

GENERAL AND SPECIAL REVELATION

The student should consider closely the following references and all related ones:

Gen. 1:26	Gen. 3	Gen. 12:1-3
Gen. 18:25	Isa. 60-62	Eze. 3:17,18
Jonah	Matt. 28:19,20	Mark 16:16
Acts 10:34-44	Rom. 1-3	John 3
Eph 2:12,13	Rom. 10	Matt. 16:17
1 Cor. 2:14	1 Cor. 12:2,3	Matt. 11:21
Luke 12:47,48		

S.D.A. Commentary, Vol. 4, Article "The Role of Israel in Old Testament Prophecy."

Prophets and Kings, chapter "Hope for the Heathen."

<u>TM</u> 398	<u>COL</u> 373	<u>MH</u> 104
<u>DA</u> 825, 478	<u>EW</u> 276	<u>COL</u> 385
<u>MH</u> 461, 462	<u>CT</u> 188, 189, 423	<u>COL</u> 343
<u>MH</u> 419, 425	<u>ST</u> 257	<u>AA</u> 134, 109
<u>Ed</u> 17, 263-264	<u>GT</u> 10-13	<u>TM</u> 459

Compare the following statement from J.N.D. Anderson's Law and Grace, pp. 17-20 with the succeeding paragraphs from Desire of Ages:

"Finally, it remains to say a few words about the danger of what I have termed a general confusion on this subject - a confusion which may particularly affect our attitude to those of other religions. One continually hears something like this. 'Yes, this is all very well for those who have been born and bred in Christendom; but what of others? Surely the good Muslim, the consistent Confucianist, and the believing Buddhist, will be judged by their own standards? Do you suggest that they are doomed to inevitable damnation? That would be an intolerable doctrine.'

Now what is the truth of this difficult question? May I briefly outline the facts as I myself see them?

Let us postulate, in the first place, that something of God's moral law is known to all, for God has not left Himself without witness. There is no partiality with God; but to all who 'by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality' He has promised eternal life. This seems to be the plain teaching of Rom. 1 and 2.

But it is equally clear from the same Epistle, in the second place, that man always and everywhere falls short. He falls short, inevitable and by nature, of the ultimate moral law. So he is a sinner. And he also falls short of the standards he knows, the code he ought to follow. So he is a guilty sinner. 'For there is no distinction; since all have sinned and fall short of the glory

of God.' 'No human being will be justified in his sight by works of the law.' So all men, whatever their religion and whatever their moral condition, stand in urgent - and equal - need of a Saviour.

And it seems inescapably clear, in the third place, that there is only one Saviour. It is fundamental to the whole biblical revelation that no one else could ever meet human need, except God Himself in the Person of His incarnate Son. How else can we explain the manger of Bethlehem and the cross of Calvary? And it is equally fundamental that even God can never forgive human sin except on the basis of the atonement, when He Himself judged sin, bore its penalty and justified the sinner. How else can we explain the agony in Gethsemane, and the cry of desolation on the cross?

Then there is no hope for those who have never heard the good news, who have had no real opportunity to embrace the gospel? That does not necessarily follow. It seems clear, indeed, that a Muslim, for instance, cannot be saved by trying to be a good Muslim, or a Confucianist by striving to be a consistent Confucianist. But then neither can a Baptist be saved by trying to be a good Baptist, nor an Anglican by striving to be a consistent churchman. But suppose the Muslim, the Confucianist or the pagan were to come to realize - by the gracious working of God's Spirit - that he is a sinner, and suppose he were to cast himself, in his sin and need, on the mercy of God, to the best of his knowledge? Does not the Scripture say that 'there is no distinction...For, "every one who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved"'? Such would, of course, be saved through Christ, the only Saviour - just as the Old Testament saints were saved through Him alone. And if they should ever really hear the good news on earth, they would surely be among the company of those who accept the gospel with joy at its first hearing. But if they should never hear at all on earth, I suppose they would awake on the other side of the grave to know and worship the One to whom they owe their salvation. Is not this what St. Peter meant when he said, in the house of Cornelius, 'Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him'? Not, of course, that any one can earn acceptance by their good works. The teaching of Scripture is quite clear regarding this. But from the passage just quoted it would seem that men are accepted on the grounds of their 'fear' of God and their consequent abandonment of themselves to His mercy - an abandonment which, like the understanding faith of the Christian, must always issue in righteous living.

