

aggressively, as you suggest, or defensively. Really we are on the defensive—the stronghold Zion is attacked by enemies from without and within. The Bible is attacked by so-called Higher Critics, and the cross, the doctrine of the ransom, is attacked by Evolutionists and hosts of others, and the long entrenched errors of doctrine are now stumbling many who want to be on the Lord's side of this battle—the side of truth. The enemy of truth, Satan, and his deluded followers must be shown up and driven completely out-side Zion's

walls that now at last "wheat" may be distinguished from "tares." We know of no better aid in this conflict than the "Volunteer TOWER." It is an inspiring scene to see the Allegheny church volunteers going forth every Sunday morning, and it must be still more so to witness the larger company of the Boston church—about 80 per cent of the entire church, we understand, are "volunteers." The influence of such preachers and their message is bound to tell on the right class.—EDITOR.]

## BIBLE READING INDISPENSABLE

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—I can hardly appreciate the advice given by you in the last WATCH TOWER, under caption of "Attention, Watch Tower Readers!" inasmuch as I am always benefited by a re-reading of the DAWNS, but permit me to say that I believe there are some who may misconstrue the last two sentences of the above article and think into them a meaning it is not intended they should contain, viz., that you are advocating the reading of the DAWNS exclusive of God's Word. I have learned from observation that those who merely read the DAWNS without examining the context of Scriptures quoted do not become well established in the truth, so that when the fire that tries every man's faith becomes more intense, they are unable to endure the ordeal. It has further been my experience that those who state that "they" have the Bible to read, and that it is sufficient for them without reading the DAWNS, never come to a clear knowledge of the truth, because they thereby ignore the instrumentality that God has been pleased to honor in setting forth his truth in these last days. And in ignoring the instrumentality they ignore not man, but God, "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will;" and hence, as long as they maintain such an attitude, they cannot hope to be led into all truth. But happy are those who keep their minds in a receptive condition for truth, willing to receive it through whatever agency the Lord may be pleased to send it to them. May the Lord enable each one of us so to be.

Before closing I must tell you that I was greatly encouraged by the article, "Keep yourselves in the love of God." How it has refreshed me in spirit! I appreciate more fully now the fact that it is one thing to possess the "love of God" and another thing to maintain it to the end of our course.

How much effort on our part is implied in the word "keep!"—continuous effort, yet ever mindful of the fact that the Lord is the "author" as well as the "finisher of our faith." It is to "pray without ceasing," to "quench not the spirit," to "despise not prophesying," to "prove all things and hold fast that which is good."

Some three years ago, when I began to appreciate the beauty of "present truth," I realized I had lost much precious time, and desiring to make the best of the little I had left, I thought over several plans and finally decided on this one, "Every day I will try to become a little more like Jesus, and then he will make plain to me those things I do not now understand." And I find that my knowledge of the "deep things of God" has ever been commensurate with my progress in becoming more and more like God's dear Son, but herein I became aware of the greatest struggle of my life, a struggle to the death of the old nature, and oh, what a struggle it is, only those who have tried to stem the current of a fallen and depraved nature know. I found arrayed against me the world, the flesh and the devil, but "thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" How appropriate are the words,—

"Keep striving: the winners are those who have striven

And fought for the prize that no idler has won;

To the hand of the steadfast alone it is given,

And before it is gained there is work to be done."

Enclosed find order for DAWNS. With much Christian love, I am,

Yours in our Redeemer,

E. J. COWARD.—Texas.

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No. 14

## VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

### IS THE CHINA TROUBLE PROPHETICALLY SIGNIFICANT?

Apparently a serious crisis in the world's affairs is being reached in China. For the past sixty years Europeans have been intruding themselves upon the Chinese, ostensibly for the benevolent purpose of blessing the Chinese with European civilization, but really for commercial purposes,—supplying their needs for a money consideration. Subsequently, about forty years ago, under compulsory regulations forced upon the Chinese, Christian missionaries were permitted to enter the Flowery Empire to contradict its religious and moral ideas cherished for centuries. The new religion brought family strife—especially because it taught the people that their ancestors (whom the Chinese worship as demi-gods), not being believers in the only name wherein is salvation, were lost eternally—doomed to everlasting torments.

These missionaries, and all foreign merchants who lodged with them, were specially protected by treaty laws and regulations, and thus were exempted from Chinese laws and became a favored people, possessed of greater privileges and liberties than the natives. Moreover, the missionaries (especially the Romanists, from all accounts) attempted to extend these special treaty rights to such Chinese as professed conversion—the priests became the attorneys of their people, and by arguments and threats, etc., generally got their faithful free from charges brought against them.

Thus inch by inch the white man forcibly intruded upon the yellow man, until the war between China and Japan, which displayed to the civilized world the helplessness of China, the second greatest nation of the world numerically (400,000,000). Since then the white man's arrogance has increased, and the newspapers of the world have told the Chinese that it is only a question of time until their nation will no longer exist, being divided among the nations of Europe, who have grasped ports and whole districts, compelling a nominal acquiescence on the part of the Chinese.

The Chinese are a thrifty people and peaceably disposed and not specially patriotic,—else they would not have submitted to these intrusions so long as they have. Indeed, they are quite tolerant toward foreigners who will adopt their civilization, submit to their laws and mind their own business. Understanding the circumstances, we cannot so much wonder at the recent uprising against foreigners under the auspices of an athletic society called the "Boxers." It is worthy of note that the present outbreak, while it has extended to all missionaries and all foreigners, nevertheless began with Roman Catholics exclusively. Much as we must deprecate the killing of many missionaries and many native converts, we must admit that such an uprising would have occurred long ago among white men of any nationality. Lack of patriotic sentiment amongst the Chinese, and inferior armament, etc., accounts for the delay of this outbreak: the people have been kept so busy providing for life's necessities that love of money has crowded out love of country.

Europe is astounded at the late uprising, for two reasons. (1) It offers a suggestion that a patriotic feeling may yet take hold of the Chinese, which with their overwhelming numbers would make them a menace to Europe, for they could muster an army twice as numerous as could all Europe combined—an army accustomed to obedience, and very economical. (2) Even should the whites succeed in coercing the Chinese, and hold the kingdom as a vassal empire, or divide it amongst the "more civilized," the danger is that international jealousies over shares in the spoils, "spheres of influence," etc., would ultimately lead to great wars, far-reaching in their influence, and quite possibly involving all Europe.

It is from this standpoint that affairs in China are of special interest to those who know that we are living in the harvest time of the Gospel age, and who are instructed from the Word of God to expect this age to close with a great time of trouble—beginning with international complications,

and ending with anarchy. From this standpoint we examine the Scriptures and note the following as seemingly pertinent, indicating that every nation of earth will be involved in the trouble, but that "Christendom," "Babylon," "Sheshach," will be the *last* to drink the cup of wrath. We quote from Jeremiah 25:15-33, as follows:—

"Thus saith the Lord God of Israel unto me: Take the wine-cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations to whom I send thee, to drink it. And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them. . . . All the kings of the north, far and near, one with another, and all the kingdoms of the world which are upon the face of the earth: and the king of Sheshach shall drink after them.

