

# The Full Assurance of Faith

by Daniel Steele

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of having full assurance of faith, which is possible through perfect consecration and the illumination of the Holy Ghost.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 21:21, Mark 9:24, John 14:17, Romans 8:16, 1 Corinthians 2:10, 1 Corinthians 2:12, Ephesians 1:17, 1 John 2:20, 1 John 5:10

**Topics:** "Christian Assurance", "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

Daniel Steele preaches about the certainty of salvation from doubt through the power of faith and the Holy Spirit. He emphasizes the importance of moving towards Christ despite doubts, as progress towards Him weakens doubt but does not destroy the Christian. Steele highlights the distinction between unbelief and doubt, pointing out that doubt, when met with faith, can lead to a positive outcome. He discusses the psychology of Christian assurance, explaining how the human mind's intuitive faculty can grasp spiritual truths, especially the personal manifestation of God through Jesus Christ.

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## Transcript

### I. Salvation from Doubt.

"I know not what it is to doubt;

My heart is ever gay."-- Faber.

The most surprising fact which came to the knowledge of Jesus was the weakness of his disciples' faith. Descended from heaven, written all over with proofs of his divinity, and bearing the great seal of God in his right hand -- the miracle-working power -- he stood unrecognized in the world. A little band of a dozen or more attach themselves to his fortunes, and avow faith in him; but often their perception of the wonderful beauty of his character was so dim, and their glimpses of his divinity were so brief, that they relapsed into distressing doubt, and were on the point of abandoning him forever. We often wonder at their skepticism and spiritual stupor, as if we, standing in their place, would have had eyes to pierce the clouds of doubt, and to behold and adore the full-orbed sun in its first rising upon the world's darkness; but we are by no means sure that if we had been the companions of Christ's earthly wanderings, listened to his words, and witnessed his works, we should have escaped the oft-repeated rebuke, "O ye of little faith! wherefore do ye doubt!" Should Jesus today step into our Christian assemblies, and tell us his view of our spiritual condition, he would find a sentence in his gospels just adapted to the state of the modern Church, "O ye of

little faith."

We have somewhere met with a quaint, but exhaustive classification of mankind in respect to Christ; namely, believers, half-believers, make-believers, and unbelievers. There is no fifth class. Nor can they be reduced to three. Some persons deny the existence of half-believers. They assert that there are no degrees of faith; that it is not possible that a soul should be in such an equivocal attitude toward Christian truth; that there is either full belief or unbelief. But half-believers have existed all along the history of the Church; and they throng our churches today, and they make up the majority of disciples now as they did in the days of the Son of man. It is interesting to trace the boundary between half-believers, or doubters -- we use the term synonymously -- and unbelievers. Unbelief has no positive element of faith, and hence is always the ground of condemnation. It is always fatal to right practice. The unbeliever cannot perform Christian duties with any sincerity, for there is no motive power. Unbelief is spiritual paralysis, voluntarily induced and retained. Its inner essence and culpability lie in the obstinacy of the will against the truth. The secret reason why the intellect does not assent to the truth is, that the will refuses to obey. Unbelief has always a moral and not an intellectual cause. It arises, not from a lack of evidence, but from an unwillingness to follow wherever the truth may lead. Hence, Jesus applies his antidote directly to the will when he would prescribe an infallible remedy.

"If any man wills<sup>1</sup> to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

Perfect consecration is the doorway out of the most inveterate unbelief. This is also the perfect cure for doubt. There is this difference between unbelief and doubt. In all doubt there is a positive element of faith toward which the soul moves, when it is met by a counter current of objections and difficulties. These two opposing forces -- faith and doubt -- distract the soul; but if the result is progress toward Christ, the doubt, though it has weakened, has not destroyed, the Christian. The positive element in it has triumphed. Jesus always upbraided doubt, but he never sends the doubter to hell, because it is possible for the will to be in an attitude of obedience despite the doubts. It is possible for a Christian to live on the right side of doubt; that is, to act as if he had no doubts. When Naaman was told to bathe seven times in Jordan, his reason immediately questioned the efficacy of this prescription for the leprosy. At first he was a positive unbeliever, and turned his face toward Damascus; but at the suggestion of his servants, and in view of the greatness of the benefit and the simplicity of the remedy, he was induced to turn the head of his cavalcade toward the despised Jordan. He was still brimful of doubt, but he had faith enough to move him in the right direction. He dipped himself once, and examining his skin, found no change. His doubts increased with each plunge; but he still had faith sufficient to go on till the seventh plunge, when his flesh became like a little child's. This is living on the right side of doubt. He went to the Jordan a doubter, and was healed, instead of going to Damascus an unbeliever, to linger out his days in abhorred loathsomeness.