Two further points must be stressed. Firstly, this line of reasoning, if it be true, by no means lessens our missionary responsibility. We need only remember how we ourselves were brought to this commitment of faith. Was it not by the appeal of the gospel story? And did not St. Paul, as soon as he had declared that 'Everyone who calls

upon the name of the Lord will be saved,' immediately add: 'But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed?...And how are they to hear without a preacher?' And if there be some who, like Cornelius, grope their way to an abandonment of themselves to God's mercy, is it not our privilege and responsibility, like that of John the Baptist, to 'go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins'?

Nor, secondly, does this lighten the responsibility of those who have heard the gospel message but not accepted it. On the contrary, it accentuates that responsibility - for such have no manner of excuse, and no semblance of alternative. There is no other Saviour, and no other way; there is a real salvation, but through grace alone; and that salvation, when truly experienced, must always show itself in practical obedience to the moral law."

"Christ intends that His ministers shall be educators of the church in gospel work. They are to teach the people how to seek and save the lost. But is this the work they are doing? Also, how many are toiling to fan the spark of life in a church that is ready to die! How many churches are tended like sick lambs by those who ought to be seeking for the lost sheep! And all the time millions upon millions without Christ are perishing.

Divine love has been stirred to its unfathomable depths for the sake of men, and angels marvel to behold in the recipients of so great love a mere surface gratitude. Angels marvel at man's shallow appreciation of the love of God. Heaven stands indignant at the neglect shown to the souls of men. Would we know how Christ regards it? How would a father and mother feel, did they know that their child, lost in the cold and the snow, had been passed by, and left to perish, but those who might have saved it? Would they not be terribly grieved, wildly indignant? Would they not denounce those murderers with wrath hot as their tears, intense as their love? The sufferings of every man are the sufferings of God's child, and those who reach out no helping hand to their perishing fellow beings provoke His righteous anger. This is the wrath of the Lamb. To those who claim fellowship with Christ, yet have been indifferent to the needs of their fellow men, He will declare in the great judgment day, "I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity." Luke 13:27. " D.A. p. 825.

"In all ages, philosophers and teachers have been presenting to the world theories by which to satisfy the soul's need. Every heathen nation has had its great teachers and religious systems offering some other means of redemption than Christ, turning the eyes of men away from the Father's face, and filling their hearts with fear of Him who has given them only blessing. The trend of their work is to rob God of that which is His own, both by creation and by redemption. And these false teachers rob man as well. Millions of human beings are bound down under false religions, in the bondage of slavish fear, of stolid indifference,

toiling like beasts of burden, bereft of hope or joy or aspiration here, and with only a dull fear of the hereafter. It is the gospel of the grace of God alone that can uplift the soul. The contemplation of the love of God manifested in His Son will stir the heart and arouse the powers of the soul as nothing else can." D.A. p. 478

"Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, but they have cherished His principles. Through the influence of the divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those above them. Even among the heathen are those who have cherished the spirit of kindness; before the words of life had fallen upon their ears, they have befriended the missionaries, even ministering to them at the peril of their own lives. Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God." D.A. p. 638.

"All may find something to do. "The poor always ye have with you" (John 12:8), Jesus said, and none need feel that there is no place where they can labor for Him. Millions upon millions of human souls ready to perish, bound in chains of ignorance and sin, have never so much as heard of Christ's love for them. Were our condition and theirs to be reversed, what would we desire them to do for us? All this, so far as lies in our power, we are under the most solemn obligation to do for them. Christ's rule of life is, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Matt. 7:12." D.A. p. 640

"Through heathenism, Satan had for ages turned men away from God; but he won his great triumph in perverting the faith of Israel. By contemplating and worshipping their own conceptions, the heathen had lost a knowledge of God, and had become more and more corrupt. So it was with Israel. The principle that man can save himself by his own works lay at the foundation of every heathen religion; it had now become the principle of the Jewish religion. Satan had implanted this principle. Wherever it is held, men have no barrier against sin.

The message of salvation is communicated to men through human agencies. But the Jews had sought to make a monopoly of the truth which is eternal life. They had hoarded the living manna, and it had turned to corruption. The religion which they tried to shut up to themselves became an offense. They robbed God of His glory, and defrauded the world by a counterfeit of the gospel. They had refused to surrender themselves to God for the salvation of the world, and they became agents of Satan for its destruction.



