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Seekers after God: Revelation

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Seekers after God: Revelation

The impetus given by tradition to seekers after God. One result growing out of this God idea of the tradition, is of first rate importance, viz: It has been an inspiration to certain great souls to seek after God. Men who have not been contented with the intimations to be derived from the works of nature nor with just the fragmentary and somewhat confused outgivings of the traditions of men; but, inspired by the works of nature and those traditions—they have boldly attempted to ascertain the fact of God for themselves. If there be a Deity, transcendent of or immanent in the universe, they have said, why not find him? Or if the universe itself—nature—be Deity, may not this be found out by searching? Hence came “Seekers after God.” In the book of Job is found the pregnant question: “Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?” (Job 11:7). In this question there is a doubt disclosed, but the significance of that passes when it is observed that the question is asked by Zophar, false friend of Job, and not noted for the depth of his understanding. An affirmative answer is given as the word of the Lord to Israel, and surely by one of the “Seekers after God” more capable to speak upon the subject than Zophar: “Ye shall seek me and find me,” God is represented as saying, through Jeremiah the prophet, “when ye shall search for me with all your heart” (Jer. 29:13). Here not only the possibility of finding God is declared, but also the prime condition essential to the achievement is given—“when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”

Is revelation possible? The question of the possibility of revelation may be raised: (i.e.) the ability of the higher intelligences of other worlds to communicate knowledge to man. But this can only be entertained for a moment. We have in previous chapters held forth the very great likelihood of the worlds and world systems that we have contemplated being inhabited by intelligences, and some of them most likely of superior intelligence to the inhabitants of our earth; the probability

of which is far above any reasonable doubt, and notwithstanding the immense distances that separate them from our earth, yet distance may not affect the assurance that inter-world communication of intelligences is possible; for distance has little to do with thought—or things of the spirit.

At this point we are able to apply again our method of reasoning from what we know to that which is possible, yea, even probable up to the point of moral certainty. And this is what we know from human experiences on the subject of marvelous means of communication.

The question of interplanetary communication. It is within the recollection of men yet living when the only means of communication between places distant from each other was by means of letters transmitted at best by the speed of the stage coach or equestrian mail carriers. This was followed by the invention and adoption of the electric telegraph devices, and soon the land became a network of telegraphic lines to establish the facilities of rapid means of communication. Not even the wide spreading ocean was to bar islands and continents from this new method of transmission of messages from land to land. Cables were laid upon the ocean bed linking together the most distant continents, and bringing them well nigh within the possibility of instant communication one with another. This was followed later by the invention of the telephone by which means the human voice was made to be heard, first at short distances ~~from each other~~, then at longer distances, until at the present time through this means of communication it is made possible for the human voice to be heard across the oceans and over the greatest extent of land distances. Nor is this method of communication any longer dependent upon the stretching of wires over the land and under the oceans; but by means of radio inventions the human voice is marvelously broadcasted to all lands and over the seas. All this makes the argument possible from what we know, viz: If man with his limited development in this matter of communicating intelligence from land to land among his fellows, can achieve so much, what may it not be possible for higher intelligences of older and more advanced worlds to have accomplished in the matter of inter-world communication by superior methods created by their intelligences; until distance, however great, renders no obstruction to the communication of higher intelligences with each other, and with the inhabitants of our world. Indeed, may not the development in this kind upon our own earth have been the result of suggestion, and through inspiration supplied by some means of communication from mind to mind by interplanetary communications? At any rate in

the presence of means recently developed in improved methods of communication, so wonderful that to men of two generations ago they would have appeared miraculous, any doubt concerning the possibility of communication between the intelligences of other worlds and world systems with our own, must disappear.

