It is by this communion with heaven, which the Word effects through its double sense, that those occasional perceptions of the interior significance of a simple story or an obscure symbol in the Scriptures, which every humble student of the Bible, as God's message, has experienced, are effected. The influx of good entering from the Lord into the interiors of the mind,

inspires and gives life to the truth which enters from without, and becomes perceptible as a holy consolation, a refreshment, an impulse of good, a strengthening of faith, an illumination of thought. By the method of its composition, and consequent inspiration of Divine wisdom, so holy, so perfect, so exactly correspondent with spiritual truth, is the letter of the Word, that it continually bears the life of the spirit and the bread of heaven, down, even to the natural man.

This power of the Word, by virtue of its double sense, to conjoin heaven and the church, and bring down spiritual life and knowledge to man, is a matter of very great practical importance and comfort. But we must not overlook the great and important use of the spiritual sense of the Word as revealed and entered into in some degree by men on earth. Its value, together with the Science of Correspondence, is not in substituting a merely intellectual study of correspondences for the devout reading and contemplation of the Holy Word in its letter; for there can be no substitute with men on earth for the Divine Life and power of truth in its own Holy ultimate. But the value of the revelation of the spiritual sense of the Word is, first, that we

may know what Scripture is really Divine from plenary inspiration; and second, that we may have the genuine doctrines of truth by which as a lamp to read the letter. The letter of Holy Scripture has been separated from its spirit in the Church; the very existence of a spiritual sense has been denied; and there is consequently no vital doctrinal belief, and very little practical belief in the Divinity of the letter. It is when it is so regarded, apart from its Divine origin, and in its own light, that "the letter killeth." What the Science of Correspondence does for the man of the Church, therefore, is, to furnish him with the internal evidence of the Divine Inspiration of the Word, and to supply him with a principle by which to test the Canon of the Word independently of any authority of tradition. Only that Scripture is plenary Inspired which contains an internal sense, and the doctrine of Correspondence in its application to the Canon reveals what books have such a sense. These are the five books of Moses, Joshua, Judges, the two books of Samuel, the two of Kings, the Psalms, all the Prophets from Isaiah to Malachi, the four Gospels, and the Book of Revelation. These books are written according to the law of Correspond-

ence, containing an internal sense, and effecting an immediate communication with heaven; but the Epistles and other Scripture, though written by inspired men, do not contain an internal sense, and do not claim to be the Word of the Lord. The inspiration of the Apostles, was inspiration of the kind that is common to good and holy men, and their Epistles contain the doctrine of the Gospels; but containing no internal sense they do not possess that plenary Inspiration which belongs for instance to the Gospels themselves. If this division of the Canon seems to you arbitrary, and obnoxious to your pious traditions, I beg of you to remember that it rests upon internal evidences which are verifiable, and that it in no way degrades the Epistles, but only exalts the Plenary Inspired Word, which is seen by Correspondence to possess an Internal Sense. We hold the inspiration of the Epistles and the book of Proverbs, for example, as high as any doctrine of Inspiration current in any school of theology; but we place the Inspiration of the Pentateuch, and the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings, and the Psalms, the Prophets and the Gospels, inconceivably higher than any doctrine of the church has ever been able to place it. The revelation of the

spiritual sense enables us, then, to know what books are the Very Word of God, why and in what manner they are Divine, and that by them the Lord immediately quickens the souls of men. The knowledge of the existence of a spiritual sense is like a vision of Jacob's ladder; for so do men behold the Holy Word, its foot resting on the earth, its top reaching to heaven, and angels ascending and descending thereon between God and the human soul. "If man were aware of the existence of a Spiritual Sense, and when reading the Word were to allow his thoughts to be influenced by his knowledge of it, he would come into interior wisdom, and into a still closer conjunction with heaven, because he would thus enter into ideas similar to those of the angels."

Moreover, the doctrines of the Christian churches have really falsified the letter of the Word by confirming its apparent truths as genuine truths; they have taken away "the key of knowledge," and perverted the genuine Divine truth which shines through its letter in places like a face through a veil. The Spiritual Sense of the Word was therefore revealed, that the man of the Church might have the genuine doctrines of truth as a lamp by the light of which to read the Word in its

letter. Thus the doctrine of Correspondence, and the Spiritual Sense of the Word as opened by means of it, are needed in the Church for the development of a spiritual reason in man, the cultivation of a rational faith, and the triumphant vindication of the Divine authenticity of the Scriptures; and all this, if for nothing else, that men may approach the Word of God devoutly, in prayer and faith, to receive through its very letter the spiritual sustenance which flows down into the minds of those who so approach it.

Another quality which is given to the letter of the Word, by its inspiration and dictation, is that the truths, or appearances of truth, in the letter, are expressed "in such a way that the simple may understand in simplicity, and the wise in wisdom." In many places, for example: anger, wrath and vengeance are attributed to the Lord; and it is said that He punishes, casts into hell, tempts, and such like things. He who believes this in simplicity, and on that account fears God and guards himself from sin against Him, will by that very faith and obedience be brought into a vital realization of the genuine truth that the Lord is love itself, and the appearances of anger and wrath are the only reflection of man's

own opposition to goodness and truth. And thus it is with the truths of the letter of the Word both genuine and apparent; they are precisely those, which being, obeyed if they be command, or learned, and made fertile by meditation, if they be instruction, will gradually lift up the mind to a perception of the higher truths within.

It may be asked why need the written Word be so given, with its essential meaning obscured in literal appearances? Why was it not composed in such a manner that the genuine truth could be perceived by everyone? And I might ask in return, why was not this natural world so constituted that everyone could comprehend it at a glance? Why do so many things in the world around us appear different from what they are? Why does not the flash of the lightning reveal to the wondering savage the science of electricity? Why should the God of nature delude His intelligent creatures with such fallacies as are everywhere inseparable from the senses?

The answer to these questions is the answer to the other. We have learned that the fallacies and appearances of nature are inseparable from the senses, and that their underlying principles are only discoverable by experience,

observation and reason; and a revelation which is to reach the sensual mind of man must observe the same law. Just as the senses refuse to see things in nature otherwise than as they appear, and, however exalted and extensive the cultivation of science, still maintain the impressions of phenomena as presented to the merest child; just as all the truths of science subsequently learned, serves only to explain the impressions of the senses, and see themselves imaged therein, and rest firmly in them as their eternal foundation; so the religious impressions derived from the letter of the Word, remain through all our development of a rational theology; and all our knowledge of spiritual realities neither removes them nor weakens them, but converts them into a mirror wherein it sees itself reflected. Because the Word of our Written Bible is, in itself a series of related adaptations of divine wisdom to angels and men, extant an open book in all the heavens and on the earth, we may take hold of it anywhere, and find the Lord there. In simplest precept, or in figure or song, whatever appeals to our state, and impresses our religious faculty, there, with humility and love, or with shame and fear, as the case may be, we may rest in a be-

ginning of obedience, and find the Lord of all life. For he dwells by influx in all its forms and appearances, to operate our regeneration, and "open our eyes to behold the wonderful things in His law."

And now, in conclusion, let us turn once more to the representative act of the Lord with which we began. The disciples on whom he breathed represent these inspired truths of His Word and doctrine; and the breathing forth of His holy spirit represents that common influx through heaven into the mind of man, by which these truths become "teachers taught of Him" are sent forth into his mental world to convert and turn it unto righteousness. Whosoever sins they remit are remitted; that is, whoever submits to their guidance in the shunning of evils, is delivered from the power of his sins. Whosoever will not yield to their guidance in the shunning of evils because they are sins, then are his sins retained. Such is the commission and power of the Word of God even in its letter. Its truths are Divine and infallible teachers and judges of men, because they are mediums of that Spirit of wisdom and knowledge which is able to "guide into all truth" and "convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment." But

this infallibility of which we speak is not that which men oppose and defend in their debates concerning the authenticity of the history or science in the Bible. The Word is infallible for its own purposes, which are divine and eternal. It has nothing to do with history or science except to use them, or to use men's impressions of them, so far as they can be used in the giving of an ultimate body to revelation in the world. The infallibility of the truths of the Word, is not therefore, as teachers of natural wisdom, but as quickeners of eternal life in whosoever will obey; as teachers, "able to make men wise unto salvation." AMEN.

IV.

THE HISTORY OF REVELATION; OR, THE SUCCESSIVE DIS- PENSATIONS OF THE CHURCH.

The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.—John I, 14.

THE internal sense of the Word opens to thought the organic nature, and the needs of the human soul; the nature and consequences of evil; the nature and progress of regeneration; the augmentation of blessedness in heaven, and the insane delights of the wicked in hell. It opens, also, the spiritual history of the race, the successive states of the Church, and the corresponding Divine dispensations of truth, or the degrees and modes of Divine revelation and manifestation. The race has had its well defined periods of progress, corresponding to infancy, childhood, youth and manhood, in the individual. These are its Ages with respect to its successive states: its

Dispensations or Churches, with respect to the manifestation of the Word and Providence of God. The Spiritual history of these dispensations or Churches, and the corresponding adaptations of "the Word," which "was with God, and was God," constitutes what may be called "the internal historical sense" of Holy Scripture; and I propose in this discourse to present a summary view of this history of revelation and the corresponding dispensations of the Church, as it is expounded in the doctrines of the New Church. The scope of the subject is so vast, that I must of necessity speak dogmatically and in general terms; but it is, also, of so great importance to the whole subject before us, that the barest statement will be found of use in a judgment of the doctrine of the Sacred Scriptures here advocated. I may remind you that the means of verification are at hand, within easy reach of every sincere student.

Revelation necessarily has a history, and its history is at the same time the history of the Church. We may be sure of this, if we remember (*a*) that the Revelation of the Word is God's manifestation to finite men of the infinite things of his own Wisdom, (*b*) that nothing can be given to men which cannot be

received by them, and (c) that ages and races differ indefinitely in their capacity of reception. As ages succeed, or as the states of men change, the manifestation of the Word, which is the light of infinite life, must change its form in adaptation to this varied receptivity. Otherwise it could not be received, and the light would shine in darkness, uncomprehended. If for this reason Revelation is multiform, the order and succession of changes in its adaptation, must correspond with the order of the spiritual progress of mankind. The history of the one is the history of the other.

Another preliminary statement of importance is, that the individual is the image of the universal man. Beginning in the innocence of infancy and progressing through, the simple, open, sincere, affectionate confidence of childhood, and the restless, willful self-assertion of youth, the individual develops gradually to manhood. With continual fluctuations, these successive stages in the life of man mark a gradual development of science, and a strengthening of the powers of the natural man; but on the other hand there is a spiritual declension from the affectionate docility of infancy and the faith of childhood, to the self-will and pride of intelligence which mark the natural

man. As it is, thus, with the individual, so has it been with the race—the larger man.

So far as natural science is able at all to read the history of the race, it has been with all its fluctuations a substantial progress in civilization and natural knowledge. The spiritual sense of the Word, however, discloses to us the other side of this development, showing a spiritual declension, marked by a succession of Divine dispensations and Churches, in which the Heavenly Father adapted His Word to the changing conditions and successive spiritual deflections of His children.

Now, it is important to remember that in both cases the end is an angelic maturity. Both with the individual and with the race, spiritual preparation is made in the successive declining stages, for subsequent redemption and regeneration; while on the other hand the progressive natural development is becoming a prepared foundation for the subsequent activity of redeemed and quickened spiritual powers. The innocent states of infancy, the pupilage of childhood, and the discipline of youth are internally stored away, and “remain,” to be again vivified and developed in the time of man’s mature rational regeneration. Though seemingly forgotten, while man

is developing as a social and civilized natural being, they return with multiplying power in the spiritual states of his religious maturity. In close analogy with this progress of man, the successive Divine dispensations or churches, from Adam to the coming of the Lord, furnished a necessary preparation for the Incarnation and Redemption in Jesus Christ. The Word was not immediately "made flesh," but mediately through a succession of Divine dispensations.

The internal sense of the Word presents five general dispensations of the Church. The word Church is used in this connection, not to indicate sects, organizations or establishments, but the mode of Divine revelation, and the form of religious life *in* man. The church is the Kingdom of God on earth; it is the revelation of Divine truth and goodness, and on man's part it is the way of apprehending the truth and the degree of obedience to it. On its Divine side the Church, therefore, is one in all time, for it is the giving forth of that Word, which is with God, and is God; but on its human side, it varies according to man's capacity of understanding and doing the Word. In either view, it is a Kingdom of God within man, and not a thing of outward

observation. It is proper enough to call our organizations and instrumentalities which are derived from the Word and Church in man, churches; but this is not the primary sense of the word Church. It is not the sense in which we use it in this present connection; and when we speak of dispensations or Churches, the degree and mode of Divine revelation, and the corresponding forms of the religious life in man, are to be understood. Using the word in this sense, the Holy Scriptures present, as I said, five general dispensations of the Church;—three preceding the Incarnation, one inaugurated by it, and the fifth predicted, and now beginning to be realized. Those which preceded the Incarnation, mark the successive stages of the Divine adaptation of truth to man's "fall," even till it was manifested to his sensuous perception "in the flesh," to work in the plane of his natural life a plenary redemption. We shall see that "the fall of man" was gradual, and the coming of the Lord into the world was progressive; and, in the whole wonderful history, we are to behold a steady evolution of the Divine purpose to become Himself, the Rock against which the gates of hell should not prevail, and have to Himself a Church which shall be indeed the Bride, the Lamb's wife.

The first state of the Church, and the Golden Age of the race, is set in Holy Scripture under the allegory, or "composed history" of Adam and the Garden of Eden. In the spiritual sense of the first chapters of Genesis, we have a very full and explicit showing of the innocent, artless, infantile character of the Most Ancient Church. Under the symbol of creation is portrayed the development of the celestial man by the Spirit of the Lord; not the creation of the outward phenomenal heavens and earth and moving things, but the development of the internal spiritual earth and heavens of the soul; the orderly regeneration of primitive men; the formation of their will and understanding, with their affections and perceptions, by and under the moving Spirit of God. The Garden of Eden, the paradise of God, is the resultant state of mind and heart; with the Lord and the perception of His life ever present, and all heavenly growths of affection and thought springing up in the soul, from the heat and light of His immanent Spirit.