"Therefore thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Drink ye and be drunken, and spue and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you.

"And it shall be if they refuse to take the cup at thine hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts: Ye shall certainly drink. . . . for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the Lord of hosts. . . . The Lord hath a controversy with the nations: he will plead with all flesh: he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord. . . .

"Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts [boundaries] of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried."

It is not for us to prophecy, but to seek to interpret and apply prophecy: and even then we are to learn from the past that it is not the divine purpose that matters prophetically revealed shall be understood in *detail* until during or after fulfillment.—and then by those taught of God. We therefore merely suggest that, in harmony with the foregoing Scriptures it will not surprise us if the Chinese are entering now their share of the great day of wrath upon all nations;—about to drink their share of the cup of divine wrath, which is to bring all nations low, as an experience preparatory to the great blessing of all the world under the Millennial kingdom. And if it was appropriate that Israel, the natural seed of Abraham, upon rejection of Messiah should be punished and destroyed nationally, eighteen centuries ago, will it be strange if other nations also be compelled to drink of the same cup of wrath?—See verse 29.

India has already been severely scourged with famine and pestilence, yet these may be only the beginning of her share in the cup of wrath, which we understand will be to every nation, as it drinks thereof, a time of trouble without precedent. Probably the trouble will extend from nation to nation during the next few years, until finally, despite every effort to avert it (verse 28), great Babylon's turn will come—probably within ten years from now, when she must drink the very dregs of the cup, suffering more severely than the heathen nations, even as she has enjoyed greater privileges and sinned against greater light. "Babylon—Sheshach—shall drink after them"—Verse 26.

As the "Gospel of the kingdom" was circulated throughout Palestine before its trouble and overthrow, so we believe the same Gospel of the kingdom will be preached *for a witness* to each nation before its trouble comes. China probably contains but few fully consecrated Christians, and these chiefly among the missionaries, and hence the "harvest" message might quickly reach them all. In this connection it will be interesting to note, (1) that under divine providence our dear Brother H. A. Randle sent a special personal appeal to each Christian missionary in China, and later many tracts and DAWNS, about a year before this trouble broke out; (2) the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society sent tracts and booklets extensively to the same missionaries last year. True, we cannot say that many have received the truth, but we had no reason to expect that many would receive it. Yet the witness was given to all before their great time of trouble came. And who knows but what this interruption of mission work, backed by the truth, may set others to thinking in another direction—to looking and praying for God's kingdom to come, as the only hope of the world.

#### THE SHEPHERDS DISAPPOINTED AND CHAGRINED

Reverses in the mission fields of the world, one after another, will be very discouraging to ministers who have been preaching to themselves and others that a peaceful conversion

of the world to Christ is near at hand: that thus the Millennial kingdom will be introduced. They will find that they have been uttering a false cry, saying, Peace, Peace, when there is no peace, and can be no peace satisfactory or lasting until the Prince of Peace, Immanuel, shall establish it through his kingdom, by breaking in pieces the nations as a potter's vessel, and establishing his kingdom on a different basis in their stead—on their ruins. Note now how the same prophecy refers to this despair of the pastors, etc., of nominal Christendom, at the spoliation of their pasture fields, as follows:—

"Howl, ye shepherds [pastors], and cry: and wallow yourselves in the ashes, ye principal of the flock: for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersion are come: and ye shall fall [and be ruined] like a delicate vessel. And the shepherds shall have no way to flee, nor the principal of the flock to escape. A voice of crying from the shepherds [pastors] and an howling from the principal of the flock shall be heard. for the Lord hath spoiled their pasture."—See Jer. 25:34-37.

\* \* \*

Lord Salisbury, the British Prime Minister, addressing *The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts*, recently said:—

"Just look at this Chinese matter. You observe all the people who are slaughtered. Do you imagine that they are slaughtered simply because the Chinese dislike their religion? There is no nation in the world so indifferent on the subject of religion as the Chinese! It is because they and other nations have got the idea that missionary work is a mere instrument of the *secular government* to achieve the objects it has in view. In the East they have the proverb, 'First the Missionary, then the Consul, then the General.'"

\* \* \*

*The London Spectator*, commenting on the general dislike of Europeans by Asiatics, now being exemplified in China, says:—

"There is in China no race hatred, or color hatred, or, as we believe, hatred of creed for Chinese Christians. They could be tolerated quite well as mere idiots, but that those who dislike their ideas fear them also, and believe that unless those who propagate them are extirpated the ideas will win. The Europeans, they say, are already convincing many; they have almost persuaded our Emperor; year by year their views are advancing among the people,—if they and their disciples are suffered to live, our religion, our civilization, our social system, all are lost together. As for our literati, they will be ruined first, for they are our officials. People wonder that the harmless missionaries should be the objects of such a passion, that they should be disemboweled instead of merely beheaded: but think of the treatment of the Christians by the Roman Judges and we shall begin to understand the Chinese movement. Add but a little fear to the feelings already generated, and who would answer for the lives of Jews in France, or Germany, or Russia, or for those of Anarchists in any part of Europe? Asiatics in all ages have believed the amalgam of beliefs and social ways which constitutes their civilization, to be divine and unimprovable, and regard those who despise it, and preach against it, and shake it, as the intrusive Europeans certainly do, with a horror which of itself extinguishes the feeling of a common humanity. They have no more sense that slaughtering such is wicked, than the Parisians had when they massacred the Huguenots, or than English sportsmen have when they organize a battue of birds."

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General Lord Wolsley, of the British War Department, takes a very pessimistic view of the outlook in China, which is corroborated by the accumulating evidences that since the China-Japan war China has been quietly drilling her troops and arming them with modern weapons, machine guns, etc. He said recently:—

"China possesses every requisite for overrunning the world. She has a population of 400,000,000, all speaking the same language, or dialect, readily understood from one end of the empire to the other. She has enormously developed wealth, and still enormous natural wealth awaiting development. Her men, if properly drilled and led, are admirable soldiers. They are plucky, and able to live on next to nothing. Moreover, they are absolutely fearless of death. Begin with the foundation of millions upon millions of such soldiers as those men are capable of being made, and tell me, if you can, where the end will be."

A Chinese gentleman of education explains that the present trouble is occasioned by the Chinese lack of conscience: that

well-meaning missionaries are duped by many of those professing conversion. He says for instance,—

A Chinaman, an executor of a relative's will, may decide to cheat the orphans under his care. He arranges the matter readily with the Mandarin ruler by promising him one-half the booty. Later he concludes to give him but one-eighth, and to pave the way attends mission meetings, etc. Then he represents himself as terribly persecuted because of his new religion, and through the missionary secures consular protection which hinders him from being tried in a Chinese court. This step is taken months in advance of his refusal to give the Mandarin the promised one-half of his booty.

