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efforts to escape from disagreeable duty, will after all have the disagreeable duty to do; and it must be done, too, with the additional torment of the reproof of conscience, the fatigue and shame of flight, the mortification of exposure, and the sorrow of repentance. The man who always does right from the first, has, in this world, much the easier task and much the happier life, as well as the brighter crown in eternity.

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## ARTICLE V.

### THE INDIVISIBLE NATURE OF REVELATION.<sup>1</sup>

By E. P. Barrows, Jr., Professor at Andover.

NOTHING is more common than the explicit admission of principles, when they are stated abstractly in their naked form, and the implicit denial of the same by the maintenance of opinions which are irreconcilably at variance with them. The principles themselves are, perhaps, apprehended only in a dim and shadowy way, and their logical consequences are not so much as thought of. Hence the necessity of laying down first truths in a clear and definite manner, even though they be generally admitted, and following them out to their legitimate results. In all investigations of a moral nature this is necessary, but especially in the momentous question of Revelation; for here, more than anywhere else, we continually find men contradicting and disowning the necessary inferences from principles which they themselves admit, or, at least, will not venture to deny.

The proposition that Jesus of Nazareth was a Teacher sent from God, few of the present day would care to deny. Yet multitudes are far enough from acknowledging the weighty truths which this proposition wraps up in itself. To exhibit all these in detail does not come within the scope of the present Article, which has for its object to set forth *the indivisible nature of Revelation*. Taking the above-named proposition for our central point, we propose to consider the high and

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<sup>1</sup> An Address delivered on the occasion of Professor Barrows's Inauguration as Seminary Professor of Sacred Literature in Andover Theological Seminary.

glorious truths that cluster around it, so far as these have a bearing upon our theme.

With the man who openly denies that Jesus was a messenger from God to men, we have at present no concern; but if any one acknowledges this as a true proposition, the first question (and a main question it is) will be, in what sense he holds it; since it is a custom with some of the present day first to eviscerate a proposition of its true and proper contents, and then admit it. Thus, to the question: Was Jesus a messenger sent from God to men? one of these modern philosophers might answer: "He was, for he had a mission to execute for the good of mankind, as had Confucius, and Zoroaster, and Alfred the Great, and Washington." But the mission he makes to be purely providential, utterly excluding from it the supernatural element. And if it were again asked: Was Jesus an inspired teacher? he might reply: "He was, for all genius is inspired. It is a scintillation of the Infinite, a beam of the great universal Mind. Homer and Milton and Shakspeare were inspired to sing; Socrates and Plato, to teach men the philosophy of mind and morals; Newton and Laplace, to investigate the laws of nature; Tell and Washington, to vindicate the cause of liberty." But inspiration is with him only an exaltation of the faculties of the soul arising from within itself, such as any man may have in a natural way; not a supernatural influence coming from a free personal Divine spirit upon a free personal human soul. He first eliminates from the idea of inspiration everything that is above nature, and then concedes that all great men are inspired. The proposition, then, that Jesus was a messenger from God to men it would be necessary, first of all, to settle in respect to its true meaning; nor could any lower meaning be admitted than that which the unprejudiced reader of the New Testament gathers from the words of Jesus himself, and of those who were his intimate friends and understood well what he taught respecting his own person and mission. The substance of these is, that the person who was known on earth as Jesus of Nazareth, was in the beginning with God and was God, the Maker of all things; that this Divine Being, who existed in a state of glory with God before the world was, was made flesh, and thus came forth from the Father and came into the world and dwelt among men, invested with a true and proper human nature; that, as one who had dwelt from eternity with God, he knew all truth, and was, therefore, an infallible teacher; that, as his whole appearance on earth was supernatural, so also he daily performed works of supernatural power; that, inasmuch as he was

himself the Author and Giver of life, no man was able to take his life from him, but he laid it down of himself as a ransom for the sins of the world; that at the appointed time he rose from the dead, ascended to heaven, and sat down on the right hand of God, being invested by the Father with all power in heaven and in earth. All these truths concerning the person and offices of Christ the Evangelists drew from his own lips, and they teach them in the plainest language. This is their idea of his mission from God to men, nor is there any possibility of setting aside this idea, except by setting aside the histories themselves which they have left us as thoroughly false; for it is interwoven with their very substance. Now with the man who denies the record of the Evangelists as untrustworthy we have, as already stated, nothing to do in the present Article. But if one admits that Jesus of Nazareth was a messenger from God to men in this high Scriptural sense, then we ask him to consider how weighty are the truths which necessarily follow in the train of this admission.

And, first of all, it is manifest that supernatural interposition enters into the plan of God's providential and moral government; for here we have a mighty interposition that is supernatural in the fullest sense of the term. Nor is there any idea more in harmony with our nature, or more readily and universally admitted by us. Supernatural intervention forms, so to speak, the warp of true religion, and it enters into the substance of all false religions that have a popular origin. It is only philosophic pantheism that seeks to reject it, not with the consent of our nature, but against it; against our nature in its inmost essence, for if there be any first truth that shines by its own light it is that of our own personality. We know immediately and absolutely that we — the thinking, acting beings — are not impersonal ramifications of some great impersonal whole that is developing itself in everlasting cycles of fixed fate, without any real freedom; but we are true and proper persons, endowed with reason, conscience and freewill. Our inward intuition covers not only the proposition: "I am," but also the proposition: "I am a person, rational, free, accountable." We know that our actions, good and evil, are our own, not in any figurative and improper sense, but in deed and in truth; and that eternal righteousness demands that we be held responsible for them. Hence that confidence in an invisible, almighty, personal power which goodness naturally inspires, and that "fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation" which follows wickedness. Now this constitution of our nature is satisfied only with the Scriptural view of a

personal God, infinite in wisdom, power and holiness, who upholds and controls all things, and who holds towards each of his rational creatures the personal relation of Lawgiver and Judge. It is the ineradicable consciousness of guilt that makes the idea of this personal relation to God terrible to men, and impels them (whether by a conscious or unconscious process it is not necessary here to decide) to take refuge from its brightness in the mazes of impersonal pantheism. In thus divesting God of personality they seek to purchase relief for a troubled conscience at the expense of violating their natural convictions of truth.

