

Part II

The Biblical Structure of Reality

The Invisible God: “I AM”

The central declaration of the Scriptures is that God *is*.

The constant affirmation of the Scriptures is that God *acts*.

It has always been a wonder to me that some men can read the Bible right through and leave God out of it. That is a tremendous feat of intellectual excision. Everything is attributed to nature and man, nothing is attributed to God. The presupposition behind it is that there is no God. It requires a deliberate and selective blindness that screens out much of what the Bible is about.

If a man reads the Bible that way, he fails completely to understand it. As a record of events, the Bible goes beyond the telling of the event to reveal what lies behind the event. More precisely, it goes beyond the event to tell who—whose intelligence and will—lies unseen behind the event.

The Bible is a book that pierces beyond the natural into the supernatural. A man who reduces it, by mental fiat, to the dead level of the natural, censors out of the Bible exactly what the book

was given to make clear to man. He lays an edict upon his understanding not to grasp what the Bible is about.

The Bible asserts, uniformly and from the beginning to end, that there are different levels of intelligent and active life: beasts, man, angels, demons, Satan, God. More are unseen than are seen. All but the beasts are intelligent agents whose actions profoundly affect human history. To smash them all down to a single level of existence is to read the Bible with resolute unintelligence.

The intelligent way to read the Bible is not to lump everything together without discrimination, assigning to man or to nature the acts of God. The intelligent and discriminate way to read the Bible is to assign the acts of man to man, the acts of Satan to Satan, the acts of God to God, the acts of angels to angels, and the acts of demons to demons. To do that illuminates events. Not to do so obscures their causes. There are events today that are not intelligible apart from the Biblical structure of reality.

The central declaration of the Scriptures is that God is. When God commissioned Moses to lead the people of Israel, Moses wondered if the people would accept his commission as genuinely divine. God said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

Through Isaiah God said, "For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things not yet done." Isaiah 46:9-10.

"In the beginning God . . ." are the first words of the Bible. Look at the first chapter of Genesis: "And God said. . . ." "And God saw. . . ." "And God made. . . ." "And God called. . . ." "And God set. . . ." "So God created. . . ." "And God blessed them. . . ." "So God created man. . . ." "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good." The Bible is in large part an account of God in action.

The God of the Scriptures is a God of intelligent and purposeful and efficient activity. He is a God Who acts—Who acts in human history. He is a God Who speaks, and the signature of His divinity is that what He speaks far in advance is fully acted out in history.

In Genesis, and throughout the Bible, we see God exercising attributes of volition and intelligence and personality and speech of which man is capable on a diminished scale, because man is made in the image of God.

There are scholars who scoff at this as "an anthropomorphic God." They fail to grasp that God deliberately speaks to man

about Himself in terms understandable to man. When the infinite God speaks to finite man, He speaks in terms measured to the mind and experience of man, just as a parent in speaking to a child brings his words and illustrations within the range of a child's comprehension. If God is like man it is because the faculties with which man is endowed are in major respects God-like.

Genesis declares that "God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion. . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them. . . .'" (Genesis 1:26-28.) God endowed the first man Adam with attributes of will and intelligence and speech, so that man was like his creator.

Man was made in the image of God, but sin entered the human race and man is now a badly marred image of God. Psalm 82:6 says, "*You are gods, and all of you are children of the most high, but you shall die like men . . .*"

The Invisible God

The Bible says that "God is a spirit." (John 4:24.) He is invisible and He is immortal.

The invisible God has expressed Himself in the physical creation. His creative hand is seen in the natural order, but He does not dwell on that plane. Romans 1:20 says, "Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, have been clearly seen in the things that have been made."

God is a spirit, invisible to the eye of man, and He dwells on the spiritual plane. He is supernatural—that is, above nature. All that we see in the natural realm, from the intricate design of the atom to the great balanced wheels of the stars and galaxies, is the product of God's creative genius and His infinite power. Nature is His handiwork. The Milky Way alone is a system of over a hundred billion stars.