In Bunyan's immortal allegory there is a scene which strikingly portrays unbelief, doubt, and faith. Christian and Pliable tumble together into the Slough of Despond. Pliable wallows till he gets out "on that side of the slough which is next to his own house; so away he went, and Christian saw him no more." This is living on the wrong side of doubt, and going into the darkness of confirmed unbelief. Christian "struggled to that side of the slough which was farthest from his own house, and next to the wicket gate." He lived on the right side of doubt, and reached the Celestial City, while Pliable perished in the City of destruction. Christian did nobly, but he might have done much better. There was another pilgrim, named Faithful, who, on coming to the same slough, looked carefully, and found "substantial steps placed, even through the very midst of this slough," and walked in safety upon them. These steps are the Divine promises, and this

character, Faithful, represents all perfect believers in Christ Jesus, lifted by faith above the quagmire while planting their feet upon the immutable granite of God's word.

Such a life is possible. It begins with the moment when the half-believer "knows the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe" fully in "the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead." This is salvation from doubt. There are witnesses on earth today who testify to this salvation as the blessed experience of years, yea, scores of years. Harassed and weakened by doubts, they opened the Bible and found it a vast magazine of promises. Among these, one promise rose like Mont Blanc, and fixed their gaze: it was "the Promise of the Father." the Comforter, who should glorify Christ by a revelation of his power to save. They appropriated this great promise of the greatest gift that men can wish, or heaven can send, and suddenly their feet were lifted from the plane of their past experience, and planted on that serene and cloudless summit, where each might sing: --

"Rejoicing now in earnest hope

I stand, and from the mountain top

See all the land below;

Rivers of milk and honey rise,

And all the fruits of Paradise

In endless plenty grow."

It is not surprising that many, believing the testimony of their brethren and sisters, are earnestly crying,

"O, that I might at once go up;

No more on this side Jordan stop,

But now the land possess;

This moment end my legal years,

Sorrows, and sins, and doubts, and fears, --

A howling wilderness."

But many are kept back from seeking salvation from doubt by the suggestion that this whole question of assurance is determined by our mental and physical constitutions. They say that this salvation is for the sanguine, the ardent style of minds, with whom faith is easy. But bilious and phlegmatic temperaments, when they fully trust in Jesus, the complete Saviour, are just as easily lifted to the sunlit summits of assurance, and they become far more stable in their experience. Read the Acts of the Apostles, and you will find that after the pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit, there was great joy, betokening that the shadows of the night of doubt were dispelled by the rising of the daystar within their hearts. New Testament Christians are abounding in joy as soon as they receive the Holy Ghost in full measure. Temperament makes no difference.

## 2. The Psychology of Christian assurance.2

Man's cognitive or knowing powers are few in number. Through his senses or perceptions he knows the qualities of matter. By his internal perception he knows also the inner world. By his faculty of relations, discursive or elaborative power, he infers the unknown from the known. But lying back of these faculties, and existing before them all in the order of nature, but not in the order of development, is the power of original suggestion, the faculty of intuition. This term, from the Latin *intueor*, "look directly at," is used to designate the ability of the mind under certain conditions to gaze immediately upon certain truths independent of the perceptive or the elaborative faculties. These truths have various designations, as first, self-evident, or intuitive truths, first principles, native notions, etc.<sup>3</sup>

The notions grasped by this faculty are space, time, cause, substance, right and wrong, personal existence, personal identity, the axioms of mathematics, etc. When the mind is brought into activity by the presentation of the external world to the senses, or by sensation and perception, these notions start into being as if from the very groundwork of the mind. They may be known by the following criteria: 1. Incomprehensibility -- We do not comprehend how or why the thing is. 2. Simplicity -- It cannot be resolved into several other notions or cognitions. 3. Necessity, and consequent universality -- The nonexistence of a first cause cannot be conceived; hence it is said to be necessary, and, of course, universal. 4. Comparative evidence and certainty -- This strictly pertains to the thinking subject rather than to the primary truth. The mind has the highest degree of certitude in contemplating these truths.