Let us pause for a moment upon this wonderful story of Creation. There is just now in the Churches a revival of the attempt to harmonize the first chapter of Genesis with

current science, and by a skillful, and doubtless innocent, reading of the truth of science into the narrative, the attempt is attended with a measure of apparent success. But the result is quite disproportionate to the labor expended, and can scarcely be called satisfactory. The general truth that God is the Creator of the universe, is a truth of revelation, which science cannot discover, but which it may confirm. Beyond this the attempt to read the lessons of observation into the story of Creation issues in nothing; it results in no other important contribution to either natural or spiritual knowledge. When all is done that can be done in that direction, we still feel that there must be some other worthy spiritual revelation for us in the wonderful details of the narrative in Genesis. The Science of Correspondence in opening to us the spiritual meaning of this Scripture justifies this feeling, and vindicates the Word of God as such. The structure of the narrative, which has been a source of such infinite trouble to the literal interpreters, is seen to have a divine cause in the message and meaning it bears; and to yield an orderly serial and instructive description of the processes and progressions of God's spiritual Creation, or regeneration of man. The "Creation"



described is regeneration ; the active agent is the Word, the Spirit of God ; the field of operation is the heavens and earth within man, or what the apostle calls, the internal and external man ; the six days are the successive states of spiritual development ; and the Sabbath of rest is the resultant concordance of human nature with the Divine nature, when all in man is God's in him, and "very good."

Regeneration is the birth, or development of the Spiritual nature in man, and like all birth it is orderly and progressive.

The natural mind, which is born from the world, from the impressions of the senses, and habits of systematic thought in regard to those impressions, is first formed in man before the spiritual planes of his nature can be developed in the least. But in this state of the natural man, preparation is made for their development. Some knowledge of spiritual things can be laid up in the treasure-house of his memory. He can be taught that there is a God, and a spiritual world, and that realities which transcend the senses have claims upon his attention ; and in the learning of these things, in his infancy and childhood, certain affections of delight in them are stored away in the, as yet unconscious, interiors of his soul.

But darkness broods over the sea of worldly knowleges and possibilities; what he has learned of spiritual things, is chaotic, and without power to reduce the things of his consciousness to order and endow them with heavenly life. To quicken all these possibilities, the Spirit of God moves in him, and the Living Word comes to him with its "light." Then begins with man a second state, in which he finds that he has two natures; an inward and an outward man; and that, therefore, there are two spheres of knowledge, one pertaining to the outward world, and the other to God and immortal life. The knowledge of God and his law, now stands apart in awful distinctness and clothed with its own authority; not to be confounded with the mere natural knowleges which come through the avenues of sense. If it has slept inoperative, the breath of God may vivify it, and discriminate it from our own will and thought, and lay a solemn interdiction upon our evils and errors. Then comes in a third state, in which man begins, from the Lord, to talk piously and devoutly, and to do good actions; but which, nevertheless, are not living or saving, because they are supposed to originate in himself. The outward and inward man are

not only separated by the firmament; but they are placed face to face, and in opposition to each other. Man obeys the Lord's truth, but it is a forced obedience, rendered in opposition to inclination. In the first place, truth was only something learned; in the second state, it was seen to be from the Lord, and invested with his Divine authority; but in this third state, it comes out with its reasons and the commands of conscience. It brings repentance and self-denial; and must continue until we are subdued, and our moralities are fixed in habit. When this state is full, and its work completed, still our evils are not removed.

But they have been silenced, and self-love loosened in all its intrenchments; and then at last, the Lord will come into the heart, and take up all its room, dimly at first, full-orbed at last. This fourth state is that in which man receives from the Lord the sun of spiritual love, and the moon of living faith, and the stars of heavenly knowledge, all set in the firmament of the internal mind, to shed light and quickening into the reformed earth of the external man. Man is moved with new impulses, and thinks and acts from the Divine will as his central and controlling motive. The old lusts

and persuasions are not merely loosened, but they move out, even beyond the region of the consciousness, as this new and mighty love for goodness and truth for their own sake becomes the very life of man's affections. We not only believe the truth but see it and feel it. Our moralities become spontaneous, the outbursting of the soul's unfailing love. They are living and life-giving; and the following states of the regenerate life, are only the ultimations of this new will and faith, in all the living forms of regenerate natural affection and perception. When the love of the Lord has become fixed in the heart, and burns there as an eternal sun, it not only transfuses all our beliefs and runs them into celestial moulds, but all our knowledge is exalted into the service of the new man. Then finally the central Divine love flows forth into all our deeds; they are duties no longer, but delights. This is the sixth day in which God makes a man in His image and likeness; it is the end of the states of labor, for the Sabbath comes, the golden dawn of God's eternal rest in the soul.

Primeval men, though free from the tendencies and proclivities to evil which we inherit as the result of a tainted ancestry, were, nevertheless, merely natural men, needing to be re-

born, or developed as spiritual beings into the image and likeness of God. With them the processes of regeneration were free from the throes of spiritual temptation, which men at this day encounter on account of inherited evil, but the succession of states and order of development was the same as it is with us, and as it will always be. This, of which we have given only the most general statement, is presented in the Story of Creation. Every detail of the narrative is pregnant with the most enlightening doctrine as to the progressive development of the spiritual nature of primeval men, even to the establishment with them of the Celestial Church. Like a garden planted by the Lord, was the Most Ancient Church in the perfection and beauty of its first estate. It pulsed with the Divine life, and was irradiated with its light. The natural history of this age is not preserved, but every item in the Bible Story of Adam is replete with significance as to its celestial state; and something of the same Allegory is preserved in the traditions of all peoples. The men of this age were simple, open, sincere, affectionate and true. They acted from impulse; but their impulse was derived from the Lord. The Word which "was with God, and was God,"

flowed into them as a stream from the Divine fountain; indeed as the very Divine life itself, and thus a living light. The Lord walked and talked with them in the midst of the garden; they were capable of holding Communion with God by means of His love and wisdom "written on their hearts." They were capable thus of loving what he loved, and lived in open perception of His wisdom. Heaven and earth were united in them; the will of God was done in earth as it is in heaven; and the whole phenomenal world was a mirror of Divine intelligence, wisdom peace and love. They had no need of external verbal revelation of truth to guide them into the apprehension and perception of it. Instead of the command to love the Lord with all the heart, or the teaching that they should do so, with the reasons for so doing, they had this truth inspired through the heart and revealed to them in affection to do so. They needed no instruction from without, no authority to coerce, and no reasons to persuade; for to what is good they had a "yea" implanted in the will, and to what is evil a "nay," with none of that stubbornness of will which requires more than these. They needed no compass to shape their course, for the truth was in their wind and tide. As

they received light from the life within, their inclinations and appetites were of the truth, and were true.

In time, for reasons into which we cannot enter particularly, the people of the Most Ancient Church fell away from this single-minded communion with the Lord. The reasons, indeed, are not easy to give. In what the fall of man consisted we shall see; that it came in the exercise of his implanted freedom we may believe; but how the first impulse and enticement grew upon him, when all was "very good," it would be more difficult to show. Perhaps we shall see an image of this, but only an image, in the transition of the infant to the child with its more pronounced willfulness. Its senses are more and more developed; and with their advance toward supremacy there comes in something of self-assertion, and self-confidence. This was the fall of the people of the Most Ancient Church, however it may have come about—a yielding to the suggestions of the serpent, the sensual principle, with its persuasion that all things were not from the Lord, that they themselves were really good and wise, and might of themselves judge of good and evil. Then began the decline of that Church; and then

was given the promise of the Messiah. The progress of its consummation was gradual; and under the names of the posterity of Adam is detailed the various sects into which it divided, and by which preparation was made for a new Church and a new dispensation of the Word, when the consummation of that should have fully come.

At the end of every Church, the Lord saves a remnant, with whom may be established a new dispensation; or what is the same thing: He provides that the new shall be established with the few who abide in faith and hope to the end of the old. The Golden Age passed away, and the Adamic Church was swallowed up in a flood of evil practices and false doctrines. The Silver Age followed, and a new Church was established, the spiritual history of which is set forth under the story of Noah and his posterity. It is in this change that we shall see how the Lord, or the Word, follows man, with adaptations adequate to his new necessity.

The men of the former age acted from impulse; and, while their impulses were good, all was very good. But when, from the deflection of the will, their impulses were turned into evil, they still followed them.

“Every imagination of the thought of their hearts was only evil continually; and how was it possible for the Lord to reclaim them? How, indeed, but by bringing the race to a halt, and giving it a new start, and this in a new direction! When He could no longer lead man by his affections—when every influx of the Divine Life into man’s will was turned into evil desire, and this in turn presented itself in his thought in the form of falsity—the Lord interposed by presenting His Word to the thought first through an external revelation. Thus, by a radically new dispensation of the Word, in an entirely new way, the Lord inaugurated a new state of the Church.

With the Noetic Church a new mode of life was introduced; by external revelation it was made possible to think and reflect concerning the truth as something apart from that which the heart loved. The understanding could be elevated above the will, and truth learned as doctrine, could be acknowledged as duty, and finally loved for its own sake. The Adamic Church had only perception of truth from love, and when the love was evil the truth was turned into falsity in the thought, but the Noetic Church was endowed with conscience formed by a new manifestation of the Word

through an external revelation which could be learned, understood and loved. The Adamic Church beheld heaven in the earth; they perceived without reflection the Divine and heavenly things in their earthly Correspondences.

The Noetic Church, on the other hand, was taught intellectually to see spiritual things in natural things. The knowledge of Correspondences was given as a science in the form of doctrine; and the Divine truth was externally revealed by means of a written Word composed exclusively according to the correspondence of natural with Divine things. Representative worship was instituted in which the places, the sacrifices and symbolism, were all significative of spiritual things; and the signification was communicated to Novitiates by instruction, and preserved by tradition. The references in the Bible to the book of Jasher, the Wars of Jehovah, and the Enunciations confirm the existence of an ancient Word; and Swedenborg teaches us that the first chapters of Genesis, which treat of Creation, of Adam and Eve, of the Garden of Eden, and of their sons and posterity down to the flood, and also, of Noah and his sons, were transcribed from that Word by Moses. (T. C. R. 279.)

The Christian world has come to recognize that there was an Old Testament before the Pentateuch was written, and that traces of these lost works are to be found in the actual text; and it ought to be well disposed therefore, toward the further teaching that it was continued in use among some of the nations of the East, down even to the time of the Jewish dispensation. And from the character of the early chapters of Genesis, which are generally believed to have been copied from more ancient documents, it may easily be confirmed that the earliest written revelation was given in the pure language of Correspondences. It was because that Word was full of Correspondences which signified celestial and spiritual things remotely, and consequently began to be falsified by many, that in Divine Providence it disappeared, and another Word was given, written by Correspondences not so remote. For in the course of time, the Ancient Church also fell away, as had the Adamic Church before it. Noah became drunken with the wine of his own vineyard; that is to say, the people of the Ancient Church began to pervert the doctrines of spiritual truth to the feeding of their pride and self-gratification. They began to consult their own intelligence regarding

Divine things, to be deceived with their own conceits, and confused with their own reasonings. They aspired to build a Tower which should reach to heaven; and instead of one speech and language as at first, their doctrines became confused and divided; they gradually lost their knowledge of Divine language, became Idolators, Magicians and Sorcerers, and in their dispersion lost their written Word itself. The partial and vitiated doctrines of its Divine wisdom were preserved in the traditions, and written in the sacred books of the various nations; but no longer possessing the key to the ancient Correspondences and representatives, their worship soon descended into one form or another of polytheism and idolatry.

In natural knowledge and civilization the race was advancing. The rise of empires began—Egypt, Nineveh and Babylon—the foundations of which outstretch even the farthest reach of tradition. But on its spiritual side the race was declining, and God following it. When the Celestial perception of the Adamic Church was destroyed, the Lord invested Himself as the Word with the Spiritual doctrines of truth revealed to the understanding of the Noetic Church; and

when this also failed, He called Abraham, and inaugurated a new dispensation of the Church with the Hebrew and Jewish people, and led them by means of direct commandments, wonders, and threats and promises. First, to Abraham and the Patriarchs, by Angelophanies, and such direct supernatural revelation as they were able to receive, and afterward to the Jews under the leadership of Moses, and through the word of the Prophets, the Lord established a representative of a Church, unto the time when He must needs come in the flesh, and put forth the might of His Divine truth in a humanity of His own.

The idea to be sustained is, that from the fall of Adam to the time of the appearing of Jesus Christ, the Church gradually declined from its primeval simplicity; man receding further and further from the interior love of God and the perception of his wisdom; that the Lord as the Word successively accommodated His Divine Truth to this declining perception; and that when the children of Israel were chosen to represent a "holy nation," and a "royal priesthood," man had arrived at a most external state in regard to religion, in which the things of the Word could only be believed so far as they were presented to the

outward senses. The Church of heavenly impulse passed away, and the Church of faith succeeded; this declined, and the Church of mere external obedience followed, and as this declined the semblance of a Church was maintained through the miraculously enforced obedience of Israel. In all this time, and by successive accommodations to these states of decline in human perception, the Word was being made flesh, and the Lord was descending with His children into the plane of sensuous life. In man's innocence the Lord walked and talked with him in the garden of his soul. In man's state of spiritual charity, the Lord revealed himself to the understanding through the natural representatives in which man could perceive the spiritual subjects. In the obscuration of charity He kept alive some faith in his Word, and some knowledge of Himself as God-man, through the manifestation of the Angel of His presence. In man's natural rebellion and worldliness He followed him with wonders, and punishments and rewards, and kept him in a sort of enforced obedience. And when man became wholly carnal, so that even Divine truth addressed to the natural mind lost its power over human conduct, through the separation of his heart

from Divine goodness, the Word was made flesh, and exhibited in the form of man, and in the Divine conduct of human life before the very senses of men.

In each of these successive manifestations of the Word it had been invested with something of man, clothed with forms derived from the state of human reception, until in the Jewish church it was so accommodated to their "froward" hearts, that they were allowed to think of God as altogether such an one as themselves; of His law as arbitrary command, obedience to which was only to be inspired by fear, or hope of temporal prosperity.

In such a state, so clothed and so regarded, Divine Truth is shorn of its power over the lives of men. They soon began to stone the prophets, and kill those that were sent unto them; till the Divine communication died out in Malichi with the promise of the Lord's coming, with "glad tidings" to those who looked unto Him and hoped in Him for deliverance, and with woe to those who feared Him not. When that night also reached its culmination in the perversion of the law through tradition, then He did come by another, and the lowest and the purest revelation of Divine Truth

then possible. He raised up, when "there was no man," a man of His own by immediate impregnation of a virgin, and Divine Conception; and manifested the Word in the flesh for the redemption promised from the beginning.