If, then, we admit, as is most natural and reasonable, the Scriptural view, that God is not an impersonal law or power developing itself in the endless phenomena of nature without any true inward freedom, but a personal Being, before nature, above nature, and the author of nature; who gave to nature all her laws, and is able, therefore, to suspend them, to add to their power, or to work without them; and if we further admit that God governs the world for a high moral end, which end, so far as it exists out of himself, must be the holiness of his rational creatures and the blessedness inseparably connected with holiness, the physical creation being only a handmaiden to the spiritual — if we admit these two most reasonable propositions, we place ourselves at once in harmony with the plan of God's government as it is revealed to us in the Bible. We may naturally expect that this personal God, who has made us persons and has placed our highest good in communion with himself, will manifest himself to us in a supernatural way whenever the spiritual ends of his government require such a manifestation. This question of an impersonal nature-God, or a personal God above nature, is the true point of divergence between rationalism and supernaturalism; and it is the state of the heart that gives the impulse in the one direction or the other. Pantheism, under the show of great profoundness, is irrational, because it involves the denial of first truths which shine by their own light, such as our inward freedom and accountability, and the true merit and demerit of our actions; and because, also, it fails to meet the wants of our spiritual nature. It has nothing to recommend it save the misty veil which it spreads before the tribunal of a personal Judge. The Scriptural view, which places each of us in a personal relation to the great Father of spirits, is in harmony with our nature, and satisfies all our wants as spiritual beings. It is terrible only to unrighteousness.

Let us consider, then, as an established truth the proposition that

our Saviour's appearance on earth was supernatural in the true and proper sense of the word, and that, consequently, supernatural interposition enters as an essential element into the plan of God's providential and moral government. From this great central truth we infer at once the antecedent probability of other supernatural manifestations of God to men. We should hardly expect to find the incarnation of the eternal Word and the work of man's redemption connected with it standing forth in solitary grandeur, with no antecedent or subsequent revelations accompanying it. Thus much we might, at least, infer with certainty, that if antecedent revelations were needed by way of preparation, or subsequent revelations for carrying out the work of redemption begun in the incarnation, they would not be wanting. Having admitted the truth of our Saviour's supernatural manifestation, and how, after his resurrection, he led his disciples to the Mount of Olives and ascended to heaven while they beheld, we are not in the least surprised at the announcement of the angels: "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." The declaration is in perfect harmony with what we have already seen and believed concerning the Son of God, and, therefore, it finds our minds already prepared to receive it. Again, having admitted that the Redeemer manifested himself on earth as the Lord of life and death, we are ready to believe his solemn announcement that "the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Let us not be misunderstood as though we held that the simple word of Jesus were not of itself a sufficient ground of faith. What we wish to show is, that his second coming, with the accompanying resurrection of the dead, naturally follows in the train of his first coming, so that he who has admitted the reality of the one, is in a state of preparation for the announcement of the other.

Once more, faith in the miraculous works of Christ naturally connects itself with faith in the supernatural endowments of his apostles. We cannot believe that the Saviour would leave the revelation of the way of salvation through his blood incomplete. Either he must have remained on earth until he had, by his own personal teachings, unfolded it in all its parts, so far as it was necessary that men should understand it, or he must have authoritatively commissioned his apostles to unfold it, and, given them, in the possession of miraculous

powers, the seal of their commission. But now we know, from our Saviour's own words, that he left many things to be revealed after his ascension, and promised to this end the gift of the Holy Spirit. "I have," said he as he was about to leave them, "yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." And accordingly we find in the words of the apostles the full unfolding of some high truths that had been only briefly intimated by the Lord himself. For this work the promised gift of the Holy Spirit qualified them; and the miraculous powers which accompanied it were the evidence of their commission, so that their doctrine comes to us with the authority of Christ himself. Instead, then, of finding in the miraculous deeds ascribed in the New Testament to the apostles a perpetual stumbling-block, as do the rationalists, we ought either to reject, as a fable, the whole history of Christ's supernatural manifestation, or admit, for very consistency, the supernatural endowments of his apostles; for the two cling together indissolubly as parts of one great plan. It is surprising that De Wette should admit, as he does, the historic truth of our Lord's crucifixion and resurrection, which constitute the central point of his supernatural manifestation, and yet be so perplexed with the Pentecostal gift of tongues. One might well ask him, and all men of his class: Why should it seem incredible to you that the Son of God, who, in the days of his humiliation, had power by a word to confer upon the deaf and dumb the gift of speech, should, after his exaltation to the right hand of God, have enabled his apostles to speak in foreign tongues, both as a sign of their Divine commission, and as a help in the work of propagating the Gospel? But forgetting or not apprehending this, he wanders on through pages of perplexity and doubt, continually sinking, like Christian in the Slough of Despond, deeper and deeper in the mire, and he gets out at last, not on the right side, by the helping hand of faith in the miraculous endowments of the apostles, but on the wrong side, through the ditch of the Irving tongues. Rejecting the explanation which lay near at hand, and which is given by the Apostle Peter: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear,"—rejecting this adequate explanation, he finds a solution of the phenomena of that memorable day in the jargon of Edward Irving's meetings; a striking illustration how a preconceived theory may carry a man of no ordinary learning, shrewdness and good sense a great way past a good explanation to find a poor one.