The interesting question now arises, whether the notion of a personal God is given by intuition. The intuitional Deists of India, constituting the Brahmo Somaj, teach that the idea of God, and all other religious truths, are given by the faculty of original suggestion, intuition, or pure reason. Hence a revelation is a superfluity. The American transcendentalists agree with these Asiatic philosophers in ascribing to man, as innate in his soul, all truth necessary to his proper religious development. But neither Scripture, experience, nor observation justifies this system. The notion of cause is given by this faculty, and, by implication, a first cause. But this is not a personal God. It is disputed that the notion of right and wrong given by the ethical sense, added to that of first cause, develops the notion of a personal God. If it could, the notion would violate the second criterion, and, consequently, would not be a primary truth. And yet if God is ever known, it must be through intuition that this knowledge is reached. The analysis of the human soul discloses the anomalous fact that it has a faculty for a class of ideas of which it is destitute. The only explanation of this anomaly must be found in the absence of the proper conditions under which this kind of truths is developed. The abstract notion of space can never arise in one born blind till he gazes upon objects in space.

We believe that the distinction between right and wrong arises only after intercourse with human beings in whom rights inhere. Hence the wolf-reared men found at different times in India evinced no moral sense. Now the lacking requisite for spiritual perception is the presence and illumination of the Holy Ghost in the soul. This was the natural and normal state of the unfallen man in Eden. God was immediately apprehended as a personality through a sense of his love flowing like a river through Adam's consciousness. There was an interior light, the Holy Spirit, within the human spirit. Sin extinguished that light, and the religious intuitions ceased, leaving a yearning -- a painful yet ill-defined-sense of want, unrest, and forebodings of ill, sufficient to produce a blind activity of the religious nature. St. Paul has truthfully portrayed this condition: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned."

In marked contrast is the clear vision of the believer. "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. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual," or, more properly, "explaining spiritual things to spiritual minds." The soul, when thus filled with the light of the Spirit, immediately apprehends the existence of God in Christ, and his great love to me, individualizing me in his regards, and also it has an intuitive conviction of immortal life. "For we know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." That the person thus coming into communication with the believer in this exalted state of spiritual illumination is Jesus Christ, apprehended as the Supreme Deity, is evident from the testimony of all advanced believers. Christ stands forth before them, the chief among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely. They speak of an ineffable joy and assurance arising from an inexpressible love to him. Their language is,

"On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;

All other ground is sinking sand."

He is, as never before, the sovereign of their hearts. His divinity impresses itself upon the soul, which despite all former doubts, now cries out, "My Lord and my God." How exactly does this experience harmonize with the Scripture, "No man can say" (truly from the heart, not dogmatically from the head) "that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." Not only does experience assert that Jesus is Lord, but the Son of God expressly assured his disciples that the Paraclete should glorify him, "for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."

Thus the humblest, most illiterate mind, by the exercise of perfect faith in Jesus, grasps the only key to the fortress of unbelief, the citadel of antiChrist -- modern Rationalism, the sum of whose faith, or rather unfaith, is, the only God is the Father; Jesus Christ is dead and gone in the same sense that Julius Cesar is in his grave, and influences this world only through history. That key is the immediate, intuitive knowledge of Jesus as a living and almighty Saviour, reigning within the soul without a rival. The question has been asked, whether this knowledge of Christ is independent of the testimony of the evangelists, and of the women who saw Jesus alive after his death? We reply, that their testimony is the appointed means used by the modern believer to the attainment of the end, an inward manifestation of Christ. He who climbs up the stairs leading to the dome of St. Peter's, uses every stair to increase his elevation. But he is not using every stair when he stands upon the summit of the dome, and the magnificent landscape of the Eternal City, the Campagna, the Apennines, the Albanian hills, and the Mediterranean, lie in entrancing beauty before his eyes. So faith in the statements respecting the historic Christ, constitutes the staircase up which we mount to reach the summit of Hermon, where that historic Christ is gloriously transfigured before our spiritual vision. In an important sense, the testimony of the believer of today is independent of the record of the evangelists, and is a new confirmation of its truth. The fact of the resurrection rests upon historic proofs. The fact that Jesus lives a king, and reigns over the believer, rests on intuitive evidence.

The contents of that assurance afforded by the spiritual perceptions are CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD. Dogmatic truths are not discovered in their abstract form. They are concrete in Him, the Alpha and Omega -- pardon, purity, life eternal. He is made unto us wisdom, sanctification, and redemption.

It remains to prove that this apprehension of Christ sustains all the tests which are the peculiar criteria of intuitive knowledge. It is incomprehensible. We can give no account of the rationale. It lies beyond the range of our powers. The Scriptures assert that the manifestation of Christ is by the medium of the Holy Ghost. But he himself is not apprehended. The eye does not apprehend the light, but the object

manifested by the light as a medium. We do apprehend the personality of Jesus, but not that of the Divine torchbearer who pours illumination upon the spiritual eye. The trinal distinctions of the Divine Persons is not manifested, nor their separate offices in the salvation of the soul.<sup>4</sup> Christ fills the vision. The source of the light in which he stands radiant is not cognized. By faith in the words of Jesus we know it is the Holy Spirit.