Thus, through all the dispensations of the Church it was the Father following the prodigal, working and waiting in Divine patience till he came to the swine-husks; where and when, for the first time mightily, He could reach forth His hand to help. When man, therefore, had put darkness for light, and perverted even the precepts of the Decalogue till they reached no real plane of human life, it was time for the Lord to reveal Himself anew. When there was no medium by which the Divine love could reach the corrupt heart to quicken it, it was necessary for the Lord to assume a new medium by which to dispense His life and light with power. This was the occasion of the Incarnation. Divine truth was well nigh lost to human apprehension in the external rites and ceremonies, which from merely sensual perception in the Church were loved for no significance of their own, but from an idolatrous, sensuous devotion. Lower than this the Divine truth with men cannot

exist, and profaned in the Church it was shorn of its power. The ends of salvation required a Divine revelation which should under-reach man's rebellion, and dispense the Divine truth with power of help to his very lowest sensuous state.

The Lord as the Word was made flesh, and addressed Himself to this sensual intellect in man; and thus came into the world to be seen with the eyes and heard with the ears, so that if only through the medium of the senses mankind might learn anew to comprehend something of the Divine love and wisdom, and from understanding progress to love and do His precepts, and live. The spirit of the Most High clothed itself in with humanity in the womb of a virgin, and took human nature into conjunction with His invisible and unapproachable essence, and thus stretched forth an arm into the natural world by which to subdue man's enemies and mediate to his lowest necessities, the Divine spirit of life and all might. This was that coming of the Word for which preparation had been made from the first; for this, all who loved God, and hoped in his redemption, in every dispensation of the Church, were taught to look; and unto this end they were preserved in the world of

spirits, to be delivered when He should come in the fullness of time. This manifestation of the Word by Incarnation was more than a manifestation; it was an ultimate exercise of Divine power for the conversion of the race; a conflict and a victory.

Whatever difficulties may belong to your idea of the Incarnation and the glorification of the Lord's humanity, it is sufficient to observe that His first advent was His manifestation through the medium of the humanity assumed; and that it was required by, and was adequate to, the sensuous state of mankind. Men had lost the power to conceive spiritually of the Divine truth; they perverted every commandment of God to the favoring of their own councils, and there was among them no medium of Divine help. Then the Lord raised up a manhood of his own which should reveal His Divine goodness and wisdom to disciples and enemies, and thus came into the world. His coming, because it was a revelation of His truth and power to the lowest, and even to demons, brought judgment and redemption. Judgment to evil men and evil spirits; redemption, not from the price and penalty of sin, but from the compelling power of our spiritual enemies, and from the hand of them that hate

us. Seeing Him they saw the truth of Divine love as no words could present it to them. He brought the Father forth to view, and manifested the begetting and sustaining love of God in the begotten and sustained righteousness and power of His own personal presence. The result was twofold: deliverance and salvation to them that received Him; judgment and subordination to them that worshiped the prince of this world. He "cast out the spirits with His word," that men, "being delivered from their enemies, might serve Him in righteousness and holiness before Him all the days of their life." What He came to do He finished; and did it perfectly. He came to manifest Himself to the sensuous thought of men by appearing bodily before their senses, and working before their eyes the works of God, and exerting in the plane of the natural mind, upon both the willing and the unwilling, the power of God unto judgment or salvation. For this His incarnation was necessary; this, in His incarnation, He perfectly accomplished.

This was the beginning of a New Church. The Lord provided in His manifest personal advent for the perpetuation of its revelations and benefits. The withdrawal of the sensuous image of His presence was a necessary part of

the work ; it was necessary that the power of His spirit might be felt "calling all things to their remembrance," whatsoever they had seen and heard. The disciples gradually and privately gathered together and commenced a new Church movement on the basis of these remembrances. They preached the Gospel and established Churches. They based their convictions of the truth of Christianity upon what they had seen of the Lord in His manifestation to their sensuous perceptions, and what they had realized of his promises in the experiences of their natural religious life. This was the dispensation of the first advent—the acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as the Son of God—confession of all the facts of the Incarnation as the Gospel of redemption, and salvation through obedience to the Lord's precepts of life. As its first fruits under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of Christ, there grew up the Gospel, as the means of transmitting its benefits to all generations. And in the Gospels we have "God manifest in the flesh," as to all the benefits of such a manifestation. In the recorded life of Christ the Lord makes His first advent to us also. He is personally manifest to our sensuous thought therein, and no other such advent or manifes-

tation is needed. If He were here, present in the flesh, He would show us no other than that which is shown in the record of the life on earth whereby he glorified His humanity, and made it to have life in itself as the Father hath life Himself. If we had reclined with John on Jesus' breast, or washed His feet, like the woman, with our tears, we would have been no better disciples than it is possible for us to be now. With the Gospel of His first advent we have that advent and need no further such manifestation, nor could we be benefited by such. If we see no beauty in Him to desire Him now, we may know we would have been among those who said, "Thou art mad, and hast a devil." If we find no power of healing in His Divine precepts, neither would we were He bodily present, and should we follow in the throng and touch the hem of His garment. No! the Lord makes His first advent to every man to whom the Gospel of His Incarnation comes; and the way in which we treat Him in this, precisely corresponds to the way in which we would treat Him if He should reveal Himself again in the flesh.

But it was part of the Gospel of the Incarnation that the Lord should come again; that the Christian Church should fall away, and its un-

derstanding of the Word fail, and its love wax cold, and then He would come as the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven. The twenty-fourth chapter of the Gospel by Matthew sets forth, under the symbolism of war, conflict and distress of nations, and commotion in the heavens and the earth, the gradual decline and corruption of the Church of His first coming. The symbolism used is the common and suggestive imagery of the old Prophets, and can only be misunderstood by a blind determination to literalism. Literally understood, it cannot be understood at all. Spiritually understood, these predictions show : *First*, that the Church would begin not to know what was good and true, and be filled with disputations ; *second*, that it would come to despise good and truth in its thirst for dominion ; *third*, that in heart it would deny and profane them.

To any one at all familiar with the controversies that came in with the third century, and the subsequent history of sophistries and corruptions of doctrine, even to the time of the Protestant Reformation, and with the vindictive debates and persecutions which followed that crisis, there is needed no further illustration of the prophecy than the facts furnished. In the symbolic language of the prophecy it

is said, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven." The same thing was said by Joel of the state of the Church at the time of the Lord's first coming, and Peter, as we know, applied the prophecy to the Jewish Church. It was the sun and moon of the Church that were darkened then; and this is the meaning in the second prophecy. Not the dissolution of the heavens, but the wreck of all that is good and true—love, faith and knowledge of heavenly mysteries—when the Church is in ruins, is what is meant by these signs. When the "Sun of Righteousness" sheds the light of His countenance in vain upon an apostate Church, the thick clouds of its sophistries and perversions of truth intercepting its quickening heat and light; when the moon of true faith cannot penetrate the intellectual obscurity with its reflected light; when the stars of heavenly knowledge are no more lights in the firmament of the Church, then must the Lord come with a new manifestation of His goodness, and put forth with new power the activities of His spirit.

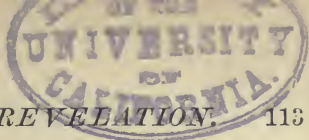
Catholics will not own it of themselves that such things were ever true; nor will Protes-

tants own it; and it is very natural that they should not. But Catholics assert it of Protestants; and Protestants assert it of Catholics; and very eminent theologians of each school have proved the corruptions of faith and charity in the other. No unprejudiced man of this day need fear to look back into the past and see that what each said of the other was true of both. In the Church, both Catholic and Protestant, at the middle of the eighteenth century, we behold a Christianity paralyzed in its most vital part; even the activity of controversy died out save as to its political significance. The people debased and misguided; the courts vicious and sensual; the priests sunk in a godless epicureanism, or an equally godless intellection; religion almost non-existent apart from the drowsy formalism that had usurped the holy place. Surely such a state of things answering to the spirit of the prophecy, was an occasion in the Church for the Lord's coming, or for a new manifestation of Himself.

What the manifestation of the Word in the flesh could not prevent, its repetition could not cure. What was needed, then, for the revival of the Christian Church, was not a second personal appearing of the Lord, but such a

revelation of the Word as would fulfill and carry forward the work of His first advent. It needed that the Lord should, as He promised, open the things which He had said and done in parables, and "show us plainly of the Father." In His first coming He gave us the letter, His second coming was to give us the Spirit of Truth and reveal His genuine glory and power in the clouds of the letter. And the event has proved the Apocalypse in the revelation at this day of the Spiritual sense of the Word. The glory of genuine truth shining through the types and appearances of the letter of the Word is "the glory of the Son of Man in the clouds."

The clouds of earth are not the Lord's chariot, any more than the "white horse," upon which he is said to come, is a charger of earthly stock; these are signs. They signify the literal images and representatives by which the divine truth is mediated and embodied in earthly language. The types and symbols in the letter of Holy Scripture are called "clouds of heaven," because they are taken up out of the natural mind of men, as the clouds are lifted from the earth—and because they veil, while they contain, the heavenly meaning of the Divine Word, and thus mediate its light to the natural mind. It was thus that the phraseology of the old



prophets hid from the eyes of the Jews what to the apostles they revealed ; and it is on account of this peculiar quality of the letter of the written Word, as veiling deeper things within it, that it is in all the Scriptures compared to a cloud. “It was symbolized by the cloud which rested upon Mount Sinai, concealing the Lord from their view, up into which Moses was called when the Word of the Old Testament began to be revealed. A similar cloud, infolding a fire within itself, was shown to Ezekiel in holy vision as the Word of the Lord first came to Him. And the same thing was signified by that cloud which received the Divine form of the Savior out of the sight of the apostles, as they stood, being in vision, gazing up into heaven, as he ascended from them on the Mount of Olives.” The clouds represented the letter of the written Word unto which they were remanded when He withdrew from them His visible presence. It was the visual image of Him which they retained, and the remembrance of His words and works, which under His inspiration, they wrote, and testified in the Gospel for us—this image of His life with them and among men, together with all the Word which testifies of Him, was represented by the vision of a cloud in which they

saw Him ascend, and in which in like manner it was said they should see Him come again.

Now the Lord makes His appearance in these clouds, the types and symbols of the letter of His Word, as soon as the heavenly meaning of the symbols are made clear, and they all are seen to relate to Him. In the revelation of the spiritual sense of the Word, which is everywhere veiled in its letter, every type, every figure, and every circumstance, in history, or psalm, or prophecy, is seen to relate to the Lord, and represent His work for and within human souls. And it is in the accomplishment of this purely Divine work of opening the Holy Scriptures, and revealing for the Church the existence, nature, and particular truths of their spiritual sense, that the Lord comes in the clouds of heaven. *He* comes, for the whole Word reveals Him, and His work. He comes in the *clouds* because it is the images of the letter of the word, which, being interpreted, reveal Him. This is known because it is an accomplished fact, and the event, as I said, has explained and proved the Apocalypse.

This spiritual coming of the Lord, and revelation of the spiritual and eternal glory of the written Word, as containing the living Word Himself, has been accomplished by means of

a man, called and prepared to receive and expound the Science of Correspondences, the genuine doctrine of the spiritual senses of the Word, and the laws of life in the spiritual world. Being accomplished, it carries its own evidences within itself, and appeals not to human evidence, but to its own light and power, for the authentication of its genuineness. The giving of the Word was accommodated to lower and lower states of humanity till man reached his lowest perversity; then it put forth its power for his redemption, converting and turning the spiritual course of the race. In the Gospel of that work and the prophecy of its fulfillment in the full and crowning manifestation of the Divine meaning in all the history of the Church, the literal Word was complete and the books closed. When therefore there was need of light and doctrine for the guidance of rational thought, and preparation in natural science and reason for the revelation of that light, the Lord, by his own mercy and wise means, "loosed the seals and opened the book." Now it is allowable and possible in the Church "to enter intellectually into the mysteries of faith," and to confirm the doctrines of the spiritual sense of the word in reason and life.

The Paradise which man lost is to be regained in the New Jerusalem, which comes down from heaven, in the heavenly doctrines of truth and principles of life revealed for men on earth. The Holy City or Divine system of doctrine contained in and revealed from the internal senses of the Word is with men; they may study and understand its truths; and receiving and loving them, and living according to them, abide in the city by its river of the water of life, healed with the leaves of the Tree of Life, and sustained by its fruits.

If this general outline of the history of God's Word to man has presented anything with clearness, it is this: *first*, that the Lord always reveals His Word in forms adequate to meet the spiritual states of men as they change; and *second*, that any and every form of revelation must be such as to respect the freedom of man. "There is not, there never was, and never will be, any religious truth ever given to man which was not and will not be so given that, while he who loves it may be convinced of its truth on rational grounds, they who have no love for it may reject it on grounds which seem to them equally rational." And it will be so with the last and crowning revelation of all; while it is the manifestation of genuine spirit-

ual truths to spiritual reason in man, it can only commend itself "to whosoever *will* take the water of life *freely*." It comes to bless; not to curse, as it must do with all who should accept its teachings for any other reasons than those of love for the goodness to which its truths lead. The revelation of the spiritual sense of the Holy Word does not abrogate its literal sense, but vivifies and fills it with new meaning and power; it comes, opening in all the Scriptures the things concerning the Lord's work of redemption, regeneration and salvation, in all dispensations of the Church, in all planes of human life; it comes as the crown of all forms of revelation to gather them into its light and open their true character and spiritual meaning. It comes, therefore, to bless and do good, to enlarge men's views of truth, their experience of goodness, their sphere of use, and their capacity of enjoyment; and to all who love these things, it is able to authenticate its Divine mission, to justify the Providence of God in the past, to gather into its embrace the good and the true of all former dispensations, and open out into a career of illimitable progress. Amen!

V.

THE PRINCIPLE OF ADAPTA- TION: OR THE REAL AND APPARENT IN THE SCRIPTURES.

With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward.—Ps. xviii: 26.