The deception of sin had reached its height. All the agencies for depraving the souls of men had been put in operation. The Son of God, looking upon the world, beheld suffering and misery. With pity He saw how men had become victims of satanic cruelty. He looked with compassion upon those who were being corrupted, murdered, and lost. They had chosen a ruler who chained them to his car as captives. Bewildered and deceived, they were moving on in gloomy procession toward eternal ruin, - to death in which is no hope of life, toward night to which comes no morning. Satanic agencies were incorporated with men. The bodies of human beings, made for the dwelling place of God, had become the habitation of demons. The senses, the nerves, the passions, the organs of men were worked by supernatural agencies in the indulgence of the vilest lust. The very stamp of demons was impressed upon the countenances of men. Human faces reflected the expression of the legions of evil with which they possessed. Such was the prospect upon which the world's Redeemer looked. What a spectacle for Infinity Purity to behold!" D.A. pp. 35,36.

"'He that delivered Me unto thee,' said Jesus, 'hath the greater sin.' By this Christ meant Caiaphas, who, as high priest, represented the Jewish nation. They knew the principles that controlled the Roman authorities. They had had light in the prophecies that testified of Christ, and in His own teachings and miracles. The Jewish judges had received unmistakable evidence of the divinity of Him whom they condemned to death. And according to their light would they be judged." D.A. p. 737.

#### THE CALL TO SALVATION IS ONLY THROUGH THE GOSPEL

"The call in question is made only through the Word of God, as heard or read. That is, the revelation of the plan of salvation is not made by the works or by the providence of God; nor by the moral constitution of our nature, but by the intuitions or deductions of reason; nor by direct revelation to all men everywhere and at all times; but only in the written Word of God. It is not denied that God may, and in the past ages certainly did, convey this saving knowledge by direct revelation without the intervention of any external means of instruction. Such was the fact in the case of the Apostle Paul. And such cases, for all we know, may even now occur. But these are miracles. This is not the ordinary method. For such supernatural revelations of truth after its being made known in the Scriptures and committed to the Church with the command to teach all nations, we have no promise in the Scriptures and no evidence from experience.

It has even been, and still is, the doctrine of the Church universal in almost all its parts, that it is only in and through the Scriptures that the knowledge necessary to salvation is revealed to

men. The Rationalists, as did the Pelagians, hold that what they call "the light of nature," reveals enough of divine truth to secure the return of the soul to God, if it be properly improved. And many Arminians, as well as Mystics, hold that the supernatural teaching of the Spirit is granted in sufficient measure to every man to secure his salvation, if he yields himself up to its guidance. It would be very agreeable to our natural feelings to believe this, as it would be to believe that all men will be saved. But such is not the doctrine of the Bible; and it requires but little humility to believe that God is better as well as wiser than man; that his ways are higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts; and that whatever He ordains is best.

That the Scriptures do teach that saving knowledge is contained only in the Bible, and consequently that those ignorant of its contents, are ignorant of the way of salvation, is plain, -

1. Because the Scriptures both of the Old and of the New Testament, constantly represent the heathen as in a state of fatal ignorance. They are declared by the ancient prophets to be afar off from God; to be the worshippers of idols, to be sunk in sin. The people of Israel were separated from other nations for the express purpose of preserving the knowledge of the true religion. To them were committed the oracles of God. In the New Testament the same representation is given of their condition. It is said, They know not God. The Apostle proves at length in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, that they are universally and justly in a state of condemnation. He exhorts the Ephesians to call to mind their condition before they received the gospel. They were "without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God, in the world." (Eph. 2:12) Such is the uniform teaching of the Word of God. It is utterly inconsistent with these representation, to assume that the heathen had such knowledge of God either by tradition, or by inward revelation, as was sufficient to lead them to holiness and God.
2. This doctrine follows also from the nature of the gospel. It claims to be the only method of salvation. It takes for granted that men are in a state of sin and condemnation, from which they are unable to deliver themselves. It teaches that for the salvation of men the Eternal Son of God assumed our nature, obeyed and suffered in our stead, and having died for our sins, rose again for our justification; that, so far as adults are concerned, the intelligent and voluntary acceptance of Christ as our

God and Saviour is the one indispensable condition of salvation; that there is no other name under heaven whereby men can be saved. It provides, therefore, for a Church and a Ministry whose great duty is to make known to men this great salvation. All this takes for granted that without this knowledge, men must perish in their sins.