"No one has ever seen God," the Bible says in John 1:18. He cannot be discovered in any way other than by His own self-revelation made to man at times and by the means of His own choosing. The Scriptures—the sum of revelation after revelation given to Hebrew men over many centuries—are the appointed means that God uses to convey to mankind the truth about Who He is, what

His purposes are, and about the intelligent forces that operate in the supernatural realm.

God chose the Hebrew people to be the recipients and heralds of His revelation of Himself to mankind, and it is with the patriarchs that this unfolding revelation of God began.

God commenced His public revelation of Himself with Abraham and continued and expanded it through Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, and the Hebrew prophets.

A man may learn something *about* God through teaching, but he only comes to *know* God by a direct, personal revelation to himself.

Jacob had learned about God and about the acts of God from his fathers, but he did not know God until God revealed Himself to Jacob. That is the difference between head knowledge and heart knowledge. A man may be told all about a certain young woman—her birthplace, her background, her schooling, her character, her activities—and he may have a very complete and accurate *concept* of what she is like, but it is not until he meets her that he begins to know her as she really is.

Jacob made a journey from his father's house to his uncle's house. Chapter 28 of Genesis says, "Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. And he came to a certain place, and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending upon it! And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, 'I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your descendants. . . . Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land'

"Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, 'Surely the Lord is in this place, and *I did not know it.*' And he was afraid and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God and this is the gate of heaven.'" Jacob named that place Bethel, "the house of God."

It was, by all appearances, an entirely ordinary place when Jacob stopped there to rest on his journey. The sun had set, darkness had settled over the land, and Jacob could find no shelter or comfort except a stone for his pillow. God was invisible to Jacob's eye there. The place did not impress him. He took a stone, lay down, and went to sleep. Bethel was different only because God chose at

that place, on that night, to reveal Himself to Jacob.

Jacob knew nothing of God, sensed nothing of the presence of God by his own faculties at that place—"the Lord is in this place, and *I did not know it*"—until God deliberately broke through the unseen veil that divides the natural from the supernatural and revealed Himself to Jacob there. Then that ordinary place seemed "awesome . . . the house of God . . . the gate of heaven."

Jacob could have strained his natural faculties to their utmost and not have discerned anything more about that place than its physical attributes. The natural senses cannot penetrate into the supernatural at any time. They are stone dumb to the presence of God, or angels, or evil spirits, in any place. They can know nothing about it at all.

God used three means of communication in revealing Himself to Jacob. Jacob received the revelation of God by a dream, by a vision, and by words—the words that God spoke to him that night.

God had spoken previously to Abraham: "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates . . ." (Genesis 15:18.) The subsequent revelation spoken to Jacob was in strict accord with the revelation previously received by Abraham. That was an evidence of its validity. Supernatural revelations that contradict the Word of God—they regularly occur—are not of God. They are borne in upon men by evil spirits, and they are meant to deceive. The Scriptures warn against them. One such revelation occurred in the Middle East in 1968, when a virgin figure appeared as by a vision in a church and promised the enemies of Israel success in eradicating her.

There at Bethel, God spoke to Jacob: "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your descendants; and your descendants shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the east and to the north and to the south; and by you and your descendants shall all the families of the earth bless themselves. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done that of which I have spoken to you." Genesis 28:13-15.

Bethel was the beginning of Jacob's personal knowledge of God. No longer was it by family tradition and teaching alone that he knew of God. Now he knew God for himself. Later, at Peniel, Jacob was to experience a greater and more thoroughly transforming revelation of God that would alter his character permanently and cause his name to be changed, from Jacob (which means a sup-

planter) to Israel (which means prince with God).

This God Who revealed Himself to Jacob at Bethel is the God Who Is. He identified Himself to Jacob as the God of Abraham, because that is exactly Who He Is. This was not because Abraham had been a religious genius or a masterful theologian, but because God had deliberately revealed Himself to Abraham, had made certain promises to him, and because Abraham had believed God and obeyed Him. The God of Abraham is the God Who makes promises and keeps them.

This God of the Hebrews is the only true God. He is a living being, supreme above all others in the universe, creator of all that is, the author of life. All others who are worshiped by men as gods are either creatures of imagination or evil spirits seeking to usurp God's place among mankind.

