

THE ROCK OF AGES

Scripture Testimony to the One Eternal Godhead
of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Ghost

by

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CHAPTER TWO

That Scripture, in the Old and the New Testament alike, detaches our ultimate confidence from man the creature, and attaches it to God the Creator:-

This is enforced by three parallel lines of truth:

- (1) by contrasting the sinfulness and feebleness of mortal man with the goodness and omnipotence of the Eternal God:
- (2) by direct prohibition and precept:
- (3) by declaration of the awful jealousy of the Creator, if any creature usurp His position in our affiance and in our regard.

(1) The most casual glance at the contrast testimony of Scripture might convince us that such is the design of God.

Scripture Testimony of Man

1

We are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow - Job 8:9. 13.

2

Ye are not able to do that thing which is least - Luke 12:26.

3

How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth - Job 4:19.

4

The thoughts of man - are vanity - Psalm 94:11.
He turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish. - Isaiah 44:25

5

All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field - Isaiah 40:6.

Scripture Testimony to God

1

Thou art from everlasting - Psalm 93:2.
All things naked to his eyes - Hebrews 4:13.
He inhabiteth eternity - Isaiah 57:15.

2

With God all things are possible - Matthew 19:26.

3

The Heaven of heavens cannot contain thee - I Kings 8:27.
God is a Spirit - John 4:24.
The Lord God omnipotent - Revelation 19:6

4

The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever: the thoughts of his heart to all generations - Psalm 33:11.
The immutability of his counsel - Hebrews 6:17.

5

The eternal God - Deuteronomy 33:27.
The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever - Psalm 104:31.

6
There is none righteous, no, not one - Romans 3:10.

7
The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? - Jeremiah 17:9.
Man looketh on the outward appearance - I Samuel 16:7.

8
A man that shall die - Isaiah 51:12.

9
In Him we live, and move, and have our being - Acts 17:28.

10
Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? - Isaiah 65:9.

6
There is none good but one, that is, God - Matthew 19:17.

7
God is light, and in him is no darkness at all - I John 1:5
I the Lord search the heart - Jeremiah 17:10.
But the Lord looketh on the heart - I Samuel 16:7.

8
Who only hath immortality - I Timothy 6:16.

9
The Father hath life in himself - John 5:26.

10
I have made the earth, and created man upon it - Isaiah 65:12.
He fashioneth the hearts (of the sons of men) alike - Psalm 33:15.

This testimony might be almost indefinitely prolonged: the above may suffice. But I would venture to draw your attention to three or four passages, where the contrast is forced upon our notice by the sacred writer himself. If, for example, we turn to the prayer of Moses, he reposes supreme trust in the Eternal: **“Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God”** (Psalm 90:1,2); and contrasts this immutability of the Most High with the brief life of men: **“They are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth”** (ver. 5, 6) *

*** I would pray the reader to compare the way in which this same figure, this parable to all nations, is enlarged upon in Isaiah 40:6-8, and is enforced in the New Testament, I Peter 1:24; James 1:10, 11.**

This was the lesson so often and so painfully taught to Israel of old, by a Father's solemn chastisements and forgiving love. From frequent expostulations I select one: **“Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord”** (Isaiah 31:1).

And what is the reason given? **“Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not Spirit”** (ver. 3).

And what is the urgent entreaty founded thereon? **“Turn ye unto Him from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted”** (ver. 6). Again, this message is sent to captive Zion: **“I, even I, am He that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth?”** (Isaiah 51:12, 13, see ver. 15)

Observe, in all these passages, how much stress is laid on the creative power of God as proof of His infinite preeminence. The Maker alone is mighty to save. And if it be so in temporal deliverances, how much more in respect of that eternal salvation which must engross the regards of every thoughtful man, seeing that the Psalmist says of the rich men of earth, **“None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him, for the redemption of their soul is precious!”** (Psalm 49:7, 8). **“But God,”** as he shortly after cries in the rebounding exultation of faith, **“God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave; for he shall receive me”** (ver. 13).

(2) Furthermore, the prohibitions and precepts are direct and express.

“Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish. Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God: which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever” (Psalm 146:3-6).

So again, Isaiah, having spoken of the fear of the Lord and of the glory of His majesty, says, **“Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?”** (Isaiah 2:22).