The knowledge has the second characteristic, simplicity. It cannot be resolved into constituent elements. Though concrete, it is not complex. The fullness of blessing in Christ is the fullness of an indivisible person, not of a thing separable into its elements.

The third criterion is necessity, and hence, universality. The testimony of advanced believers under the illumination of the abiding Comforter is full on this point. The nonexistence of Christ's love to them is something as unthinkable as the annihilation of space. He is to them all and in all. They find him the center of their thoughts, around which they revolve by the constraining power of his love. He fills all things, all their thoughts. Praise and prayer to him are involuntary, and unconsciously offered, even while the intellect and the hands are busy with the cares of life, so perfectly has Christ's personality pervaded theirs. "I will make my abode in you." The criterion of universality accompanies, of course, necessity. If a notion is necessary it must be universal. The only exception is, where the conditions of any intuitive notion do not exist. The abstract idea of space does not exist in a person who has never had eyesight.

To the trained mathematician there are intuitive truths relating to numbers and quantities which do not exist in the savage. Dr. M'Cosh teaches, that the intuitional faculty is capable of cultivation. Hence the universality exists wherever the proper conditions are found. It is just so with the knowledge of Christ in high Christian experience. It is universal with those who have perfect faith in Jesus. That a majority of the inhabitants of the world, including some great writers on mental philosophy, are destitute of this intuitive apprehension of Christ and the joyful assurance of his love, does not disprove this criterion, for the majority do not perform the conditions, they do not fully trust Christ. It gives great pleasure to state that the experience of perfect love sustains the fourth test of primary truth -- certainty. Of nothing is the mature believer under the holy unction more certain, than he is that his Redeemer lives. Doubt, which haunted the beginning of his Christian life, has been dispelled by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness. The darkness is past, the true light now shines. He can sooner doubt the solid earth or the shining sun than his sonship to God, and joint heirship with Christ

"O love, thou bottomless abyss!

My sins are swallowed up in thee;

Cover'd is my unrighteousness,

Nor spot of guilt remains on me:

While Jesus' blood, through earth and skies,

Mercy, free, boundless mercy, cries."

The conclusion to which we have arrived is, that in his unfallen state, man had and fully exercised the power of intuition Godward, and spiritual truth flooded his soul as the sunbeams fill the raindrop. Sin shrouded the soul with a pall of blackness, excluding the glorious sunlight; but perfect faith in Jesus Christ removes the pall, and the long-lost light again fills all that spirit. The soul, amid the intensity of this spiritual

illumination, enjoys an assurance of salvation which could not be increased were that fact written by Gabriel in letters of fire across the arches of the sky. No amount of testimony, human or angelic, can increase the certitude of the soul lit up by the presence of the Comforter. We do not need lanterns to see the sun rise. He brings his own self-revealing light.

### 3. The Spiritual Manifestation of Christ not Illusory but Real.

There is in many minds, even among believers, a grave misapprehension of the grounds of certainty with respect to spiritual things. It is tacitly conceded that there is more room for doubt with respect to Christian experience than there is in the affairs of this life. It is the purpose of this chapter to demonstrate that this concession is unnecessary, and to show that we may, under the full illumination of the Holy Spirit, as certainly know God in Jesus Christ as we know any facts in this world. Let us take the fact of the existence of an external world. Ordinary minds regard an outer world as a certainty the highest possible for the mind to entertain. But when we begin to look for the ground of this certainty we find our selves afloat on a broad sea of conflicting opinions on which we are so tossed that our indisputable certainty becomes very uncertain, and in some minds vanishes altogether.

The two grand divisions of opinion are, 1) that our consciousness of external objects is mediate, and, 2) that it is immediate. Philosophers adhering to the first view reason thus: The mind, imprisoned in the body, cannot travel out of it and grasp external objects. It must always remain in its appropriate sphere. It is conscious only of what is taking place within itself. It is unextended, and cannot grasp matter which has extension. It is immaterial, and cannot lay hold of the qualities of the material world. Yet in some way we are quite sure of an external world. But how? Here we find philosophers dividing again into two classes: 1. That there is a third thing between the material object and the immaterial mind, which constitutes the medium of perception. What this third something is, it puzzles the philosophers to tell. If it is material, it is in need of a medium itself in order to come into contact with the mind. But if it is purely immaterial, the mind in cognizing it is gaining no knowledge of matter, and hence no certainty.