The achieved fact of revelation. Moreover, and again adopting our process of reasoning from what we know, we have found among men, and especially among men of most highly developed intellectual and moral and spiritual nature, a desire for the improvement of less developed and barbarous peoples, an impulse to help the lowly and the unfortunate by giving themselves and their fortunes to the uplifting of their fellow men, and the betterment of conditions of all, and especially to enlighten by education the ignorant. This being true of men of this class, may it not be true, and increasingly true of intelligences of other worlds, and especially of those of the higher intellectual types of older and more developed worlds? If this reasoning from what we know is sound, will not all objections to the possibility of inter-world communication of intelligences have been set aside, and may we not conclude that revelation is not only possible, but very probable; and may it not be true that some of the “seekers after God” of our own world in their search for God, may really have found him, and brought back a message from “the inner fact of things”?

It is quite evident, of course, that all “Seekers after God” have not found him; and even among those who have, it is quite equally evident that ***they have not found him in anything like equal measure; for it must be admitted that there are great differences in the messages*** they have reported to their fellows. In some instances their messages are not very clear, or coherent; and not always in agreement with each other. This, however, not because of any defectiveness in the source of knowledge, but from the unequal ability of those who are entrusted to interpret rightly their contact with the higher sources of intelligence. The fault is with the medium of interpretation rather than with the source or the reality of their inspiration. The great thing in the whole matter is, however, the achieved fact of revelation. Once the contact made, the union established between earth intelligences and the higher intelligences of other worlds, that contact may be trusted to lead to the development of a constantly increasing clearness of the message to be imparted, until earth inhabitants will be instructed by knowledge imparted from higher sources of intelligence than their own minds for their guidance; but undoubtedly in such fashion, and in such progressive degrees, as not to be overwhelmed with knowledge

that might hinder rather than accelerate the true development of powers from within by the intelligences receiving these administrations. For development of intelligences—which may be called education—results not so much from acquiring a mere knowledge of things, as from the development within of the mind powers to seek and find things each for himself.

The function of revelation. The function of higher intelligences, through revelation, would be to encourage and inspire by contact, here and there, the efforts to self-development of those whom they would assist. Men have learned that what we humans call education is not mere “cramming” with knowledge of facts, but the development in those who are taught of the power to think for themselves, and to think straight and right. That power established in the mind, the student will find the facts for himself, absorb them in his own mind, and learn the application of them for himself. Undoubtedly the higher intelligences of other worlds with which our world in some way may be in physical connection, and in moral and spiritual union and sympathy—*they* wishing our development—will minister their helpfulness to us in some such spirit as this; and the fact that they would so proceed doubtless accounts for the limited and rather infrequent dispensations of revelations to our earth. Those revelations are undoubtedly intended to be progressive and ministered in such fashion as to lead to human development from within, and also are administered in such manner as not to interfere with the free agency of man, and not to break into or destroy the purposes of man’s earth life. The present order of things as to revelation and other things, has been devised in the wisdom of higher intelligences to impart to man a self-culture and development that has been planned in the highest wisdom. Planned in the wisdom of those who have more extensive knowledge than we can fathom by our partial vision of things.

Visualization with spoken revelation. There remains to be accounted for some manifestations of an occult power of the mind of man in the matter of communication between intelligences. Telepathy, or the power of one mind to be in such sympathetic affections, feelings or emotions with another as to make thought transference possible between them is now accepted by men of science as a reality.

In addition to being almost instant communication with all parts of the world by wireless telegraphy, the telephone, the daily press is in use of the process by which photographs fairly accurate are sent from great distances by means of picture telegraphic instruments; and already

the television instrument that shall make it possible when using the telephone to also visualize the one with whom the conversation is being had, is an assured accomplishment for the near future. The recently developed ability of man through tele-autography to actually affix signatures to a document from great distances—one such case being reported in the current press as taking place between London and New York in July 1927. With such powers of communication of thought by telepathy; of vision by the use of the instrument of television; and by obtaining signatures even over-seas by tele-autography, the recorded instances in Holy Writ and other true records of man's experience—the recorded instances of receiving revelation from higher intelligences—from God, may not be regarded as so miraculous or so impossible as some would have us believe.