The missionary, unused to such duplicity, labors, as he supposes, for justice for the oppressed, but the result of his efforts may be summed up thus,—

"Net result: A misled missionary confirmed in his wrong-headedness; a would-be dishonest mandarin baffled and infuriated; two orphans robbed of their inheritance; food for nine days' gossip, and stirring up of hatred of 'foreign devils'; the whole a piece of rank injustice.

"Let me deliberately state that I am quite certain there

is not one town in the whole length and breadth of China that has been visited by missionaries, in which you could not at this moment find indisputable evidence of a case similar in all essentials to the example I have given you."

We wonder how long it will require our dear friends interested in missions to learn that God is seeking as his "elect" not the lowest, but the highest types of man;—that now is not the Lord's time for judging the heathen—that as the Apostle declares, "God hath appointed a day [the Millennial day—2 Pet. 3:8] in the which he will judge the world in righteousness." (Acts 17:31) When they learn this they will see the un-wisdom of attempting to forestall Jehovah's plan, and will cooperate rather in his great and gracious arrangement of first calling and preparing an "elect" church, which by and by shall, as God's "royal priesthood," with their glorious Lord, Jesus, as fully competent missionaries, bless the heathen with the gracious opportunity of salvation promised. Perhaps a signal failure of present missions, and spoiling of pastures, may be God's method for awakening his true servants now deluded and blinded by false doctrines contrary to the Word.

## PROGRESS OF THE CAUSE IN GREAT BRITAIN

The Lord's blessing attends the British branch. Four colporteurs are at work there with good success. Brother Hennings writes of their work thus,—*"The results of their labors for the last two months show that any one of average intelligence and activity can, with the Lord's blessing, sustain himself in the work. Give a clarion call from the WATCH TOWER for more laborers for this great field, advising would-be laborers to write to the British branch for terms, territory, etc."*

Respecting the "Volunteer" service Bro. H. says,—*"The Volunteer work is progressing well; particularly in this city (London), where we have so far put out 14,000 copies. The*

work is going on in four sections of the city. Yesterday was the first day on "double turn" (A. M. and P. M.) and the total number of copies of the Volunteer TOWER distributed was 4,000. At this rate we shall soon be obliged to call on you for funds for another 100,000 edition."

Our Society has just rented a very desirable meeting place where Sunday meetings will be regularly held. It is a public hall opposite the Great Eastern Ry. station, and near Wansted Park station of Midland Ry. The entrance is No. 79 Woodgrange Road, Forest Gate, London E. All who trust in the precious blood of Christ will be cordially welcomed. Seats free. No collections.

## THE COLPORTEUR WORK AT HOME

We have had many additions to this service lately, but still there is room for consecrated laborers. The harvest is great, the laborers few, comparatively, and the time is short

—*"the eleventh hour."* Write us for particulars if you have the desire and the opportunity to thus "preach the Word" by printed page.

## THE MINISTRY OF COMFORT

*"The Lord hath anointed me . . . to comfort all that mourn; to appoint [promise] unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified."*

Isaiah 61:1-3.

Our text is surely good tidings in a very broad and a very deep sense. Its message is one of "comfort," not only to Zion, the consecrated church, but to *all who mourn*; and as mentally we cast our eyes over the world we are deeply impressed with the thought that the vast majority of mankind are in mourning: as the Apostle expresses it, *"The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together."* There are undoubtedly a few who are full, satisfied, and who mourn for nothing, and who, therefore, under these conditions, are excluded from any share in this promised blessing; but they are exceptions to the rule. Some of them are wealthy in this world's goods, and feel that they have need of nothing, and are kept busy with their efforts to enjoy themselves. There are others of the same full class who, tho not wealthy, have a very self-satisfied feeling as respects their moral status: they do not realize themselves as sinners; they do not realize their daily imperfections nor their need of a Savior; and are not mourning for anything, and not therefore in the way to be comforted with any of the comforting assurances and promises and provision which the Lord has made for those who mourn.

So far as the world is concerned, our Lord's ministry of comfort to them is chiefly a future work. We rejoice, however, that the time is sure to come when all that mourn, all the "groaning creation," shall be brought under the blessed influences and provisions of the Millennial kingdom, and shall there come to know the consolations which God has provided in Christ.—the balm for every trouble, every wound; the cure for every blight, every sin and every imperfection; and their privilege of profiting by these to the fullest measure by giving themselves unreservedly into the care of the Good Physician. But the poor world, blinded and deceived by the god of this world as respects the character and plan of Jehovah, can neither see, hear, nor appreciate now the wonderful pro-

visions made for them, and hence they cannot receive the blessing, the consolation, the "comfort" now, but must wait for it until the establishment of the Lord's kingdom, the binding of Satan, and the opening of their understanding with the eye-salve of the truth.

But as respects Zion, the consecrated church, this comfort is now her privilege, and all children of Zion need to be comforted. First of all, they need the comforting knowledge that their sins are forgiven, and that they are no longer strangers and aliens and foreigners, but children of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord, if so be that they suffer with him. They need to be comforted, too, with the assurances of the Lord's Word that our God is very sympathetic, "very pitiful," and that if anyone be overtaken in a fault he may be restored, and "not be utterly cast down." If the children of Zion had no such consolations as these they surely would be utterly discouraged, disheartened, and faint by the way; hence the Lord has provided these comforting assurances, pointing out to them that having begun a good work in them he is desirous of completing it, if they will permit him to do so, and that to this end they must abide in Christ by faith, coupled with obedience to the extent of their ability. What Christian is there who has not shared these consolations, these comforts, and what Christian has not needed them, and realized that without them he would long since have been undone?

The Scriptures point out to us that our comfort comes through fellowship with the heavenly Father and with our Lord Jesus: we are comforted, not by believing that they are ignorant of our weaknesses and shortcomings, nor that they have a low standard of righteousness and a sinful basis of fellowship, but quite to the contrary of all this, they comfort us with the assurance that altho our every imperfection is known to the Lord he is yet very sympathetic, very merci-

ful; and that having provided, in the great sacrifice at Calvary, a full propitiation (satisfaction) for all sins, the Lord is very pleased to apply, on behalf of each of his adopted children, in full measure, the riches of grace necessary to the covering and offsetting of every unintentional, unapproved error and failure. What comfort is here! What consolation! What privileges of fellowship with the Father and with the Son!

And this comfort, the Scriptures assure us, comes to us through the holy spirit—it is the channel, and, hence indeed, called the Comforter. (John 14:26) Those who have the holy spirit may have the comfort; those who do not have the holy spirit may not have this comfort, this consolation. It is only as we receive of the spirit of the Lord, the mind of the Lord, his disposition, that we are able to understand and appreciate the lengths and breadths, the heights and depths of his love and compassion and provision for us, and to be comforted thereby.

Nevertheless, this comfort of the holy spirit (the channel of divine favor), reaches us through the Scriptures, for the Scriptures are the medium, or sub-channel through which the knowledge of God's grace and the comfort of all knowledge reach us; in the Apostle's language, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."—Rom. 15:4.