IF we admit the principle that every Divine communication to man must be adapted in its forms of expression to the states of life and thought of those to whom it is given; we shall see in the text the explanation of many literal peculiarities of Holy Scripture. We are perfectly familiar with the law that objects of thought, quite as much as objects of sight, must appear according to the intellectual training and spiritual attitude of the per-
cipient. Each man can see only what his previous course of life and habit of thought enables him to see. Whatever lies wholly above and outside of this previous preparation

is lost to him. Whatever comes, by symbol and accommodated expression within his range, must at first show itself, according to his own *state*—that is, the total result of his previous life and habit. “That only can we see which we are,” says Emerson, “and which we make. The weaver sees gingham; the broker sees the stock-list; the politician, the ward and county votes; the poet sees the horizon, and the shores of matter lying on the sky, the interaction of elements—the large effect of laws corresponding to the inward laws which he knows, and so are but a kind of extension of himself.” This is the law for a generation as well as the individual; it sees according to its prevailing life and habit of thought. In the childhood of the world, the wise taught the mysteries of life in myths; in an evil age of prowess and physical strength these degenerate into heroic stories; in times of popular sensuality, the remains of wisdom are veiled and preserved in a spectacular ritual. The intellectual vigor of New England in the old days exercised itself in the severe logic of the Puritan divines; an enervated society to-day, used to sensational novels and plays and newspapers, demands a sensational pulpit. With a sense of freedom it asks deep questions; but

unused to application, it will not weigh deep answers. It demands what lies within the range of its habit; even the new in science must be "popularized," and the plausible often answers all the purposes of demonstration. Thus it is that every generation, as well as every individual, must see with its own eyes; and that which would lift it up, must come down within the range of its vision. Even then it will not see that which is presented as it is; but at first according to its previous habit of thought and course of life. The actual must so appear, however, to be acknowledged at all; and if so appearing, it brings to the observer changes of life, it may in that way prepare him to behold the real. The law is universal and necessary in the nature of man.

Now apply this principle to the explanation of God's verbal revelation in the Scriptures, and we shall see at once why with the pure He must show Himself pure, and with the froward He must show Himself froward. God is what He is, and Divine Truth is one thing and not another; but every manifestation of God, and every communication of truth, must be accommodated in its forms of expression to the state of life and habit of thought of those

to whom it is given. The New Church applies this principle to the interpretation of the Bible, and thus disarms skepticism of its objection. For, in addition to the general modifications in the form of revelation which we recognized in a glance at the history of the successive dispensations of the Church, it is apparent that all revelation must have its human as well as its Divine side, and its *apparent* as well as its *genuine* truths. It is to be expected, therefore, that much of the letter of Scripture, being an accommodation of truth to the "froward" heart of man, will present only appearances of truth. In itself it is what it is, divine from heaven; but in its letter it is what they were to whom it was given. Written otherwise at the first it would have been written to no one, and could not have insured even its own preservation. On the one hand it is truth, as the Jews and early disciples of the Lord could alone apprehend it; on the other, it is truth as apprehended by angels. Outwardly it is, much of it, froward to the froward; inwardly it is pure to the pure.

To the eager waking child, all alive with the new discovery that it is growing light, and plying you with questions as to whence it

comes, you show the rising sun. You tell him that every morning the sun climbs up the eastern sky and rides through the heavens. This is only the appearance of the fact; but there is a reality within the appearance, and truth in what you say. So you teach the vicious, lying boy that it is wicked to do so, and that God is angry with the wicked, and punishes them. It is not the real truth; but it is the best expression of the truth for the boy. It is the clearest presentation of the whole certainty of moral retribution you can make to him. What you say will not bear rational criticism, but there is a truth within and back of what you say, that no criticism can dislodge, just as the law of planetary motion is really involved in the apparent sunrise.

So we say of all Holy Scripture as the verbal revelation of Divine truth to man's froward state. It is adapted to the mental vision and moral position of those to whom it was given. It takes on, therefore, in much of its teaching, a like froward form; but the "it" back of the form is genuine truth. The Spiritual reality is hid in the appearance. And the same law which rules of necessity in the giving of revelation, rules also in man's understanding

of it. To the pure, that pure and holy wisdom which lies back of the froward showing is revealed. It is not innocence, but the lack of innocence which sees only immorality in the Bible; and it is not wisdom but empty conceit which finds only foolishness in it. This law would still be in force if the pure Divine truth that is in the Bible were revealed to us afresh in Nineteenth Century English, and according to the habit of thought of this generation. It would still be froward to the froward and pure to the pure. Men's difficulties might be different, but they would not be less great. The genuine truths and laws of Spiritual life, are already within the appearances of Holy Scripture; just as the truths of science are in the apparent order, and equally apparent disorder of nature; just as the laws of life and providence are hid in the involved and perplexing but steadily advancing drama of history.

Now I wish to illustrate this principle of Divine adaptation in the explanation of (a) the apparent contradictions of the Bible, and (b) the representations of God's part in the wars of the Jews.

1. *The apparent contradiction* in the representation of the Divine Character. It is

said of the Lord: "Fury is not in me" (Isa. xxviii: 4); and again, "God is angry with the wicked every day" (Ps. vii: 11). Here is a direct contradiction as out of the mouth of God; and everybody knows these are not exceptional texts. We are told that God is angry and that He is love itself; that He is wrathful and kind; revengeful and merciful; provokable and unchangeable; that He repents and repents not; that He curses His people and punishes them, and that He is kind to the unthankful and the evil, and His tender mercies over all his works; that He forms light and creates darkness; makes peace and creates evil; that "He hath mercy on whom He will, and whom He will he hardeneth." One great question in to-day's religious inquiry is, whether or not there is an order underlying this apparent confusion. How are these contradictions to be harmonized with the Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures? Is there a necessity in the nature of things connecting them with a Divine revelation to man on earth? Or does their existence in the Bible vacate its claim to Inspiration?

Modern criticism has brought these contradictory representations in regard to the Divine character into sharper outline, showing

their connection with the ages in which they were written, and with subsequent dogma. But beyond this it has done nothing whatever, except to deny in the name of reason that a Divine and Infallible God can be both love and wrath, or mislead His children by representing Himself in contradictions. This, however, is only a negation; and true progress never ends in denial. It never closes its eyes and returns to its ignorance; but pushes on to a new and higher affirmation of sufficient breadth to illustrate its difficulties. The histories of nations carry us through no period when there was not universally the idea of God, and a consciousness or a belief, both in His pleasure and displeasure, in His disposition and power to reward and punish. And this universal fact exalts the statements concerning the love and wrath of God, in our own Scripture, above the accidents of nationality, and shows them to belong to universal religious consciousness. We may deny the apparent contradiction as a reality, but we cannot deny it as an appearance. And its universality as an appearance should encourage us to believe in some underlying law and necessity, and to seek for its discovery.

We have the help of analogy here. Con-

traditions are not peculiar to the Bible. Nature is full of paradoxes. There are complications, and what appear to be contradictions, everywhere. All knowledge that the apparent is not the real, is a discovery. It took long, very long, to find out that natural phenomena are not the result of the capricious tricks of pleased or insulted deities. And when the old philosophers began to deny superstitions, founded on the appearances of irregularity and disorder, their first impulse was to say "that nature is seen to do all things of herself, without the interference of the gods." It took long, very long, to learn the laws which are the principles of order underlying the apparent disorder of the universe of forces and things. Very gradually, as facts accumulated and confronted one another, it became possible for a great mind here and there to grasp the whole in its connections, and announce a universal principle including the eccentricities, exceptions, and contradictions in their relations to the accustomed order of things. Only in our day has it become known that human society also may be studied in the same way; that the apparently irregular and incalculable movements of human free agents, in their drift and results, are subject to laws so universal and

constant that they may be estimated at long range with astonishing accuracy. Such has been the progress of science, a constant demonstration of the play of law amid seemingly chaotic and accidental facts, and successively broader and more comprehensive generalizations of law, as exceptions were noted and known. And so completely has the principle become established, that nature is one orderly, continuous, and progressive whole, that the impulse of science is to amass facts as discordant and contradictory as possible, that they may open the way to wider and ever-widening generalizations of natural law. No one feels any uneasiness because half the scientific fraternity are searching with microscope and telescope for unknown facts. No one fears that their discovery will either do injury to science or disprove the existence of the universe. And this confidence rests simply on the conviction that in all, under all, over all, are universal principles of order.

So must it be, and so will it be, in theology. What we ought to expect, and what we ought to push forward to, is the discovery of the universal spiritual truths and positive laws that are back of and constant in the appearances of revelation and the facts of religious consciousness. The historical criticism of our

day which looks so threatening, which brings to light such apparently mischievous and destructive facts, has only served for the most part to bring out the irregular, inconstant, and contradictory things of Divine revelation, and set them in most damaging antagonism. Shall we refuse to look at the facts? No, for along that way lies relapse into ignorance. Shall we deny all revelation, and rest there? No, for there is no rest. Revelation itself is a fact that will not be denied any more than the outward world of the senses. What, then, should we do but reach out to, and pray for, those Divine and spiritual unities which comprehend and harmonize all seeming discrepancies in the revealed and recorded ways of God to man. This we must do.

Coming, then, to the contradictions of the Bible concerning the character and disposition of God, let us rise from the letter to the spirit, and inquire what is the whole purport of the revelation. The truth that God is love is really the teaching of the whole of Divine revelation, when direct teaching respecting God is given. For the Scriptures are not merely a revelation of God. They are also a revelation of man; of the states of good and evil in man, and their consequences. But the

whole spirit of the Word breathes one truth, with respect to God Himself and His attitude toward man, namely, that He is love itself—pure, perfect and unselfish love. And this is what reason demands. It refuses to believe that there can be in the Divine nature anything answering to anger, hatred and revenge. It refuses to believe that he is changeable or swayed by likes and dislikes. However men may feel toward Him, or however they may feel and act towards each other, it is not in the nature of God possible that He should feel anything but the most unselfish and constant love toward them. We may hate Him and His laws, but He never hated nor desired to punish us. His laws are only the wise ways of His love with us. They are the ways of His infinite wisdom, and are good for us, and necessary for us, because they are the true order of our life, the only means to the perfection and happiness His love has ordained for us. And because His laws are laws of love they change not. They are the eternal order of spiritual life, revealed and written in the Word only that we may know them and do them. All the precepts and laws which are summed up in love to God and the neighbor, are enjoined upon us, simply because *they are*

laws, that is, the ways or true methods of spiritual life. They are commanded because they are written in our spiritual organism, and are the only ways by which we may grow into harmony and conjunction with God and enter into His joy. They are the ordinances of infinite wisdom for the ends of infinite love.

Such is the love of God and the wisdom of His laws on the divine side and to the spiritual view; but how must they appear to the diseased and abnormal vision of disobedience? "To the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; to the froward thou wilt show thyself froward." It is an unfailling law that the appearance of spiritual truth, and of spiritual things generally, is and must ever be in perfect correspondence with the states of the percipient subjects. If that is a state of order, of good disposition, and rational honesty, spiritual things will be seen and appreciated, when revealed, in their own light. If this state be one of disorder it will reflect itself back upon God and spiritual laws, and see in them only hatred and vindictive punishment. The world is full of illustrations of this law, and like every true generalization it solves mysteries.

Take, for example, the laws of physical health. The man who is wise to learn them

and obey them, and has become through obedience healthy and vigorous, not only appreciates those laws, but rejoices in their beneficence. He sees that they are wise, and ordered for comfort and use. He sees that even the pain that follows disobedience is part of their beneficent order to save the reckless from self-destruction. But the man who has broken all the physical commandments, and become a body of disease, looks upon nature as a hard mother, and her laws as a very arbitrary set of regulations. This is only saying, what we have seen to be true, that every one sees the wisdom and beneficence of a truth, according to his own state with respect to it. The same truth does not appear the same to persons in different states. To one it stands out clearly and defined in its grandeur and relations; he is delighted with it. Another only dimly apprehends it. To another it has no significance; it has neither form nor comeliness that he should desire it. To another, who has been acting or believing contrary to it, it is positively hateful. It does not appear to him as truth, but as a falsity. It is really the same truth that presents such various aspects to different individuals; the cause of the various appearances is not changes in the truth,

but the reflection of their different mental states.

Now, if this be a law of the human understanding with respect to truth, and of the human will with respect to goodness, it explains the contradictions of the Bible. For the Bible is a revelation of God and the laws of spiritual life, and the consequences of obedience or disobedience, to all sorts and conditions of men; and the truths respecting these things to reach them at all must appear variously to their different states, and quite oppositely to the evil and the good. Accordingly, there are in the Word both genuine truths and apparent truths. Truth as it is, and is apprehensible to enlightened reason; and truth as it appears, as it can only appear, to sensuous thought. That "God is good to all, and His mercies over all his works" is a genuine truth. That He is angry with the wicked and punishes them, is an apparent truth. God is goodness itself, and truth itself; He desires the spiritual regeneration and happiness of all His children; He has so created man that he may by orderly and obedient observance of the laws of his spiritual nature, become conjoined to Him in reciprocal love and use. These are genuine truths. They are abund-

antly taught in plain declarations and precepts. They are satisfactory to enlightened reason. They are the very spirit and life of the Word; and its spiritual or internal sense teaches nothing contrary to them. But how would they appear to an idolatrous, self-seeking, sensuous people? How would they appear to a people who had no conception of love but as self-love; no idea of happiness but lust; no idea of law but as license to do their own sweet will? If Divine love would reach and restrain such a people, and lead them to compel themselves to obey even the very lowest forms of the laws of their spiritual life, must He not appeal to their self-love and to their sense of pain? The first truth for such to learn, the first truth for us all to learn, is that the laws of God are the laws of man's life; that they are all keyed to beneficent results; and that if they are disobeyed they will work most terrible spiritual mischief. The punishment which attends the violation of spiritual laws is not less beneficent than the pain that attends the violation of physical law. It is itself a revelation of Divine mercy. But if denounced against the wicked, how should they perceive it other than as a threat of anger and wrath. If not made to realize it, they

would not heed it ; and if brought clean home to them, they could not understand it as anything but the punishment inflicted by an offended Deity. How is it with ourselves? When we have broken the sum of the commandments, and have not done to men as we would they should do to us, is not the first keen pang of remorse a sense of Divine displeasure? How is it in the whole course of our experience of the consequences of disorder? Do we not continually complain that the laws of Providence are unjust; that the ways of God are not equal? In this is latent the whole appearance of the anger of God. God is good, but He is true; His truth is the law of human life and happiness, and it is good. This is the reality. But the appearance is, to those who obey the law of life, that God is good and His ways merciful; to the evil and disobedient, that God is kind only to those who fear and obey Him, and is angry with, and punishes those who do not.