3. This is further evident from the nature of the message which the ministers of the gospel are commissioned to deliver. They are commanded to go into all the world, and say to every creature, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." Where is the propriety of such a message if men can be saved without the knowledge of Christ, and consequently without faith in Him.
4. This necessity of a knowledge of the gospel is expressly asserted in the Scriptures. Our Lord not only declares that no man can come unto the Father, but by Him; that no man knoweth the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal Him; but He says expressly, "He that believeth not, shall be damned." (Mark 16:16; John 3:18) But faith without knowledge is impossible. The Apostle John says, "He that hath the Son, hath life; he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life." (1 John 5:12) The knowledge of Christ is not only the condition of life, but it is life; and without that knowledge, the life in question cannot exist. Him to know is life eternal. Paul, therefore, said, "I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." (Phil. 3:8) Christ is not only the giver, but the object of life. Those exercises which are the manifestations of spiritual life terminate on Him; without the knowledge of Him, therefore, there can be no such exercises; as without the knowledge of God there can be no religion. It is consequently, as the Apostle teaches, through the knowledge of Christ, that God "hath called us to glory and virtue," (2 Peter 1:3) To be without Christ is to be without hope, and without God. (Eph. 2:12) The Apostle Paul, while asserting the general vocation of men, saying, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved;" immediately adds, "How then shall the call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10:14) Invocation implies faith; faith implies knowledge; knowledge implies objective teaching.

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (v. 17) There is no faith, therefore, where the gospel is not heard; and where there is no faith, there is no salvation.

This is indeed an awful doctrine. But are not the words of our Lord also awful, "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it"? (Matt. 7:13,14) Is not the fact awful which stares every man in the face, that the great majority even of those who hear the gospel reject its offers of mercy. Facts are as mysterious as doctrines. If we must submit to the one, we may as well submit to the other. Our Lord has taught us, in view of facts or doctrines which try our faith, to remember the infinite wisdom and rectitude of God, and say, "Even so Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." The proper effect of the doctrine that the knowledge of the gospel is essential to the salvation of adults, instead of exciting opposition to God's word or providence, is to prompt us to greatly increased exertion to send the gospel to those who are perishing for lack of knowledge." Systematic Theology, C. Hodge, Vol 2, pp. 646-649.

#### CHARGE NUMBER 1

"Mrs. White, writing in 1858, declared that the slaves were kept in such ignorance that they could not discern between right and wrong. Therefore God could not take them to heaven, but in mercy will simply not resurrect them. He will simply let them be as though they had not been. This is contrary to facts and Scripture. "In truth slaves were often more godly than their masters and perhaps this visionist (Mrs. White) didn't know that the slaves had their own separate places in churches in those days." Mrs. White's statement is "contrary to the Word of God," which declares that "All that are in their graves" will come forth. See John 5:28,29.

This charge is based on the following statement by Mrs. White in 1858, in Spiritual Gifts, volume 1, page 193.

"I saw that the slave-master would have to answer for the soul of his slave whom he has kept in ignorance; and all the sins of the slave will be visited upon the master. God cannot take the slave to heaven, who has been kept in ignorance and degradation, knowing nothing of God, or the Bible, fearing nothing but his master's lash, and not holding so elevated a position as his master's brute beasts. But he does the best thing for him that a compassionate God can do. He lets him be as though he had not been." (See also Early Writings, p. 276)

Let us examine in order the two parts of this charge:

1. That slaves were spiritually ignorant, when "in truth slaves were often more godly than their master." But Mrs. White did not say that all slaves were spiritually ignorant. In fact, she declared as emphatically as do the critics that "slaves were often more godly than their masters." Only a few pages beyond this passage (page 193) now under discussion is her statement: "I saw the pious slave rise in triumph and victory" (Spiritual Gifts, p. 206). Only two paragraphs before the disputed paragraph on page 193 she speaks of "the tears of the pious bond-men and bond-women" (page 191). In the same connection she hurls anathemas at the cruel masters. We do not know how she could have more clearly taught that "in truth slaves were often more godly than their masters."

