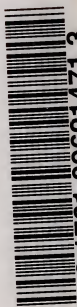


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# The Fundamentals

*A Testimony*

Volume IX

Compliments of  
Two Christian Laymen



# The Fundamentals

*A Testimony to the Truth*

*"To the Law and to the Testimony"*

*Isaiah 8:20*

Volume IX

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Two Christian Laymen

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### CHAPTER III

## THE WISDOM OF THIS WORLD

BY REV. A. W. PITZER, D. D., LL. D.,  
SALEM, VIRGINIA

“There is a growing impression among eminent private thinkers that Christianity is losing its hold upon men, and that the Church is a waning power; that the religious world is drifting from its moorings, and faith is becoming a tradition of the past.”

The above quotation is from an editorial in the most popular newspaper published at the Capital of the United States.

If the faith of the Church is to stand in the wisdom of men, then it will be the sport of every wind of doctrine, and be driven hither and thither, according to the course of the popular tide; and if the Church has no better anchor than the wisdom of this world, then, indeed, will it drift from all its moorings, and be tossed continually upon the seas of ceaseless speculation. But if faith is to stand, not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God, in the sure Word of Truth that liveth and abideth forever, then, like its Divine Author, it is and will be the same yesterday, today, and forever. If faith be founded upon the Word of Eternal Truth, then the Church has an anchor sure and steadfast, entering into that within the veil.

One prophecy of Daniel is fulfilled: “Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased”. The world has never witnessed a period of such incessant and intense mental activity. Nature, in all her vast domains, in her atoms and her masses, has been searched with keenest scrutiny, and compelled to give up her wondrous secrets. The microscope reveals worlds of order and beauty unseen by the unassisted

eye; while the telescope sweeps the silent skies, and stars by the thousands and tens of thousands are discovered, and numbered, and catalogued. The electric spark sends thought, in printed words, with lightning speed around the globe. The microphone magnifies sound until the spider's walk across a window echoes as the tread of an armed man. The phonograph receives upon its shining metallic disc the words and tones of the living speaker, and is able to reproduce them after a thousand years. All tongues, and tribes, and nations are brought into daily and direct intercourse and fellowship. Time and space are no longer barriers between men, races, and empires. Even the Dark Continent, unexplored equatorial Africa, has been penetrated by the heroic and dauntless Stanley, from Zanzibar to Bomma; and the cannibal tribes of the Upper Livingstone are no longer unknown to the civilized world. And still men run to and fro, restless and dissatisfied, crying for more light and more knowledge.

#### NO REAL CONFLICT BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND SCIENCE

The Christian does not look with dismay upon these researches into Nature, these discoveries of Science; on the contrary, he hails with joy each new discovery as affording additional evidence of the wisdom, power, and goodness of God. Full well does he know that the facts written on the rock-leaves beneath, the star depths above, and the pages of Inspiration, when properly understood and interpreted, will be found to be in exact and perfect accord, showing forth the glory of the Infinite Writer of them all. There is no controversy between the man of faith and the man of wisdom, provided each one acts in his proper sphere. There is not, and never has been, any real conflict between Religion and Science. There may be conflicts between interpretations of Scripture and interpretations of the facts of Nature; but what God has written in His Word never conflicts with what God has written in His creation.

The scientific skepticism of this day ought to remember how much Science owes to Christian men—to men who believed in a personal God; who believed in His written Word, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Redeemer. What shall be said of the “pious Christian, Copernicus, consecrating his life to God, to Man, to Science; who pioneered his way into the unknown universe, as the great Columbus of the heavens? What of Christian Galileo, who, while teaching the facts of Science, also believed the truths of Scripture?” What of the leaders in all departments of human progress, immortal names familiar as household words—what of Bacon, and Kepler, and Newton, and Herschel, and Hugh Miller? Or, later still, what of Chalmers, McCosh, Morse, Dawson, Southall, Cabell, LeConte, Henry, and hosts of others who lead the vanguard of the army of investigation and discovery in all the vast domain of human knowledge? The man of faith may point to these intellectual giants, and claim them as the humble disciples of the lowly Nazarene—as firm believers in the written Word of God. They led the onward march of human thought, but bowed in devout adoration before a personal God. How dense a darkness would envelop the race were all the light kindled by Christian men banished from the horizon of human knowledge.