Can we not see, therefore, that the contradictory representations concerning God's character, have their ground and necessity in the spiritual law that men must severally see truth according to their state? To reveal Himself and His laws to all men, the evil as

well as the good, the sensual and depraved as well as the rational, God must necessarily be represented variously and even oppositely. There have been whole generations of people, there are now in our own cities whole classes of people, to whom the revelation of the reality of God, and of spiritual law could be made no otherwise. If the selfish man resists or punishes any one, it is from anger; he is furious and acts wildly from revenge. If he have an idea of God, he can only conceive of Him as enraged and punishing men, as he himself would do if they had transgressed his law. Fear is the only sentiment in such a man open to the Divine appeal. To fear accordingly the Lord appeals; if by any means the disobedient may be led to observe the laws of righteousness and begin the work of reformation. The fact is, that we are dependent upon God, and our happiness dependent upon obedience to His spiritual laws. This eternal necessity appears to obscure, sensuous and wicked minds as the Divine omnipotence, pleased or displeased, rewarding or punishing. *The appearance is the necessary aspect of a reality.* It is not, therefore, to be destroyed with the simple-minded; though it is to be avoided as a doctrine of the Church.

We do very well to say the sun rises and sets. We cannot very well say otherwise. It is not the fact, but the appearance of the fact. It will always be true to the senses. And so forever, and forever, it will be true that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

2. Another class of apparent contradictions, is illustrated in the representations of moral responsibility. It is said in the decalogue, "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me" (Ex. xx 5); and again, "The soul that sinneth it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son." These seemingly contradictory texts are explained in the truth which lies back of both, and which can only be overlooked by an exclusive attention to one or the other.

Nothing can be more obvious than the axiom that no man is guilty for what took place before he was born. Whatever the truth may require us to believe, it certainly does not require us to begin with an absurdity. "In Adam's fall we sinned all," is a sentiment that is repugnant to all rational thought. The Scriptures teach that "the iniquity of the

fathers is visited upon the children," and by a very curious perversity of understanding, the word "iniquity" has been read to mean precisely as though it were "guilt" or "punishment." It is, however, nothing of the kind. Guilt is not transmissible; and it is only a gross caricature of Divine justice to represent it as demanding the punishment of countless posterity for the sin of a single progenitor. We are to put utterly away all such ideas of "original sin" as define it to be the entailed guilt of a transgression over which we had no control, and in which we could have no moral responsibility. But then, we are not to conclude, on the other hand, that there is no hereditary transmission, and that the iniquities of the fathers are in no way carried over to the children.

There is a great deal of erroneous thought upon this subject from the profound and general ignorance as to the substantial and organic form of the human soul. Man is not an abstraction, but a spiritual, organic form. And the effect of disobedience to the laws of spiritual life, is the perversion of the organic functions of the soul, and consequent deterioration of its substantial form. Sin is a spiritual disease; a disease of an immortal organism. And,

therefore, as it becomes deep-seated and cronic by disobedience, and is not brought to the healing touch of the Divine Physician by repentance, it issues in confirmed spiritual death. Every one writes the record of his own sin, and lays up his punishment in his own soul in its perverted spiritual forms. Hereditary sin, or transmitted guilt, is an idea therefore which cannot be expressed except in terms of self-contradiction. But hereditary evil is a different thing. It is the transmitted deterioration of the substantial human form, the transmission of a perverted spiritual organism. It is thus that the iniquity of the fathers is visited upon the children. "Transmissive dispositions and proclivities to evil, coming down a long line of tainted ancestry, and gathering strength and volume on their way by every generation that transmits them, is a fact that is universal, and so an irreversible law of human descent." This is illustrated not only in that the race lies in spiritual darkness, each generation receiving from the past its gloomy superstitions and predispositions to evil, but also in the persistency with which nations and families perpetuate their characteristics. Time and culture and physical environment exert their modifying influence within a certain range, but "during

three or four generations, and, indeed, during any known historical periods, they never break up the type." Types of character, and the image of these in the physical form, are transmitted with such constancy and tendency to accumulation, that the trained observer, as soon as he looks on the human form, though it be that of the sleeping child, knows the race and sometimes the tribe and family to which it belongs. Every fact of observation and experience, every truth of the Word of God, confirms the doctrine that the fathers transmit to the children, not character, but modifications of substantial organic form, which qualify the inflowing life and create propensities and proclivities which had been confirmed in the voluntary lives of the progenitors. The whole subject is illustrated in hereditary predisposition to diseases of body. Disease is not transmitted; but a perverted organism, which under the excitement resulting from carelessness, or from favoring abuses, is felt as a propensity and developed in disease. And every confirmation of the disease results in the still further deterioration of the organism and its transmission to its own offspring. And this is the real image of the corresponding spiritual fact. When evil has become fixed in mind and will

and life, and thus perverted the function and form of the soul, that determination of the substantial spiritual form is carried over to the offspring; and under the excitation of influx from attendant evil spirits it is perceived as a propensity. And if its transmission is not arrested by regeneration, through the shunning of evil because it is sin, the propensity is transmitted with accumulated power to the next generation. It is thus that we bear in us the marks of our lineage in general and in particular; thus, that the fathers' sins have impressed upon our spiritual organism such abnormal bent and perversity as had resulted in themselves, and which are felt by us as propensities to evil. The Lord is said to visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children in accommodation to the universal appearance to the natural and sensual man, that the consequences of his own depravity are visited by omnipotence. The real truth which thus appears is, that *they are actually and necessarily carried over.*

But this is only one side of the truth. If this alone were known, it might seem just to say, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." But this proverb of Israel the Lord declares to be a very foolish meditation for the children. It

is true that the iniquity of the fathers is visited upon the children as predisposition and propensity to evil. But the truth is worth more as a warning to parents than as an excuse for children. For this also is true, that those propensities are balanced by angelic and Divine influences, so that every soul is free to resist them and turn from them. A propensity is not a sin; there is no transmission of guilt; there is no punishment except for the evil that passes into deed through our volitions. In some sense it is true that we inherit the consequences, in a deteriorated spiritual organism, of the sins of our forefathers. But that neither increases nor diminishes our responsibility an iota. It has no bearing on our eternal destiny unless we are indifferent. It may increase the severity of our temptations; but the omnipotence of the Redeemer is ours if we choose to resist the propensities which we inherit. "Now, lo! if one beget a son that seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like, he shall not die for the iniquity of his father—he shall surely live." You must see, therefore, that these two texts are only apparently contradictory; they are harmonized in the light of a higher law superior to either, and immanent in both.

II. We come now to examine in the light of the principle of adaptation, the Bible record of the wars of extermination against the Canaanitish nations, instituted and carried on, it would appear, by express command of God. The strongest objections are urged against the Inspiration of the Mosaic Scriptures on the score of these wars. They are denounced as measures of enormous cruelty and the most indefensible injustice; and the inspiration of the record which appears to ascribe them to the command of God, is repudiated as impossible of Christian belief. I hope to show the value of the doctrine announced in making some helpful and necessary discriminations here also.

(a.) Consider the human side of these wars. As facts of history, the wars of the Jews were no more pleasing to God than any other wars. God is not the author of war. That He is so is only an appearance to selfish man, in obedience to the universal law of "froward to the froward." The devil is universally the presiding genius in the declaration of war, and field-marshal in its conduct. This is admitting all, and more than all, that objectors to revelation urge against the wars of the Jews. But it is admitting only the truth. Every war, in

common with every murder, every lie, every slander, every vice of every hue, is instituted at the express command of self-love, whose essence is the love of evil. It is the "I, myself," principle of the depraved heart that does all the wrong and mischief, that incites every strife and quarrel, large or small, the world over. This is just as true of all the wars perpetrated in the name of Christianity as it is of the wars of the Jews in the name of God Almighty. It is just as true of wars waged in the name of freedom as it is of the wars of empire. Search throughout universal history, and you will find that latent in every war as the instigating and controlling motive, has been some form or other of the lust of dominion or greed of gain. The wars of the Jews had no other origin and inspiration; and in this were essentially like all other wars whatsoever.

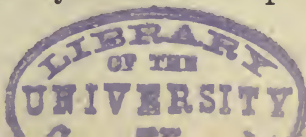
You are ready, perhaps, to dispute this, notwithstanding all that you know confirms it. Out of war has grown progress and the development of human interests; and how is this fact to be reconciled with its infernal origin? By remembering another fact, that is often forgotten, namely, that the devil is not the supreme ruler of the universe, and that his per-

mitted existence brings him within the police regulations of the kingdom of God. You will remember that it is written of God, "If I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there." You will remember that it is elsewhere said of His government, that "He will make the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He will restrain." He who put free will into the making of man knew the issues of it. He knew that man would fall into self and separate himself from God; and creation was prepared for the event as if it had already happened. The eternal, inherent, and organic laws of the Divine government cover not only its provisions, but its permissions also; and are controlling always. They not only lead on to the good provided, but they follow into the evil permitted. Yea, they are there beforehand, and the limit is set precisely at that line where are evolved great, good and sublime issues, more than the wit of man conceived or his motive of self-interest intended.

There has rarely been found a power of holy fervor strong enough to cope with the ambition of dominion. In the drama of history, the saints have never been able to assume the leading role. They have rarely had the skill, energy, intelligence, force of will, to

cope with the ambition of dominion, and keep it even out of the institutions of the Church. The ardor of genuine goodness in men is to the fiery zeal of self-love, as the heat of kindling embers to that of a seven-times heated furnace. And this fire of self-love evolves gigantic powers. The strongest motives sharpen wit and concentrate ability; and the ambition to be greatest, richest, or most honored for brilliant achievement, is the impelling force that develops strength in the complicated machinery of government, commerce, and organized industries. The faint, feeble beginnings of goodness in men are inadequate to kindle any such force of character, sagacity, and persistency. The children of this world are wiser and more efficient in their generation than the children of light; and God turns to use the most effective instrumentalities. But the laws are ordained beforehand in the constitution of man, and of society, which alone can conserve those fiery impulses and struggling antagonisms, and out of individual self-seeking volve the common good. In the permitted existence of every evil, and selfish espousal of every cause, is set its limit: "Thus far shalt thou go, but no farther."

You must work out for yourselves the ap-



plication of this suggested key to history, for we must not suffer ourselves now to be drawn too far from the main theme. But they only read history aright who thus see God in it; not providing wars and cruel wrongs and invasion of personal rights, but setting them off one against the other, and working out purposes of which the actors had no conception. And this, which is true of all history, is especially true of the Children of Israel; for the Mosaic dispensation was essentially dramatic and representative. The Israelites were chosen and called, not because of their righteousness and spiritual character, but because of the particular bent of their selfishness and superstition. It is again and again said of them that they were not chosen for their righteousness, nor for their own benefit, as particular favorites of God above all people; but for their peculiar fitness to prepare for and to represent and typify the ends of God in the coming Christianity. There are reasons here which cannot be entered at this time, but it is manifest upon the face of its history that their dispensation was in all respects a representative one. And for such a purpose their very absence of spirituality and their peculiar external character especially fitted them. Their

vanity was flattered with being selected by the God of their fathers, whom they had forgotten in their idolatry. Their peculiar superstitions rendered them susceptible to wonders and signs; and their selfish greed and fear gave to these signs a controlling power over their conduct. Their peculiar external character rendered them capable, beyond those more receptive of the interiors of religion, of attending to the minutiae of ceremonial worship, and of preserving it from a sense of the sanctity of its forms. Their "stiff-neckedness," their "lack of faith," and their idolatrous love of ceremonials, were the very qualities which rendered them capable of being led, and driven, through a history in which should be set and dramatized spiritual things of which they were hopelessly ignorant. With them, as with no other people, therefore, the idea of God and the hope of Messiah could be preserved unto the time of its fulfillment. With them, as with no other people, could be enacted those revolutions in the nations sunk in the most hopeless idolatry—revolutions which were the necessary preparation for Christianity. By them, as by no other people, the materials could be furnished, and the Holy Word be written, and preserved in the form in which

we now have it, as the form best adapted to render permanent the blessings of Divine revelation, to make them the most extensive, and to secure them from perversion.

Their history is to be read, therefore, and their wars of extermination considered in the light of this representative character of their dispensation. As wars they were no more and no less lovely than certain modern ones to which we ascribe justice, and out of which have certainly grown beneficent results. War is never heavenly; but if vice ever reached its limit and needed to be overthrown by the tearing down of its strongholds, then most justly was punishment inflicted on the Canaanites. If a race ever destroys its capacity to benefit mankind, or to save its posterity from the darkness of its own evils, surely the nations of Canaan had reached that limit when their extirpation became a mercy. The extirpation of the wicked when their wickedness has reached its summit, is a measure of merciful necessity. In the providence of God the land of Canaan, the traditional seat of the ancient churches, was to become the theatre of representative rites and of a Divine Incarnation, from which should spring a new religious life on earth. The nations that over-

ran the land had acted their part, and run the length-of license, and come to the limit of permission. They were to be, and they were, displaced by a people who, though rebellious, could yet be led into and kept in holy externals. They were fit instruments, as a holy and righteous people could not have been, even if the Lord had found any such, for the accomplishment of that which needed to be done in the economy of His providence, which looked to all that has grown out of it, and the still greater blessings that are yet to grow out of it in the brightening eras of a spiritual Christianity. As matter of human history, therefore, the displacement of the Canaanitish nations by the Children of Israel, is to be regarded as the displacement of one evil by a less, with a view to a providential purpose of good to humanity. It was equally a mercy to the Canaanites and to the world, if it is ever a mercy to cut off a hopelessly tainted generation.

(b.) Let us now consider the record of these wars as a part of the written Word of God. In common with all the Israelitish history, it is representative and typical of spiritual things, the affairs of that people having been constantly overruled for this purpose. It

is, as I have said, a grand drama. The first scene commences with the calling of Abraham, and the last concludes with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. All their patriarchs and kings, priests and prophets, and indeed the whole people, were the actors in this wonderful drama. The characters represented were the Lord Jesus Christ, as to all that He performed and suffered in His conflicts with our spiritual enemies for the redemption of mankind; His Church in the steps of her progress from carnal to celestial; and the individual member of the Church in all the stages of his corresponding advancement. Everything which creates opposition is also shown—the obstacles to be overcome and the lapses to be dreaded, as well as the blessings to be obtained.

Some of you may not know that this is true, because it has not been shown you. But consider if it were desirable whether the Children of Israel were not just such a people as would be capable of enacting such a representative history. Consider, if it were enacted and desirable to be preserved, whether the record of their history as found in the sacred scriptures is not such as would be most scrupulously guarded and handed down by them.