"No man has seen God at any time," the Apostle John writes in I John 4:12.

The Scriptures speak of God:

—as "the invisible God" in Colossians 1:15.

—as "the king of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God" in I Timothy 1:17.

—as "him who is invisible" in Hebrews 11:27.

This passage in Hebrews says that, "By faith Moses left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king [Pharaoh]; for he endured as *seeing him who is invisible.*"

God is "the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality and *dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has ever seen or can see,*" Paul wrote in I Timothy 6:15, 16.

Psalm 104 says that God covers Himself "with light as with a garment."

The Scriptures admonish men, "Let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, *for our God is a consuming fire.*" Hebrews 12:29.

"God is light and in him there is no darkness at all," the Bible says in I John 1:5b. It says also that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Proverbs 9:10.

The Personal God

The God revealed by the Bible is a personal God, Who reveals Himself to individual men. He deals directly and personally with

men. The prophet Hanani told Asa king of Judah, "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him." II Chronicles 16:9.

Adam, when he had sinned, tried to hide from God in Eden, but God found him there. Men, in their sin, seek to hide themselves morally from God. Some say that there is no God, and that gives them a temporary and delusive relief from concern over the consequences of their sins. Others tell themselves that God is very remote and unconcerned with man; that God set the universe in motion and then went off to some distant eyrie in the heavens to attend to matters far more important than the affairs of men. Some say that "God is dead." Scholars especially are prone to regard it as vanity that God would take any particular notice of men. Their supposition is that the God of the cosmos could not be a God interested in fine details. All of these are ways of declaring that man is free to sin and go his own way because God is blind to sin or so withdrawn from humanity as to be indifferent to individual acts.

The Bible gives the flattest possible contradiction to this. It states that "even the hairs of your head are all numbered." (Luke 12:7.) The God who knows the number of the hairs of your head knows the number of the sins of your heart.

And the God who knows the number of your hairs also knows the number of the stars. "He tells the number of the stars; he calls them all by their names." (Psalm 147:4.) Or, as Isaiah puts it, in majestic poetry: "To whom will you liken me, or shall I be equal? says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who created these? He brings out their host by number; he calls them all by name. . . .

"Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, 'My way is hid from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God'?" Isaiah 40:25-27.

Man has devised telescopes to probe outward from the earth into the creation, and with them and by radio search he has discovered some corners of the universe. Only lately has man begun to know something of the vastness of the creation. In 1955, a photographic atlas of the universe in 200 sky maps was published at the Palomar Observatory. It was reported then that "Far beyond in outer space there are galaxies similar to the Milky Way. Sometimes these galaxies group into clusters. Whereas only a scant three dozen such clusters were known before the sky survey, now

more than a thousand have been found"—1,000 clusters of galaxies.

Congregated in one such system, called the Coma Cluster, are about 11,000 galaxies.

If the Milky Way were observed from an immense distance away, it would be seen as a crowd of billions of suns (some estimate as many as 200 billion), arranged in a flat spiral structure. Its density would be so great as to suggest, to the untutored eye, that they are jammed together, with very little space between them. But we know how perfectly the solar system is arranged around our sun as just a tiny wheel within this massive swarm of suns.

Our solar system is a beautifully ordered mote in a single galaxy—having something less than the prominence of the dot over one *i* in an unabridged dictionary. (Actually, some scratch-pad figures show, the solar system is as prominent in the Milky Way as one dot over one *i* would be on a shelf of 2,850 unabridged dictionaries.)

There are times when the galaxies "collide." One galaxy meets another head-on and they pass through each other and come out on the other side, with no star having brushed another.

"The galaxies within reach of telescopes like that on Mount Palomar probably number in the billions," it was reported in 1963. The atlas of the universe mapped the sky out to a depth in space of 600 million light-years. (A light-year is about six trillion miles.) Isaac Asimov wrote in 1960 that "the 200-inch telescope can make out objects up to an estimated two billion light-years away, and there is no sign of an end of the Universe—yet."

