

05
"God is Love." I. John IV. 8.

To judge of God's character by the standard of human reason will infallibly lead us into error. There are depths of mystery in that Holy character, which at one time would induce us to look upon him as an arbitrary Governor, who in his dealings with his creatures had no regard to their happiness ~~at his expense~~ whatever, but was only determined to carry out his own pleasure.

This is the view which ~~theists~~ ^{Infidels} present of the God of the Bible, as he appears to their distorted vision and perverted understanding. Hence acting upon the natural impulse of the feelings they reject the Bible as giving a false representation of the Great Being who made, preserved and governs the world, and erect an imaginary Deity in their creed, formed &

constituted according to their own ideas of what God should be. The very reverse of this is the view entertained by another class of persons, who guided by the light of Reason alone, assume that God is only the perfect personification of Benevolence, Infinite & indiscriminating. That since He is Love & nothing but Love, therefore He wills the happiness of all His creatures and not one of them shall ever perish, because it is utterly inconsistent with the character of a Being who is all Love that he should permit any pain or misery to be inflicted upon those dependent upon Him. The same error has misled both, in different ways. The Infidel says that the Bible presents us a God all harshness & severity and the Universalist on the contrary says

that He is presented to us in His Word,
all Love & Mercy. Truth is always at a happy
medium from the two extremes & thus we find
by a careful investigation of the Character given
of God in Sacred Scriptures, that God is both a "Father
in whom compassions flow" and a "just God who
will by no means suffer the guilty to escape."

That His ^{attributes of Justice & of Truth by no means}
^{inconsistent} ~~renders it false~~ that "He is Love," we think is abundantly
manifest. We hope therefore to shew that while
God must exercise no one Attribute at the expense
of another, yet He is preeminently distinguished
as a God of ^{Goodness} Love & this we shew by a con-
sideration of our natural constitution as sentient
Beings. II. From ^{God's Providence both General & special} ~~the~~ ~~nature~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~universe~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~plan~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~creation~~
~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~universe~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~plan~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~creation~~ III. From the plan of Redem-
tion.

That the very essence of the Divine Character is Love ^{Goodness}

physical & moral
will appear abundantly manifest from our constitution
as rational intelligent Beings. Man is said to be "fearfully
and wonderfully made" - "curiously wrought" - his physical
frame is compared to "a harp of thousand strings" - so varied
so multiplied, so harmonious are the parts of which it is
composed. When we, without the assistance of anatomical
skill, are led to think of the nerves, the muscles, the sinews,
the tendons, the veins, the arteries, the bones & flesh which
make up this mortal frame, and see how aptly they are all
conjoined and fitted together though widely dissimilar all
designed to answer some valuable and useful end &
not one of which can be spared without detriment to our
comfort & enjoyment we see visibly displayed the goodness
and the Love of God to us, in thus creating us with
everything about us adapted to our happiness. Let us

dwell for a moment also upon the addition to our enjoyment, with which God has blessed us, in the furnishing us with the external senses. We have the sense of sight the most perfect & delightful of all — the eyes are "the windows of the soul" indeed, through which ~~she~~^{it} looks forth from the tabernacle of flesh in which ~~she~~^{it} is housed, and communicates with the visible material world around. Hence our perceptions of the beautiful the glorious and the sublime in Nature's works around us — ^{from} the variegated tints of the rainbow, that ~~the~~ "based on Ocean spans the sky" to the delicate hues of the flower that blooms at our feet — from the azure of heaven's blue spangled with clustering worlds of light all bright & glorious, to the purple glow of the clouds that hang in gorgeous drapery around the setting sun — from the tall towering mountain whose hoary

brow has battled with a thousand storms to the magnificent
Cataract tumbling & thundering to the abyss below - ~~from~~^{or}
the limitless expanse of "old ocean's gray & melancholy
waste" - all these beautiful glorious & sublime objects, are
exhibited to us by the aid of the eye. But the sense of hearing
is an additional evidence of ^{God's} ~~God's~~ ^{Godness} Love to us. Through this
medium the sounds that delight and instruct are conveyed
to the soul. The melody of Music - warbled by nature's songs
ters - the music of Nature herself in the thousands harmonies
which float around us in strange & unseen choirs - the
sound of the human voice which greets us with accents
of Love & friendship - or stirs us with emotions of
responsive sympathy - or arouses us with the spirit-awakening
power of Eloquence, or guides us to Heaven in the
echo of God's own Holy Word by his Minister, all are