Consider whether its accommodations to their idea of God as being One and Almighty, but yet such a One as themselves; its interpolated myths appealing to their wonder; its historical exaggerations appealing to their vanity, were not all necessary to their reception of it, and likely to insure its preservation. And when I tell you that these peculiarities of the letter of the sacred record, which are so often urged as an objection to its inspiration, were not only necessary to its reception and preservation, but were needed also to perfect the series of truths which constitute its internal spiritual sense, I only say what is verified and is provable. For these sacred histories are representative not only in a general way, but specifically as to the actors, in their successes and reverses, as to all the scenes, and every particular.

This is strange only because it has not been known. Devout discipleship has always seen something of the general representation. It has been known that Canaan represents the Church and Heaven; that Israel represents the spiritual Israelite, who is without guile before God; and that their enemies typify the besetting evils of the heart and obstructions to the Christian life. But it is now to

be known that this is not only true in a figurative sense and general way, but exactly as to every particular recorded, even those which are historically trivial and unaccountable. This needs to be known, and is therefore revealed in our day, for two reasons: *First*, to restore confidence in the Inspiration of Scripture, and to lead on to an affirmative and expectant study of it. The searching analysis of modern criticism has brought to light so much in the mere letter to be complained of and caviled at, that it has determined the thought of the Church away from the "spirit" which "giveth life," and left us the dead letter of a peculiar history, which is regarded as holy only from its antiquity. Nothing but an equally critical exposition of the spiritual meanings involved in each and every particular case can again restore it to reverence, and open its divine uses. Then, *second*, this needs to be known, because it is not a mere technical issue of the Inspiration of Scripture, but a matter of practical import in the illustration of Christian life. The Hebrew Scriptures have not fulfilled their use, and ceased to be the Word of God. The day is coming when the spiritual sense of all this history and symbol will be unfolded to your wonder,

and you shall see in them the gospel, such as it has not entered into your heart to conceive of it. And those who have looked upon the dawn of the coming day, testify truly that these Scriptures are no more to them a record of bloody wars, and unchaste lives, and cruel persecutions, man with man, but a prophecy of self-conquest, a particular portrayal of the evils to be encountered, and the means by which they are to be subdued and the kingdom of God established.

And how much we need this instruction ! It would save us many a sad disappointment, and fortify us for strength where we often display vacillation and weakness. Multitudes are received into the Church every year, under the delusion that the indeterminate thing called "conversion" is all and enough. After a hearty and painful effort to rouse themselves from worldliness and indifference, they are allowed to fancy all the promises of "a new heart," and a pure one, fulfilled; and that in entering into the communion of the Church they are entering into a land "flowing with milk and honey," wherein is rest, peace and happiness. But they soon learn better; and the disenchantment is often attended with remorse and despair. How many

sad mistakes might have been saved you if your new love and purpose and hope had been warned of the "seven nations mightier and stronger" than themselves, already entrenched in the fastness of the heart, ready to contest every advance in the establishment of heavenly principles. When the Israelites arrived at the promised land, they found that their real warfare had just begun. And for what weary years, and with what ever-shift-in vicissitudes it was carried on! Sometimes they were victorious; sometimes defeated—once having even the sacred ark itself captured from them by their pagan enemies. In all this is only an image of man's conflict with "the foes of his own household," the wicked native occupants of his heart, his hereditary and acquired evils which he cannot run away from, but must combat and overcome. It would do us infinite good in our struggles to know that the Lord goes before us to cast out these native evil and false principles, not all at once, lest the land become desolate, but little by little, as spiritual principles increase and multiply and become fixed.

If this principle were clearly understood, it would save much of what is known as "back-sliding,"—the indifference that follows disap-

pointment. Regeneration is not accomplished by a sudden and irresistible stroke of God's power, but by little and little, as evils are subdued and good principles established in obedience to the Lord, who is "the Captain of our Salvation." When we have put down pride, jealousy is at hand; and when we have overcome selfishness in one form, it comes in another form in the suggestion of spiritual pride that we are getting to be somebody. No sooner was a battle won than the Israelites forgot God and fell a prey to another foe; illustrating the subtle encroachments of our selfish pride, which plunges us into conceit at every successful resistance of evil, and thus leaves us unprotected from a still more persistent enemy. Our Christianity has been such an external and formal thing for the most part, that very few seem to realize that it involves interior purification. If men have been faithful to the laws of the institutional church, observing its formalities with decorum, and stoutly calling on the name of Christ, that is thought to be a real life and preparation for heaven. It is not so, however. Good it may be, but not enough. Outward piety without internal repentance is at least only a truce with our spiritual foes.

Our regeneration is effected by the implantation of spiritual good and truth, and then by the removal of what is evil and false. But we have the faintest possible conception of the process; of the complications of evil and its entrenchment behind the fallacies and sophistries of our artificial lives. "By little and little" are they expelled, only as the fruitfulness of a true culture shall abound in the spirit. The heart knoweth not its own secret; the understanding doth not consider. It may well be that our defeats are of Providence as much as our victories are; not only following necessarily when we turn away to other gods, but revealing thereby new foes to be encountered and new truths to be heeded. We cannot wish ourselves into the kingdom of heaven; we cannot pray ourselves there. We must remember the Lord our God and keep his commandments, and loyally fight on against whatsoever opposes them. With "the sword of the spirit" and "the shield of faith," we must make the best fight we can, rallying from every defeat, and glorifying God in every success, "faithful unto death."

God hath given us this record of war, with its successes and reverses, that we may read in it our own evils and the means of subdu-

ing them, the causes and the issues of conflict, and through all our dependence upon Him and the ark of His covenant. Shall we renounce it all because the blind learning of our day, seeking no Divine message in it, has been able to read no Divine wisdom out of it? Nay; rather let us approach it as the good gift of God, ready to learn and do what things He has therein to teach us profitable for salvation. It is not history or science that we need a Bible to teach us, but the mysteries of spiritual life, the sins that so easily beset us, and the weapons of defense and final extermination. And this we shall find whensoever we seek it in the Holy Word if we are teachable and humble, looking up to the spirit and not down to the letter. And in the days that are opening upon the Church, blessed shall they be who are found waiting and watching for the coming of the light of life; for they shall behold it breaking forth in its revealing splendors out of the darkest clouds of the letter, giving a new meaning to human life, a new breadth to the Divine commandments, and a new blessedness to the promise, "To him that overcometh will I give to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with My Father in His throne."

VI.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE SPIRITUAL SENSE THE ONLY ANSWER TO SKEPTICAL OBJECTIONS.

Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.
—LUKE XXI: 33.

MEN'S thoughts change, God's endure. Human imaginations serve their use and pass away; but the eternal realities of Divine Truth remain. We begin with fallacies always. We see at the first only the appearance. Though a truth be hidden in the fallacy, though a reality be presented in the appearance, we see it only as we are able; and all our growth in wisdom and life consists in penetrating appearances and rising out of fallacies into more rational conceptions of the indwelling Spirit of truth. Truth may be divested of its garments, and may be seen more and more clearly as to its real quality,

but it never is outgrown, never ceases to present new fields of inquiry, and new answers to newly awakened questions. Our opinions and beliefs, founded on our imperfect and fallacious interpretations of the Lord's words, change as our states change, and pass away, but the truth does not pass away, and this familiar fact is a comfortable rock upon which to rest our faith in the sufficiency of the Bible to meet the need and guide the thought of this skeptical and speculative time.

Never were so great changes at work in the "heaven and earth" of human minds; never were opinions so generally unsettled; never were dogmas so little respected and so easily relinquished; never was investigation so free and independent, ignoring past conclusions based on discarded appearances, and reaching out after facts. There is an old argument for the Bible based upon its age and its influence, namely:—These Holy Scriptures have stood the test of time. They have been the fountain of life, light, inspiration and hope, to thousands on earth, whom we trust and believe are now enjoying the felicities of life eternal. They have revealed the Master, and imparted noble motives to the master-minds of the civilized world. All this is good and

strong presumptive evidence of their Divine origin. But there has come a state of mind in society, to which this argument is inadequate. No merely external evidence of the Divine character of the Scriptures is sufficient to commend them to the love and faith of that large class of thoroughly honest men and women to whom modern criticism has appealed. The Bible is losing its hold upon so many sincere minds, because it has been perverted by a vast amount of absurd interpretation, which men have not learned to separate from the Revelation itself. Historical criticism, useful as it may be in discovering what is false in human interpretation, fails, for want of a true doctrine of Divine Inspiration, to discern the universal and eternal Word of the Lord in Sacred Scripture. Its present tendency is to sweep away all Divine authority, together with the traditions of men. "Lest, therefore, mankind should be in doubt concerning the Divinity and sanctity of the Word, its internal sense has been revealed, which in its essence is spiritual, *and is in the external sense as the soul is in the body.* That sense is the soul which vivifies the letter; wherefore that sense can testify concerning the Divine sanctity of the Word, and convince

even the natural man if he is willing to be convinced.”

I wish to give you some final reasons for this faith, and shall endeavour to show (*a*) the great present need in the Churches of the doctrine of the internal sense; and (*b*) that it is the only answer to skeptical objections.

1. The new doctrine of the Internal Sense of Holy Scripture is needed in the Churches, because apart from it there is no practical faith in the Bible as the Word of God. A practical faith is a working faith. It must be, as far as it goes, rational, assured, settled, confident. It must be seen to inhere in the nature of things; must be so justified and confirmed as to become a principle of belief and conduct. There is no such faith in the plenary Inspiration of the Scriptures apart from the doctrine of their internal sense. It is impossible that a belief in their plenary Inspiration can co-exist with a belief that they contain but one sense, and that the literal sense. It might have been possible once, when men believed what they were taught without questioning the matter of belief or the authority of the teacher; but it is not possible in this day of intellectual activity, when teachers debate and men weigh evidence. This is shown not alone in the pres-

ent confusion of opinion and timid, apologetic defense of Revelation; but also in the history of the decline of the doctrine of Inspiration.

It is true that all Christian Churches agree in confessing the Bible as the Word of God, but upon no subject is there greater diversity of opinion than upon the character and extent of its Inspiration. "The consequence of the study and application of the Bible, from the period of the Reformation (says an orthodox authority), has been gradually and progressively to limit the extent of Inspiration; and by so doing to vindicate (as was supposed) the Holy Character of what is unquestionably of Divine origin, and to make the application of the rule of faith more sure." The belief in the Spiritual sense of Scripture, which was current in the primitive Church and prevailed more or less extensively for fourteen centuries, had suffered much discredit on account of fanciful and absurd interpretations. Without any rational doctrine of the inhabitation of the Spiritual sense in the literal, and with no rule of interpretation, the temptation to read human fancies into the text led to appalling corruptions of doctrine. The reaction, of course, was to insist upon the authority of the literal sense of Scripture as its final sense; but the doctrine

of plenary Inspiration was still retained, in name at least. There had been a belief in "an entire inspiration of matter, words and composition generally;" but "at the period of the Reformation, Luther placed the first limit on this view, and contended that the matter only was of Divine origin, the composition human." With the gradual progress of inquiry and the more diligent use of the Scriptures a further limitation was put upon their inspiration, and so much of the matter of the Bible as conflicted with the developing facts of natural science, was excluded. Then, with one portion of the matter of the Bible excluded from the sphere of Revelation, it was contended that statements of fact which belonged not to Sacred but to profane history, should be excluded on similar grounds. Next was raised the question whether even its Sacred history is inspired; and that question was answered in the negative with regard to all except such portions of the historical record as involve a matter of faith or practice. And proceeding on this principle, as orthodox criticism has done, namely, that the Bible is to be maintained as "the rule of faith," and dogmatic truth the only matter needing the control of Inspiration, the reasoning of the inspired writers was next

held to belong to themselves and not to the Spirit. Hence, "the assertions, and not the proofs, are the proper objects of unqualified assent."

This gradual limitation of the extent of Inspiration has proceeded upon the theory, it must be remembered, that the Bible contains but one sense, and that the sense of the letter; the "meaning which it had to the prophet or evangelist who first uttered or wrote, to the hearers or readers who first received it." Behold, then, what a remarkable basis of faith in Inspiration is left for the devout acceptance of men! After you have excluded all possible mystical meaning in any part of Scripture, and confined its Inspiration to the plain grammatical sense of the letter; after you have excluded all that is peculiar in its composition; all allusions to natural facts; all matter of profane history; all religious history that is not absolutely necessary to establish some dogma of faith; all parables, illustrations and reasonings; everything but the exact, direct and unequivocal assertion of matter of belief;—that which is left over is not much.

It would be wrong to present this as a statement of the accepted doctrine of Inspiration. It is doubtful if the Latitudinarian

School, which as we read the signs, is beginning to prevail even in Orthodox Churches, would accept the consequences of such a statement. But it is seriously presented, notwithstanding, as the logical conclusion required by their frequent assertions and concessions, however much their reverent feelings may revolt against such an intellectual conclusion. It is probable that most religious teachers hope to maintain a truce between faith and reason, and retain a real belief in the Divine Origin and Inspiration of the Scriptures, while allowing the admissions which the results of criticism seem to require; but it is a self-deception that cannot last. "So long as it was believed," says a much respected authority, "that each word and phrase to be found in the Bible—nay, even the order and grammatical connection of such words and phrases—had been infused by the Holy Ghost into the minds of the Sacred writers, or dictated to them by His immediate suggestion, so long must the opinion held respecting Inspiration have been clear, intelligible, and accurately defined. But such a theory could not stand the test of close examination. The strongest evidence against it has been supplied by the Bible itself; and each additional discovery

in the criticism of the Greek and Hebrew text confirms anew the conclusion that the great doctrine of the infallibility of Holy Scripture can no longer rely upon such a principle for its defense. The 'mechanical' theory (he continues) having been tacitly abandoned—at least by all who are capable of appreciating the results of criticism—and no system altogether satisfactory having been proposed in its stead, there has gradually sprung up a want of definiteness and an absence of consistency in the language used when speaking of Inspiration, owing to which those who are most sincere in maintaining the Divine Character of the Bible, have not infrequently been betrayed into concessions fatal to its supreme authority." (*Lee on Inspiration, Preface.*) This writer in presenting the characteristic of "the great majority of modern theories of Inspiration," "that of ascribing undue prominence to the human element of the Bible," reduces the varieties of opinion which may be traced to this source to the following :

"I. To the first head may be referred those writers who have changed the formula 'The Bible *is* the Word of God,' into 'The Bible *contains* the Word of God.' Writers of this class, while they generally shrink from abso-

lutely drawing the line between what is and what is not inspired, yet broadly assert as well the possibility as the existence of imperfections in Scripture, whether resulting from limited knowledge, or inadvertance, or defective memory on the part of its authors."