The galaxies *within reach* appear to number in the billions. If each galaxy is a family of billions of stars, we begin to get a notion of the extent of it—billions of billions—yet God knows the number of the stars and He "calls them all by their names."

The God of creation is the God of the cosmos to be sure. He is also the God of the most minute details.

Man has devised microscopes and particle accelerators that enable him to look inward upon the creation, and by them he has sliced matter down to fractions so fine as to make a billionth of an inch sound like an exceedingly crude measurement, but he has not yet managed to pierce to that which is so fine that it does not have clear structure and intelligent design.

An uncle, Dr. Robert H. Phillips, is a nuclear physicist who

worked for a dozen years at the Brookhaven National Laboratory on Long Island. He has occasionally given me an evening-long talk on the subatomic world (remember when we used to think of an atom as something terribly small?) and has told me of the precision of nuclear measurement.

Nuclear measurements carried out with a particle accelerator deal in "such sizes as 10 to the minus 25th square centimeters," he told me. "That means that if you put one over one and add twenty-five zeroes—

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—then you have written in ordinary decimal system the fraction of a square centimeter that a nucleon occupies in space." That is *one ten-septillionth of a square centimeter*.

"That isn't the very smallest thing that we look in on by any means," he said. "The subdivision of matter certainly reaches to smaller objects than that."

Nucleons are protons or neutrons. "Nobody really believes that a nucleon is the last subdivision of matter," Dr. Phillips said. Some physicists hypothesize quarks as still more elementary particles.

If man looks outward he sees the creative hand of God and he cannot search to the end of it, and if man looks inward he sees the creative hand of God and he has not yet come to the end of it.

Study everything between quarks and quasars and you find structure, motion, order, a lawful stability, arrangement, and design.

Whenever man seems to be near the inner or outer limits of the creation another layer unfolds to his astonished gaze. The God Who made the planets also designed the molecule. He Who formed man also formed the living cells. The God of the whole is also the God of the parts. And He cares particularly for man.

Hear David: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which you have ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

"For you have made him a little lower than the angels, and have crowned him with glory and honor. You made him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; you have put all things under his feet . . . O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth." Psalm 8.

There is nothing hidden from God. There is no refuge a man can find in which he can hide from the searching eyes of God. "Before him no creature is hidden, but all things are naked and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Hebrews 4:13.

"Nothing is hid that shall not be made manifest, nor anything secret that shall not be known and come to light. . . . Whatever you have spoken in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in secret shall be shouted from the housetops." Luke 8:17 and 12:3.

"His eyes are upon the ways of man, and he sees all his goings. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves." (Job 34:21,22.) Death will not remove sinners from the face of God; it will bring them to the judgment.

At a time of great decline of faith, even the elders of Israel said, "The Lord sees us not; the Lord has forsaken the earth." Ezekiel 8:12.

Such things as that are said today by seminary professors training young men to be ministers. These statements were contrary to the fact then, and were evidence of the elders' wickedness and blindness, and they are just as false today.

The Bible declares, "Thou God seest me." Genesis 16:13.

"Woe to those who seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works in the dark, and they say, 'Who sees us?' and 'Who knows us?' Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: For shall the work say of him who made it, He made me not? Or shall the thing framed say of him who framed it, He has no understanding?" Isaiah 29:15,16.

"O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me!" David says in Psalm 139. "Thou knowest when I sit down and when I rise up. Thou discernest my thoughts from afar. Thou searchest out my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou dost beset me behind and before, and layest thy hand upon me. . . . Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?"

"If I ascend to heaven, thou art there! If I make my bed in Sheol, thou art there! If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there thy hand shall lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, 'Let only darkness cover me, and the light about me be night,' even the darkness is not dark to

thee, the night is bright as the day; for darkness is as light with thee.

“For thou didst form my inward parts, thou didst knit me together in my mother’s womb . . . Thou knowest me right well; my frame was not hidden from thee, when I was being made in secret, intricately wrought in the depths of the earth. Thy eyes beheld my unformed substance. In thy book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them . . . When I awake I am still with thee . . . Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!”