But it is the inseparable connection of our Lord's incarnation with a series of previous revelations upon which we wish mainly to insist, for in this direction some of the fiercest assaults have been made upon revealed religion. Many seem disposed to admit, at least not willing openly to deny, the main facts of Christianity, if they can first dis sever them from the Old Testament; but this, as containing an authentic record of true supernatural manifestations, they are determined to disown. Its narratives of miraculous events they attack, now by denying the genuineness of the documents, now by alleging chronological and historical inconsistencies, now by urging difficulties drawn from physiology and the laws of nature, and again by arraying the religious ideas and doctrines of the Old Testament against those of the New. More especially do they labor to show that the Messiah of the Old Testament hard cannot be the Messiah who appeared in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, because, as they affirm, the character of the one is repugnant to that of the other. To cite a single illustration, Rosenmüller, in his commentary on the second Psalm, after admitting that the personage there described is that great king, called by way of distinction, the Messiah, whom the Jews were expecting as their future deliverer and the conqueror of their enemies, adds: "Yet that the prophet had in mind Jesus himself, the Saviour, no one can believe who, uninfluenced by any preconceived opinion, shall consider with himself what is said in the ninth verse concerning the cruel dominion which that king is to exercise over the conquered nations,"—an objection to the identity of the Messiah of the Old Testament with that of the New which has been reëchoed in a thousand forms.

But it can be easily shown, that the acknowledgment of the supernatural character of Jesus of Nazareth and the miraculous manifestations connected with his appearance, involves the acknowledgment of the supernatural revelations recorded in the Old Testament, so that the two must be received together or rejected together. Perhaps this ought to be assumed as granted without discussion. But since it is denied, directly or indirectly, by a host of foreign interpreters, many of whom occupy high posts in the Church, and since, moreover, the consideration of it brings up to view the essential unity of Divine revelation, we beg the reader's indulgence while we offer a few suggestions on the subject.

And, in the first place, the supernatural mission of Christ (supposing this to be admitted) is itself very strong presumptive evidence of previous supernatural revelations. That such a mighty event as



this should have burst upon the world abruptly, without any previous preparatory manifestations of God, is contrary to the whole analogy of the Divine proceedings, the order of which is, "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." That some sort of preparation, a providential at least, must have preceded the advent of Christ, all will admit who believe in its reality. No one would seriously maintain that he could have properly appeared in the days of Abraham or of Moses. But, since the advent itself was to be in the fullest sense miraculous, why should not the way for it have been prepared by miraculous revelations as well as by providential arrangements? How great the inconsistency that finds—rightly finds—in the mighty cycle of changes which geology reveals, that plan of progression which enters as an essential element into all the operations of God, but cannot discern in the continually brightening page of Hebrew prophecy the dawn of that perfect day which opened upon the world with the advent of God's Son! But so it is in matters of religion, and so it has ever been. Here men depart from those fundamental principles which guide them in other investigations.

Then, secondly, we have the great fact that the Jewish people, among whom our Lord appeared and from among whom he chose the primitive preachers of the Gospel, possessed a firm and deeply rooted belief in the unity of God and his infinite perfections. That such a belief was a necessary foundation for the peculiar doctrines of Christianity can be easily shown. It was a belief peculiar to them as contrasted with other nations, and held, moreover, not by a few philosophers among them, but by the great mass of the people. No other example of a whole nation receiving and holding firm this fundamental doctrine of religion existed then, or had ever existed; and no adequate explanation of this great fact has ever been given, except that contained in the Old Testament. The fact itself proves a series of previous miraculous interpositions and revelations such as is there recorded. It was not by chance, but in accordance with the eternal plan of redemption, that the Messiah appeared when and where he did, not in Egypt in the days of the Pharaohs, nor in Nineveh, or Babylon, or Athens, or Rome, but in Judea when now "the fulness of the time was come."

But the hopelessness of the attempt to dissever the revelations of the Old Testament from those of the New, appears most clearly when we consider the ground which the Saviour himself took, and after him his apostles, on this point. If we know anything whatever concerning the doctrines of our Lord Jesus, we know that he constantly

taught his disciples that he had come in accordance with the prophecies of the Old Testament. If there were found in his words only one or two remote allusions to these prophecies, then there would be more show of reason in the favorite rationalistic hypothesis, that the disciples *misapprehended* the meaning of their Lord's words. But now his teachings on this point are too numerous and explicit to admit of any such explanation. The disciples could not have been mistaken in respect to so fundamental a position as this, which underlies the whole of our Lord's instructions. It was with two of them a matter of positive knowledge, that "beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself;" and with all of them, that he said in reference to his past teachings: "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me." Here it is not even necessary to assume the inspiration of the New Testament narratives, though this can be established on the most solid grounds. It is sufficient to maintain that the disciples were honest men, capable of correctly reporting what they had heard from the lips of their Lord. And this — that in him were fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament — they had evidently heard daily and in manifold forms. It constituted, so to speak, the warp of his web of daily instruction. Now, if a single thread unlike all the rest in substance and color had found its way into that web, it might, perhaps, be regarded as foreign and accidental. But to unravel from our Lord's words all his references to the prophecies concerning himself, contained in the Old Testament, would be to take out of the web all the threads of the warp, and then the web itself would be gone. Nothing, then, is left for those who would dis sever the revelations of the Old Testament from those of the New, but the poor expedient of saying, that in this matter Jesus accommodated himself to the prejudices of the age; which is found, when duly considered, to mean that the Son of God, who came down from heaven to earth to teach men the way of salvation, whom the Father by a voice from heaven commanded all men to hear, and who has himself authorized and required all men to put unlimited confidence in his words — that this Son of God availed himself of a popular delusion, a baseless idea which the men of the nineteenth century would at length detect and set aside, to support his claims to be the long expected Messiah; an expedient this which the moral sense of every true believer rejects at once with abhorrence. In truth, no simple-

hearted reader could ever gain from the words of Christ and his apostles any other idea than that Jesus of Nazareth appeared in accordance with a bright train of true supernatural revelations going before and preparing the way for his advent. This idea is so incorporated into the very substance of the New Testament that it must stand or fall with it.