2. The other way of explaining this difficulty is to assert that in perception we perceive neither the material objects nor their images, called by the ancients, "skins of things," the media above described, but we perceive only certain modifications of our own minds which we are perpetually mistaking for external objects. Both classes of these philosophers are Idealists. Their fundamental assumption is, that only the mind itself can be immediately known as an ultimate fact in consciousness. The logical sequence is, that the external world is a groundless and unnecessary assumption. This is pure idealism. But some, the hypothetical Realists, who start with the same assumption, try hard to save the external world from vanishing into cloudland by making it an inference from the third thing spoken of, or from the modification of itself. But an inference is not worth any thing unless certain proved premises lie back of it. In this case the logical premises are lacking, and we have no certainty of the existence of any thing external to mind. The material world is logically annihilated by the philosophy which assumes that in consciousness the ego, or self, is all that is immediately known. Yet this is the philosophy which is dominant in Germany today, and is widely prevalent throughout civilization wherever the modern school of the Natural Realists or natural Dualists does not prevail.

This school, of which Sir William Hamilton is the chief, assumes that both the self, or ego, and the non-self, or non-ego, are immediately known in consciousness. This is the second grand division of philosophers. They are called Realists. Sir William Hamilton boldly enlarged the sphere of consciousness to include not only the modifications of mind, but the outward object which produces the inward change.

According to him, I am not conscious of the idea of this writing desk as a third thing between the material desk and the purely spiritual mind, but I am conscious of the desk itself. Hence the Hamiltonians -- a minority of these philosophers -- are certain of an external world; the rest of them are either in great perplexity on this subject, or they have settled down upon the airy foundation of pure Idealism, and are content with the belief that matter is a stupendous illusion. I do not say that a majority of mankind are in this predicament, for happily the mass of the human family are not metaphysicians, they have not ventured to turn over the cornerstone of their knowledge to see what it rests upon: they have the good sense to act upon their experience of realities as natural realists, and have no difficulties with the grounds of their knowledge. We shall proceed to show that Christians act in the same way with their knowledge of spiritual realities. They are spiritual realists, those of them who have become acquainted with the Spirit of truth, or the Spirit of reality, as it might be correctly translated. We will now endeavor to show the philosophic grounds of certainty in regard to the spiritual manifestation of the Son of God to the perfect believer.

The subtle suggestion is sometimes presented that this whole matter of Christian experience is all illusory -- a phenomenon of our own minds under the influence of causes wholly within itself. The thoughtful believer is sometimes annoyed by the thought that God has nothing to do with inward religious emotions -- that what seems to come from without, and to move so marvelously within the soul, assuring of pardon and cleansing from sin, really arises from the hidden depths of our mysterious nature while intently contemplating religious ideas, and that there is no manifestation of God at all as an objective existence.

To this we have two answers. In the first place, if this illusion leaves permanent beneficial effects upon the character, gives victory over sin, fills the soul with love toward God and the purest philanthropy, destroys the fear of death, and adorns and beautifies the spirit with all excellences, it is infinitely better than any reality to be found on earth, and it should be earnestly coveted and diligently sought by every person.

2. But we may know that God manifests himself in Christian experience by the testimony of consciousness the same testimony that assures us of the existence of the external world. To demonstrate the existence of the material world, as we have shown, has been for ages "the puzzle of philosophers," as Tyndall styles it, many contending that the sphere of consciousness is limited to the operations of mind itself, and that it cannot directly cognize any thing external. The most that it can do it to infer that its sensations have an external, unknown, and forever unknowable cause. Those who deny the correctness of this inference deny the existence of matter, and resolve it into ideas. With idealists, the ego only exists; the mountain, river, and plain are only so many different modifications of the ego, or self. At length Sir William Hamilton arose, and cut this metaphysical knot by boldly enlarging the sphere of consciousness to include the outer world. So we reply that the soul illumined by the Holy Spirit is conscious, not only of its own subjective religious exercises, but of God, their external cause, impressing himself mysteriously upon the Spirit. In other words, we may have, when our perceptions are quickened by the Holy Spirit, the same knowledge of God as we have of the external world. Christians in advanced experience universally testify that they all know God.