I need not multiply passages to prove that the explicit commands of Scripture with one consentient voice require, in the words of Peter, that our **“faith and hope be in God”** (I Peter 1:21).

(3) But nothing can prove this fundamental truth more solemnly than the words heard by Moses on Sinai, **“Thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God”** (Exodus 34:14).

Jealousy, as usually understood, is that peculiar uneasiness which arises from the fear that another may rob us of our due honour or affection. And with fallen man towards his fallen fellows this attribute of our being, from taking an exaggerated view of our own rights and claims, from unduly depreciating those of others, and frequently from unjustly suspecting their innocent conduct, becomes the readiest vent for the outflowings of selfishness. And hence the ill name of jealousy. But not always even among men. Thus we speak of a man, jealous for the fair name and best interests of his friend; as Paul says of the Corinthians, **“I am jealous over you with godly jealousy”** (II Corinthians 11:2). And thus a man may be justly jealous of his own reputation that **“good name which is rather to be chosen than great riches”** (Proverbs 22:1).

In this use it is closely allied to self-respect, and springs from a due sense of our own position and powers, of the claims which we have upon others, and of those mutual obligations, domestic, social, national, which lie upon us all. Now, in a sinless world, this estimate would be exactly true, and these requirements every moment perfectly satisfied. But when sin breaks in, the claims of man on man are violated; and justice, of necessity, conceives a holy anger and a pure indignation at that which is unjust and unequal.

We see a broken fragmentary image of it in man, like the sun struggling through mist, and reflected on agitated waters. But in God it is without fault, or flaw, or cloud. He has an absolutely perfect knowledge of His own supreme majesty and goodness: He forms an absolutely perfect estimate of the claims that supremacy has on His creatures: and He conceives an absolutely perfect jealousy when those obligations are set at nought.

Now, the Lord declares Himself to be Self-Existent from eternity, Omnipresent, Immutable, Almighty, Incomprehensible, Omniscient, the Good One, the Holy One, the Creator, Preserver, and Administrator of all things in Heaven and earth, the Searcher of hearts, and the most high Judge of all. These attributes, indeed, would appertain to Him as governing a world which sin has never defiled, and sorrow never darkened, and death never desolated. But when man had broken His commands, and trodden the seductive paths of disobedience and guilt, the Lord gives a further and deeper revelation of His Divine goodness and grace. He reveals Himself as the only Being who forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin, as the only Refuge for the fugitive, as the only Saviour, Deliverer, and Redeemer of His people. (Isaiah 26:4; Deuteronomy 6:4 5; 10:20, 21; 5:29).

Further, He claims the supreme dependence, love, worship, and service of His creatures. This you would not for a moment deny, so that you could without scruple subscribe to the language of the church, "My duty towards God is to believe in Him, to fear Him, and to love Him with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength; to worship Him, to give Him thanks, to put my whole trust in Him; to call upon Him, to honour His holy name and His word, and to serve Him truly all the days of my life.

But how does He regard it, if any creature usurp His rightful prerogatives, and steal away the homage of our hearts from Him who says, "I am Jehovah: that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another?" (Isaiah 42:8).

Let me answer In the language of Scripture:

"Thus saith the Lord: Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord: for he, shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed, is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is: for he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh; but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit" (Jeremiah 17:5-8).

It is impossible in a brief treatise to exhibit the strength of this declaration. These verses do not stand isolated from the rest of Scripture. They only gather up and present to, us, in a few words, its concurrent testimony from Genesis to Revelation. (O Lord, cleanse Thou the thoughts of our hearts from all creature confidence, by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name). For this truth stands on the forefront of the temple of religion: **"I am God, and there is none else"** (Isaiah 46:9).

The dedication stone bears this golden inscription - "To the Alone, Supreme, Eternal God."

And as you bow low within its holy precincts, this is the first and great commandment - **“Thou shalt have none other gods but Me.”**

And the response of every faithful worshipper is in the spirit of the Levitical adoration - **“O Lord our God, blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. Thou, even thou, art Lord alone: thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee. Thou art the Lord”** (Nehemiah 9:5-7).

Such adoration as is re-echoed in the courts of heavenly glory:

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created.” (Revelation 4:11).

~ end of chapter 2 ~

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