conveyed to us by the sense of hearing. — Is it not equally
manifested in the more sensual faculties of smell & taste
and touch — that truly man is richly furnished by a benefi-
cent Creator with every requisite faculty to promote his
Comfort & Happiness. If then there were no other evidence
of God's ^{Goodness} Love to us — and that the very essence of His
Nature is Love — we have it ~~ix~~ abundantly established
in the physical constitution of Man. For, acting as
the Deity did with an Omnipotence that could not be
stayed or hindered, and a Will that could not be
trammelled, how easy would it have been for Him to
have changed the whole design & result of the work
of man's creation. Had He not been prompted by
Love, He might have made every object in Nature, a
source of disgust, or of ridicule or of horror or of hatred, or

[not exactly a quotation but the idea was borrowed from
Paley's Mor. Phil. Book II. Ch. 5.]

Goodness

pain! Had not that Love which is the very essence
of His Nature, guided His Creative Power, [He might
have caused every sound that fell upon the ear to be
a discord, every odour that was wafted upon the passing
breeze to ~~have been~~ a stench, every viand offered to the
taste to be a nauseating potion, and every object brought
to the touch to be invested with a poisonous sting!]

When therefore instead of this state of things we have senses that
show us the beauties, and teach us the harmonies, and
communicate to us the excellencies of the objects around us,
is it not abundantly evident that ^{the Earth is full of the} God is Love?

But if our physical frame in its ^{Goodness of the Lord} wondrous organization
and happy adaptation to our comfort, teach us this pre-
cious ^{truth}, how much more resplendently does this feature of
the Character of the Divine Creator become manifest, as

we rise higher in the scale of Being and consider our moral
Constitution! Ah! here is the wonderful goodness of God to
us as His creatures. In this frail tabernacle thus nicely con-
stituted for man's happiness, dwells an immortal inhabitant.
Yes! all gloriously & fearfully wrought as it is, it is but the prison
house of the soul. It is not upon this fallen star that now
shines with dim & faded lustre - shorn of its beams by
the clouds of sin & corruption that I would call you
to gaze for ~~an~~ full manifestation of God's ^{Goodness} Love.
But look upon it when first man walked forth
from under the creative hand of his Maker
the image of God - with his understanding clear &
penetrating - his will unbound & free - his heart pure
& holy. In knowledge righteousness & true Holiness
the personification of the Deity. Yet much of God's love

is to be seen ~~yet~~ even although "the gold hath become
dim and the most fine gold changed." We have still
an immortal spirit capable of wondrous thoughts
words & works. How rapidly can it fly to the utter
most verge of the Universe or speed back to the
most remote period in past time or dart forward
to the latest conceivable point of the future and
by Faith grasp the glories of the upper world.

In these grand attributes of the soul we find the distinctive
points of difference between rational & irrational
creation - these raise man to an immeasurable
height above the beasts that perish and plant him
upon an eminence but little lower than that where
Angels stand. As we glance thus hastily at the physic
& moral constitution of Man the conviction is deeply

11
"The Earth is full of the goodness of
the Lord"

fixed upon us that "God is Love."

But we proceed to shew that God is Love from the
nature & operation of His Providence.

The broad theatre of the Universe displays the Providence
of God. Hence the distinction of General & Special
Providence. The doctrine of our Church on this subject
is that "God, the great Creator of all things doth uphold,
direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and
things, from the greatest even to the least"