It is fundamental in philosophy that consciousness cannot lie. To deny this would be to nullify mental science by throwing discredit upon the source of its facts. For it is a law of evidence that one proved falsehood destroys the credibility of a witness. "Falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus" -- false in one instance, false in all. Consciousness testifies in Christian experience that a power from without the soul enters in and subdues all things to itself, and that this power is a person, since it does the work of a person, certifies to the penitent believer his pardon, and awakens an intense love toward the worker -- an affection directed

toward persons only. That this person is Christ, or rather, the Holy Spirit revealing him, is also directly apprehended by our spiritual perceptions in a manner wholly inexplicable to reason. But it ought not to be strange that He who created the infant with power to interpret its mother's smile should endow the human spirit with power to recognize its Creator's presence. But there are persons who cannot accept Sir William Hamilton's widening of the sphere of consciousness to include the external world. It is not our purpose to defend any system of philosophy. If you admit the certainty of an external world as attainable by the mind without its direct cognition by consciousness, you must assume that it is an irresistible inference from modifications of mind through sensation and external perception. In other words, the sudden pain which shoots through the nerves to the sensorium carries with it the feeling of certainty that some cause outside of the mind, some thorn or needle, is the cause of this sensation. In like manner, we argue that certainty which the Christian feels, that the changes occurring in his experience are not from some cause from within, but from without, and that this cause is not material but spiritual in its nature. We are endowed with the ability to discriminate between the objective and the subjective. If it were not so we could not distinguish our perceptions from the images of our fancy. In like manner we are enabled to discriminate between religious emotions having an objective cause, and mere subjective phantasies. Hence, advanced Christians, especially, speak with the utmost assurance of their communion with God, and of the joy of the Holy Ghost. The Christian under the full illumination of the Spirit, as certainly knows God as either the Hamiltonian, or the non-Hamiltonian may know matter. Consciousness testifies to no greater certainty in the apprehension of the external world than she does in the knowledge of Christ. The direct intuition, or the inference, if it be an inference, amounts to an absolute certainty in both cases.

But we utterly despair of convincing the Idealist of the agency of God in Christian experience, since he invalidates the testimony of consciousness to the existence of any thing except the operations of his own mind. He resolves into the omnivorous ego the earth and sky, and the God who fills them. To attempt to prove to the Idealist the agency of God in regeneration and sanctification by assuming that he is immanent in the human soul would be only confounding the subject with the object, and affording the premises from which Pantheism, with all its disastrous moral sequences, is the logical inference. This book is written for people of common sense, who believe that consciousness attests that we live in a world of realities, and not of illusions. To such persons we would say that the field of internal Christian experience affords the groundwork for a philosophy as positive as any based upon the facts of physics or civil history. The moral and religious intuitions furnish us with utterances as authoritative as those which arise in the field of pure intellect. Of course the advocates of Positivism, and the other various forms of Materialism, will not expect the Christian to demonstrate the reality of the work of the Divine Spirit from a standpoint so low as the denial of the separate existence of the human soul, and the rejection of the Divine personality. For if the universal testimony that the ego, the thinking subject, is not the body, but a distinct substance, be discarded, it is scarcely reasonable to suppose that the attestations of millions of Christians to a supernatural change wrought in their consciousness, and transforming their characters, will be received by these miscalled philosophers. For that only is a genuine philosophy which recognizes all the facts in the world of mind, and constructs some rational hypothesis for their explanation. The facts for the truth of which Christian believers vouch are as stubborn as any in the domain of science. It is certainly very unscientific to refuse to put them to the test of experiment, and to discredit the testimony of the vast body of competent witnesses who had done so, with the assertion that they are deceived or deceiving.

In our reference to these systems of philosophy it is not our purpose to prove one or disprove others, but simply to show that if any of them admit a certainty of any one fact in the outer or inner world, the facts of Christian experience are just as certainly known, resting on the same basis --the testimony of

consciousness. The Christian can give just as good an account of his experimental knowledge of Jesus Christ, as the philosopher can give of his knowledge of the external world.

It is to be regretted that the writers on mental philosophy have with so great unanimity deemed the psychology of Christian experience unworthy of their notice<sup>5</sup>. We know of no better explanation of this fact than the absence of a marked spiritual experience of conscious salvation in the hearts of these writers. If they had been made conscious "partakers of the Holy Ghost, and had tasted the powers of the world to come," they would not have failed to describe the marvelous phenomena attendant upon that transformation of the entire man which is called a "translation from darkness to light, a new creation, a resurrection from the dead." No modification of mind is more sharply defined in the consciousness, and more tenaciously grasped by the memory. Hence these religious transitions and uplifts of the soul present an attractive field for the lover of intellectual science.