The language of the whole chapter from which the brief passage in debate is quoted, makes clear that Mrs. White is speaking of two classes of slaves: (1) the "pious" slave, who evidently has a knowledge of God, knows right from wrong, and acts in harmony with that knowledge. All that is implicit in the word "pious." (2) The slave "kept in ignorance," who knows "nothing of God, or the Bible," who fears "nothing but his master's lash," and who does not hold "so elevated a position as his master's brute beasts." In making this distinction Mrs. White conforms to history. All slaves were not treated alike. Some slave owners were much more considerate than others, and some did provide for their slaves certain opportunities for religious instruction.

Mrs. White, looking to the great day of God, "saw the pious slave rise in triumph and victory," She saw the slave that had been kept in complete ignorance allowed to sleep on in the grave and "be as though he had not been."

2. That brings us to the second point of the charge; namely, that Mrs. White says that some will not rise in the resurrection, when the Bible says that "all" will rise. But the Bible writers sometimes use all-inclusive words like "all" and "every" with definitely implied restrictions. Let us illustrate:

Christ said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." John 12:32. Universalists, who teach that all men will be saved, use this text with great persuasiveness. Does not the text say "all"? But orthodox Christendom has ever denounced Universalism as heresy.

As to this particular statement by Christ, there have been various interpretations. We think it is simply an illustration of the fact that Scriptural writers and speakers often make general statements, which, taken apart from their other statements, might seem to be too all-inclusive. But these writers presume that their hearers will interpret a particular statement by all the other statements they have made. When we do this with Christ's words in



John 12:32 we soon find ourselves understanding the "all" as meaning all who are willing to respond to His drawing influence.

John the revelator foretells the second coming of Christ and declares that "every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." Rev. 6:15,16. Note that he says "every bondman, and every free man." Yet Isaiah says that in the last great day there will be a company who will look up and rejoice. (See Isa. 25:9). Shall we then conclude that John contradicts Isaiah? All Bible students understand that when John says "every" he means only every one of the wicked hosts in the world.

It is no more unreasonable to believe that there may be limitations to the "all" in the phrase, "All that are in the graves shall hear his voice," than in the "all" of John 12:32, or the "every" of Revelation 6:15. Christ divides the resurrected into two groups: (1) "they that have done good," and (2) "they that have done evil." We think that everyone will admit that there are some who have lived and died who have done neither good nor evil. For example, Moses wrote of the "little ones" and "children" of the rebellious Israelites, that they "had no knowledge between good and evil." Deut. 1:39. Then there are those who are mentally defective. To the list of those who have "no knowledge between good and evil" Mrs. White simply adds the slave who has been "kept in ignorance."

When the question is raised, What will God do finally with all those who have had no knowledge between good and evil? we are immediately plunged into deep theological discussion. Even the wisest of men have no clear answer on this question, which is a most difficult one. Most theologians are content to answer it by voicing the question asked in the Scriptures: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Mrs. White's statement is simply a commentary on that ancient question, a commentary which does not run contrary to Scripture. Ellen G. White and Her Critics, F.D. Nichol. pp. 334-337.

#### THE UNVEILING OF JESUS CHRIST

"In the notion of 'revealed' as opposed to 'natural' knowledge", runs a passage from a book on THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION, "there is usually conveyed the thought of a communication of truth to which man could not attain by his own unaided powers. That is to say, a knowledge is communicated by God to man which man otherwise could not have possessed." This definition of revelation is then written off as out-of-date, having been 'exploded' by modern knowledge. And yet, if you will read it again carefully you will

find that it is exactly what the New Testament teaches as the bed-rock foundation of all Christian experience. It is true that "a man can receive nothing, except it be given him from above" (John 3:27); and the apostle Paul rebukes the divisive, argumentative pride of the Corinthians on these very grounds: "For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Corinthians 4:7).

It is essential that we realise that God's truth can never be discovered by the mind of man groping upwards unaided. Both Zophar and Elihu understood this. One asks: "Canst thou by searching find out God?" - or according to a marginal reading: "Canst thou find out the immensity of God?" The other states bluntly: "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find Him out..." (Job 11:7; 37:23). In fact one of the great lessons to be learnt from the book of Job is that he, and his friends, are floundering, hopelessly out of their depth, until God steps in, and reveals Himself. In this way is dimly fore-shadowed that most awesome of all marvels - the coming of God Himself into His world in the person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ - to employ J.B. Phillips' dramatic name for Him "God-become-Man". "No man," says the apostle John, "hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1:18).