It is the same hand that holds ~~in his hand~~ the unseen
machinery of the Solar System - ~~that~~ ^{and} orders "the range
of Planets Burns and adamantine spheres, wheeling
unshaken through the void immense" that also sustains
in existence the smallest insect that ~~crawl~~ ^{floats} upon the
air. It is that same eye never slumbering nor sleeping

which watches the enduring movements of the worlds of
light above us, which also notes the "fallosa sparrow"
It is the same infinite mind which while it is employed
~~in~~ ⁱⁿ the government and upholding of a Universe, also
numbers "the very hairs of your head." It is the same
ear that listens to "the music of the spheres" & the song
of angels that hears well-pleased to the song of
praise from earthly lips - & the humble prayer of the
saint. Not a note of rejoicing re-echoes through the
Courts of Heaven but he hears it - not a sound
of solemn music from worshipping Assemblies upon
Earth but it reaches his ear. And thus his infinite
omnipresence & omniscience prepare the way for the
exercise & display of his Universal & Particular Provi-
dence. For should you take the wings of the morning

and dwell in the uttermost parts of the Earth or of the
sea - you would find God present to note every move-
ment, to hear every word to understand every thought.
Never has there been found that place on the broad
surface of the Earth - or the limitless expanse of Ocean
so perfect a solitude that God was not there.
Never has there lived a human Being so elevated
as to be above, or one so degraded as to be be-
neath the notice of his Providence. From the Mon-
arch upon his Throne surrounded by all the Pomp of
earthly Glory on whose nod the destiny of a Nation
trembling hangs - to the beggar in his hovel, or ^{with} ~~upon~~ the
earth for his bed & the Heavens for his shelter,
all are the objects of his watchful care & Providence.
Yes! he hears the offering of praise and gratitude from
the thankful heart, surrounded with the blessings of Life

and he hears & marks the cry of afflicted and distressed
albeit it may be uttered in the midst of Poverty &
desertion.

It is his Providence that has spread out this goodly
world around us for our habitation; garnished it
with beauties & glories for our admiration, hung up
the glorious Lamp of the Sun to enlighten us by day
& the pale & lovely light of the Moon by night &
all the bright lesser lights which spangle the Heavens
& make it a shining frame. And methinks that from
the bosom of those shining worlds we may hear in the
silence of Nature the precious truth uttered with a kind
of voiceless Eloquence that ^{the Earth is full of,} "God is Love." It is his Pro-
vidence that has brought from the bosom of the teeming
Earth the fruit & herb that sustains man & beast—
that directs the ever changing periods of "seed-time & harvest"

Summer & winter cold & heat, "that spreads before us day
by day the table of his bounty - that keeps us during the shades
of night from "the Pestilence that walketh in darkness"
that overshadows us with the wing of his protection to
shield us from "the arrow" of Death "that flieth by Day"
and from "the Destruction that wasteth at noonday"
while "thousands may fall at our right hand & ten thou
sand at our ~~right~~ ^{left}" - it is his Providence that causes
"it shall not come nigh us." Not a breath do we draw
not a pulse do we strike - not a blessing do we receive but
from that kind watchful Providence which takes care
of all from the least to the greatest - and who ~~is~~ ^{eye}
so blind as not to read ~~inscribed~~ on every gift - whose
ear so dull as not to hear trumpeted on every breath of this atmos
phere around us - whose heart so hard as not to feel
with responsive gratitude that "God is Love."

The rich and the poor the high and the low - are
equally the objects of his watchful care - and while
he (with his ^{eye} ~~bliss~~ guides, (with his ~~power~~ ^{arm} sustains
(with his ^{king} ~~power~~) (protects) the Ruler of the mightiest
Nation - it is a precious and a cheering truth
that the poorest man in his humble hut can-
not utter a groan but God hears it - he can-
not shed a tear but God notes it - he can-
not heave from his labouring breast a sigh
but God marks it & he tempers the wind to
the shorn lamb; and thus it is in the experience
of past goodness at God's hand the Christian
loves to say & feel with David "The Lord is my
shepherd I shall not want - he leadeth me beside
the still waters he maketh me to lie down
in green pastures - he restoreth my soul."

How then is it written as with a sunbeam upon
every gift of God that he is Love! How doth
"day unto Day utter speech" and "night unto night
shew Knowledge" of his Love - in the watchful
Guardianship Care & protection of God over
us every moment of our lives - Well might
an Ancient Philosopher exclaim "When God was
about to create the world he transformed
himself into Love."

But if the truth of this annunciation be so manifest
in the Creation of Man and God's Providence
in relation to him - we have still a higher &
more astonishing evidence of the fact in the
Redemption.