The Invisible God Made Visible

There is no more awesome and wonderful fact than that God, the Creator, in making Himself known to man, has come to man as man. Of the several means of revelation God uses to make known the truth about Himself, the one that is chief above all is the incarnation: God coming into human society as man.

We are living on a visited planet. That is far more than a New Testament idea. That God Himself—the Creator—would come to Israel as a man is prophesied in the most explicit terms in the Old Testament. Isaiah 9:6 says, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

Think of that: A man born a Jew—nothing less than Emanuel—God with us.

God made His most complete revelation of Himself to man in a Jew named Jesus. Jesus perfectly showed forth the character of God in His person. He, alone among all men, had no part in sin from birth to death. The Bible says of Jesus: “He is *the image of the invisible God*, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created through him and for him . . . For in him all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.” Colossians 1:15–19.

Jesus made the invisible God visible to man in His own person. He claimed, in absolute harmony with the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah, to have lived before His birth at Bethlehem. Jesus said, "I came from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I am leaving the world and going to the Father." (John 16:28.) "Before Abraham was, I am," Jesus said. (John 8:58.) In that, He declared Himself to be God.

He knew this to be true of Himself and proclaimed it openly, a fact that renders the opinion that Jesus was merely "a good man" untenable. If the things He said were not true, Jesus was no "good man."

Jesus said, "truly, truly I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live."

And, "I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me . . . the works which the Father has granted me to accomplish, these very works which I am doing, bear me witness that the Father has sent me. And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness to me. *His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen;* and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe him whom he has sent." John 5:25, 30b; 36-38.

He said to the disciples: "'If you had known me, you would have known my Father also . . .'" Philip said to him, 'Lord show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? *He who has seen me has seen the Father.*'" John 14:8,9.

"I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you," Jesus told His disciples shortly before His death. "Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me; because I live, you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." John 14:18-23.

The Book of Hebrews begins with these words: "God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spoke in former times to the fathers by the prophets, has in these days spoken to us by his Son, whom he has appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and *the express image of his person*, and, upholding all things by the word of his

power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Hebrews 1:1-3.

The Old Testament is explicit on the humanity and the divinity of the Messiah. The New Testament, in the declarations of Jesus as well as those of the apostles and writers, is unequivocal on the divinity of Jesus.

You can learn about God by reading the Bible, but God wants more than that for you. He wants you to know Him personally. God specifically offers to come into your life in so definite a way that you will know He has come in; you will know He is there, with you and in you. He wants to walk with you every step of the way through your life. That is your highest privilege as a human being. It doesn't make any difference who you are. "God is no respecter of persons." (Acts 10:34.) The social and class distinctions of the world count nothing with God. If you sit on the lowest rung of public respect and dignity, ignored by nearly everybody, God will come into your life. If you occupy the highest station, God will come into your life. As much is true if you are an ordinary person. After He had risen from the grave, Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hears my voice and opens the door, *I will come in to him* and sup with him and he with me." Revelation 3:20.

I remember the morning twenty years ago when I asked Him to come into my life on the basis of His promise. He came in that day, and my life was immediately and wonderfully changed—far beyond my own capacity to alter it—and that change has never lost its freshness or its power. God began the change that day, and He remains its continual source and supply. All things are made new.

God's Love and His Fury

Most men have heard that "God is love." The passage that declares this says: ". . . he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love—not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No man has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us." I John 4:7-12.

God created the world and man, and everything else that He created, as the expression of His generosity and love. "God saw that everything he had made . . . was very good." God intends that His creation be joyously perfect. He intends order, harmony, peace, worship, love, and great joy to prevail unchallenged among intelligent beings. There is a glimpse of this primeval state of things in the Bible. God spoke these words to Job:

"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what are its foundations fastened, or who laid its cornerstone,

"when the morning stars sang together
and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

Job 38:4-7

That is the way it was, and that is the way it ceased to be when Satan brought sin and hatred into God's creation, and persuaded man to turn his back on God.