To-day the Lord Jesus is the One "that liveth, and was dead; and (is)...alive for evermore..." (Rev. 1:18). God is revealed through Him, and only through Him to the human heart; and the twin agents of such revelation are the Holy Spirit of God using the Scriptures - the Word of God. How amazingly this is brought out, amongst other ways, by the use in the New Testament of the Greek word from which we get the word apocalypse.

First, shall we see how this word is used in the Gospels. The places where it occurs are few, but significant. In the first place in Matthew 11:20-24, and the parallel passage in Luke 10, the Lord Jesus sternly rebukes the blatant unbelief of the cities where His 'mighty works' had been done. Then suddenly come the words: "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (vv. 25-27). This is immediately followed by the gracious invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (vv. 28-30). This sweet summons comes to us across all the frustrations, and noise of our arguments, and mental toil: 'Come...learn!' All that is needed is that we are humble enough to put aside our

own 'wisdom and prudence', and to come as 'babes' ready to be taught. "The secrets of the Kingdom," runs one comment on these verses, "are not revealed to those, who are wise in their own conceit, but to those, who have the meekness of infants, and the child-like eagerness for knowledge."

It is perhaps a good point at which to look more closely at the meaning of our Greek word. The verb means: to remove the veil or covering away from, and so to expose to open view what was before hidden. Perhaps one of the simplest illustrations of this is to be found in the wedding ceremony of the Hebrew people. The bridegroom never saw his bride until the wedding day. Then she was brought to him veiled. He had the privilege of lifting the veil, and then for the first time saw his bride as she really was. Up to that moment he had only the descriptions brought to him by a go-between to guide him. All his knowledge had been second hand. Now he saw for himself. As we go on we shall see that this is a striking parallel to that unveiling which is the only safe standing ground of Christian experience.

Our next passage is one of the most meaningful in the whole of Scripture - Matthew 16:13-23. It always delights me to note that the Lord Jesus did not ask His disciples what men had to say about Him, His miracles, or His teaching. He asks: "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" After they had passed on the scraps of guess-work, which they had overheard from others, He presses home the question to their own hearts: "But whom say ye that I am." There is no hesitation about Peter's reply: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This declaration of faith is immediately stated to be an unveiling. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bariona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Such knowledge cannot be gained by man's teaching, not by human reasoning, but can only be learned by direct revelation from God. The apostle's categorical statement would seem peculiarly relevant just here: "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. 12:3). He can give lip service, and a measure of intellectual assent to the conception of the Lordship of Christ; but it can only become a deep-rooted knowledge, upon which faith can be built for time and eternity as it is made a divinely revealed fact to his heart by God.

We must remember that God's revelations are made to us a little at a time, as we are able to receive them. So we see that this revelation to Peter was simply a beginning; and verses 21-23 show that he had at that time no understanding at all of the Cross, towards which the Saviour's face was set. His thinking stemmed from natural reasoning, and was built upon his ideas and prejudices as a Jew, and behind these was deceptive, satanic suggestion. Compare his distress when his Master spoke here of His death, with the triumphant declaration made years later in his first epistle: "Who

His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed " (1 Peter 2:24). Why is his statement so clear and precise now? Because the meaning of the Cross had been unveiled to him, and he had seen the wonder of God's mercy towards men in Christ. Note also his self-confident boast: "Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended " (Matthew 26:33). He imagined that it was possible to follow his Lord in his own strength. Compare this attitude with his simple statement that the Christian is one who is: "Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation..." (1 Peter 1:5). Why the change? His own need, and the sufficiency of God's keeping power have been unveiled to him. Where formerly there was the frustration of self-effort, there is now a natural looking away unto Jesus, which is the lovely fruit of revelation. We must all tread this path. God has no favourites. He unveils the wonders of His love, and the glory of His salvation to those, who are ready to learn. In a recent number of CHRISTIANITY TO-DAY there is an article by Dr. Wilbur M. Smith entitled HAVE YE NOT READ? Dr. Smith shows how possible it is to accept the authority of Scripture without having any true understanding of its message. One paragraph reads: ‡ 'Have ye not read?' Of course, those of whom Christ asked that question had read the Scriptures. But though they had read them and could quote hundreds of passages, they had not entered into the deeper implications of many of these revealed truths. Thus they had constructed a system of error, were ethically insincere, and were blind to the fact that their Messiah stood in their midst. Many of them were living in disobedience to the very Word they defended and believed to be inspired." History has a habit of repeating itself, and in our day of abundant religious literature, new fangled 'Christian' jargon, and the prolific development of theories, ideas, and doctrines, there are many, who in spite of the fact that the Holy Spirit of God is present to lead us into all truth, have never seen the Cross unveiled, and the risen Saviour in His everpresent saving power.