Thus far we have contemplated the indivisible nature of revelation from the platform of the New Testament. If now we go back to the beginning and look at it from that position, we shall find that it constitutes a golden chain, every link of which was forged in the armory of heaven, and indissolubly connected by God himself with the following links, all the way down to the incarnation of Christ. Let us look at the record contained in the first three chapters of Genesis. We shall find this thickly sown with the seeds of those great principles which underlie the course of human nature and the history of redemption. It will appear, in a single word, to be nothing else than the undeveloped history of man, both as man, and as a sinner. And it is worthy of especial notice, that our Saviour and his apostles build upon the events which it records arguments of the gravest import, the validity of which appears at once, the moment that we admit these events to be historic verities, while otherwise the arguments themselves vanish with the events into thin air. Thus our Saviour answers the question of the Pharisees: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" by a reference to the original constitution of God: "Have ye not read that he which made them at the beginning, made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." And upon the same original record the Apostle Paul builds an argument for the subordination of woman to man: "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." And again: "A man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man." Now if the events to which the Apostle here refers be historic verities, then his argument is valid; otherwise it is good for nothing.

But it is the narrative of Adam's fall and the consequences thence proceeding to the race, which is, in a special sense, interwoven with the very substance of the plan of redemption. From this we learn,

*First*, that alienation from God and wickedness are not the natural condition of man, but one into which he was brought by the event there recorded. In one sense, indeed, a sinful character is natural to man. It is the character which belongs to all men, since the fall of Adam, from the beginning, until they are renewed by Divine grace. But it is not man's primitive character. He was made upright and placed in communion with God. This is the natural state of men as rational creatures of God, and for this very reason it is the state to which the Gospel of Christ proposes to restore them.

*Secondly*, that the misery and death which reign over the human race, are not mere natural facts that find an adequate explanation in man's physiological constitution, but that they come upon him by God's express appointment as a sinner.

*Thirdly*, that from the very day of the fall God put enmity between the woman and her seed and the serpent and his seed, thereby establishing in this world a mighty conflict between his cause and the cause of "that old serpent, which is called the Devil and Satan," a conflict which should endure throughout all ages, and in which the seed of the woman should continually suffer from the serpent and yet continually prevail over him: "It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

In this brief narrative, then, we have both the substance of the Gospel itself, and the grand fact on which it is based. The great historic event of redemption is, that "the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil;" and the works of the devil which he came to destroy, are precisely the works described in the record before us, the seduction of man from his allegiance to God with the misery and death that followed. We see, then, that this primitive history of man's apostasy is so far removed from the character of a myth that it contains, in truth, the very key to the plan of redemption. So it is plainly regarded by the Apostle Paul; for he builds upon it arguments of the gravest consequence, relating, not to the outworks of redemption, but to its inward nature. He makes the universality of man's fallen condition through the sin of Adam the platform upon which is built the universality of the provisions of the Gospel through Christ. "By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned." "As by the offence of one judgment came upon

all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." How could the original transaction of the fall and the manifestation of God's Son be more indissolubly bound together as parts and parcels of one great plan than in these words of an inspired apostle? Nor is it any forced and unnatural view that he gives of the primitive record, but that which most naturally offers itself to the candid reader, provided only that he admits the appearance of Jesus of Nazareth as itself a true supernatural revelation. For if he denies this, he plainly denies the very idea of supernatural manifestations from God to men, and is lost in the mists of infidelity.

Since, then, the very first revelation of God to fallen man is thus firmly interwoven with the whole plan of redemption, we might well assume the same of every subsequent revelation. If the first manifestation of God to sinners and the last great manifestation in the person of Christ be parts of one whole, much more must every intervening manifestation enter as a harmonious element into the same whole. We wish, nevertheless, for distinctness of impression, to consider a single salient point in this mighty range of Divine communications — the Abrahamic covenant.

The first feature of this covenant to which we would call the reader's attention, is its universality. It is made with Abraham, not for himself alone and his posterity, but for all the nations of the earth. "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." And if the Abrahamic covenant had respect to the whole human family, the same must be true of the Mosaic economy in its ultimate design; since this did not abrogate the covenant made with Abraham, but rather came in as subordinate to it, and in order to prepare the way for the accomplishment of its rich provisions of mercy for all mankind. "It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." The Mosaic economy was, in truth, a partial subservient to a universal dispensation. In the purpose of God, therefore, it had a benevolent aspect towards the whole race. The man who objects to it as not in harmony with the catholic spirit of the Gospel, is bound to show how a universal religion, like Christianity, could have been wisely and successfully introduced without a previous work of preparation, or how any better

method of preparation could have been devised than that of the Mosaic institutions. Otherwise his objection is as futile as if one were to find fault with the monarch who marches to subdue a revolted province, because he does not so divide his forces as to enter it on all the four sides at once. Every man of understanding would answer: The question is not on how many sides the province shall be entered, but how it shall be best reduced to obedience.

Another feature of the Abrahamic covenant is its purely spiritual character, the condition of its blessings being nothing else than faith. The Apostle Paul dwells with much particularity on the fact that this covenant was made with Abraham before his circumcision, lest any should say that it was conditioned wholly or in part upon a "carnal ordinance." "He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised." The seal of circumcision, then, was not necessary to the validity of the covenant, for the covenant existed many years before its institution. Faith was the only condition of Abraham's justification: "He believed on the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness." Circumcision was added, not to give Abraham righteousness, but as a seal of the righteousness which he already possessed.