Yet while this comfort is of the Father, through the Son, by the holy spirit, communicated through the Scriptures, we are informed that in great measure it is communicated by the members of the body of Christ one to another, as the Apostle, for instance, after relating certain features of the divine plan respecting the deliverance of the church, says, "Wherefore, comfort one another with these words." (1 Thess. 4:18) Similarly, the Apostle declares that he sent Timothy to the church at Ephesus, and again to the church at Colosse, that *he might comfort their hearts*. This, of course, signifies that he was to draw their attention to the exceeding great and precious promises of the Lord's Word, and that thus they might drink in the holy spirit of all the promises, and that thus they might be comforted, not only with respect to the things promised, but with respect to the loving compassion and sympathy of him who promises them.

Writing to the Thessalonians, the Apostle says that he sent Timothy—"to establish you and to comfort you concerning your faith, that no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto: for verily, when we were with you we told you we should suffer tribulation, even as it came to pass and ye know. For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you." (1 Thess. 3:2-5) Here again it is evident that the comforting signifies and implies establishment in the faith once de-

livered to the saints, that all the terms and conditions of our covenant should be clearly held in mind, and that the promises of reward at the end of the journey might serve to comfort, strengthen and establish the children of Zion in their endurance of the tribulations as good soldiers. This comfort, again, was of the Lord, through the holy spirit, through the agency of Paul and Timothy. Again, the same Apostle, speaking in the same strain, says: "Wherefore, comfort yourselves together and edify one another, even as also ye do."—1 Thess. 5:11.

All of the Lord's people need to remember that in proportion as they are ambassadors of the Lord, and his representatives, it will be their privilege not only by and by in the kingdom to "comfort all that mourn," and to be the trees of righteousness, whose leaves will be for the healing of the nations (Rev. 22:2), but they should remember that in the present life they have a ministry of comfort to perform also, toward all who mourn in Zion—toward all of the Lord's people who are in any tribulation, physical or mental disquiet, disease; and they should remember, too, that just in proportion as they are filled with this spirit now, it is their privilege to bind up the broken-hearted, and comfort the mourning ones. No one can have this spirit of helpfulness, this disposition to comfort and to strengthen, and to edify, and to up-build the household of faith, except he have in considerable measure the spirit of the truth, the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of love: and in proportion as each seeks to cultivate this privilege of brotherly helpfulness, in comforting and up-building and strengthening, in that same proportion he will find the spirit of love developing and abounding in his own heart, and that his likeness to the Lord Jesus, the Head of the body, is becoming more pronounced from day to day and from year to year.

Finally, in view of what we have seen respecting the Lord's goodness toward his people, and the methods by which he comforts them through the holy spirit, the Scriptures and the brethren, let us note one of the Apostle's expressions respecting the great comfort and consolation which God has provided for his consecrated, faithful people, saying:—

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."—2 Cor. 1:3, 4.

So then, all of our lessons and experiences in life in connection with trials and difficulties and tribulations, if we are rightly exercised by them, should bring us larger experiences in the Lord's comfort, through the gracious promises of his Word and the spirit of the same; and should make us the more capable and efficient agents and representatives of the Lord, his Word and his spirit, in communicating comfort to others about us in their trials and difficulties.

## "FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS"

MATT. 18:21-35.—AUGUST 12.

Apparently this lesson grew out of the preceding one on the necessity for guarding against stumbling the least of the Lord's little ones. It would appear that Peter had immediately attempted to put into practice the instructions of the previous lesson, and it was his inquiry as to how often it would be his duty to exercise forgiveness toward a repentant brother, that gave our Lord the opportunity to inculcate a lesson upon the subject of forgiveness.

The teaching of the Jewish rabbis on the subject of forgiveness was, that if the wrong-doer repented of his evil words or actions and came to the aggrieved person, acknowledging his wrong and asking forgiveness, he should be granted forgiveness as often as three times. They based their teaching on this subject on the statements of Job 33:29—margin, and Amos 2:4. Our Lord's teaching on the subject was, in many respects, the reverse of this, and required the offended one to go to the offender to make inquiry respecting the matter, and to show him his fault. This would require great humility on the part of the one who felt himself aggrieved, for it is much easier to resent and avoid the injurer, than to go to him according to the rule which our Lord has laid down. Peter seems to have gotten the impression that the Lord's rule, being different from that of the rabbis in this respect, would also probably be more generous and require that forgiveness be granted a larger number of times; hence Peter adds together the three and the four times mentioned by Amos, making seven in all, and inquires whether the Lord would have his followers be generous and forgiving to those

who trespassed against them to that extent—seven times. What must have been his astonishment, and that of all the apostles, to hear the Lord say that forgiveness should be accorded, practically, times without number—seventy times seven.

The thought would seem to be that those who become the Lord's people, partakers of his Spirit, the spirit of love, will, in proportion as they are filled with that spirit and led by that Spirit, be so generous, so magnanimous, so loving, that they would not only be willing but glad to forgive a repentant brother;—glad to be first to extend the olive branch and to make his way back to reconciliation and harmony as smooth as possible. From hearts full of pride, envy, malice and other elements of the spirit of selfishness and sin, and merely topped off with a coat of benevolence and generosity, it will be impossible to dip out very much of the spirit of forgiveness, without dipping out with it some of the bitterness and hatred; and even with this mixture forgiveness could not be granted very freely by an unregenerated heart. But with a heart emptied of malice, and hatred and envy, and filled with brotherly kindness, meekness, patience, gentleness, forbearance, love, we may dip a cup of forgiveness on every occasion and as oft as it may be applied for, and it will be without a mixture of evil, bitterness, sarcasm, etc., but pure and unadulterated, generous, loving forgiveness.

We are to remember, however, that this holy Spirit which we have in our earthen vessels did not abound there at first, but with all was merely a surface coating, as it were, to be-

gim with. Gradually, as the holy Spirit increased in our hearts and abounded, it displaced the wrong spirit: hence those who are able from their hearts to dip the cup of forgiveness repeatedly and without a mixture of evil thereby give evidence that they have been with Jesus and have learned of him, and that they have drunk deeply of his spirit, and that they have been purging out the old leaven of malice, and are being sanctified by the truth, being made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. We are to remember that this growth in grace, while it has a positive time of beginning, in our consecration vow, is nevertheless a gradual work, requiring patient perseverance in well-doing, requiring also that the old nature, with its evil disposition, be mortified continually—deadened—so that our minds may be renewed under the transforming influence of the spirit of the truth, in which we are to grow daily.