Actual visitation of intelligences from other worlds to our own. Up to this point we have considered only the matter of *mind* communication of knowledge by the higher intelligences of other worlds to the inhabitants of our earth. The question, however, of actual visitation of the higher intelligent personages to our earth is of equal importance. The visitation of angels, the alleged descent to and appearances of God to men, the levitation and ascent of those who have lived upon all the earth into heaven, there to dwell with God—the possibility of all this must be considered. And this actual visitation of divine personages to our earth involves the whole thought of overcoming the immense distances which separate us from other worlds. It involves the question of interplanetary visitation of the inhabitants of the universe. Do there exist means of transportation, and may there be palpable, actual intermingling of mutually intelligent inhabitants of world-systems? If so, knowledge of that fact would do away with much of the mystery attendant upon reported visitation of angels and spirits, and even of what are regarded as more tangible, physical personages.

Interplanetary transportation considered. As in the case of establishing the possibility of likelihood of the interplanetary communication of knowledge by means of revelation, by process akin to thought-transference, let us work out this same problem of interplanetary ~~transportation~~ **visitation** of personages and doubtless also of things.

Reasoning again from what we know our of the experiences of men in this matter of transportation, we know that transportation is a thing in which there has been marked advancement of late years in our world. Within the memory of men now living time can be recalled when the means of traveling from one place to another was either by

horse-drawn vehicles or by equestrian riding. It was not until in the second and third decade of the nineteenth century that the power of steam for wheel-drawn vehicles over rails was adopted, and then was commenced that rapid construction of railways which soon made the continents networks of them, uniting all parts of civilized lands. Overland travel was so established by this means that it gave easy, comfortable, and rapid transit from one place to another and the disadvantage of separation by distance was greatly lessened.

It was in 1807 that Robert Fulton launched the *Clermont* on the Hudson River, the first application of the power of steam to water vessels. Previous to this oceans and seas were traversed only by the power of wind and ocean current propelled boats; but now steam-driven vessels are in the "seven seas" and all their connections, so that rapid and secure means of transportation has been secured, and the oceans, once the dread of all those who went down to the sea in ships, have lost their terror, and are now merely the convenient highways between the continents. The voyage between Europe and America which once was a matter of many weeks and attended with great danger, is now reduced to a matter of less than six days; and in greater comfort and security than attends upon traveling on the land.^a

Also there has come into existence the self-propelled automobile, capable of moving with equal speed of the lightning express trains, rendering travel swift and safe on the ordinary roads of the country without the use of rails, until rapid and safe means of travel in all lands is provided.

Man's achievements in earth transportation. Within the last twenty-five years man has made rapid progress in his conquest of the air in which, both in speed and sustained flight, he surpasses the eagle or the sea gull in their flight. Two methods have been employed in attaining man's conquest of the air. First, the device was by the inflation of huge canvas bags by hydrogen gas which made the balloons lighter than air, and hence capable of rising from the earth to great heights. In these men were wholly at the mercy of the upper air currents to which they rose, as they had no means by which they might steer their course. A notable event in this kind of air aviation took place about 150 years ago, when Jean Pierre Blanchard and John Jeffries (the latter an American) on January 7, 1785, crossed the English Channel from Dover to Callis [Calais] in a balloon. Their achievement however is set down

^aRoberts added a handwritten note: "Question on [illegible] of Doc + Cov Sec 61," evidently regarding traveling upon the waters.

as a piece of sheer luck, as the aeronauts had no control of their craft, they merely drifted across the channel. Development in that line of aviation, however, has gone on until now we have the dirigible lighter-than-air German Zeppelin—largely a world-war development—capable of being fully controlled as to its direction, and of such sustaining power that in October 1924 the ZR-3, a German Zeppelin, now the American airship *Los Angeles*, crossed the Atlantic, flying from Friedrichshafen, Germany, to Lakehurst naval air station in New Jersey, a distance of 5,066 miles, in 81 hours and 17 minutes; and when she landed, still had unused fuel that would have been sufficient to have taken her as far westward as Chicago. On this voyage the air-ship was in constant communication with the world over which she flew by means of radio ~~communication~~ **instruments**. It was a somewhat similar flight that was made across the Atlantic by the R-34, English dirigible air-ship, under command of Major C. H. Scott of the Royal Air Force, starting from East Fortune, Scotland, on July 2, 1919, and landing at Mineola, Long Island, on July 6th, with nearly her last gallon of fuel spent. She made the flight, a distance of 3,130 miles, in 108 hours, 12 minutes but returned to Pulham, England, in 74 hours 56 minutes; showing, it is claimed, that crossing from America to Europe presents fewer difficulties than a journey from Europe to America. It was in a similar air-ship that the Norwegian explorer, Amundsen, accompanied by Ellsworth and Nobile, engineers, flew over the North Pole of our world on May 12, 1926.^b