Rauch, in his *Psychology*, has devoted a chapter to religion, styling it "a peculiar activity of God in the human soul, differing from all his other operations, by which it is converted, renewed, and purified, by a power which manifests itself to the consciousness, needing no other light." He writes like a man of Christian experience, or like a candid philosopher who attaches importance to the testimony of multitudes who have had such an experience. But Cousin has touched upon this subject, in one of his lectures, in a far different spirit from Rauch, indicating his utter ignorance of the spiritual power of the Gospel in affecting transformations of the character. With him Christianity is not a glorious life within the soul, but a set of facts and a list of dogmas apprehended by the intellect. Cousin's fundamental error his proton pseudos, lies in this proposition: "The only faculty of knowledge is reason." All the negations of Rationalism lie folded in this acorn. The Infinite Being can never be "the direct object of love." "Such a love cannot sustain itself save by superhuman efforts, which terminate in folly." All this would be true were there no supernatural Agent to "shed abroad the love of God" in the believer's heart, and to attest directly to my soul that he loves me, even me. With an utter destitution of the spirit of true philosophy, this celebrated psychologist slurs over all Christian experience within, as the dreamy vagaries of mysticism, "chimerical and mischievous," overlooking entirely the amazing activities and heroic labors and sacrifices which have made all the Christian centuries illustrious and none more brilliant than the missionary century in which he lived. To refute the declaration that "reason is the only faculty of knowledge," we quote the utterance of another French philosopher, whose fame will outlive that of Cousin. Pascal says, "The things of this world must be known in order to be loved, but Jesus Christ must be loved in order to be known." This is only another form of the inspired utterance of St. John, teaching that the heart is a faculty of knowledge: "Whosoever loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love." As a painting is known only through the eye, a symphony through the ear, and an odor through the smell, so God is known only through the heart in holy love. We may hear words about a painting, we may read the notes of the music, we may discourse about an odor, and we may reason about God, but we can have a knowledge of none of them except through the appropriate faculty.

A description of Niagara awakens no emotion, but a view from beneath Table Rock overwhelms the soul with emotions of sublimity. The cataract is now for the first time known, because the right perceptive faculty is applied. We do not know God when reason apprehends a first cause, and conscience demands an executive of the moral law. He may still be a nondescript impersonality. The wrong faculties are in exercise. To know him as a person we must know him through that department of our nature which always has a person for the object of its activity. Our affections go out only toward persons. When the heart voluntarily moves toward God in perfect love, the soul is deluged with that flood of joyful emotions which

announce the advent of the personal God in the consciousness. This is the only "God-consciousness" of which we are capable. It is one thing to have notions about God, and it is quite a different thing to know him.

John Stuart Mill, the great logician and oracle of Materialism, has most signally failed in his attempt, not to invalidate the testimony of Christians, but to explain their unanimous assertion that the Holy Spirit abides within them, "to witness God's eternal love." His interpretation of the experience of believers in Christ is, "that it is neither more nor less than ascribing outward existence to the inward creations of our own faculties -- to ideas or feelings of the mind -- and believing that, by watching and contemplating these ideas of its own making, it can read in them what takes place in the world without." Hence the witness of the Spirit is, to him, an illusion, and communion with God is a pleasing hallucination, and victory over death through faith in Jesus is the happy delusion of the sailor dreaming of safety while approaching the rocks, lured by a false light. But is Mr. Mill competent to philosophize on this subject? Have his spiritual intuitions been called into activity by the quickening Spirit? If not, then he is reasoning as wisely as one born blind who asserts that colors are purely subjective, "the inward creations of our own faculties." So long as consciousness is the source of all the facts of psychology, and the basis of all correct conclusions, just so long will one spiritually blind be incompetent either to testify or to theorize truthfully respecting spiritual experience!

In 1866 an operator at Valencia sat at the end of the broken cable while search was made for the other end in the depths of the Atlantic. While he was, at midnight, intently watching the delicate magnet disturbed by the influences of the sea, suddenly the tiny spot of light flashed out the words, "God save the Queen." How many metaphysicians as great as Stuart Mill would it take to prove to that operator that this message was not from the other world, mind answering to mind in clear majestic thought, but that it was a lucky combination of the incoherent pulsations of the sea? Just as many such philosophers will it require to prove to the newborn soul that the "Abba, Father," suddenly resounding in his soul, originates in the depths of his own nature, and that it is not the voice of Him who sitteth on the throne above and sends down assurances of pardon and adoption to penitent believers below. Mr. Mill's groundless assertion will become an argument worthy of consideration when he has demonstrated --

1. That he has a similar Christian experience, and that it bore the marks of an origin purely subjective and internal.
2. That just such experiences arise in the devotees of false religions when intently contemplating Buddha, Brahma, Jupiter, Woden, Thor, or any African fetich, as are attested by believers in Jesus Christ.
3. That these experiences are attended by a moral transformation, a victory over sin, an assurance of the Divine favor, and an adornment of the character with the whole constellation of Christian virtues, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, and temperance.

