

The system by which the Progressives draw their conclusions is based on rational and empirical “truths” that are common to *cosmos diabolicus* throughout history but abhorrent to divine revelation.

Chafer continues with the components of the divine system of revelation that further includes Inspiration, Illumination, Interpretation, and Animation.

INSPIRATION. Inspiration is that controlling influence which God exerted over the human authors by whom the Old and New Testaments were written. It has to do with the reception of the divine message and the accuracy with which it is transcribed. (Inspiration is) a God-given revelation ... bequeathed to man in a permanent, written form. A God-given Revelation is bequeathed to man in a permanent, written form which not only expands the field of man’s knowledge into the realms of infinity, but serves ever as a corrective of those fallible, shifting fancies and theories which human ignorance unceasingly engenders. (p. 61)

Without doubt it is the supernatural element, which constitutes the very warp and woof of the Bible doctrine of inspiration, that not only gives to it its distinctive and exalted character but also repels the spiritually darkened mind of the unregenerate man—a darkness which is in no way relieved by human learning. The scholar who finds it easier to believe that, when inanimate matter by accident became “complex enough and in appropriate collection, living organisms may have emerged,” and that those organisms, in turn “developed by inherent spontaneity into rational human beings,” than believe that God created man in His own image and likeness, such a scholar will resent the teaching that God has spoken to man and that this message has been, under the guidance of God, transcribed into infallible writings. (pp. 61–62)

Devout men—some of great scholarship—have always agreed in the main as to the inerrant and supernatural qualities of the Bible. This belief has become distinguished as “the traditional view,” or “the doctrine of the church.” This harmony of belief on the part of devout men is not the concord of ignorance, since ignorance is incapable of concord. (p. 62)

ILLUMINATION. The purpose of God in providing the Bible is that man, to whom the Bible is addressed, may be possessed of dependable information regarding things tangible and intangible, temporal and eternal, visible and invisible, earthly and heavenly. In view of man’s native limitations, this fund of truth is of measureless value to him. (p. 105)

Is Jesus the Messiah?

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Signs of Messiahship (continued)

Added to the original darkness which came by the fall, there are at least four particularized forms of spiritual blindness which, according to the Bible, are experienced by certain classes of humanity and which augment beyond computation man's natural unenlightenment. (p. 105)

1. ISRAEL'S BLINDNESS. In addition to natural blindness, a judicial darkness has fallen upon Israel which Jehovah instructed Isaiah to announce in these words, "Go and tell this people: 'Keep on listening, but do not perceive; keep on looking, but do not understand.' "Render the hearts of this people insensitive, their ears dull, and their eyes dim, otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and return and be healed." (Isa.6:9–10; cf. Matt. 13:14–15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40; Acts 28:26–27; 2 Cor. 3:14–15). This blindness was predicted to appear in Israel when their Messiah would come. The blindness came upon them as anticipated and caused that national unbelief. (pp.105–06)

Thus it is disclosed that for Israelites there are two possible illuminations: one for the individual Jew who believes to the saving of his soul, which illumination dispels all previous darkness; and the other for the whole nation, which will be their portion when the "Sun of righteousness" arises with healing in His wings (Mal. 4:2), when the Deliverer shall come out of Zion and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Romans 11:26). Since the Word of God shall then be written "in their hearts," it is evident that the agency which the Spirit will use to enlighten that nation will be the Scriptures of truth. (pp. 106–07)

2. GENTILE DARKNESS. The darkness which is now experienced by the Gentile nations, apart from satanic blindness, is none other than that which has come upon them because of the fall. The unsaved, having never known any other state, are unconscious of their condition and therefore almost universally disbelieve those Scriptures which describe their plight. There are many descriptions of this Gentile darkness presented in the Bible. Even when the light, which Christ is, shined in darkness, "the darkness comprehended it not" (John 1:5; cf. Eph.5:11; 1 John 2:11).

3. **SATANIC DARKNESS.** An extraordinary disclosure is made in 2 Corinthians 4:3–4 of the fact that unregenerate men, individual Jew and Gentile alike, are blinded as to the gospel and that this blindness is as a veil upon the mind. This incapacity to respond to the gospel has been imposed by Satan with a view to impeding the normal reception of the message concerning God's saving grace. (p. 107)

Two exceedingly important statements by Christ bear on this same incapacity of the unregenerate man. To Nicodemus He said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3); and of the present relationships of the Spirit, He said, "... the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees Him not, neither knows Him" (John 14:17). So, also, the Apostle points out that the knowledge which the world possesses, forged as it is out of a perverted understanding of God's truth into false philosophies and conceptions, is the very agency which Satan uses to mislead them. All of this is an added revelation of the fallen estate of the unregenerate. But these restrictions ... can be overcome by the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit. (T)he Spirit reprove, or enlightens, the world with respect to the cardinal features of the gospel, namely, "sin, righteousness, and judgment" (John 16:7–11). The Scriptures are evidently the primary agency which is used by the Spirit to this end, for "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). (pp. 107–08)

4. **CARNAL BLINDNESS.** Having depicted the restrictions of the ψυχικός (*psuchikós*, 'natural') man respecting his inability to receive the things of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:14) and having appraised the supernatural capacity of the πνευματικός (*pneumatikós*, 'spiritual') man (1 Cor 2:15), the Apostle portrays the restricted spiritual understanding of the σαρκικός (*sarkikós*, 'carnal') man and assigns the cause for carnality in the specific group to which he was writing. This revealing passage reads: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual [πνευματικός], but unto carnal [σαρκικός], even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto you were not able to bear it, neither yet now are you able" (1 Cor. 3:1–2). The carnal man is here addressed as a *brother* and as a *babe in Christ*, all of which demonstrates that he is saved. However, his reception of God's word is limited to its simplest messages—likened to *milk* and in contrast to *meat*—and this, it is asserted, is due to his unspiritual life.

Thus it is disclosed that unspiritual living hinders the normal illuminating work of the Spirit of God in the mind and heart of the child of God. (p. 108)

THE ILLUMINATING WORK OF THE SPIRIT. The period of time between the two advents of Christ is often designated as *The Age of the Holy Spirit*, and properly so, since these days are characterized by the activity and administration of the Spirit. Among the age-characterizing operations of the Spirit is that of teaching or enlightening the individual in whom He dwells.

This reception of truth is not confined to commonplace issues, but may reach out into the “deep things of God,” and the experience of the believer when thus taught by the Spirit is peculiar in this respect, that the divine Teacher is within his heart and he therefore does not hear a voice speaking from without and at stated times, as is the method of human teachers, but the mind and heart are supernaturally awakened from within to apprehend what otherwise would be unknown. (p. 109)

There is no didactic discipline in the world comparable to the teaching of Christ by the Holy Spirit, both because of the fact that infinity characterizes the themes which are taught, and because of the Teacher’s method of approach by which He, by the Spirit, enters the innermost recesses of the heart where impressions originate and there not only tells out the truth of transcendent magnitude, but causes the pupil actually to grasp the things thus revealed. “By faith we understand” (Heb. 11:3).

There is not the slightest possibility that the most educated and brilliant mind can make one step of progress in the understanding of spiritual truth apart from the direct, supernatural teaching to the individual heart by the indwelling Spirit. In like manner there can be no full or worthy apprehension of God’s revealed truth by the Christian who is unspiritual or carnal. Hence the imperative aspect of a yielded life. (p. 113)