

the Roman centurion to exclaim, "Surely this was the Son of God." But when, in addition to the foregoing, we take his resurrection, and examine into all its circumstances and bearings, and mark the distinct evidence which it supplies, we feel the truthfulness and force of the apostle's language. He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead." Our understandings bow beneath the massive weight of proof which is laid upon them. The investigation is satisfactory: the truth is established. We ask no further evidence. And yet there is one argument more which we must not lose sight of. However clear and convincing each preceding proof may be, in its individual character, still, without this additional argument, the chain of evidence which runs through the history of "the *man* Christ Jesus" would be incomplete. The miracles of his life, the wonders of his crucifixion hour, the glories of his resurrection, must be followed by the splendor and triumph of his ascension. This is the link which binds the whole to the throne of truth, to the throne of God.

The argument to be drawn from this event can be stated very briefly.

There is a law in nature, impressed upon all material things, and—so far as human observation and research have gone—extending through the whole sweep of creation. It is the law of attraction. By it order and harmony are maintained in the universe, and the countless atoms of which our world is composed are kept in perpetual cohesion. Like an invisible net work, of celestial fabric, it surrounds the globe, and preserves upon its surface the various tribes of living beings by whom it is inhabited, and the various portions of inanimate matter which are loosely strewn around. It is directly contrary to this established law that any portion of matter, as, for instance, a human body, should be removed from the surface of the earth, and be carried, wholly and forever, beyond the range of its influences. Should such a circumstance occur, it would be essentially miraculous. It would be a miracle of the highest order, and therefore must be the act of God, and of God alone. Such an event was the ascension of Christ.

In the whole history of the world there have been but two occurrences which bear any resemblance to it. We refer to the translation of Enoch and the translation of Elijah. Between them and the event under consideration, the Scriptures make a wide distinction. We read that "Enoch walked with God, and was not, for God took him." And in the case of Elijah we are told that celestial messengers were sent forth to bear him away to the skies; and we hear his servant Elisha exclaim, as he witnessed his departure, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." There is no such language employed to describe the ascension of Christ. Each event was truly startling and miraculous; but the removal of Enoch and Elijah was a translation, the act of another; Christ's removal was an *ascension*, *his own act*. And herein lies the grand distinction. It was the putting forth of that power which sustains the world, and directs its affairs; that power which hangs the earth upon nothing, which guides the stars in their courses, and which, in the days of Joshua, made the sun stand still. It was the Almighty Creator of the universe, placing his hand upon the law of his own enactment, and holding it in temporary suspension, while his human nature passed into the heavens, where he sits at the right hand of God, "inhabiting the praises of eternity."