"II. Under the second head, may be placed the different hypotheses which assume various *degrees* of Inspiration. The tendency of all such hypotheses," "is to fine down to the minutest point, if not altogether to deny, the agency of the 'Holy Spirit in certain portions of the Bible. . . . Where nature ended, and Inspiration began, it is not for man to say.'"

"III. The third head comprises Schleiermacher and his followers; the shibboleth of whose school, in brief, is this: 'The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life.' The idea of Revelation, according to Schleiermacher, is confined to the *person* of Christ: the notion of Inspiration he considers to be one of completely subordinate importance in Christianity; the sole power which the Bible possesses of conveying a Revelation to us consisting in its aiding in the awakening and elevation of our religious consciousness; in its presenting to us a mirror of the history of Christ; in its respecting the intense religious life of His followers; and in

giving us the letter through which the Spirit of Truth may be brought home in vital experience to the human heart.'” (Id. p. 34.)

Rejecting the doctrine of “mechanical” Inspiration, and these theories which arise from giving undue prominence to the “human element” of the Bible, this author proposes a theory of Inspiration by which he wishes to retain the truth in each of the several systems without their weaknesses and errors. He makes a distinction between Revelation and Inspiration. By Revelation he understands “a direct communication to man, either of such knowledge as man could not of himself attain to, because its subject-matter transcends human sagacity,” “or which was not in point of fact, from whatever cause, known to the person who received the Revelation.” By Inspiration he understands “that actuating energy of the Holy Spirit, in whatever degree or manner it may have been exercised, guided by which the human agents chosen by God have officially proclaimed His will.” Upon this theory some portions of the Scriptures cannot be said to contain a Divine Revelation; but they are all the result of Divine Inspiration. This Inspiration “employs man’s faculties in accordance with their natural laws; at the

same time animating, guiding, moulding them so as to accomplish the Divine purpose." "We must not regard the Sacred penmen, on the one hand, as passive machines, yielding to an external mechanical force;" "on the other hand, if we dwell solely upon the subjective phase of this influence, we lose sight of the living connection of the writers with God." In a word, the writers were themselves in the full possession of their faculties, and their own knowledge of history and precept; but they were so guided and controlled by Inspiration, and their knowledge so far supplemented by supernatural Revelation, that the result, while partaking of the peculiarity of genius, thought and feeling of the writer, is nevertheless Divine and authoritative (pp. 140, 42). This theory of Inspiration may be accepted, we suppose, as substantially representing the position of the most thoughtful among Orthodox teachers in the Churches. It contains many elements of truth, and so far as it goes, it is capable of being harmonized with the doctrine of an indwelling spiritual sense in all Scripture. But standing alone, and predicated of the mere literal sense of Scripture, it is utterly indefensible. It fails to account for discrepancies in facts and statements, for the want

of chronological accuracy, for the unnatural arrangement and confusion in the order of the narrative, which are acknowledged on all hands to exist in the Old Testament history. It does not account for the different versions of the same facts, nor for the seeming contradiction, both in the relation of the same facts, and in the relation of other facts which appear to exclude each other, in the Gospels. If the letter of the Bible is exclusively the Word of God, containing no distinct spiritual sense to account for these apparent difficulties, they cannot be reconciled with any theory of Inspiration which claims the Bible as a Divine and authoritative record. "To suppose a supernatural influence to cause the record of that which can only issue in a puzzle, is to lower infinitely our conceptions of the Divine dealings in respect to a special revelation."

In estimating the need of a new doctrine of the Sacred Scriptures in the Churches, therefore, we must consider, not alone what is put forth as the theory of Inspiration, but also the admissions and difficulties which, on the other hand, render the doctrine as held indefensible. It will be found (*a*) that among a majority of the teachers in the Churches, the impression prevails, not that the Bible *is* the *Word* of

God, but that it *contains* the Word of God; and that means, not that it contains an internal sense by virtue of which it is Holy and Divine, but that some things in it are true, and some are not. Where the line is to be drawn, what is to be accepted and what rejected, it is not easy to determine, in the absence of any better guide than the individual judgment. It is manifest that such an uncertain faith in Divine Revelation cannot hold its own poor footing against the advance of a destructive criticism.

It will be found (*b*) that there are teachers in the Churches who contend that the Sacred writers were so guided and controlled by Inspiration as to have produced a record which, with all its human elements, is still the Divine and authoritative Word of God. But inasmuch as these hold the literal sense to be the final sense of Scripture, they are left with no defense against the destructive exhibit of historical criticism, save their own naked assertion. It will be found (*c*) that these difficulties are becoming more clearly appreciated, both by the Orthodox and liberal teachers in the Churches. The Rev. Moses Smith voices the feeling of a large number of sincere and able ministers when he writes, "Wanted:

A new statement of the doctrine of the Inspiration of the Bible." "Modern scholarship," he says, "has made large advances in restoring the original Scripture text; scientific discoveries have notably improved Biblical interpretation. Some modification of statement in regard to Inspiration would naturally be expected. Such modification has become imperative. The old forms of statement, in the face of modern criticism, are like stone forts and wooden frigates in the face of modern ordinance and iron-clads."

The defect thus confessed is not alone in the inadequate statement, however, but in the fallacious conception of the Divine character of the Scriptures. What is needed is a doctrine able to maintain itself, and capable, therefore, of supporting a rational, assured, settled, confident faith. This characteristic the new doctrine of the Internal Sense presents. It is not disturbed by any conflict between the cosmogony of the Pentateuch and science, nor by historical inaccuracies, nor by literal contradictions even, since it declares the purpose of Scripture is to teach neither science, nor history, nor formulated dogma, but spiritual principles. It is not affected by the obscurities of the letter, for it possesses a rule of interpreta-

tion by which to resolve the apparent confusion of the literal symbols and representatives into the light and harmony of spiritual truth. It makes little difference to a faith resting upon this doctrine, whether the Pentateuch were written by Moses or copied from older documents; little difference whether it be myth or fact that is recorded. For it accepts as the primary aim of the Word the revelation of spiritual truth; and for this purpose a myth may in some instances be more serviceable than a fact; a fragmentary history more useful than exact Chronicle. What this doctrine requires is, that in every instance, whether myth or fact, *the record shall contain a distinct spiritual meaning corresponding with the sense of the letter*; and the presence of such a meaning alone constitutes its full or "plenary" Inspiration. The peculiarities in the record which are brought to light in the progress of science or criticism, will be welcomed in the light of this doctrine as so many instances of the supremacy of the Spiritual Sense; and if the doctrine be true it will be able to show that these peculiarities of the letter only minister to the sequence and perfection of the spiritual meaning. Such a doctrine the Churches need; and nothing but

its acceptance can save them from practical rejection of the Word of God.

I do not forget that the Bible is able to commend itself to simple faith; that it has met, and does now meet, the spiritual wants of many sincere Christian people who have never been disturbed by the clamors of criticism, and who have never attempted to define the doctrine of Inspiration. They know that they have always been accustomed to regard the Bible as God's Word, and beyond this they only know that they find in it when they seek the Bread of Life. But these simple-minded Christians do really and most practically believe in the Spiritual sense of the Bible; and it is this which makes itself felt through their unshaken faith, and gives them wisdom above their teachers. Once destroy that faith, by persistent and confusing objections, and thenceforth "one suggestion of doubt will have more weight than a thousand confirmations." It is precisely this which is being done. People are taught to think of the letter alone, and they hear this attacked on every side by the most specious objections. They observe that most of what is written by their orthodox and trusted teachers is directed to the defense of the authenticity of the Sacred books, or to the

reconciliation of Genesis and Geology, or the harmonizing of historical discrepancies; they observe the accumulating strength of skeptical objections, and the demoralization of their own forces, and losing thus the reverence of tradition, and finding no rational basis of faith, they are without the Spiritual qualifications for perceiving the Divine Spirit and life that flow in through the Word. The man who has grown up with a sincere and humble reverence for God's message to him in His Holy Book, and has actually tested its commands in his life's experience, knows that it is Divine by the surfeit of all testimony: "Whereas I was blind, now I see." But such is not the condition of the rising generation, nor of any great number of professing Christians; they have passed from the state of traditional faith into a skepticism, out of which there is no way but through rational evidence and intellectual conviction. They must be taught rationally to see that there is an internal Spiritual sense everywhere present in Holy Scripture, by virtue of which it is Divine, and then they may if they will, reverence it as God's Word, and compelling themselves to obey it as such, confirm their rational faith in Spiritual experience.

II. We have now to consider the doctrine

of the Internal Sense in its relation to skeptical objections. The first general answer which this doctrine presents to all skeptical objections founded upon the appearances of the letter of Holy Scripture is this: "Admitting all the difficulties which you have brought forward, the fair inference from such appearances is, *not* that the Scriptures are uninspired, but that *if they are*, they must contain that superior wisdom which is the criterion of Inspiration, in an interior sense distinct from the literal expression. We find in the Scriptures numerous intimations leading us to look for something beyond the letter; the difficulties you have raised are calculated to turn our attention in the same direction; you have produced nothing that can convince a reflecting mind that the Scriptures are not the Word of God; you only compel us to correct our conceptions, and take higher views as to what the Word of God must really be; your objections hold mainly against your first assumed canon of interpretation, namely: that the Scriptures contain but one sense and that the literal sense; they judge your own position, and sustain the first conclusion of reason that a Revelation which is really from God, must contain the mind of God—not upon its face but within its bosom."



This answer does not indeed prove that the Scriptures *are* the Word of God, but it indicates the proper attitude of the inquirer, and establishes a ruling principle of criticism, which the objections drawn from the letter of Scripture in no way invalidate, but rather strengthen. This principle is, that the evidences of Divine Inspiration, and the final and harmonizing sense of Scripture, is to be sought for within, and not without. If the matter to be revealed is the Divine and Infinite wisdom, and God has nothing else to reveal; if those to whom it is to be adapted and revealed are immersed in evils and fallacies; it follows as a necessary conclusion that the real matter of Revelation must be involved in earthly symbols and representatives, and that it is to be sought within the symbols and representatives and not confounded with them. Strong presumptive evidence in favor of this position is furnished in the facts, (*a*), that the Scriptures repeatedly make this claim for themselves; (*b*) that it was accepted and made the basis of interpretation in the Primitive Church; (*c*) that it has been tacitly accepted and practically followed by all earnest Christians who have realized the highest experiences of Spiritual life, and (*d*), that the symbols and representa-

tives of the letter, as examined and compared in the light of modern criticism, cannot be understood as presenting the genuine Divine truth upon their face, and must be regarded as its clothing and *representative* mirror, or as unworthy of reverence.

In the face of all this it ought not to seem impossible nor improbable that there is a Divine Law governing the inhabitation of Spiritual wisdom in the letter of Scripture, and that that law should be revealed in the Church and become a universal rule of interpretation. These considerations should, at least, create in the earnest truth-seeker, an affirmative attitude of mind, toward the doctrine of an internal sense, and that established, the rest is a matter of fact. It is incumbent upon the doctrine of the internal sense to demonstrate its fitness, and upon its doctrine of Correspondence to show its reality by its ability to unlock the symbols of the letter, and explain the peculiarities of the literal record. This we claim it will do for the inquirer who approaches in an affirmative state of mind. But he must guard against prejudice as an end of inquiry. He must admit the possibility provisionally or he cannot proceed. I have done what I could in former lectures to throw light upon the general sub-

ject in such a way as to create this affirmative attitude of inquiry. Whoever is ready for proofs, and willing to see them if they are valid, may find them in Swedenborg's *Arcana Cœlestia*, or in the expository works of the New Church, where the actual working power of the doctrine of Correspondence, as a rule of interpretation, is presented. For my present purpose I must again assume these evidences perfect, that I may proceed to state in brief the answers of this doctrine to some of the particular objections of skepticism.

(1) *As to the Authenticity of the Canon.* We are told that "the ablest critics agree only in the opinion that no safe opinion can be pronounced," "as to when, or by whom, or on what principle" the Jewish Canon was established, and that it is equally impossible to tell when or by whom the four Gospels were written. This difficulty is urged against the Inspiration and Divine authority of the Scriptures on the assumption that such authority is inadmissible unless you can authenticate an inspired writer and "a perfect two-thousand-year-long chain of preservation and transmission" of the original writing. It is to be regretted that the defenders of the Bible should seem to admit this assumption in accepting the issue.

It is well enough for historical critics to bring to light what facts they are able in regard to the authenticity of the Sacred books, but it is a mistake to rest the question of Inspiration upon external evidences of authenticity; (a), Because external evidence in such matters is exceedingly uncertain, and may be easily used to confirm any hypothesis with which the investigation is begun. The results of criticism show that this is the case, and that opposite schools can with great show of success press the uncertain data to the support of opposite conclusions. (b), Because it is not a primary question. Its settlement determines nothing with respect to the Divine character and Spiritual value of the document. If the authorship and precise transmission could be perfectly authenticated by external evidence, the question of Inspiration would be just as far from being settled, and the characteristics of the writings just as difficult of explanation. Error uttered by an inspired writer is no more truth than the error of an uninspired one, and the primary question is not as to the human authorship, but as to the Divine content of the Scriptures. Our answer to all objections based upon the difficulty of authenticating by external evidence the authorship and purity of the Sacred

text is this: The Scriptures are Divine by virtue of a distinct Spiritual sense exactly within the letter; the Science of Correspondence discloses such a sense, it is, therefore, the true test of Divine authenticity. I must remind you again, that this Science of Correspondence is a definite and teachable system; that it can be studied and applied, and the results examined in the light of reason; that it has been so studied and applied, and the result is an intelligible, serial and consistent Spiritual sense in verse after verse, and book after book, and that to those, who, from examination, are alone competent to judge, the rule of interpretation and the Spiritual sense elicited verify each other. If, now, it should be demonstrable that Genesis yields upon the application of this science a serial and harmonious Spiritual sense in all respects worthy of a Divine Revelation, and the book of Proverbs does not; then any reasonable man must conclude that the Divine content of Genesis is its authentication, even though there should be no evidence of any kind that it was written by Moses, or any one man at any one time, and though there should be the most unmistakable evidence, on the other hand, that the Proverbs were written by their reputed author. If the rule of interpretation

were a loose and imperfect key, unlocking some passages or even some chapters, and failing in others, it could scarcely be accepted as the test of the Divine Canon. But such is not its character. It unlocks the intelligible secret of those books which bear upon their face the claim to be the Word of God. It applies with equally happy results to the Pentateuch and to the Four Gospels, to the Pslams and to the Prophets, showing in each and all a connected and harmonious internal sense. In the face of such internal evidence, the conjectures and debates of the critics from their uncertain historical data, is mere ingenious trifling, and the most sober and assured results of literary criticism possess only a secondary value.