~~Herein is Love - not that we love Him but that he
loved us and gave himself for us~~

Yes! "In this was manifested the Love of God to us because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is Love — not that we loved Him but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

It were indeed signal evidence of God's love to us that he should create us sentient Beings of curious & exquisite mechanism formed for physical and rational enjoyment and that he should have sent us forth into this ~~world~~ world filled with so much to charm the taste & mind — even were we to end our existence here — even should the grave be the terminating point of our career and were there no other scene of existence on which we were hereafter to enter. But we

Know that Earth's dark scene shall not be man's
only dwelling place - we know that the grave is not
to be the goal of the race we run - we know
it from the Divinity that stirs within us - we
cannot be so blind as not to know that those
high & far grasping aspirations which flit across
our vision like beams of light are the offspring of some noble
Principle within - We know that those yearnings of the
immortal Spirit for some substantial & sincere en-
joyment not of Earth, speak of another & nobler
scene of Existence - and we know too for we have
been taught it and we have felt it that the wings
of the soul are trammelled and her energies are
crushed and her brilliancy be dimmed and her
vision beclouded & her faculties are debased by sin -
and thus when we feel the inward conviction

of this disheartening truth we know that if there
be an Eternity of Existence beyond this vale of
tears— it will be an Eternity of sorrow & grief
to us. We know that if we launch our vessel
forth in search of the happy haven of eternal
rest with no better pilot than a deceitful heart—
and no better passport than our own righteous-
ness, we shall be wrecked upon the breakers
of disappointment and driven from the door
with a "Depart ye workers of iniquity! I
never knew you!" What then oh what to the soul
with its immortal yearnings and its inward deeply
wrought convictions of its lost estate— what
is this world with all its glories— its wondrous
works of Nature & Art— what its comforts
& blessings— what the daily sustenance of

this perishing mortality - prolonging its wasting
existence from day to day - if when this scene
of earthly pageantry is over nought remains but
a dark prospect of an unblesse'd Eternity -
But now upon the midnight gloom of the
soul beaming the radiant ~~lustre~~ of the
Star of Bethlehem. Upon the dark bosom of
the storm cloud of Jehovah's wrath hangs the bright
Rainbow of promise to a dying world - and now
the soul which like the Dove found no rest in
its weary wanderings over the waste of a
desolated world, returns with the olive branch
of peace & joy & reconciliation gathered
from the summit of Calvary! Oh wondrous
love of God that thus has raised us from
the depths of despair - that has taken our feet

from the rainy day of despondency and placed
them upon the Rock of Ages: ~~that has given~~
us beauty for ashes the oil of joy for
mourning and the garments of praise for
the spirit of heaviness — that has put a
new song into our mouths even praises
unto the Most High!"

That Redemption is the strongest evidence
of the truth that "God is Love!" will appear
manifest if we consider that is entirely gra-
tuitous. God was under no obligation to
Redeem Man. Remember how graciously He
had dealt with man — how he had set be-
fore him Life & Death blessing & cursing
how he had faithfully warned him of the
consequences of Disobedience — Remember

that man was furnished with every capacity for
obedience & by ^{the exercise of} his own will ~~not~~ perpetrated
the act of disobedience which defied the authority
of his Gracious Father committed suicide on
his own soul's happiness and overwhelmed
a world of his Posterity in Sin & Misery—
Remember too that if possible there was a
greater apparent obligation resting on God
to destroy Man than to redeem. "In the
day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"
was the threatened penalty" why was it then that
God instead of blasting the rebel from his pres-
ence with everlasting destruction, did on the
contrary spare him and even on the very
day set for his Execution uttered words of

of encouragement and consolation to the lost
& ruined? Why was it that even when man might
surely expect the execution of the threatened pen-
alty, God condescended to make the first
promise of a Redeemer "The seed of the
woman shall bruise the serpent's head!"
Oh! it was because His mercy which is
only one of the outlets of the Ocean of his Love
is over all his works. It is because "God
is Love!" He received no addition to
his Glory no accession to his essential
Happiness — He would not have been
one ray less glorious — not one particle
less Happy had he inflicted upon man
the threatened penalty — With one volition of

His Divine mind He could have brought in
to Existence another more beautiful more glorious
world than this filled with holier & nobler be-
ings than man — But He chose to make
the display of His essential Character of Love
more manifest in the salvation of the rebel
justly doomed to die!