The beauty, the symmetry, the order and perfection, the sheer loveliness of what God made was all designed to serve the best interests of man and to afford him scope for achievement and discovery, endless provisions, pleasure and joy. It has been terribly impaired by the introduction into its affairs of the active principles of sin and self-will, whose effect is to spread blight and ruin in many different forms over the landscape of God's creation. One such blight is racial hatred, which has caused so much anguish and bloodshed among mankind.

Contrary to a very common notion of it, the quality of God's love is not bland. The love of God is strong. The love of God is discriminate, and it is purposeful. The perfect complement to the love of God—that which throws it into strong relief and shows its purity—is the hatred that God expresses toward that which is evil. God hates sin. He hates evil.

The greater an individual's sensitivity to that which violates what he truly prizes, the less patience he has with it. A love of purity requires by its nature a coequal abhorrence of filth. A symphony orchestra conductor will not rest until he drives everything that mars the symmetry, beauty, and perfection of the music out of the performance. He is intolerant of that which disfigures it musically, and the greater his love of the score the more absolute his intolerance becomes.

Because He is love, God is consistently intolerant of everything that violates His own intention in creation. God hates evil with a pure and furious hatred because He sees that it is constantly at work to destroy what He has made—at work to destroy man, to destroy society, to destroy nature, to destroy civilization, to destroy harmony, to destroy joy. He does not look upon it as man does, that is, relatively, because He sees it not limitedly but in the whole path of its effective ruination.

The intention of Satan is to make moral, spiritual, and physical chaos and wreckage out of as much of God's creation as he possibly can. Satan enlists man in that attempt, by appealing to his lawless lusts and passions. We can see the effects of that all around us, in the nation, in the world.

Man is infected with the moral disease that God calls sin. God is not tolerant of human sin because He knows that if it were allowed to go unarrested it would ultimately destroy everything in its reach.

God loves the man but He hates the sin. It is God's will to separate the man from the sin, but if a man refuses to be separated from his sin, if he exhibits a resolute preference for it, then he must bear the full penalty for it, death. God will put such a man in quarantine forever in a fire prepared for the devil. The Bible declares that sin must be arrested and judged.

God seeks to separate the sinner from the sin, so that He may express His pure love to the sinner and His pure wrath against the sin. That is what He did in sending Jesus to die on the cross for sin. God placed man's sin upon Jesus at Calvary and judged it there with the penalty of death. "He bore our sins in his own body on the tree." (I Peter 2:24a.) The love of God is strong. Strong enough to send His Son to die for sin.

God has spoken and demonstrated His love of man and His abhorrence of sin and in this one act—the voluntary death of the cross.

"Surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows
 Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted
 But *he was wounded for our transgressions*, he was bruised
 for our iniquities;
 Upon him was the chastisement that made us whole
 And with his stripes we are healed . . .
 The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

That is why Jesus could cry, "It is finished!" (John 19:30.) The penalty of sin was fully paid.

God's love is expressed in the creation, but it is supremely expressed in the redemption.

God cannot go farther in loving man and in dealing with sin than to die for sin. To go another step would be to tolerate sin. God will never do that. Every man who accepts the blood atonement is cleansed of sin and escapes the wrath that God must, by the deepest necessity of His holy nature, express against sin. The man who rejects the full atonement God has provided for sin, by the blood of Jesus Christ, leaves God with no option but to bar him from His presence and to confine him forever to what the Bible calls "the lake of fire."

The love of God, as well as the wrath of God, is shown throughout the pages of the Bible. It is sheer ignorance to state, as some do, that the God of the Old Testament is a God of wrath, while the God of the New Testament is a God of love. The God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament are one. There is no distinction between them.

The anger of God against evil is shown not less in the New Testament than in the Old. The New Testament is full of the expressed fury of God at evil.

The scope of the outpouring of God's wrath against sin is shown in several chapters of the Book of Revelation, and its magnitude is greater than any judgment of God recorded in the Old Testament, including the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men," the New Testament declares in Romans 1:18.

In the Old Testament Moses declared: "The Lord thy God is a consuming fire." Deuteronomy 4:24.

The New Testament declares, "Our God is a consuming fire." Hebrews 12:29.

"Hate the evil, and love the good," the Old Testament enjoins in Amos 5:15a. It is not possible to love the good without hating the evil, because the evil actively antagonizes and runs against the good.