It was on this ground of revelation that the apostle Paul stood and fought for the purity of the Gospel. Our word is used twice in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians. The apostle has uttered his solemn, twofold anathema against those, who 'pervert the Gospel of Christ,' which in verse 6 he has dubbed 'the grace of Christ'. "Our calling," comments Rev. E.H. Perowne, "is in grace, i.e. in His free and unmerited favour and goodness; as opposed to all notion of salvation by moral or ceremonial righteousness." There is no other basis for salvation, nor has the Church of God any other valid message to preach. Paul now goes on to claim that an understanding of the Gospel message is the direct result of revelation - of God's unveiling to the heart of man. In verses 11,12 he says: "The Gospel I preach to you is no human invention. No

‡ "Let us go back to the question Jesus asked,

man gave it to me, no man taught it to me; it came as a direct revelation from Jesus Christ" (J.B. Phillips' version). Then in verses 14-16, using again the same translation, he continues: "I was ahead of most of my contemporaries in the Jewish religion, and had a greater enthusiasm for the old traditions. But when the time came for God (Who was responsible both for my physical birth and for my being called by His grace), to reveal His Son in me so that I might proclaim Him to the non-Jewish world, I did not, as might have been expected, talk over the matter with any human being." What, indeed, can man add to God's unveiling? We are now on ground that cannot be shaken. We may not be able to deal with the casuistry and argument of the official teachers of religion, but we can say with the once-blind beggar facing the questioning of the Pharisees: "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see" (John 9:25). Albert Barnes comments here: "We should not be ashamed of the fact that we are made to see by the Son of God. No cavil or derision of men should deter us from such an avowal". Our real problem is often pride, we cannot grasp the fact of our complete dependence upon God's grace. We feel that we must make some contribution, and are so intent on the construction of our own little 'Babel towers' of self-based religion, that we are in no frame of mind to be shown the ladder set up on earth, which reaches to the very throne of God. Can you not see Him, who is Thy Way, setting up that ladder in His Cross, and His glorious Resurrection, and Ascension? Do you rejoice in the wide open door that admits us poor prodigals to the Father's Home? Are you able to invite others: "Come with me! I have been shown The Way! Christ is all!"?

To direct men and women to their own 'commitment' or 'decision' is to delude them. Our task is to be so under the sway of the Holy Spirit of God that He can reveal Christ to them. Nothing less than this is Gospel preaching. The saving grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ must be unveiled to men, or they must perish. Revelation is not something to argue about, it is essential to salvation.

Turning to the Epistle to the Ephesians, we have in chapter 1, verse 17 the burden of the apostle's prayer for the Ephesian Christians: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him...." "It is a characterizing prerogative," writer J. Agar Beet about this verse, "of the Spirit of God to impart a knowledge of eternal realities; and, more definitely, to lift the veil which no hand but that of God can lift and which hides from us the unseen things of God. The former term (wisdom) is general: the latter (revelation) is specific. Paul prays that the Father who is characterized by infinite grandeur, who has already (v. 13) sealed his readers with the same Spirit as an inward source of wisdom and as One who reveals the things unseen. His prayer reminds us that each new influence and work of the Spirit is a fresh gift from God." Once again we are faced with our natural inability either to understand, or to attain to God's purpose and provision for us - a humbling limitation which we do not accept easily. It is just



as true of us as Christians, as it is of the most darkly ignorant animist, that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor. 2:14). At every step of the way from the moment of our first illumination (2 Cor. 4:6), to the end of our journey we must have His own unveiling of His grace, giving, and glory, to deliver us from the crippling blight of self-effort, and bring us into the liberty of moment by moment co-operation with Him (Phil. 2:12-13).