And if we look at the promise contained in the Abrahamic covenant: "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed," we find that it is not so much in harmony with the Gospel as the very Gospel itself which, in the words of the Apostle, "the Scripture preached before unto Abraham." In truth, the incarnation of Christ is, in accordance with the uniform representation of the New Testament, nothing else but the carrying out of the Abrahamic covenant; for this covenant is, first, universal, made, not for one nation but for all the families of the earth; secondly, purely spiritual, being conditioned on faith alone; and thirdly, its substance is Christ in whom all nations are blessed.

And while God has thus indissolubly linked to the incarnation of his Son this high transaction with Abraham, we see how he has, at the same time, connected it with the first promise in Eden. The tenor of that promise is, that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head; of this: "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Now it is by bruising the head of the serpent that Abraham's seed blesses all the families of the earth. The two revelations, then, are in their inmost nature one and the same.

And so we might follow down the line of prophecy, and show how, in the development of one great self-consistent plan, the promise

originally made to the seed of the woman, and subsequently limited to the seed of Abraham, was again limited to the tribe of Judah, and, lastly, to David's royal line; the Messianic revelations of the Old Testament becoming continually more and more definite, till at last they clearly unfold the personality and Divine attributes of that seed of the woman who was from the beginning appointed to bruise the serpent's head, and exhibit him as being, at once, in a high and incommunicable sense, a Prophet, Priest and King to men. But this would lead us over a field of inquiry too wide for the present Article. Besides, if the indissoluble connection of the earliest revelations with the manifestation of God in the flesh, is firmly established, that of all the intervening revelations will follow as a matter of course.

From the indivisible nature of revelation, as we have now endeavored to exhibit it, some inferences may be drawn of a very practical character, especially in reference to the interpretation of the Old Testament.

1. *Each particular communication from God to men must be, in its place and measure, perfect.* For it proceeded from the Infinite Spirit, who understood at the beginning the whole plan of redemption, and who, when he made the first revelation concerning it, knew all that was afterwards to follow, and said and did, in the most perfect way, all that was at that time proper to be said and done. Herein the revelations of the Bible stand in luminous contrast with all human systems of religion. Of the Platonic Socrates it has been well remarked, that we can clearly discern how, in the progress of time, the disciple himself gradually improves and perfects the doctrines which he puts into the lips of his master. It is not so with the revelations of the Holy Ghost. These admit, indeed, of a stupendous development, and for such a development they are manifestly intended, but they are capable of no rectification or improvement. The very earliest of them contain in themselves the germs of all subsequent revelations<sup>1</sup> without any admixture of error. There is in them a holding back of the full light reserved for future ages, because the world is not prepared to receive it, but no mist of error—nothing which, fairly interpreted, will ever need to be retracted or changed. In them the sun of righteousness is seen, not in his naked majesty and brightness (for he is not yet risen upon mankind), but only “through

<sup>1</sup> That is, not of all the *specific events* that come within the scope of revelation, but of all the *great principles* of the plan of redemption, which is the theme of revelation.

a glass darkly;" nevertheless it is, so far as it goes, a true manifestation of his glory. And for this reason these early revelations have an immortal youth and vigor. They retain for us who live in these latter days all their original freshness and power; nay more, the subsequent revelations, instead of setting them aside as false and visionary, only invest them with new halos of light. Take, for example, the great primitive prophecy: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." We can find no words more pertinent to describe the mighty conflict which is going on between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. To us they have a higher significance than they could have had to our first mother. What are they but a condensation into one sentence of the history of redemption from Eden to the last trump—a flash of light from the third heavens which discloses at a glance the whole destiny of this world? And so it is with the later prophecies concerning Christ, whether they describe his prophetic, his priestly, or his kingly office, or the effect of his manifestation: "The kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider." "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth."

We have said that every revelation must be, in its place and measure, perfect. Now on some points the early generations of men were prepared to receive full instruction; and here we find the primitive revelations blazing forth like the noonday sun, and furnishing a flood of light for all succeeding generations of men. Thus the personality of God as opposed to pantheism, his unity as opposed to polytheism, and his infinite perfections in contrast with the gross conceptions of idolatry, are taught as clearly in the beginning as in the close of revelation. In respect to these our Saviour and his apostles added no new light, for none was needed. So also the whole doctrine of God's providential government over men is taught from the very first, as in the inimitable history of Joseph, with a clearness and



fulness surpassed by no subsequent revelation. What is true of the revelations of the Old Testament, holds good of all its institutions, the Mosaic economy included. These were, in their place and with reference to the end which they proposed to accomplish, perfect. They were the best that could be given to the church under existing circumstances. Considered as ordinances of God they had no imperfections. They were imperfect only so far as the dulness and waywardness of men disqualified them to receive, without a previous training, ordinances of a more spiritual character. At the foundation of all our reasonings concerning the institutions of the Old Testament must lie the axiom: "As for God his way is perfect."

2. *Each revelation must be in harmony with all the preceding and following revelations.* It may be thought that this is not so much an inference from the subject, as the subject itself stated in another form. We admit that it is so in the sense that the premise — the indivisible nature of revelation — contains in itself the conclusion, that all its parts must be in harmony with each other. And this form of the truth is one upon which the interpreter of the Old Testament is specially called to insist at the present day; for it is very extensively denied, not only openly, by men of the rationalistic school, but in a more clandestine yet not less effectual way, by a host of popular writers, who are imbuing the public mind with their pernicious sentiments. Of the open denial of harmony between the Old Testament and the New, in respect to the Messiah and his kingdom, an example has already been given in the remark of Rosenmüller, that no man can believe that in the second Psalm Jesus the Saviour is described, who considers with himself what is there said of the cruel dominion which that king is to exercise over the vanquished nations. So also De Wette remarks that "according to this" (the Christian idea) "the Messiah is no Conqueror of nations, wielding the iron sceptre: 'his kingdom is not of this world.'" But these commentators forget two most important facts. First, that, according to our Saviour's own most express declaration: "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth," the *providential* government of his foes, not less than the spiritual guidance of his disciples, is committed to his hands; so that the judgments which come upon the persecutors of his church may be truly said to proceed from him; secondly, that he has himself fully justified the language of this Psalm in such declarations as the following: "Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay before me;" where the king into whose lips these words are put personates himself. "Whoso-

ever shall fall upon this stone," which is Christ himself as the context shows, "shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." Let this single example serve as an illustration how very learned men may bring very superficial objections against the current evangelical interpretation of the Messianic prophecies.