Jesus perfectly mirrored His Father in this respect, too. In Hebrews the Father says of the Son: "You have *loved righteousness* and *hated iniquity*, therefore God, thy God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Hebrews 1:8,9.

Jesus' love is seen in the Gospels, and so is His fury at sin and dissimulation. Matthew, chapter 23, records Jesus' address to the

religious leaders: “Woe to you, hypocrites” “Woe to you, blind guides” “You blind fools . . . hypocrites!” “You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?”

In the Old Testament Jeremiah prophesied, “ ‘Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!’ says the Lord. Therefore thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who care for my people, ‘You have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the Lord’ Behold, the storm of the Lord! Wrath has gone forth, a whirling tempest; it will burst upon the head of the wicked. The anger of the Lord will not turn back until he has executed and accomplished the intents of his mind. In the latter days you will understand it clearly.” Jeremiah 24.

Jesus repeatedly warned men that if they continued in sin they would at last “be thrown into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.” He counseled, “If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire.” (Mark 10:43, 48.) He said, “The Son of man”—speaking of Himself—“will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and throw them into the furnace of fire. There men will weep and gnash their teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.” Matthew 13:41-43.

When there is a fire, true love warns of the fire; love will not say there is no fire. God’s love seeks to keep men from a destiny of fire.

The New Testament speaks of a day “when the Lord Jesus is to be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance upon those who do not know God They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.” II Thessalonians 1:7-9.

Isaiah prophesied that “it shall be known that the hand of the Lord is with his servants, and his indignation is against his enemies. For behold, the Lord will come in fire, and his chariots like the stormwind, to render his anger in fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire will the Lord execute judgment, and by his sword upon all flesh.” Isaiah 66:14a,15,16.

When it falls upon men, the judgment of God is always the last

resort of His faithful dealing with them. He calls to them first in love. He invites them to come to Himself to receive the restoration guaranteed by the sacrificial blood. He warns them of sin and of the judgment He must send upon them for it. He has made every provision for their full liberation from sin.

God will not depart by so much as a shade from His original plan for a perfect and joyous creation. The judgment is a necessary stage in the fulfillment of His great purpose, but the purpose of His love does not end there. At judgment there will be a complete separation of the just from the unjust and a complete, eternal exclusion of the unjust from any participation in the future. When they are put away, God's program will go on. He will banish the curse from His creation. There will then ensue the most wonderful effects.

"In that day the deaf shall hear
the words of a book
And out of their gloom and darkness
the eyes of the blind shall see.

"The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the Lord
and the poor among men shall exult
in the Holy One of Israel.
For the ruthless shall come to nought
and the scoffer cease,
and all who watch to do evil shall be cut off"

Isaiah 29:18-20

"The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them . . . for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." Isaiah 11:6,9.

Both testaments promise a new heaven and a new earth in which no sickness or sorrow or evil will dwell.

The Old Testament says: "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people; no more

shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress.” Isaiah 65:17–19.

The New Testament says: “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a great voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; and he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away.’” Revelation 21:1–4.

God’s love and His fury at sin will not rest at anything short of seeing men perfect and at one with their Creator.

Much more could be said about the nature and character and purposes of God as shown in the Bible. In summary, these primary truths are noted:

God is a living being; a Person. God is a spirit. He is immortal and invisible. God is love. God hates evil. Nothing can be hid from him.

The God of Israel, the only true God, is the Creator. Jesus Christ is the express image of His person, and He showed us by His life and words and acts exactly Who God Is.

The revelation of the invisible and living God is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Any other so-called revelation of God is either a fiction, or a counterfeit designed to mislead men about the nature and character and purposes of God.

This exclusivity is not an exclusivity of Hebrew achievement or insight or scholarship. It is the exclusivity of Hebrew chosenness. God elected to convey His truth to the world through the Jews. So it is by the Bible, written by Jews, that an accurate knowledge of that which lies beyond the reach of science or the eye of man—the knowledge of God and of the unseen realm of the spiritual and supernatural—may be gained.