But that His Nature is Love will appear from
the work of Redemption if we consider the
cost of that Redemption. What cost it?

"Hear oh Heavens! and be astonished on
Earth!" God so loved the world as to
give his only begotten Son that whosoever
believeth on him should not perish but
have eternal Life!" "Yes! To preserve
the Integrity of his Law & Justice inviolate

Man must die or find a Ransom — Who could
magnify the Law & make it honourable
who could pay the ransom infinitely val-
uable required to satisfy the justice
of an offended God! None but Jesus
the Son of God! And will God then
spare man & suffer his own Son to
die! Oh matchless Love! To save a
rebellious world from merited wrath
the Judge gives up his own Son to
die the innocent for the Guilty the
"Just for the unjust" — What a cost is this
what a price is this — what a great
salvation — How "precious the Redemption
of the soul" that cost the Life of the Son of
God! The temporary laying aside of the

glories of Heaven — the assumption of the form
of sinful flesh — the poverty shame humiliation
persecution, desertion contempt mockery scourging
concrification & cruel Death upon the accursed
tree — what an immense price to pay for the re-
demption of the soul of man from merited
Death!

That God is Love will appear manifest in
the work of Redemption, if we consider
that this is more than was done for Angels.
Yes! when Angels rebelled they were hurled
headlong from the high battlements of Heaven
without the interposition of an Almighty arm
to save — plunged into utter blackness of dark-
ness forever — reserved in chains under darkness

unto the judgement of the great Day." No
promise of a Saviour to restore — no offer
of mercy was ever made to them — no mes-
sage of salvation sent. The Son of God
did not say to His Father, "Here am
I send me to rescue fallen angels &
restore those bright angelic beings to
their lost Estate — nor did he say
Father "forgive them they know not
what they do" nor does he present
his blood as a peace offering to
appease the wrath of God! No hope
of Heaven or Happiness is presented
to the view of the fallen Angels thro'
the sufferings, merits, & intercession of a

crucified savours! But darkness & storm
of fierce wrath & indignation beat forever in
ceaseless torrents upon their immortal souls
and ~~the~~ the bellowing roar of the tempest as
it re-echoes thro' the vaults of those dark
regions - the burden of its thunder is "forever &
forever No hope! No hope!"

But for fallen Man - Heaven is moved
to stoop to Earth that he might rise -
God becomes Man that man may be -
come assimilated to God - God must
die that man might live!
And now when we think of this astonishing
evidence of God's Love to us we need not
wonder that we receive the other manifes-
tations of His Love in Creation & Providence

but we well understand the language of the
Apostle when ~~he~~ says "He that spared
not His own Son but freely gave him
up for us — how shall he not within
also freely give us all things?"

Sinner! You have been pleaded with by the
love you have for your own soul to seek
its salvation — you have been warned
by the threatenings of Gods Holy Law
to escape the wrath of God — you have
been urged by the consideration of
your own imminent danger — the
step of Death you have heard — the open
ing grave you have looked into — the

terrors of Hell have as it were, been uttered
in your ear & you have remained untouched
unscathed insensate! We offer you today the
tenderest the strongest the most touching
argument that ever was offered to man! Oh
we point you it is true to the dark pit be-
fore you — we show you the fearful sentence
of God's Law hanging over you in terror
we speak of the wrath of God which is
daily becoming more & more heavy for
you — but it is only that we may enhance
the value & recommend the precious disinter-
ested nature of that Love that closes the pit
and silences the thunder of the Law & averts
the threatening storm & is now awaiting you

consent & acceptance to raise you from
Sin & guilt & misery to Purity & safety
& Happiness!

Will you love Him who thus manifests
his Love to you? or will you "hate
him without a cause" still? Say, times
will you have this Christ or no! He is
yours if you will have him! Yours to
save — yours to redeem — yours to
place in chains of everlasting Bliss.
But if you reject Remember He
will not always be in reach — He
will leave you to your Choice &
oh the wretchedness & folly & madness of that
Choice can only be estimated by the intensity
of the torments of Hell and its changed
nature will be certified by the duration of
Eternity!