Flight with heavier-than-air machines. The development of the other branch of air conquest—by use of heavier than air means of transportation—has been even more wonderfully developed than the lighter-than-air mode of transportation. It is only twenty-five years ago that the Wright Brothers, Wilbur and Orville, of America, constructed their glide planes, which with the aid of wind and favorable declivity of a hill from which to start, they could make but a few feet of distance; but that accomplishment convinced them that they could build a heavier-than-air device capable of carrying not only a passenger, but a motor, and thus become automotively independent of wind and air currents, and able to direct an air-plane under whatever difficulties might be presented. This same year, 1902, witnessed the triumph of their conception. They succeeded in constructing an engine, placed it in the air-plane device and the plane on a mono-rail track, and heading straight into the teeth of a favorable wind, the machine with its driver

^bRoberts noted that he intended to add a footnote here.

rose in the air and made 105 feet for the first flight of a heavier-than-air machine for flying. This under guidance of Wilbur Wright, who in the toss of a coin with his brother for first privilege of trying the aeroplane, won. The next day, in the second flight, with Orville Wright now at the throttle, the distance of 120 feet was made. The triumph of such a machine that is heavier than air was seen nine years later in such achievements as carrying Louis Bleriot across the English Channel (July 1909), and in the flight of United States Navy planes starting from Trespasse, New Foundland, and flying across the Atlantic to the Azores, in 15 hours and 13 minutes, covering over 1,250 miles. This on the 11th of May, 1919; and from the Azores to London, by way of Lisbon, covering a total of 2,472 miles in 26 hours and 51 minutes of actual flying time.

Thence rose the ambition among the air men to make a non-stop trans-Atlantic flight. This dream was first realized with Captain John Alcock and Lieutenant Arthur W. Brown, officers in the British Royal Air Force who started from St. Johns, New Foundland, and landed in a bog in Ireland, after a flight of 16 hours, 12 minutes, making a distance of 1,960 miles at an average speed of 120 miles an hour. United States heavier-than-air planes circled the globe in 1924. The starting point was Seattle, Washington, and the journey, covering 26,103 miles, was made in 175 days, crossing the Atlantic in two jumps, from Iceland to Greenland, and from Greenland to Labrador. Also in these air journeys with heavier-than-air machines is to be noted Commander Richard E. Byrd's journey to the North Pole, May 9, 1926, in which he flew to the Pole and back to his place of starting a distance of 1600 miles, in 15 hours and 50 minutes. Charles A. Lindbergh's air voyage over the Atlantic Ocean—of such notable fame—may not be left unnoticed. The triumphant journey was made in a mono-plane from New York to Paris in 33 hours, 30 minutes, starting May 20, 1927, and covering a distance of 3,610 miles in one continuous flight. A few days later Clarence D. Chamberlin, carrying a passenger, Charles A. Levin, performed a similar feat, flying from New York to Eisleben, a distance of 3,905 miles in 43 hours.

In addition to these flights made for setting records of achievement in the mastery of the air, there has been established regular air transportation service in many parts of the civilized world, for the transportation both of mail and passengers, and air travel and transportation of mails is becoming a commonplace method of such transportation service. So secure is this method of traveling that in the two years of German civil aviation just past (1926-27), during which time 55,185 passengers were carried, and 3,073,171 miles flown, there were only two fatalities, or approximately one fatality for each million and a half *miles* of travel. This promises that

air travel in the near future will be as safe as travel by ocean steamer, railway express trains, or by the automobile.^c

The argument based upon man's achievements. The argument built upon this development of man's mastery of distance, inter-continental travel by means of ocean liners, air planes, and Zeppelins is this: that if man in his as yet limited mental development can accomplish so much in mastering earth and ocean and air in the matter of communication and transportation, who shall formulate any dictum as to the impossibility of his attaining to interplanetary communication and transportation? And much less assert the inability, or impossibility of the more highly developed intelligences of other worlds to master distance and carry on both interplanetary communications and transportation, both for themselves and for things; and is it unreasonable to believe that they are even now masters of interplanetary communication and transportation, as man is master over inter-continental communication and transportation on this our earth?