The "seventy times seven," mentioned by our Lord, we would not understand to signify a limited number of times, but rather an unlimited number—that whoever has the Lord's Spirit will be glad at any time to witness a repentance of evil-doers and to accord them forgiveness. This does not imply, however, that there may be no penalties attached with the forgiveness; as, for instance, in the dealing of a parent with a child, the moral obliquity of the misconduct may be forgiven, and the parent's indignation against the disobedience of misbehavior pass away immediately, and yet it may be proper at times to impose some penalty on the trespassing child. In every such case, however, it should be clearly understood by the child that this is not because of the parent's disfavor, which has ceased in the forgiveness, but that his peculiar parental duty requires that a lesson shall be taught which will be helpful to the child in the formation of character. In such a case the love of the parent will of necessity be generous, sympathetic, and careful that the punishment shall be only such as might properly be of benefit to the child—correction in righteousness, not in wrath. However, such corrections as this belong only to parents and guardians, and do not properly extend to brethren in the Lord's family, who are not commissioned to judge and to punish one another, but to assist one another.—the Master's words to such being most positive and emphatic, "Judge nothing before the time." "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath." "Remember him who hath said, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord."

"Hear of the same inheritance,  
Child of the self-same God.  
He hath but stumbled in the path  
We have in weakness trod."

In the family of God, the saints, begotten of the holy spirit, are all to be recognized as brethren, and to be dealt with accordingly. It is the new creature, and not the old creature, that is the brother in Christ; hence we may love the new creature, and in some respects have very little love for the old, just as all have disrespect for certain blemishes in their own mortal flesh, as they realize its weakness and imperfection.—and the more so in proportion as they grow in the divine likeness as new creatures. If, therefore, a brother should trespass against us it should be our first thought that this wrong done us is not by the brother, the new creature in Christ, but by his mortal flesh, which for the moment has gotten the upper hand with him or to some extent blinded him. Accordingly, instead of feeling angry with the brother, we should feel sympathetic, and our hearts should go out to him, and our desire be strong to do him good and to help him to overcome the weaknesses of his earthen vessel.

It is in line with this thought that our Lord suggests that the proper course is for the aggrieved one to go quietly, without saying a word to anyone else, and have a kindly conference with the one who is doing him wrong, seeking to point out the merits and denials of the question at issue, and if possible to gain the brother back to fellowship, righteousness, harmony with the Lord. If this shall be unavailing, the next step shall be still a secret one—the taking of two or three brethren of supposedly good heart and large experience, and that without attempting to prejudice their minds, and to ask these to hear the cause and to give counsel as to which one is in error. Whichever of the brethren is in error should be convinced by his fellow-pilgrims, whose arguments with him should be based upon the Scriptures and the spirit of love; but if differences still exist between them, and cannot be harmonized then, as a court of last resort, the matter should be taken before the church—the consecrated—and after

being heard by the church, its decision should be considered final, and be accepted by all. If either of the brethren still have doubts as to his receiving justice in the matter he may console himself with the thought that he will surely obtain a blessing by giving full and hearty assent to the Lord's arrangements, even if he have so large a measure of self-conceit that he still believes his side of the question to be right, notwithstanding the judgment of all the brethren to the contrary.

Whoever will thus humble himself in obedience to the voice of the church will have a blessing, and as we understand the Lord, it will be reasonable for him to expect that the voice of the church in such a matter will be supernaturally guided, that truth and righteousness may triumph. But amongst the Lord's people, let us not forget that this is the highest tribunal, and that brother should not go to law with brother in the worldly courts, however much he may feel himself aggrieved: if he have the forgiving spirit he certainly will rest the matter where the Lord directs, and that too without harboring any unkind or ungenerous sentiments. This will be the certain effect of the indwelling of the spirit of holiness, the spirit of love.

In respect to dealings with those who are without, in the matter of forgiveness, believing husbands dealing with unbelieving wives or believing wives dealing with unbelieving husbands or believing persons in business relationship with unbelievers: the same spirit of love and generosity and forgiveness will apply in every case but not exactly the same way. The believer should be generous toward the unbeliever—he should expect in himself a larger measure of generosity than he would expect from the unbeliever because he has had lessons and experiences in the school of Christ which the unbeliever never had; he has received the new mind, which the unbeliever knows not of. He should not only, therefore, be just in his dealings, but additionally, in proportion as he may be able, he should be generous, forgiving, not too exacting.

However, if an unbelieving partner has attempted a fraud, the believing partner, while exercising a spirit of generosity toward him, if the matter appears to have been wilful, should deliver the offender to the world's courts, which he acknowledges, not prosecuting in a spirit of anger or malice or hatred, but as doing his duty toward society for the suppression of evil-doers in proportion as the laws and arrangements of the world are reasonable from a Christian standpoint. And even if he should fully forgive, concluding that there were extenuating circumstances which would not require that he should deliver the guilty one to the judges of earthly courts, he might properly enough esteem it to be his duty to have no further dealings with such a person, whom he could not trust. This would not imply any lack of forgiveness, but merely a reasonable and commendable prudence.

Indeed, the consecrated people of God are admonished by the Apostle not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers, and this might not unreasonably be applied, not only to marriage, but also to business engagements and alliances. Similarly the Apostle informs us that if the unbelieving husband or wife choose to depart from the believer, the latter may conclude that it is providential and for his deliverance from an unequal yoke, as the Apostle says, "Let the unbeliever depart"—permit him to cancel the marriage contract if he will.

#### THE PARABLE OF THE TWO DEBTORS

As was his custom, our Lord illustrated his teaching on this subject with a parable: the king, in the parable, first forgives one of his servants a very large indebtedness—that is, he permits him to go free, as tho he had no such indebtedness against him, that he might do what he could toward the payment of the debt. This servant in turn finds a fellow-servant who owes him a trifling sum, and who likewise promises its payment: but the unmerciful servant, not having the spirit of the king, is ungenerous and exacting, and refusing forgiveness attempts to exact it through force. The matter reaching the ears of the king, he is justly incensed at such conduct on the part of one who has himself been so generously treated, and, in consequence, he puts in operation the machinery of justice which will punish the unmerciful servant by now requesting of him the payment of his full debt; and our Lord followed the parable with the statement, "So likewise shall the heavenly Father do to you if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses."

Not only did our Lord address these words to the disciples and not to the multitude, but additionally he declared that the illustration was applicable to those reckoned members of his kingdom, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto" this parable. The parable, therefore, is not an illustration



of the Lord's dealings with the world of mankind, but rather an illustration of his dealings with those who have become separated from the world through the forgiveness of their sins, and who additionally have become heirs of the kingdom through consecration of themselves to the Lord Jesus, to suffer with him, if so be that they may also reign with him. The parable, therefore, is to the church, and suggests to us that our original sin was not blotted out, not forgiven in the absolute sense of the word forgiven, but in the language of the Scriptures, "covered." "Blessed is the man whose sin is covered, to whom the Lord doth not impute iniquity."—Psalm 32:1, 2; Acts 3:19.

Our sins were covered from the Lord's sight, and we were treated as tho we owed him nothing, by his grace, exercised toward us through Christ Jesus and his atoning sacrifice; and this reckoned forgiveness will be made actual by and by, and the debt entirely canceled, if, according to the \*New Covenant we have made with the Lord, we shall prove faithful in cultivating his spirit of love and in becoming copies of his dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,—forgiving others as we would be forgiven by the Lord, loving, sympathizing with and helping others as we have been treated by the Lord, etc.