A more covert and insidious way of denying the harmony that exists between the Old Testament and the New, is that very fashionable one of insinuating that the God of the Hebrews is invested with a gloomy and vindictive character, and is not the loving and compassionate God of Christianity. This representation involves of course a flat denial that the Hebrew idea of God is one received from himself by a true and proper revelation, and makes it only a human conception accommodated to the notions of the times. And we shall find, upon trial, that all who make such a representation are at heart unbelievers in the reality of revelation. It is nothing less than the Scriptural idea of God's awful holiness and justice which they deny. Of one thing, however, it might be well to remind these diluters of the Divine attributes, that the Old Testament contains no descriptions of God's punitive wrath so terrible as those of our Lord himself, who came to save men from its awful power. Witness that parable which represents the rich man, who had in his lifetime received his good things, as tormented in the flames of hell, and begging in vain for a drop of water to cool his tongue. They who would rid themselves of the Old Testament idea of God's punitive justice, must throw away with the Old the New Testament also.

It does not come within the scope of the present Article to show how all the alleged discrepancies between the Old Testament and the New can be set aside. We wish only to indicate the position to which a true belief in the reality of the revelations of the Old Testament infallibly leads us. Here very much depends upon the spirit with which we come to the work. In every field of human investigation, if one is seeking for objections, he will certainly find them; for, as an eminent writer has well remarked: "There never was, nor will be, any plan executed or proposed, against which strong and unanswerable objections may not be urged; so that, unless the opposite objections be set in the balance on the other side, we can never advance a step."<sup>1</sup> Now if a man comes with a candid and truth-loving spirit to the work of comparing the Old Testament with the New, he will find the theory which disruptures the two, encompassed

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<sup>1</sup> Whately's Logic, Book III. § 17.

with difficulties immensely greater than that which considers them both as parts of one great whole.

3. *The later revelations must be taken as the true exponents of the earlier.* This is only saying that the Holy Ghost is the true and proper expositor of his own communications to men. The first revelations were made, as we have seen, in full view of the whole plan of redemption that was to be afterwards unfolded, and they received their peculiar form with express reference to this plan. It follows that all subsequent revelations must be, not foreign and heterogeneous materials added to the original prophecies, but rather an expansion of these prophecies out of their own proper substance; so that revelation is a true organism and growth out of primitive vital elements. The promise, for example: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," is not so much a new promise as an unfolding of the first in one of its parts: "it shall bruise thy head." A further unfolding of the same promise we have in the words of Nathan to David: "Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee; thy throne shall be established forever," and in all the bright prophecies that foretell the universal dominion and glory of this kingdom, down to the day when the angel Gabriel announces to **Mary** that her Son, who is to be in a high and peculiar sense "the seed of the woman," "shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." So also the other part of the primitive revelation: "it shall bruise thy heel," finds a true expansion in all the prophecies which relate to the sufferings which the seed of the woman — the Messiah and his Church — should undergo through the enmity of the serpent and his seed.

And since the manifestation of God in the flesh is itself the culminating point of all revelation, the Lord Jesus and the apostles whom he authoritatively commissioned to unfold the doctrines of the Gospel are, in a special sense, the expositors of the Old Testament, from whose interpretations, when once fairly ascertained, there is no appeal. Nor is there any valid ground here for the distinction which some are desirous to make between the authority of Christ and that of his apostles; for as it is certain that the Lord Jesus could not have been himself in error, so it is not less certain that he would not have commanded his apostles to teach all nations concerning himself and his doctrines, and given them, in the possession of miraculous powers, the seal of their high commission, only to leave them to substitute

their own groundless prejudices and conceits for the true meaning of the holy oracles.

4. *The extent of meaning contained in a given revelation must be that which the Holy Spirit intended, and is not to be limited by the apprehension of those to whom it was originally made.* Nothing can be further from our intention than the affirmation that it belongs to the wisdom of God arbitrarily to give to an earlier prophecy, by means of a subsequent revelation, an interpretation that shall be foreign to the natural import of its terms. What we mean to say is, that the earlier prophecy is, at least in many cases, framed with a view to the subsequent development of its meaning; and that, until such development is made by God himself, either in a direct way by a further revelation, or indirectly by the course of his providential dealings with his church, men's apprehension of it, though it may be true so far as it goes, must yet be inadequate. To cite a single passage from one of the most remarkable prophecies of Christ: "It hath pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand," — no one will maintain that the Jewish church (all carnal prejudices aside) could have had that apprehension which it is our privilege to enjoy of its deep meaning. This meaning it was the purpose of God to unfold through "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." It was truly contained in the original words, but in an undeveloped form. And accordingly we are expressly told that the ancient prophets, not fully comprehending the meaning of their own predictions, "inquired and searched diligently" concerning them: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." It is only they who deny the reality of inspiration, by making it a mere exaltation of the human faculties arising within the soul itself, that are necessitated, for consistency's sake, to deny the principle for which we now contend. If revelation be a true communication from God to men, then it may manifestly contain from the beginning the germs of mighty coming events, whose historic realization shall be, in connection with further communications from God, its proper expositor.