We have before us now in bare outline the probability of there being substance in the traditions of men about God; and the possibility, and even probability of revelation. As to this last, if we but place proper emphasis on the fact already suggested in a previous chapter, that the intelligences of other worlds may reasonably be supposed to possess altruistic sentiments entertained towards intelligences of other worlds, perhaps less advanced in knowledge and experience than themselves, less fortunate than they are—yet capable of advancement to better things—then it would be easy to conceive of their possessing a most earnest desire to communicate that knowledge, and administer that helpfulness which would come of such communication of knowledge from them to the intelligences of undeveloped, or but partially developed worlds.

The unity of testimony for God. The three sources of knowledge of God I have somewhat reviewed in chapter 11, and in this chapter—works of nature, tradition, and revelation—these combined may be a very strong evidence for the existence of God and all that goes with God-in-the-Universe conception. Without here allowing ourselves to be diverted into the too extensive field of thought and investigation as to the truthfulness of revelation, and the supporting power which would come to such a revelation from tradition, and works of nature, let us consider for a moment at least, how these lines of evidence work out into a very fine unity of testimony.

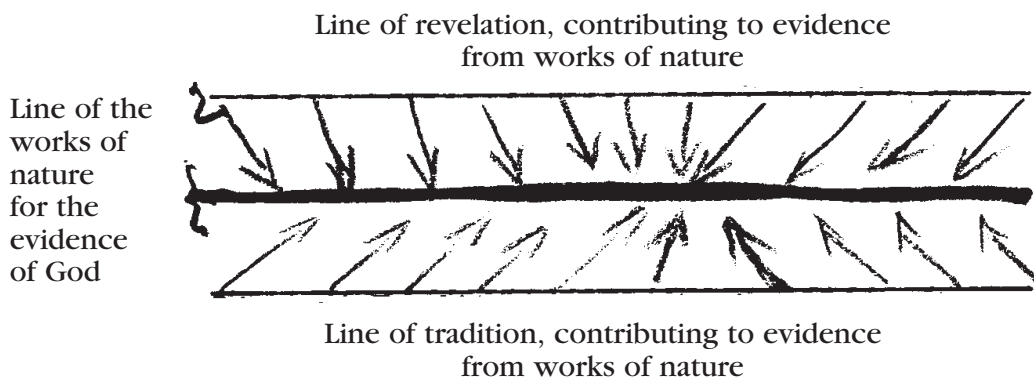
^cRoberts noted that he intended to add a footnote here.

Commencing with the course followed so far in this work, let us consider the first, the works of nature, as constituting our present major line of evidence as to the existence of, and the dominance of, mind in the universe. The presence of self-existing matter in eternal duration and space, with force or energy also present, together with the orderliness of all this universe of suns, planets, and planetary systems, *which* we have found to bear witness to the existence of a reign of law, with mind dominant over matter, matter chaotic, and matter organized into a cosmos—all ~~which~~ this proclaims mind as the eternal cause functioning in the universe, constructing and maintaining the order of things, being the directing power towards whatever ends may be designed as the purpose of the unfolding creation. So far the works of nature throughout the universe, and the orderliness of it, suggest the presence and the operation of a mighty Intelligence, which doubtless is supreme. This, at present, shall be our major line; and now turning to tradition as a contributing line of evidence to this main idea proclaimed by the works of nature, we see that the evidence of tradition supports the testimony of nature, and undoubtedly the somewhat variant and confused testimony of tradition does have a supplementary and strengthening influence upon the testimony of the works of nature to the existence and operation of that mind, of which the works of nature bear evidence; and which all through the ages tradition has been trying to tell us about.