The parable is but an illustration of the Golden Text of our lesson, taken from the Lord's prayer: it is only so long as we are willing to forgive our debtors that we may pray with confidence to our heavenly Father and hope for his forgiveness of our trespasses. If we forgive not our fellow-creatures, and that not merely in word, but in deed and from the heart, neither will our heavenly Father forgive our trespasses, and although he has generously covered them from his sight, and treated us as justified by faith, he would immediately remember our trespasses against us, and thus our justification would lapse or be abrogated, by a failure on our part to exercise the holy spirit toward the brethren and toward all men as we have opportunity.

From this standpoint the question of forgiveness of the brethren and forgiveness of all others is a very serious one to the Lord's people. It means that if they do not in a reasonable time develop this spirit of forgiveness, the spirit of love, the Spirit of God, the holy Spirit, they cannot continue to be recognized as Christ's disciples, they cannot continue to be recognized as children of God, they cannot be recognized as having their sins covered, but, on the contrary, will be treated as even more responsible than the world of mankind in general, and have executed upon them severer punishments than will be exacted from others who knew not the Master's will, and who have never tasted of his grace, and who therefore would be less culpable in the exercise of a selfish, uncharitable, ungenerous, unforgiving spirit.

We cannot suppose, however, that the Lord would expect perfection in this matter at once, from those who are still but "babes" in Christ. But his expectations are reasonable, that we should grow in grace as we grow in knowledge of him, and as expressed in the lesson of the Vine and the Branches; every branch which in due time, after due opportunity, does not bring forth the fruitage of the vine, the grapes of love (including forgiveness), will be cut off by the great Husbandman,—no longer recognized as a branch. So in this parable, the one who had experienced such great blessing from the king, and who had been reckoned for the time an honored member of his kingdom-class, ceased to be so regarded and so treated, and, on the contrary, was treated by the king without favor.

The statement that the unmerciful servant would be de-

\* See June 15, 1919, issue for critical examination of Covenants

livered to the tormentors, until he should pay the uttermost farthing of his debt, might be understood in either of two ways. First, we might understand it to represent the original debt resting against every member of the human family—the penalty of death—a penalty from which our Lord Jesus redeemed all, and from which he proposes to set free all who will obey him. In this view of the matter the unmerciful servant's penalty would signify a delivery to the second death. Or if the debt be understood as representing, in whole or in part, the obligations of his covenant as a new creature, then the penalty upon him for failure to develop and manifest the characteristics of the new creature during the trial-time might be understood to signify that such an one, tho an accepted servant of the Lord, would be required to comply with the full details of his consecration vow, by going into the great time of trouble, and there meeting to the full the demands of his covenant, and learning effectually the lesson of love and sympathy, and to appreciate the grace of God in the forgiveness of sins, as he never before appreciated it. However, we are inclined to think of this matter from the first of these standpoints, that the exaction of the uttermost farthing would signify a hopeless case, in any of the Lord's people who, after experiencing divine favor in forgiveness of their own sins, should fail within a reasonable time to learn to exercise mercy and forgiveness toward the brethren,—that such would, as a result, suffer the second death.

The Lord's people very generally find themselves in considerable trouble along the line of justice. We all recognize justice as the very foundation of all order and righteousness, and when we feel that justice is on our side, it is proportionately the more difficult to freely forgive the person whom we believe to have been acting from the standpoint of injustice. There is a general tendency to require others to measure up to our standard of justice, by some sort of penance, before we forgive them. It is against this very spirit that our Lord was teaching, and to counteract which he gave this parable. We are to remember that the Lord will require us to live up to the standards we set for others. If our standard in dealing with others be one of exact justice, we may expect no mercy at the Lord's hands. (See James 2:13) And what would this mean as respects the sins that are past through the forbearance of God, and what would it mean as respects the obligations upon us every day and every hour, to whose full requirements we are unable to measure? As we cannot come to the Lord ourselves on the score of justice, so we are not to deal with others upon that standard. As we must ask of the Lord mercy, grace, forgiveness, so we must be willing to extend to others mercy, grace, forgiveness, when they trespass against us; and as heartily, quickly and freely as we ourselves hope for.

The Lord has not laid down this rule in an arbitrary fashion, as simply saying, If you do not forgive others I will not forgive you. There is a deeper reason for it than this. He wishes to develop in us his own spirit, his own character, a likeness or copy of which was exhibited to us in the person and life of his dear Son, our Lord Jesus. It is absolutely essential, therefore, that we shall have the character he desires, or else we can never attain to the joint-heirship in the kingdom which he is pleased to extend. Hence we are to understand that this requirement or command of forgiveness, etc., is with a view to develop us as copies of his dear Son, in order that he may bestow upon us, in due time, all the riches of his grace, contained in the exceeding great and precious promises of his Word.

## "WHO DID SIN, THIS MAN OR HIS PARENTS?"

AUGUST 19.—JOHN 9:1-17.

Every traveler in eastern countries is sure to be impressed by the fact that blindness is much more common there than in Europe and America. Tabulated information on this subject, in *Encyclopedia Americana*, shows that in 1870 the proportion of blind in America was one in 1900 population; in Europe the proportion was larger, viz., one in 1094; while in China the average was one in 400 population. According to no less an authority than Dr. Geikie, Egypt has one blind person to every 100 of population. Palestine lying near to Egypt, and having conditions very similar, especially amongst the lower classes, may be supposed to have had at least half as many, viz., the terribly large proportion of one in every 200 of population.

Canon Tristan, writing on the subject, says:—

"Blindness is common in Palestine to a degree which we

in western lands can scarcely realize. There is probably no country in the world, except Egypt, where this affliction is so prevalent. At Gaza, for instance, it is said that one-third of the population have lost one or both eyes; and from my own observation in that city I should unhesitatingly say that the statement is not exaggerated. But amongst these cases it is difficult to find any born blind."

This blindness is in great measure the result of the scarcity of water and the neglect of children, whose eyes are in consequence attacked by the flies. The miracle brought to our attention in this lesson differs from the five other instances of the healing of the blind by our Lord, mentioned in the Scriptures, in that this man was born blind. In our Lord's time the science of surgery had not advanced so far as at present, and consequently, as herein stated by the one healed,

the cure was a marvel, the like of which had never been heard of. Even yet we believe that there are only five cases on record of successful operations upon those born blind. Our Lord's cure of such blindness, with the simple prescription used, would therefore be a remarkable miracle today, and much more so was it in that day.