Until these propositions are proved, Christians are not to be charged with folly for persisting in a faith which works by love, purifies the heart, overcomes the world, brings life and immortality to light, and enables the believer to cry, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

We have made the statement that the Holy Ghost communicates no theological truth. He adds no article to the Apostles' Creed, but he gives reality to the truths lying cold and inoperative in the intellect. The vague becomes definite, the obscure becomes clear, the distant is brought nigh. Especially is Jesus Christ presented as a real, living, and DIVINE PERSON. It is the great mission of the Comforter to disclose the

Deity of Christ. "He shall take of mine and show unto you." If the Son of God were a creature, the Spirit of truth would reveal him as a creature. What is the universally attested fact in that high Christian experience, the conscious abiding of the Comforter? It is the manifestation of Christ as a living, loving, and almighty Saviour, able to save to the uttermost. Henceforth all speculative difficulties subside. As spiders' webs are swept away by the mighty rushing wind, intellectual objections to the Deity of Christ are wiped out by the pentecostal breath of God, the ever-blessed Spirit. This result of the coming of the Comforter to the disciples was distinctly foretold by Jesus. "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father." This immediately became the subject matter of the Apostles' preaching. "And he hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was (is) in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."

It is the coming of the Comforter which is the only power that can lift the yoke of Rationalism from the skeptic's soul. Logic fails. There are in the human mind naturally strong proclivities toward Unitarianism. We long to carry our knowledge up to unity. We delight to discover to hen in ta polla, the one in the many -- one principle binding up into unity many phenomena. This tendency of our minds lies at the basis of classification and induction. If allowed its full scope in theological speculations it ends in Deism -- in plucking the crown of Divinity from the head of Christ. Hence our love of unity is a prolific source of error. Says Sir William Hamilton,

to this love of unity -- to this desire of reducing the objects of our knowledge to harmony and system -- a source of truth and discovery if subservient to observation, but of error and delusion if allowed to dictate to observation what phenomena are to be perceived -- we may refer the influence which preconceived opinions exercise upon our perceptions and judgments, by inducing us to see and require only what is in unison with them. 'What we wish,' says Demosthenes, 'that we believe.' 'What we expect,' says Aristotle, 'that we find:' truths which have been re-echoed by a thousand confessors and confirmed by ten thousand examples.

Not only does the natural man, devoid of spiritual illumination, strongly drift toward Unitarian views of Christ; but the Christian Church, under high intellectual culture and low spirituality, tends in the same direction. Hence the only salvation of orthodoxy is in the baptism of the Holy Spirit -- the anointing that abideth and teacheth -- poured by the Divine hand upon the mass of believers. "What the world needs is not a mere teacher to communicate something about God, but to know God himself by his own personal manifestation to each heart.

This personal and loving manifestation of God to the soul required two steps: First, the incarnation, to bring God into the sphere of our sympathies in that most affecting way in which he is presented by the manger, the garden, and the cross. But born into the world a helpless infant, unfolding in physical, mental, and spiritual power under the laws of normal development, subject to the limitations and ills of humanity, his Godhead was not so conspicuous as his humanity. The Divine glory which he had with the Father before the world was, was eclipsed by the robe of clay in which it was wrapped. Only a subdued brightness gleamed through the earthly vesture. But the time came when it was expedient for Jesus to take the second step, when his deity should burst forth, a full-orbed sun upon this dark world. To this end Christ withdraws the visible, material form, in order that it may no more divert the eye from the full splendors of his Godhead (Godhood). He goes up on high and is glorified, and sends down the proof in the gift of the Comforter, whose great mission on earth is to "glorify," exalt, deify, the Son of God by a revelation of his divinity in the inmost consciousness of every one who loves him. This undoubted, assured knowledge of Jesus Christ as "God over all, blessed for ever," emboldened the apostles to preach, and to suffer shame joyfully, for his sake. This knowledge is described by St. John as comprising "all things." "But

ye have an unction from the Holy One and ye know all things." All spiritual truth is centered in Jesus Christ. To know him by the anointing is to know "all things pertaining to life and godliness." To know Christ is to know the law, for love is the fulfilling of the law "And ye need not that any man should teach you." The highest and most trustworthy cognitions are those of the intuitions. The logic of Aristotle and Bacon cannot reach up to this knowledge of the Divine Jesus revealed in the very sanctuary of the soul by the Holy Spirit. Gal. 1:16. We cannot agree with Dean Alford, that those strong expressions of St. John are "so many ideal statements on Christian perfection," implying that believers in his day did not "have in living and working reality what they had in the ideal depth of their Christian life." We cannot conceive of an assertion more positive and explicit of the perfect spiritual knowledge possessed by those whom he addresses in this epistle. They had what St. Paul craved for the Ephesians, "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge," or intellectual comprehension or logical statement.

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