This principle, that the extent of meaning contained in a given revelation must be that which the Holy Spirit intended, taken along

with the other principles which we have deduced from the indivisible nature of revelation, sheds some light upon the vexed question of the so-called "*double sense*," over which many a lance has been broken in the dark by combatants who did not understand each other's position. It is undoubtedly true that many prophecies of the Old Testament bear on their front the marks of specific predictions of particular events. Such is the following: "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance." The fulfilment of this prophecy is plainly limited to the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt and their deliverance thence. It is true, indeed, that this deliverance was to God's church a pledge of victory over all future assaults from her foes, and may, therefore, be lawfully used by us as an argument for the final triumph of the Christian church. But this is inference, not interpretation. Were one to maintain that the prophecy under consideration contains a true and proper prediction, first, of the oppression of the Israelites in Egypt and their subsequent deliverance; secondly, of the captivity of the Jews in Babylon and their deliverance thence; thirdly, of the persecution of the primitive church by Pagan Rome and her triumph in the days of Constantine; fourthly, of her persecution by Papal Rome and her final emancipation; fifthly, of the persecution of the Puritans in England and their escape to this country; and so on *ad libitum*—this would be indeed a sort of hydra-headed double sense utterly incompatible with common sense.

But all of the ancient prophecies are not of this specific character. Many of them, like the primitive one in Eden, are plainly intended for a *progressive fulfilment*. If it be asked whether the seed of the woman in this prophecy be not Christ, the answer is: Certainly it is Christ in a peculiar and emphatic sense; for he is to the whole church, from the beginning to the end, the centre of life and power, in whom and through whom alone she bruises the serpent's head; and in this work he performs, moreover, a part which is peculiar and incommunicable. But if it be asked whether the seed of the woman here spoken of be not Christ exclusively, we must answer: Not exclusively Christ in his personality. The personal conflict of Christ with Satan, and his triumph over him, is a part of the fulfilment, but not the whole. It is of Christ in his body the church, and of the church in Christ her Head that the prophecy speaks; so that it finds a true accomplishment in all the conflicts of those who are in Christ with

the powers of darkness, whether they be the conflicts of the whole body of believers collectively, or of particular churches of believers, or of individual believers included in the body; and not only the conflicts of believers with Satan in this life, but also their final glorification "at the resurrection of the just," when, in the highest sense of the words, God shall bruise Satan under the Redeemer's feet for himself and for all his members. This is no mystical "double sense;" it is only a true evolution of the generic sense of the prophecy.

Take, again, the remarkable passage in the eighty-ninth Psalm, beginning with the words: "Then spakest thou in vision to thy Holy One," which is but an expansion of the original promise made by God through Nathan to David. Here God promises to David that he will "beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him;" that he will make him his "first-born, higher than the kings of the earth;" that his seed he will "make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven." Into the midst of this promise is woven a threatening that if David's children (who can be none else than his seed) break God's law, he will "visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes."

If we examine the terms of this promise, and especially if we compare the passage with the original prophecy, we come inevitably to the conclusion that it includes David and his descendants who occupied after him the earthly throne on Mount Zion. That it includes the Messiah no one will doubt who believes in the reality of Messianic prophecy. Nor is there in this anything mystical or unintelligible. The promise was made to David and his seed after him, so that it included both the Messiah and the whole royal line from David to the Messiah. It could not exclude David, for the kingdom of grace, of which the Messiah is the supreme Head, was already in existence in David's day, embodied in the institutions of the Israelitish church, and David was the divinely appointed earthly head of that kingdom. In his bloody conflicts with the surrounding nations who sought to destroy Israel, and in Israel the kingdom of Christ, David and his successors came of necessity within the pale of the promise: "I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him." Until the time should come for changing the outward form of God's kingdom, it was not possible that the Israelitish church, for the defence of which David and his seed were set, should cease to exist in the visible national organization given to it by God, for it was God's purpose, through this very organization, to perpetuate his kingdom of grace till the advent of the Messiah. In the discussions

of interpreters respecting the relation which David and his seed held to the Messiah much confusion and difficulty has been created by the tacit (perhaps unconscious) assumption that David's was only a worldly kingdom, a type or emblem of Christ's kingdom, but not that kingdom itself in its visible earthly form; whence has come the further assumption that David's victories were only types or emblems of the victories to be won in Christ's kingdom. But David's kingdom embosomed in itself, in very deed, the Redeemer's own kingdom, so far as that kingdom had then an outward visible organization, so that David's victories were the victories of Christ himself, from whom the life-giving power flowed forth, before his advent, to David and his seed, not less than since his advent, to his apostles and their successors. If any object to this view, on account of the gross outward form of David's conflicts, let them remember that a struggle in this form was necessary to prepare the way for one of a more spiritual character.

Upon the same principle may we explain such Psalms as the fortieth, and the sixty-ninth;<sup>1</sup> in which the writer, describing, as a member of Christ's kingdom, his own personal conflicts (or, if one chooses to adopt the theory of an ideal person, the Psalmist, speaking in the name of all the members of Christ's kingdom), is guided by the Holy Ghost to use language which is, indeed, truly applicable to himself, and the great body of believers, but only in a figurative and improper sense,<sup>2</sup> while it finds in the person of the Lord Jesus a literal fulfilment. In respect to these Psalms two things are certain: first, that they are expressly applied to Christ in the New Testament; secondly, that they contain confessions of sin which cannot, by any ingenuity of interpretation, be made applicable to Christ. If now one refuses to admit the principle for which we have contended, and is, at the same time, unwilling to reject the authority of Christ and his apostles, nothing remains but that he should say: "This verse refers to Christ, this to the Psalmist, and this again to Christ," his only guide for reference being the necessity of the case. We will

<sup>1</sup> And we would add, on account of the general similarity, the twenty-second Psalm, though it contains no confessions of sin.