#### ORIENTALISM, MORMONISM, THEOSOPHY

The question of the disciples, whether it was this man's sin or the sin of his parents that caused him to be born blind, implies either an extreme simplicity on their part, not to see that the man could not have sinned before his birth, or quite possibly it implied that some of the absurd notions of the far East—of India—had reached the Jews: one of these was and still is that each child born into the world had a previous existence, in which it had done either good or evil, the rewards or punishments of which were represented in the conditions of the present life. This absurdity is being revived, even in Christian lands, by so-called Theosophists, and by two bodies of people known as "Mormons," in the United States. It is scarcely necessary to point out that such a theory finds no support whatever in any statement of the Scriptures. Quite to the contrary, it is most emphatically contradicted by the Scriptures, which declare man's creation to have been a direct creation from God—not a reincarnation of some being which had previously existed. This thought is consistently maintained throughout the Bible, in that we are distinctly told that the child receives its life from its father, and inherits good or evil according to his course of life, and not according to any course of life of its own in a previous condition or in another world. Thus the Lord declares that he visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation, and shows mercy unto thousands of them that love him and keep his commandments.—Exod. 20:5; Deut. 5:9, 10.

This heredity, we see, comes in the natural order of things. The tendency of sin is not only to break down the moral character, but also to vitiate and impair the physical system, while godliness, altho it cannot repair and make good the impairments of sin, can check these, and hold them measurably in restraint. The Scriptures again contradict this thought, in the declaration, "By one man's disobedience, sin entered into the world, and death as a result of sin, and thus death passed upon all men because [thus] all men became sinners"—by heredity. And if by heredity then not as Theosophy, Mormonism and Orientalism declare;—not in consequence of some previous existence and sin on the part of the child.

The whole matter is squared by the doctrine of the *ransom*, as all may readily see: for if our present blemishes, with which we are born into this world, were the results of sins committed in some previous condition of existence, the death of our Lord Jesus could not cancel them, and the doctrine of a ransom would be disproved. The doctrine of the ransom is unchangeably linked to the doctrine that Adam was a perfect human being in his creation, and that it was *his sin* and condemnation that passed to all of his posterity, through the channel of natural birth. The ransom ("*corresponding price*") given by our Lord Jesus (was a man's life for a man's life: that, "as *by a man came death, by a man also should come the resurrection of the dead.*") Our Lord's ransom sacrifice, being the complete and corresponding price and offset to father Adam's sin, was constituted thereby an offset to all the results of his sin as they appear in his posterity—and thus we all were redeemed by the one sacrifice of Christ, the just for the unjust.

#### IS ALL SICKNESS OF THE DEVIL?

An increasingly large number of Christian people—including those who refuse medicines—are reaching the conclusion that all sickness is the direct result of sin and the work of the devil; and therefore that godly living will prevent sickness: and that in the event of sickness, if it be punishment for sin, medicines should not be used, but, on the contrary, prayer should be made to God for the forgiveness of sin for which sickness is a punishment, and that the cure of the disease should be expected as a reward of repentance and faith exercised.

We wonder how these Christian friends view this lesson. Like the disciples, they evidently would conclude that a man born blind must have been so born on account of sin—if not his own sin, the sins of his parents—for they account for all disease from this standpoint. Unfortunately they feel so satisfied with their conclusions on the subject that they do not inquire of the Lord, as did the apostles. And they do not hear his answer here given—that it was neither sin on the

part of the man, nor on the part of his parents, which occasioned his blindness.

If they were students of the Word they would note also the numerous statements of Scripture which clearly point out that calamities are not always punishments for sins: for instance, our Lord's declaration respecting the Galileans whose blood was mingled with the sacrifices, and those upon whom the tower of Siloam fell and slew them. (Luke 13:1-5) Our Lord distinctly declares that these calamities did not indicate that the sufferers were sinners above other men. Likewise, in the case of the sickness and death of Lazarus. Our Lord declares, not that it was because of sin on the part of Lazarus, but that it was permitted in order to be for the glory of God. So in this lesson he declares that the fact that the man was born blind was not on account of sin, but on the contrary, "that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

We are not denying that sin frequently brings sickness; on the contrary, we affirm this, and confirm this view with our Lord's words to some of those whom he healed, "Go sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee." There is a great difference, however, between claiming that all sickness is of sin and the devil, and admitting that much of it is produced or intensified by sin. We go even further than this, and admit that in a general way all the blemishes of the present time may be indirectly traced to our great adversary, Satan. For had it not been for his fall, and for the temptations which he presented to our first parents, we may suppose that there would have been no sin in the world; consequently no imperfection, no sighing, no crying, no dying. But it is thoroughly wrong to credit to Satan's power all the difficulties which we experience. We are glad indeed that he is limited and restrained; because under the weaknesses with which we are born we find quite sufficient of evil disposition and weakness received by heredity, and operating, not only between parent and child, but between neighbor and neighbor. We may be glad indeed that Satan's power to deceive is not permitted to vitiate our minds contrary to our wills, and not permitted to break down our wills, except as we give them over to sympathy and contact with evil things. We may be glad also that sickness and death working in man are not wholly subject to the prince of darkness, for altho the Scriptures declare that Satan's power is deathward, they also show us that he does not have this power unlimitedly, but can exercise it only under restraints and restrictions. This is most clearly indicated to us in the case of Job and his family. Rather, the Scriptures teach that Satan's power or influence is the result of the Adamic death operating in mankind and rendering all amenable to Satan's devices and deceptions.—Heb. 2:14.

And, by the way, Job's case is another illustration of sickness and calamities of various kinds which were not the punishments of sin; for have we not Job's own testimony of his love for God, his confidence in him, and his faithful reliance upon him? "Tho he slay me, yet will I trust in him!" And more, we have the Lord's testimony to the same effect, in favor of his servant Job, and in reproof of his friends who wrongly represented that his sickness and calamities were punishments for sin.

We conclude, then, upon Scriptural grounds, that not all sickness is in the nature of sin penalties, but that some sicknesses are as penalties. Hence, when the Christian shall find himself overtaken with sickness or other disasters, he should first of all inquire of himself, before the Lord, whether or not his difficulties are the result of—

(1) A direct violation of the laws of his reason, as for instance, indiscretion in eating, gratification of the appetite in respect to food which he knows is not suited to his physical conditions: or violation of recognized principles of conduct, as, for instance, the endorsing of a note, contrary to the instruction of the Lord's Word (Prov. 6:1, 2), which has brought disaster to many. If he does not find his troubles to be the result of personal *indiscretion* he should look—

(2) To see whether or not *sin* lies at his door; whether or not he has been living inconsistently, and might properly recognize his sickness or trouble as a punishment for his sin, his inconsistency. If he finds it to be so, he should of course immediately rectify the wrong to the extent of his ability and seek forgiveness, mercy, at the throne of the heavenly grace, and expect that after suffering some chastisements he will be released.

(3) Should he fail to find a cause for his difficulties in either of the foregoing, he should consider that quite possibly his difficulty, whatever its nature, was one of the ordinary casualties of life from which God does not wholly fore-

fend his children—desiring them to walk by faith and not by sight: such casualties are necessary, that we may be very sympathetic with the world's troubles.

(4) In some instances, as in Job's case and the case before us in this lesson, troubles may ultimately be found to have been *permitted* by the Lord, to be channels of mercy and blessing, if rightly received, as in these cases.