The early verses of Ephesians 3 also underline very strongly this Divine law. The apostle speaks in verse 2 of 'the grace of God which was given me to you-ward'. Then he defines the act of God's giving: "how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery" (v. 3). How could a man, whose boast from his earliest youth had been: "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law a Pharisee...", accept and unfold the plan that God's mercy was not to be restricted to the Jewish people, but was to embrace all men, everywhere, in Jesus Christ? Natural prejudice, and preconceived ideas are only overcome by Divine revelation. Peter needed to be prepared to take the Gospel to the household of Cornelius, the Gentile; and God gave him the vision of the sheet let down from heaven. First Peter had been drawn to the place of quiet, alone with God (Acts 10:9-23). The great question you and I have to answer is: "Am I ready to give God His rightful place, and to seek Him only? Can I say with David: 'Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that He have mercy upon us'" (Psalm 123:2)? We are all of us largely governed by our religious background and prejudices, and our capacity for usefulness is thus greatly limited. We rob ourselves, and others, because we are so slow to learn, and to accept as basic the law of Divine revelation. Did not the Saviour Himself accept as Man this limitation? Did He not say: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what He seeth the Father do; for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth: and He will show Him greater works than these that ye may marvel" (John 5:19-20). As is the case with all spiritual truth, our mental assent to it is one thing, our learning to practise it is quite another; and yet it is only the day by day application of this principle that can be of any value in our Christian living. We are always and only learners in the school of Christ. 1 Cor. 2:9-10 - as indeed does this whole chapter - amplify this dependence of ours: "But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

Perhaps it will be wise at this stage to put in one caveat. We read much in these days of those, who do not regard the Scriptures 'as we do' being guided nevertheless by the Holy Spirit. This is dangerous ground to take up. In his introduction to his book THE SPIRIT OF GOD, Dr. G. Cambell Morgan wrote: "There is one sure and infallible guide to truth, and therefore one, and only one, corrective for error, and that is the Word of God. That, in this series of studies, is the court of appeal. May the Holy Spirit, without Whom there is no understanding of the Word, grant a clearer comprehension of His Person, of His work, and of human relation thereto! In approaching the subject the mind should be disabused of all foregone conclusions and prejudices, and a stand taken upon the old prophetic dictum: 'To the law and to the testimony! If they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them' (Isaiah 8:20). There is no revelation of the activities of the Spirit of God, or of the spiritual world, save the revelation that comes through the Book". He wrote truly; and we dare not hesitate to say that one of the modern masterpieces of Satan has been to shift the ground of Christian belief away from the Scriptures, and the unveiling through them by the Holy Spirit of the Saviour's glory. A pit of error has thus been opened into which multitudes, professing the name of Christ, being deceived, have fallen. It is good to know where solid standing ground is to be found, and to be able to assent with a full heart to Paul's conclusion to his Roman letter: "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my Gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen" (Rom. 16:25-27).

Our word also leads us forward to the wondrous climax of the Coming Again of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ - 1 Cor. 1:7; 2 Thess. 1:7; 1 Peter 1:13; 4:13. The Saviour whose glory is now hidden from this world of ours, and only partially revealed to the eye of faith, will suddenly be manifested. The veil will be torn aside, and every eye shall see Him. That will be - as our word shows - a day of Judgment - Rom 2:5, etc. It will also mean the gift of liberty to our corruption-governed world; and amazingly this is said to be waiting not only for the unveiling of the King, but of His children by birth from above - Rom. 8:19-21. Dare I use the word 'exciting'? The daily Christian life is made bright by the constant unveilings of the Holy Spirit of ourselves and of Him through the Word (note: Phil. 3:15); but the future for the Christian is filled with radiant hope, certain of complete fulfilment in His time and way. "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out" (Rom. 11:33).

One final glimpse of our word! It is used in Revelation 1:1. "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass...." I wonder sometimes whether the true key to this book, so easy to speculate about, but so impossible fully to understand, is not found in chapter 19 verse 10? "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Is not the whole Bible the story of Christ? Do not the Old Testament books combine in pointing forward to Him that was to come? Is not a golden line traceable from Eden, via Calvary, on to the 'new heavens and new earth' in the ages yet to be? The Gospels are the story of His life here on earth, His atoning death, and glorious resurrection, and return to His heavenly home. The Epistles have as their underlying theme the brief but majestic words **IN CHRIST**. And here at last in the Book of Revelation is unfolded the drama of war declared and carried through to the bitter end by the prince of darkness, leaving finally in universe-filling splendour the victorious 'throne of God and of the Lamb'. By the unveiling of the Holy Spirit, you and I are able even now in some measure to enter into the worship of the heavenly hosts, and echo their triumphant song:

"**ALLELUIA: FOR THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH**" (Revelation 19:6). The Overcomer, January 1963, J.C. Metcalfe, pp. 3-6.