<sup>2</sup> As, for example, Ps. 69: 21: "They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink," words which truly describe, though in a figurative way, the cruel treatment to which many thousands of God's children have been subjected, but which were literally fulfilled in our Saviour's passion; for though this specific act, taken separately, may not have been intended by the soldiers as a cruelty, it was to the righteous Jesus part of a cruel process of murder. See Hengstenberg and Alexander in loco.

not say that this principle of interpretation is in every case untenable ; but only that it is, to our apprehension, encumbered with difficulties much more formidable than is the principle which it rejects.

5. *The course of God's kingdom must be that of constant onward progress.* For it is, as we have seen, the development of an indivisible Divine plan which admits of no retrogression. To suppose that the work of redemption, viewed as a whole, were ever in a retrograde state, would be to assume that a part of God's labor bestowed upon it had been thrown away. But this cannot be, since the Infinite Mind can attempt nothing in vain. If at any time the course of God's church seems to us retrograde, it is because of the limited range of our vision. It is undoubtedly true that there are in the world's history dark eras of degeneracy, like that preceding the Babylonish captivity and that of the Middle Ages. But even these periods, when viewed on the great scale, will be found to be a part of the church's onward course. It is sometimes necessary for a ship, before she can reach her destined port, to cross a broad and strong adverse current, by which she is carried backward many a league. Yet even then we can say of her, when she has reached the opposite side, that she is nearer her haven than when she entered the opposing stream. She has encountered and overcome, once for all, an obstacle that lay in her path. So the church of Christ is coming out of the dark ages, richly laden with lessons of bitter but most salutary experience, which will not need to be repeated. Her position, now that she is emerging, how immensely in advance of that which she occupied when she entered ! This view is eminently adapted to check despondency and inspire hope with regard to the future. There are some who, whenever they venture to look forward, indulge in a melancholy querimonious strain, utterly incompatible with true faith in the reality of God's kingdom of grace. To hear them discourse, one would suppose that Jehovah had retired from this world, wearied out with its perverseness and folly, and given it over to the dominion of Satan ; or, at least, that, in the conflict between truth and error, Satan was like to gain the upper hand. But we have seen that the perpetual increase of God's church is as certain as the execution of the plan of redemption to which all the Divine attributes are pledged. Let us take courage and be glad.

Our closing remark is, that we see the evidence of the Divine origin of Christianity in its full strength only when we contemplate revelation as an indivisible whole. It is in the evolution of a mighty



self-consistent plan, endowed with a heavenly vitality such as makes it proof against all the assaults of human wickedness, and stretching gloriously onward through the whole history of man, that the Bible manifests itself, in a special manner, to be from God. It is a very significant fact that the objectors to Divine revelation always pursue the fragmentary method. A doubt here, a cavil there, an insinuation yonder; a difficulty with this statement, an objection to that, a discrepancy between these two narratives; something unpsychological in one account, or exaggerated in another, or misapprehended in a third; particulars represented (rather misrepresented), one by one, as strange, suspicious, unworthy of the Divine mind, or contrary to man's reason; these make up the changes which cold analytic scepticism<sup>1</sup> rings from age to age in stale succession. An illustrious living author, in a work entitled "*Historic Doubts relative to Napoleon Buonaparte*," has applied to the history of this mighty chieftain the identical method of "the celebrated Hume." And it is worthy of particular notice how, in solemn imitation of his original, he carries out to perfection the fragmentary method of objections — unprecedent events, contradictory accounts, round numbers, etc. — until he makes out a strong argument for disbelieving that which we assuredly know to be true. Now, if we choose to treat the Bible in this uncandid way, we can undoubtedly plunge ourselves into the mire of scepticism; for there are difficulties, historic and doctrinal, connected with the Bible, which have never yet received a full solution. We can, if we choose, dwell upon these, until we cease to discern the irrefragable proofs of its heavenly origin. But if we are willing to examine the revelation which it professes to contain, as one great whole, its Divine character will shine forth upon us like the sun in the firmament. Our difficulties we can calmly reserve for further investigation here, or for solution in the world to come, without one chilling doubt whether the Bible is indeed the very Word of God.

It cannot be that any scheme of human invention should have possessed from the beginning such a capacity of unlimited develop-

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<sup>1</sup> Naked analysis, applied to history, has a strong tendency to engender the spirit of scepticism. The true student of history makes the synthetic the predominant element, and the analytic subordinate to this. He has to do mainly with the living soul of society as embodied in its history and institutions, not with the separate joints and ligaments of its organization, or with isolated bundles of events taken from its annals. We have too many proofs that one may be an acute critic of historical events, without being able to comprehend history as a whole; as he may also be a good grammarian, without being a trustworthy expositor.

ment, should have been able to maintain itself so firmly against all the changes of time, and should have actually unfolded itself in continually brightening forms into one great harmonious system amid the wreck of theories and empires. It cannot be that any scheme of human invention should have the power of adapting itself so perfectly to all the varying conditions of humanity, should be alike at home in the palace of the king, on the bench of the judge, in the study of the scholar, in the shop of the mechanic, in the cottage of the poor, and in the chamber of the dying. It cannot be that any scheme of human invention should possess such an indestructible inward power of casting off the corrupt foreign ingredients which man has mingled with it; and should have been able to accomplish such glorious results for the holiness, peace and happiness of men, notwithstanding it has been so caricatured, crushed and overlaid by superstition, fanaticism, and the knavery of kings and priests.

But it is only through an experimental acquaintance with the Gospel as a living whole, that we come to the full certainty of its Divine origin. "He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself." It cannot be, may he exclaim, in holy rapture, who has opened his own bosom to the glorious sun of God's revelation, and felt in the very centre of his being its warming, cheering, purifying, life-giving power, it cannot be that any scheme of human invention should be able so to satisfy all the wants of my spirit, and to fill her with such light, and strength, and gladness. Nothing but God's own sun can bring summer to the world. The Gospel has changed the winter of my soul into summer. It must be from God.