Below this our major line of evidence, for the moment, we may consider the other line of contributing evidence, viz. revelation—what the prophets and seers have reported of their findings in their search for God. Thus is fashioned a “three-fold cord” of evidence, which—we are assured—“is not quickly broken” (Eccl. 4:12).

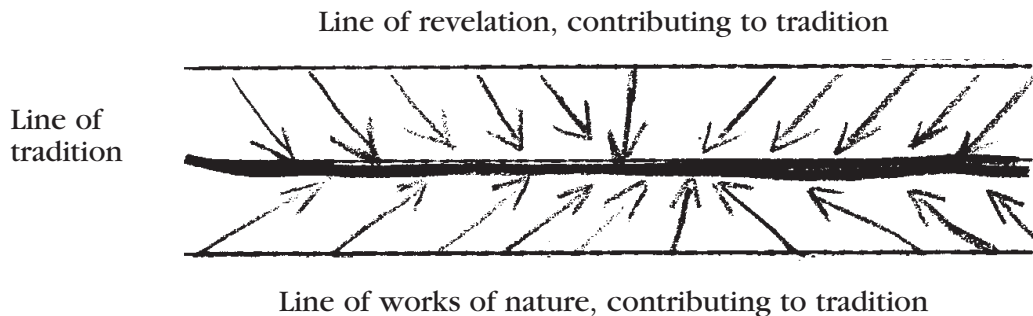
I give below a simple form, the lines represented by this presentation of the above idea:

1. *The works of nature:*



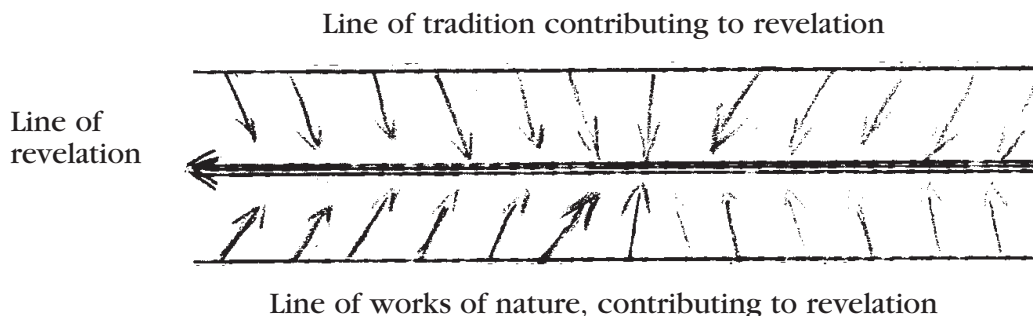
Second, we take tradition as the main line to be considered and major on that for the moment, and then following the same treatment as we did when the works of nature was the major line, we find tradition supported both by the line of revelation and also by the line of the works of nature. ~~I give a simple illustration of the presentation of the above idea:~~

2. *Tradition:*



Then third, and with increasing effect, and presenting the thought also in the true relation in which the different lines of evidence for God's existence ought to stand—and not only for his being, but the kind of being he is—we make Revelation our major line, and draw it strong as being at once the most powerful and definite means through which man may know God. Then tradition becomes a supplementary line of evidence, supporting revelation and on the other side, the works of nature become a contributing and important line of evidence for the being and for the glory of God. ~~Here follows a simple illustration of the third idea:~~

3. *Revelation:*



If the comparison of these lines in any one of the illustrations given makes out a strong case by accumulation of the three evidences for the existence of God, revelation, tradition, and the works of nature, then the conception of them, arising from the placing of emphasis upon

each of the respective lines, in turn—making the others for the time being supplementary—undoubtedly will result in still further increasing the testimony, making sure our inherited knowledge for the existence of God.

Further references recommended by Roberts for this lesson: Smith, *Six Lectures on Faith*; and “current magazines and news periodicals of recent years.” Roberts commented that he “found little in books to guide [him] in the thoughts presented in this chapter,” except in the *Lectures on Faith*.