(2) *As to the Mythical element in Sacred Scripture.* We are told that much of the Scriptures which is historical in form is mythical in fact, that the writings of the Hebrews, like the earliest writings of all nations, are mythical, and that, therefore, they are of human origin and possess no more Divine authority than other writings. It is asked, "can a book like Genesis or Exodus, made up largely of legends, be of equal value as history with a later book which really *is* history." A very pertinent question, if you wish to obscure the

whole subject by assuming that the main purpose of the Scriptures is to teach history, and their value to be tested by historical accuracy. This assumption, however, we deny. No critic, orthodox or heterodox, has ever presented any good reason for it. It certainly was not a doctrine of Primitive Christianity; it certainly is not promotive of Spiritual thought or religious faith. There is much more wisdom and Spirituality in the position taken by a clergyman of the English Church recently, who, declaring his belief in the Inspiration of the Bible, says; "I believe the Spirit of God, not only moved by secret impulses the minds of the Sacred writers, but also overruled to a great extent the *ipsissima verba* of Holy writ. And nowhere do I feel (rightly or wrongly) the Divine Inspiration more strongly and pervadingly, than in the early record of Genesis; every sentence, as Augustine says, contains a mystery. And yet I do regard these records as myths, and I think that all the efforts made to reconcile their statements with history and with science are only so much industry thrown away." This is the true position, and a perfectly natural and consistent one if we start with the assumption of the real claim of the Scriptures that they are God-inspired and profitable for *instruction*

in righteousness. Then, manifestly, a myth may be more serviceable as a vehicle of Divine and Spiritual truth than the most dogmatical form of doctrine, or the most exact statement of historical fact. That we should find both a Divine and a human element in the Bible, and that the human element should be variable, in adaptation to the changing cast of thought of successive ages, is precisely what we should expect in a written Revelation. That the earliest written forms of Divine Revelation should receive a mythical expression, is in entire agreement with what we know of the genius of the ancients. Why then should we conclude that because a mythical element is found in the Bible, the Divine must be wanting? Such an assumption is wholly gratuitous and inconclusive, and is of a piece with the insane notion of "development," that would trace everything back to nothing. If any one chooses to believe that the ancient myths and legends had their origin in ignorance and superstition, he is indeed entitled to his choice; but he should know that the facts presented by comparative mythology require no such conclusion, and lend to it no color of truth, unless you deny before hand that there is a God, or, being one, that

He is able to reveal Himself to man. What modern learning has done is this: "It traces the widely-scattered families of our race to-day, through the mazes of diverse languages, myths and religions, to our common old Aryan homestead;" and shows us, "looming forth from the mists of past ages, the great trunk of a primitive religion and an Ancient Word, of which all the various religions and sacred traditions of later times are but the numerous and fruitful branches." The attempt to construct this primitive religion out of natural elements alone, and to refer it to the so-called Solar and Lunar Deities, or the superstitious reverence for natural phenomena, explains nothing but the pre-conceptions of those who invent it.

We believe that these myths, legends, tales of the gods, pictures of the qualities and attributes and operations of the one God in his dealings with men, had their origin not in darkness, but in light;—in that spiritual wisdom and open revelation enjoyed by the Most Ancient Church, when Nature was to them full of the Divine Spirit and life, which then, in orderly influx, was communicated from the Deity without the need of a written Word. At first, creation was to them an open book of

symbols, a mirror of Divine and Spiritual things ; but when this faculty of intuitive perception began to decline, in consequence of their turning to sensuous things for their own sake instead of regarding them as the means of heavenly intelligence and use, whilst yet among the wisest a desire for the knowledge of heavenly things remained, then they perpetuated by instruction those things which had before been known by intuition. Thus originated mythical stories and allegorical histories, by which were expressed, by means of analogies taken from nature and human conduct, the spiritual truths which had at the first been intuitively perceived in their natural correspondences and representatives. They described spiritual and interior subjects in language borrowed from the appearances of nature, in allegory and myth, without danger of such forms of expression being misunderstood as literal statement of ordinary fact. The earliest form of Divine Revelation assumed, therefore, a mythical expression, as a necessary adaptation to the genius of the people to whom it was given ; and the first eleven chapters of Genesis, copied from the ancient Word, are illustrations of the purely correspondential style of the primitive Revelation.

The various mythologies are but branches of this ancient trunk of Revelation; they point with wonderful distinctness to their common pre-historic origin; they bear in their bosoms, buried under many corruptions, the Divine wisdom which is veiled in the natural symbolism and allegory of our written Bible; and the Science of Correspondence which opens to our wondering vision a complete and serial spiritual sense within the latter, furnishes also a key to the lost meaning and uniform origin of all sacred myths. When, therefore, it is objected, that much which purports to be a history of God's dealings with men, and of the order and time of creation, possesses neither historical nor scientific value—is in fact mere fable and myth, without any Divine Authority—we admit the fact, and deny the conclusion. And while modern criticism can only substantiate the fact, the doctrine of the Internal Sense gives a reason for the fact and verifies its reason by the exhibit of an intelligible Spiritual Sense in each and every fabulous history and so-called mythical interpolation, in its place. We may class also under this head all of those objections which are founded upon such peculiarities of the text as, (*a*) the want of chronological accuracy, (*b*) historical

discrepancies, (c) the recurrence of round numbers, such as are popularly supposed to possess a mystical meaning, (d) repetitions of the same fact or narrative under different conditions, or in relation to different persons, (e) an unnatural arrangement and dislocation of the narrative in many places, and (f) the existence of poetical and mystical forms of speech. These peculiarities, so troublesome to the critic who bases his investigations upon the assumption that the literal sense is the only sense, are seen from the standpoint of the internal sense to furnish no ground of objection to the Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures, but on the contrary, are actually required to contain and express that sense.

(3) *As to the apparent sanction of immortality.* The answer to this whole class of objections, was really furnished in the discourse on the Principle of Adaptation; that Divine truth, in order to make itself apprehensible in any form to such a people as the Jews, and compel their obedience to any laws of Divine order, must necessarily be expressed in accommodation to their carnal state and fallacious notions. Every Revelation is and must be an accommodation of the matter so revealed to the states and capacities of those to whom it has come. It

must therefore of necessity indicate two things : the *mode* in which it is made will indicate the states and character of those to whom it was originally given ; the *substance* of the Revelation will indicate the matter which was to be made known. Every Divine Revelation must therefore contain both *genuine* and *apparent* truths—truth as it is, and truth as it appears to those to whom it is revealed. The appearance does stand for a reality, just as do the fallacies of the senses in man's relation to the world ; and those who regard them in simplicity and regulate their conduct accordingly are clearly gainers. The appearances of truth in the letter of the Word simply indicate the states and character of man, to whom the genuine truth was thus accommodated ; they are therefore the *fallacious* aspects of truths which only become *falsities* when they are confirmed as the real and only truth. The presence of such appearances does not argue the absence of a Divine reality, any more than the apparent rising of the sun argues the absence of a law of planetary rotation. The Spiritual sense opens to us this Divine reality and genuine truth ; enables us to see the cause of its fallacious presentation in the letter ; and removes all objection to its

Divine character arising from such appearances. We have applied this explanation in a former discourse to the wars of the Jews, and do not need to dwell upon it here. Once admit that the Israelites were chosen merely to *represent* the subjects belonging to the Church, and consider all the leading characters in the record as *representatives* and *types*, rather than *patterns*, and all difficulties arising from the questionable morality of some of them disappears. We then see how the record may be essentially the Word of God, notwithstanding the craft imputed to the immediate founders of the nation their adherence to eastern manners in regard to the intercourse of the sexes, and the acts of violence and treachery committed. Granted these immoralities, and even the apparent imputation of the Divine sanction; what then? It only shows that the Jews were not the subjects of *a real church*, possessing the inward principles of spiritual life, but only of *the type of a church*—of a dispensation representing by external acts the operation of spiritual principles, in which they had no actual participation. And when these spiritual principles are unfolded by the science of Correspondence, the record is seen not as offering a pattern

of conduct, but as a Divine mirror constructed from earthly materials for the reflection of the wisdom of heaven ; and the mirror passes from the thought in the contemplation of the glorious image which it reflects.

(4) *As to infallibility.* It is objected that whatever view is taken of the Scriptures, and in whatever way they may be held as being or containing the Word of God, they are not infallible. They do teach error, and they do mislead. They teach one set of doctrines to one class of men, and another to others. They hold out to the simple expectations which are continually disappointed, and must forever be impossible of fulfillment. Now, all that depends on what you mean by infallible. If you mean that the Scriptures should contain no errors of history, or of science, or of dogmatic precept—that they should not only be free from false and fallacious representations, but that they should be able to prevent the possibility of mistake or misapprehension on the part of their readers, then we grant that the Scriptures are not infallible in such a sense. It is not possible, in the nature of the human mind, that any, even a Divine Communication, however true in itself, can insure man against the misapprehension of its message. Nor is it pos-

sible that it could make itself in any way apprehensible and secure man's attention and obedience, without presenting many fallacious appearances of truth in accomodation to his perverted understanding and perverse heart. Much less is it necessary that a Divine communication with a purely moral and spiritual purpose should be free from historical and scientific inaccuracy. But if by infallibility you mean what is perfectly and unerringly adapted for the accomplishment of *its own end*, and that it will not mislead those who put their trust in it as a guide to that end; then the Word is infallible indeed, and its infallibility proven by centuries of human experience, and multitudes of witnesses. That you do not find it infallible when judged by your scientific standards of truth is not strange, since it is not offered as a guide to such truth. That you should find it contradictory and misleading when you approach it with minds pre-occupied with theories foreign to its purpose, or a skepticism that renders the reception of instruction impossible, is the result, not of anything in its own character, but of your own mental state. But as a guide to righteousness, to those who seek it as a message from God, willing to learn and do what it teaches it is infallible, in that it is

infinitely competent to the accomplishment of that end, and infinitely adapted to all human states, of all sorts and conditions, good or bad, wise or foolish. In this respect it is not only free from error, but is altogether above and beyond criticism. We do not say that the Scriptures carry upon their face the sciences of theology and pneumatology, any more than nature carries her sciences upon her surface; nor that they are able to preserve men from false conclusions from fallacious appearances; but that the appearances of truth which the Scriptures present are precisely such as to best guide the life of the man to whom they appeal. Theological accuracy, even, is something which the Scriptures do not profess to infallibly guarantee; and all objections to the Bible on this score of its fallibility, are directed against a dogmatic position of protestant Churches, and not any claim or profession which the Bible itself presents. This is true in fact of all the objections which I have noticed, as well as the many which I must pass over;—they avail nothing whatever against the Word of God *as it is in itself*, but only against the *literalistic interpretations and narrow sectarian claims* which commonly prevail.

Those who seek *the bread of Life* in the Scriptures find that its doctrines are doctrines of life. Their history and prophetic imagery are but the clothing of thought, and when we get at the thought we get knowledge and experience of spiritual things, not natural; principles of life and not merely definitions of belief. But all who ever did come to a knowledge of the inner things of Holy Scripture had to pass through many states, and in passing through them, to experience many changes. Things which seemed as enduring as the heavens and the earth, were, in the experience of those changes, found to be not enduring, but only intended to serve in their temporary continuance, things which are eternal. They have rested on some conception as in the very heart of truth, and then coming again into states of inquiry, have learned that their conception is only partial; that there is greater breadth upon the commandment and unexplored instruction in the bosom of song or story. Mistakes have to be corrected, false notions dispelled, and the world of partial ideas in which they lived must pass away, both its heaven and its earth; for our thoughts with respect to the Lord change as well as our thoughts of human duty. But in all these changes it is not the real truth

which passes away. All that is real remains, and with this all that is new and true coalesces—the *Word of the Lord shall not pass away.*

So now in the Church, this which individuals have often experienced, is taking place upon a larger scale. The heavens and earth of human interpretation are passing away, that it may be known that they are not the Word of the Lord, that endureth forever. The denial of the Spiritual sense of the Word, which is latent in the literal interpretations and naturalistic theories of Inspiration current in the churches, is itself the triumph of infidelity. It is thus that the letter kills. And doubtless in the Divine Providence, the skepticism which so often accompanies modern critical studies is being turned to use in the destruction and dissipation of those unworthy views and false interpretations, that the Church of the future may know and teach that “it is the Spirit that quickeneth.” Because we believe that the day is at hand when the falsifications and perversions of the Word of God, to which the very Word itself is made subservient in the strongholds of so-called orthodoxy, shall pass away; when the dogmas, which are held in supremacy to the Word

from which they profess to be drawn, must be given up, willingly or unwillingly; we, therefore, offer you the intellectual help of the doctrine of the Internal Sense and of the science of Correspondence, for the strengthening of your faith in the internal glory and Divinity of the Word. Be assured that if the Church is to arise with power, if faith is to continue and exercise a power in the life of man and of society, the Word of God must be vindicated as the channel of truth eternal. This is the purport we believe of that prophetic vision of the river of life, proceeding out of the throne of God. You shall see if you improve your privileges, the self-attesting Divine truth issuing from the very heart of God, full of the power of His Life—a power which is not in words, nor in dogma, but in the in-breathed Spirit of Divine Life, transforming mind and heart. You will look in vain in history and science, as such, for this power of life unto salvation; it is not even identified with the letter of law and precept, but is in them flowing out of the Divine fullness. You will find this spirit and life that quickeneth—not by looking at, but by looking through, the letter of Holy Scripture. And if you will use the means which by the mercy of the Lord, are at this day

furnished in the restored doctrine of Correspondence, you may see and know intellectually and rationally this spiritual character and Divine sufficiency of the Word of God. "We testify that we do know," for our eyes have seen what we would that you should see also, "that I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me." AMEN.





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