#### THE SPHERE OF SCIENCE

But let it be remembered that *the Wisdom of this World is for this world only*—not for the world to come. Its proper sphere is the seen and tangible; the Here and the Now, not the Unseen, the Hereafter, the Eternal. The wisdom of man has passed out of its proper sphere when it invades the domain of the Invisible and the Infinite; when it denies that the omnipresent personal Spirit can reveal to man that which the eye never saw, the ear never heard, and the heart never conceived. It has passed the boundary of the known, its only proper sphere, when it assumes to deny that the infinite God

has revealed or can reveal Himself in His Word, His Son, His Spirit. The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

We have the right to demand of the Wisdom of this World by what authority it asserts that there is nothing above and apart from Nature, nothing in all the boundless universe except matter and force. Why shall we give up all that man holds dear at the bidding of the Wisdom of this World whose highest, and best, and latest revelation is "a grave without a resurrection, and a universe without a God"!

#### THE FAILURE OF EARTHLY WISDOM TO FIND AND KNOW GOD

The man of faith does not affirm the uselessness of earthly wisdom, but he does affirm that it has utterly failed to find out and know the true and living God. However useful and valuable the Wisdom of this World may be in its appropriate sphere, it has never yet given to men that knowledge of God upon which his soul could rest in satisfaction and peace. The World by Wisdom has never known God. At no time, in no country, among no people, has man, by wisdom, ever been able to make God known to his fellow men. Without the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the true and living God had ever been the "Unknown God".

#### ANCIENT WISDOM AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

The wise men of this generation are not backward in boasting of the world's present progress and wisdom, and yet the history and ruins of the old world, before the coming of our Lord, reveal evidences of a civilization that will bear all the light and tests of our day.

Egypt, situated on the banks of that strange river whose source has been discovered far off in the ever-flowing waters of the Victoria Lake of equatorial Africa, speaks out to this self-satisfied generation in her mummied kings, her silent Sphinx, her matchless pyramids. Egypt, that could lift mon-

ster stones four hundred feet in the air, and adjust them to a mathematical line and not vary half a hair's breadth; "that could paint on glass, grind gold to dust, embalm the body so as to make flesh immortal;" that built gigantic houses of stone that have outlived all nations and civilizations—this nation was wise in all the Wisdom of this World. And yet this grand old civilization lived and died in gross and utter ignorance of the one true and living God. The religion of the wisest men of On and Memphis "was Negritian fetishism, the lowest kind of Nature worship". The people bowed down and worshipped the Nile, the ox, the trees, the hills, and "birds, four-footed beasts, and creeping things". Egypt had wise priests, her magnificent temples, her gorgeous worship; but alas! all was of the earth, earthy. She knew not God; and her wise men, Jannes and Jambres, withstood Moses when he came to them with a message from the Living One, in whom they lived and moved. and had their being. No wonder that the people were "liars and thieves, sensual and treacherous;" with all their wisdom they knew not God.

Subsequent to Egypt there arose four great world powers, following each other in succession, claiming and exercising universal dominion, and gathering unto themselves the civilization and glory of the known world—Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. Four kingdoms seen in dream by the great Nebuchadnezzar—the image with the head of gold, breast of silver, belly of brass, legs of iron, feet partly of iron and part of clay, and interpreted by Daniel as the four kingdoms above named. But alas! not one or all of these nations ever attained unto that knowledge of God which is life eternal.

The bricks of Babylon, the purple of Tyre, the army of Xerxes, the conquests of Alexander, the legions of Rome, the poetry of Homer, the philosophy of Socrates, the statues of Phidias, the orations of Cicero, the satires of Juvenal, the annals of Tacitus—these are the drifts from the waves of that ancient civilization, wise in all the Wisdom of this World;

these are the drifts still floating on the current of human history as it moves on its majestic course to that eternity where time is not measured by days and nights, and weeks and years; and to that infinity where space is not measured by islands, continents and seas.

There were walls seventy feet high, on which war-chariots might be driven four abreast; there were hanging gardens filled with flowers and birds; there were temples of polished marble, overlaid with ivory and gold; there were statues so lifelike as almost to speak; there were highways, firm and hard, stretching from imperial Rome to all the ends of the known world; there were arches and aqueducts, fountains and baths, painting and poetry. But, alas! upon that civilization might have been written the inscription upon the altar at Mars Hill, "To the Unknown God". It was all of this world, and of this world only; it was outward, material, transient; it was earthly, sensual, devilish.

Dr. Garbett, in his "Dogmatic Faith", says: "With the sole exception of the knowledge of the true God, this old world carried human advancement to its highest pitch. For lustre of genius, brilliancy of wit, fertility of imagination, depth of thought, artistic taste and skill, aesthetic sensibilities, and keen relish for pleasure, the latest period of heathen civilization has never yet been excelled, perhaps never equaled". And yet, in the midst of all this, vice and immorality were well-nigh universal; chastity was almost unknown; thousands of virgins were annually devoted to prostitution in the temples of the gods; the life of a man was esteemed of less value than the life of a dog; slavery was universal, and slaves were put to death for the most trivial causes; men fought with each other and with wild beasts in amphitheatres, where dainty Roman matrons gazed with eager delight upon the agonies of dying men, and turned their thumbs down over the polished marble in token of their desire for more blood.