(5) In all troubles, whether for discipline or for instruction in righteousness and the development of character, the children of God (and we are not considering others now) should forthwith begin to seek the blessing which they may be sure God has in store for them when he permits adversities. And this should not hinder their use of any means for relief upon which they can conscientiously ask the divine blessing: on the same principle that we labor for and eat the daily bread for which we pray, and which is none the less of divine provision.

The work of God made manifest in this blind man was not merely in the miracle performed upon his natural eyes. It extended beyond this, and testified to the beholders the power of God, operating in Messiah. And it extended still further, in the case of the man who was healed: leading to the opening of the eyes of his understanding, it inducted him into discipleship to Christ. Had he not been born blind, had he not passed through just the experiences through which he did pass, how can we judge that he would have been in a better condition of heart to receive the Messiah than the educated Pharisees, who, with good natural sight, were thoroughly blinded respecting Messiah, his teachings and his work, so that they crucified him?

And so it is in many instances with many who become the Lord's people. Looking back they can clearly see that things which at the time seemed to be adversities, disappointments, troubles, disadvantages, hardships, were really great blessings, in that they led to the opening of the eyes of their understanding,—were really providences and blessings in disguise. Those who do so realize the divine care, looking back can praise the way God has led them day by day.

#### CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MISBELIEFS

Amongst the various false doctrines of today none appears more inconsistent from the standpoint of science and Christianity, than the system which brazenly and defiantly, and in perversion of truth and conscience unites these two words as its name. It would be amusing, we may be sure, to hear one of the devotees of this theory explain this Scripture. For, notwithstanding the fact that their entire system is in opposition to the Scriptures, they make a cloak, a pretense, of believing the Scriptures, and of using them in support of their theory—chiefly with novices. We may be sure that they would attempt to twist and juggle it in some manner, and get it so far away from the truth and the subject as at least to confuse many people, who have very little knowledge of the Bible and shallow powers of reasoning, especially those “who have not their senses exercised by reason of use,” in connection with Scriptural subjects.—Heb. 5:14.

Their theory is that there is no such thing as blindness, that it is simply a mistaken thought, a misbelief: since the parents of the blind man could not have misbelieved that their child would be born blind, the child itself, we presume they would say, got this misimpression before its birth. And then we have the inconsistency increased, for every one of intelligence knows that the infant at birth has no thought, correct or incorrect, on any subject. The fallacy of this theory is likewise proven, in the case of those born deaf and dumb. But argument and reason have no more force with “Christian Scientists” than have the Scriptures. Their infatuation with their delusion is so great that they are fully prepared to wrest facts, reason, and Scriptures—and then, in perversion of all truth and consistency, they call this “Christian Science.”

We are not contending with them respecting their use of the word “Science,” for the most stupid should be able to see that there is nothing scientific in connection with their theory: but we do contend respecting their use of the word “Christian,” because many do not recognize that they have not the slightest right to the use of this term. Our contention is that a Christian Scientist of full development, cannot be a Christian in any Scriptural sense of the word.

(1) A Christian is one who believes in God the Father, and in our Lord Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent to be a propitiation for our sins, our Redeemer, and ultimately the Deliverer of all these who obey him. But Christian Science denies the very existence of God, claiming to believe merely in a *principle* of Good. To whatever extent a man has a

good principle, the God-quality is in him, say they; and to whatever extent a horse or a dog may have the good principles, to that extent these are Gods, and to be loved, etc., accordingly. Denying the Father, they of course deny also the Son whom he sent: and altho they acknowledge Jesus, it is not with a Christian acknowledgement. On the contrary, they hold that he was merely a member of the Adamic family, and that his preëminence above others was in respect to his character and teachings. And they claim that while, in these respects, he stood higher than other men of his day, yet he but feebly grasped at certain principles or truths which are today brought to the world by her distinguished highness, “Mrs Dr. Eddy,” who thus poses as being greater than Jesus, as an elephant is greater than a mouse; tho there be certain resemblances.

(2) A Christian is one who believes in Christ as a Saviour from sin as well as from its consequences;—death and its concomitants of pain, etc. But Christian Scientists deny that there is any sin, and deny also, that there are any consequences of sin; hence, logically, they deny the ransom, for how could there be a *ransom* for sinners, if none are sinners? Thus do they deny and ignore the very *foundation* of Christian faith, without which no one is a Christian—Scripturally.

The absurdities of Christian Science commend themselves only to those who are either Scripturally ignorant, or mentally weak; and their chief attractions are therefore—

(1) The fact that they put on, as a garment of light, gentleness and kindness of word and manner. That these do not grow out of hearts thoroughly converted to the Lord, and begotten of his spirit of love, is manifest: for altho kindness and patience and gentleness are manifested, the true essence of these is lacking, namely, love. Instead of manifesting love to be the mainspring of their meekness, patience, gentleness, they manifest ambition and money-love as their inspiring motives—so far as we are able to judge the tree by its fruits. So far as we are able to learn, their efforts to promulgate their views are confined to those who are able and willing to *pay* for the instruction good round prices; and so far as we are able to discern, their care of the sick shows a love of money, and love of fame; and hence very few of the poor of this world have been injured by the doctrines of Christian Science, or cured of disease by its treatment.

(2) The cure of disease without medicine, and sometimes almost miraculously, is in the nature of things calculated to attract and interest the “groaning creation”—just as the advertisements of patent medicines attract them. We unhesitatingly assert our conviction, that this power, manifested through Christian Scientists, is not of God, but of the adversary, directly, or indirectly. He no doubt directs his servants into the use of channels and means of which humanity in general, and even many learned physicians, are comparatively ignorant—channels of human nature, which, possibly, in the future may be used by the Lord during the times of restitution of all things. Our justification in ascribing their cures to an evil source, instead of to a good source, lies in the fact that they utterly repudiate the principles of Christianity, and we may be sure God would not coöperate to assist with his power those who deny his very existence, and who make void the gospel of the redemption through the blood of Christ. The miracle-working power in them we believe to be the same as the miracle-working power in Spiritism and in Orientalism, and in the charms of other Occultists—namely, Satanic power.

If it be asked, How could Satan be interested in doing a good work? we answer: He does no such work amongst those who are thoroughly and stupidly ignorant: he is doing these works merely in the most civilized lands, and especially amongst the most enlightened of the people in the various denominations of Christendom. The adversary thus assumes the garment of an angel of light and mercy, not to lead to the Light of the world—not to lead to the cross of Christ—not to lead to the Bible—but to lead away from these, to another hope of salvation, and to another teacher: to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect. And be it remembered that our Lord's words indicate that when matters come to this condition, where Satan will cast out Satan and heal disease, it is a marked evidence that his throne is tottering to its fall—that, so to speak, this is the last extremity of the adversary's efforts to deceive.

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The Lord's method of giving sight to the blind man, we may reasonably suppose, was parabolic—that is to say, it contains a lesson under a figure. Since our Lord did not