This old world with all its wisdom knew not God. In its



splendid Pantheons there were lords many and gods many—gods of painting and statuary, of poetry and eloquence, of war and revenge, of drunkenness and lust, but no true, holy and living God. And when the polished Paul preached unto the wise men of Athens Jesus and the resurrection, they told him that he was a babbler, and a setter forth of strange gods.

The men of this civilization worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator; and for this cause God gave them up to vile and unnatural lusts and passions; they were filled with unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, murder, deceit, malignity—without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful. The unutterable vileness of this godless wisdom is apparent in the fact that even now there are rooms in some of its buried and exhumed cities, into which no female is ever allowed to enter.

“And so this ancient society perished of its own inherent rottenness. Its enormous, all pervading, universal vice sapped the foundation of virtue. The mass was corrupt to its very core. Its strength perished by the mere exhaustion of its vices.” Godlessness and vice, irreligion and immorality, went hand in hand, as they always do, until the people, having lost all knowledge of God, lost also all shame and virtue; and this splendid civilization of this old world perished of its own hopeless and helpless corruption. The less the people knew of God, the viler and more debased did they become.

#### MODERN WISDOM'S FAILURE TO FIND GOD

The world of our day claims to have grown greatly wiser in the last nineteen centuries, but still it knows not God; nor will it, apart from His Word and His Son, ever know Him. Ring out the old battle-cry, the foolishness of God is wiser than men; this conflict will never cease; perish the craven, who having undertaken to fight for Jehovah and His Christ, is appalled at the war drums of the enemy. Let the godless

astronomer sweep the skies with his glass, and count and classify 270,000 stars, and then come and tell us that he neither saw nor heard of any personal God in all the infinitude of space; let the scientific smatterer gravely inform intelligent men that faith in God must now give place to knowledge of nature and her laws; let the atheistic materialist tell us that he has searched the boundless universe, and found no intelligent Spirit, but only matter and force; let the brazen blasphemer proclaim that Moses is a liar, Jesus an impostor, and man's immortality a delusion; to one and all we say—these things are almost as old as the human race; this godless creed was held by men wiser than you, long before you were born; it was held by the wise men of the ancient world in the days of its highest civilization; it is held now by the cannibal tribes of Ureega, Manyema, and Bengala, in the dark places of the earth, filled with the habitations of cruelty; you are simply asking us to go back to the times when the world by wisdom knew not God; and the race has had enough and more than enough of this godless wisdom; if Christ the Crucified cannot save us, then indeed are we doomed and damned forever.

#### THE DEMAND OF MODERN "WISE MEN"

The wise men of this world, filled with philosophy falsely so-called, ask, first, that we give up the miracles of the Old Testament; then the imprecatory Psalms; then the "immoral parts" of the Scriptures; then, the "vindictive and bloody laws of Moses;" then Moses himself; then, all the prophets; then, the miracles of the New Testament; then, the Apocalypse; then, the doctrine of eternal retribution; then, the Holy Ghost; then, Inspiration; then, Jesus Christ; then God Himself—this is the modest demand of the unbelieving wisdom of our day and generation; this substituting "knowledge of nature for faith in God"—this is "progress"; this is "advanced thought"—and so the race is left, its "grave without a resurrection", its "universe without a God," its sin without a Saviour.

Thoughtful men understand well that the objective point of all these infidel attacks is the Cross and the Crucified. Shall we give up the blood and its cleansing and peace-giving power at the behest of boasting unbelief? Shall we cease to preach Christ and Him crucified because now, as of old, He is a stumbling-block to the Jew, a foolishness to the Greek? Shall we no longer preach Jesus and the resurrection because the wise men of modern Athens scornfully ask, "What do these babblers say?" The answer comes to us echoed down the ages; it comes from patriarchs and prophets, from apostles and martyrs; from saints of all ages and all lands who have endured all the evils and all the miseries that the malignity of men and devils could inflict. Go ask them if the Gospel is true, if it is the power of God unto salvation, if the Crucified is strong to save; and from Roman amphitheatres and catacombs, from the dens and caves of the earth, from jails and gibbets, from faggots and flames and furnaces; from India and Greenland, from China and Japan, from Ceylon and Madagascar, from the islands of the ocean, from the blood-washed millions who have gone up to glory and to God, there shall come this answer: "We know whom we have believed. Christ crucified is the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation".