

great is the harvest, and few the laborers. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest to send more reapers into the field." Matt. 9:37-38; John 4:35. And so in harmony with these verses I thankfully and humbly accept the Lord's invitation and say, Lord here am I, send me, send me.

I therefore await your pleasure in the assignment of territory, and by the Lord's grace am pleased to subscribe myself, A fellow servant in the Redeemer,
J. H. COLE.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

I am just in receipt of "Heavenly Manna." It will serve to stir up the mind by way of remembrance day by day, bringing to our attention precious words of doctrine, reproof, instruction, admonition, warning, comfort, consolation and encouragement from the divine storehouse provided by our heavenly Father, which I trust he will bless to our good and development into the Christ character.

I pray that our heavenly Father will continue to use you in the dispensing of "meat in due season" to the household of faith, and that he will continue to grant you abundant supplies of grace and strength to overcome all the trials and temptations and persecutions incident to so prominent an office in the body of Christ.

With much love and best wishes for the New Year to you,
Dear Brother, I am

Yours in fellowship and service,

A. E. BURGESS,—*Michigan.*

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST:—

I received the "Heavenly Manna" book last evening. I am sure it will be the source of many blessings to me throughout the year.

This morning we took the January 20th text and read your words of comment, and as we realized that we were considering

the same subject that you all at the "Bible House" were discussing, we enjoyed it the more, and were stirred to better thought: to a greater endeavor to get every point fully before our minds. I trust that as the year goes on we may become better able to get the full benefit of the subjects.

All the family join with me in sending you our Christian love and best wishes that the present year may be filled with rich blessings for yourself and all the brethren there.

Your Brother in the blessed Hope,

W. S. McNAUGHT, *Iowa.*

Dear Brethren of the WATCH TOWER:—

I want to tell you the story of one little tract. A few weeks ago I heard that an old friend, that I had not heard from for years until this fall, was in the hospital in Kansas City for treatment. I wrote to him immediately, sending him Tract No. 7. He received it just as he was starting to the doctor's office, so handed the tract to a man in the same ward, lying there with an amputated leg and swearing. When my friend returned he found the swearing man with tears streaming down his face. He said that was the best little book he ever saw, and wanted to keep it to hunt the references. He said he was done swearing.

Now, the friend is here visiting us. We found him to be a consecrated Christian, but in utter darkness as respects present truth. Today he was with us in our little meeting and was much surprised to learn of our Lord's presence, but he seemed to have a hearing ear, so we rejoice and point him to the helps our Lord has provided; for our tongues are so clumsy. I do hope our Lord will some day loose my tongue, so I can tell the blessed "old, old story" more smoothly.

Yours in love of our Lord,

MRS. S. B. STRATE,—*Illinois.*

THE GREAT DELUSION OF OUR TIME

J. H. DENNISON IN "ATLANTIC MONTHLY."

It would be but human if this age were a trifle supercilious, not to say deluded, concerning its own powers. Great things have been said of it, nor can it be denied that it has fallen heir to great things. At least it has enjoyed and tested beyond all other ages the fruit of the tree of knowledge. "It is an epoch," says John Fiske, "the grandeur of which dwarfs all others that can be named since the beginning of the historic period, if not since man first became distinctively human. In their mental habits, in their methods of inquiry, and in the data at their command, the men of the present day who have fully kept pace with the scientific movement are separated from the men whose education ended in eighteen hundred and thirty by an immeasurably wider gulf than has ever before divided one progressive generation of men from their predecessors. The intellectual development of the human race has been suddenly, almost abruptly, raised to a higher plane than that upon which it had proceeded from the days of the primitive troglodyte to the days of our great grandfathers."

This statement is so far true that it is dangerous. Doubtless there are a great many people, possibly a majority of so-called educated men, who would, without considering the limitations of scientific knowledge, accept these words literally, who have formed the habit of thinking that the light which we possess today is, compared with that possessed by Luther or George Washington or Socrates, as sunlight to starlight. Their view is not only that we know infinitely more than George Washington knew, but that we alone possess the final criteria of knowledge. Socrates and Washington knew a good deal, but they knew vaguely; they could not distinguish accurately between fact and delusion. Our supreme advantage is supposed to be not only that we know, but that we *know* we know.

The egotistic cast or vogue of thought envelops the mind of the age. It is more authoritative than Kaiser or Pope, than dogma or creed. It percolates through all classes, it penetrates our literature, its colors our judgment. It predetermines our view, shapes the outline of our facts, and is interwoven with the texture of our thought. In a considerable proportion of our typical men it has bred a sense of supreme judicial qualification. In the presence of a magisterial equipment so vast and complete, men of previous ages appear dwarfed; their efforts seem infantile. Even Jesus appears to grope. Our Scientific Judiciary does indeed reverence the purity of his spirit; but when it comes to his authority, or his views about God, they tenderly but firmly put him out of court.

"PRIDE GOETH BEFORE DESTRUCTION"

Now this sovereign attitude of the human mind has in the course of history proved intoxicating, and therefore perilous. There was a man once who said, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built?" Too much magistracy had begun to impair the finer workings of his mind. His next step was to eat straw like an ox. He lost sight somehow of organic relations. This suggests a vital question. Does our age actually possess the equipment for a magisterial attitude? Let us apply a test: Let us take those writers who most thoroughly represent the magisterial attitude of our times; let us see what light they throw on the social problem, what that radiance is which has caused the glory of Socrates and of Jesus to grow pale, and has made the intellectual distance between Washington and ourselves so vast that we can hardly see him. I quote from an article by Brooks Adams in the Atlantic Monthly for last November:

THE ABSURDITY OF "EVOLUTION" SHOWN

"From the humblest peasant to the mightiest empire humanity is waging a ceaseless and pitiless struggle for existence in which the unfit perish. This struggle is maintained with every weapon and by every artifice, and success is attained not only by endurance and sagacity, but by cunning and ferocity. Chief, however, among the faculties which have given superiority, must rank the martial quality, for history teaches us that nothing can compensate a community for defeat in battle. War is competition in its fiercest form." "Human destiny has been wrought out through war." "The first settlers slew the Indians, or were themselves slain. . . . To consolidate an homogeneous empire we crushed the social system of the South, and lastly we cast forth Spain. The story is written in blood, and common sense teaches us that as the past has been, so will be the future."

Applying this pitiless principle to our commercial relations, Mr. Adams argues that our only salvation is to maintain it to the bitter end. There is no hope of improvement; the human organism must fight or die. "The evolution of human society, like that of the brute, must be along lines of pitiless warfare." Notice in this quotation what the light of today is, according to Mr. Adams; it is the doctrine of Natural Selection. By its "pure white light" he discerns without any illusions the pathway of society. "Human destiny has been wrought out through war." "Dreams of peace have always allured mankind to their undoing." "Nature has decreed that animals shall

compete for life, in other words, destroy or be destroyed. We can hope for no exemption from the common lot." Surely nothing could be more logical than this.

It ought to come with a shock to those who have never thought out in their own minds the unlimited application of this modern scientific theory to human life. It has been said by the highest authority, "Natural Selection works through death." As Mr. Adams has put it, *war is Nature's decree, not human brotherhood*. The latter, alas, is an illusion, a tradition handed down from the vague and inconsequential ages. Nature's real decree for mankind is war to the knife.

SELFISHNESS IN ALL MEN

In a powerfully written article by Mr. London on the "Scab," the same view is maintained. I quote the following:—

"In a competitive society, where men struggle with one another for food and shelter, what is more natural than that generosity, when it diminishes the food and shelter of men other than he who is generous, should be held an accursed thing? . . . To strike at a man's food and shelter is to strike at his life, and in a society organized on a tooth-and-nail basis, such an act, performed though it may be under the guise of generosity, is none the less menacing and terrible.

"It is for this reason that a laborer is so fiercely hostile to another laborer who offers to work for less pay or longer hours. . . .

"Thus, the generous laborer, giving more of a day's work for less return, . . . threatens the life of his less generous brother laborer, and, at the best, if he does not destroy that life, he diminishes it. Whereupon the less generous laborer looks upon him as an enemy, and, as men are inclined to do in a tooth-and-nail society, he tries to kill the man who is trying to kill him.

"When a striker kills with a brick the man who has taken his place, he has no sense of wrong-doing. In the deepest holds of his being, though he does not reason the impulse, he has an ethical sanction. He feels dimly that he has justification, just as the home-defending Boer felt, though more sharply, with each bullet he fired at the invading English. Behind every brick thrown by a striker is the selfish 'will to live' of himself and the slightly altruistic will to live of his family. The family-group came into the world before the state-group, and society being still on the primitive basis of tooth and nail, the will to live of the state is not so compelling to the striker as the will to live of his family and himself."

Mr. London scientifically clears up the moral character of the Scab, generously including most of us in his diagnosis. He shows that, however we may appear to the casual observer, we are all Scabs by turn, and that, though outwardly we often seem to be generous, we are really true at heart to the principle of Natural Selection. Concerning each one of us, he remarks, "He does not scab because he wants to scab. No whim of the spirit, no burgeoning of the heart, leads him to give more of his labor-power than they for a certain sum.

"It is because he cannot get work on the same terms as they that he is a Scab. . . . Nobody desires to scab, to give most for least. The ambition of every individual is quite the opposite."

I pass over the argument by which Mr. London goes on to show that everybody, except King Edward and a few people whom hereditary advantage has rescued from the real struggle of life, is at times a Scab.—the laborer, the capitalist, the merchant, the minister of the Gospel, the American nation, the English nation,—in short, every human organism which is in this competitive warfare plays by turn the part of Scab, according as the strategy of its situation requires. We work for less pay to get control of the situation, but having once got control of the situation we use it to crush the Scab, reduce competition, and secure larger returns.

SELFISHNESS IS DEGRADATION, NOT EVOLUTION

I have quoted these two writers because they are representative. Not only have they carefully studied the organization of society, but they clearly reflect the illumination of that philosophy which, more than any other, is the distinguishing and magisterial equipment of our day. It is by light of "Evolution" that we feel qualified to test the Bible, Christianity, and, in fact, every human belief or moral position. For Evolution is to the popular scientific mind so absolutely established as to seem approximately identical with the cosmos itself. It is therefore a final and authoritative test.

It is evident at a glance that both these writers have studied our social problems by the light of Natural Selection, and that this is to their minds the only light worth considering. This fact classifies them as distinctively men of the type referred to by John Fiske. They are, according to him, separated from the men whose education ended in eighteen hundred and thirty by an immensely wider gulf than has ever

before divided one progressive generation of men from their predecessors. For Natural Selection is the authoritative type of Evolution so far as living organisms are concerned, and Evolution is our distinctive magisterial equipment. Scientific observation existed before our time, but it is our peculiar glory (?) to have discovered the scientific philosophy which appears to coördinate, account for, and interrupt all known facts, past and present, and which has therefore suggested the idea of an apparently absolute yet purely intellectual criterion of truth and test of reality.

Moreover, these writers are consistent: they follow their logic to the bitter end. They do not mix things up. Natural Selection, which works through death, figures in their scheme as the sole law of human development. It is Nature's decree. "Dreams of peace are an illusion."—"Human destiny has been wrought out through blood."—"Common sense teaches us that as has been the past so will be the future."—That condemns the Hague Tribunal to the Limbo of hopeless phantasms. It exposes the folly of our modern attempts to mitigate the ferocity of war. We are but trifling with an irresistible force: ferocity and murderous cunning are always Nature's tools, by which she shapes not only our physical but our ethical manhood.

This, then, is the way in which the magisterial doctrine solves our social problems, and this is the present social status of the age which has basked in its light, which "has been suddenly, almost abruptly, raised to a higher plane than that upon which the race had proceeded from the days of the primitive troglodyte to the days of our great-grandfathers."

Let us take account of stock. We have society actually organized today on a primitive tooth-and-nail basis. "From the humblest peasant to the mightiest empire humanity is waging a ceaseless and pitiless struggle for existence, in which the unfit perish," a struggle in which "success is attained not only by endurance and sagacity, but by cunning and ferocity." In fact, we are, according to Mr. London's article, already passing some important milestones on the backward road toward the moral status of the primitive troglodyte. "When a striker kills with a brick the man who has taken his place, he has no sense of wrong-doing. . . . He has an ethical sanction. . . . The family-group came into the world before the state-group, and society being still on the primitive basis of tooth and nail, the will to live of the state is not so compelling to the striker as the will to live of his family and himself."

MORAL PROGRESS OPPOSES "NATURAL SELECTION"

Now, as Mr. Adams would say, common sense teaches us whither this points. If the family-group existed before the state-group, then family needs existed before state or religious ordinances. "Thou shalt not steal." "Thou shalt not kill." What are these belated requirements of social convention compared to the necessities of the family development! If a brother clergyman draws away your congregation, reduces your salary, and so compels your children to go barefoot, why not knock him on the head! This is troglodytism, if the present writer understands the word, and he thinks that he does. It solves the social question by *disintegrating* society, and the singular fact is that Natural Selection, which is supposed to be the principle operating in moral development, which is, in fact, identical with the cosmic order, should have led us back in a kind of blind-man's waltz, till we have, according to these writers, actually reached the primitive tooth-and-nail basis, from which, according to modern science, we started hundreds of thousands of years ago; and have reached the lowest point thus far under the guidance of an age whose intellectual grandeur dwarfs all others (?).

No doubt every optimist in the country will declare that this is a stalwart misrepresentation of the present facts: but if a sober-minded man considers the present aspect of the labor question, the political situation in New York, Chicago, St. Louis, and our other great cities, the enormous development of graft, the thievish character of our new methods of finance, the fact that the small investor is today, like the man of scriptural times who traveled between Jerusalem and Jericho, sure to fall among thieves unless personally conducted; if he reflects on the Standard Oil operations and the Turkish situation and the impotency of our modern civilization to put a stop to lynching, or to prevent such a fearful catastrophe as war between Japan and Russia, he is forced to confess that there is, after all, too much truth in this dark picture, and that our conduct is quite often on the tooth-and-nail basis.

THE FALLACY OF THE ARGUMENT

But there is nothing new about this; it is the old story of a wicked world which always moves in a circle, which needs salvation, which cannot save itself because it cannot make steady moral advancement, which builds empires only that they

may perish under the weight of their corruption. It is the old *humanum est errare*, out of which grew that conviction of sin, that cry to heaven for help, which since the time of the Vedas has echoed out of every quarter of the globe, from the heart of burdened humanity. The Troglodyte we have always with us; like the Wandering Jew, he never dies. His characteristics are always the same; he takes a few steps forward, and then turns back toward the tiger and the ape. But he never becomes either tiger or ape. He becomes what we call a fiend, or, in modern day parlance, a degenerate. He is always arguing plausibly for the tooth-and-nail ethics, always ignoring its limitations, always confounding the lines at which a higher principle should take control. He is always putting the struggle for a livelihood before honor and right.

How many there are of him we never know, though we always try to find out before election day. Often he lives in high places, and very often he succeeds in organizing society. He always controls a great many votes. He has a kind of primitive logic which takes hold of men with a sort of cosmic force. Behind him is the stern fact that man has an animal nature, that this animal nature is without doubt engaged in a severe struggle for physical existence, that Natural Selection, like gravitation, really has a grip on him. In short, it is the old story of the world, the flesh, and the devil, apparently, though not really, backed up by the cosmos itself.

It is the same world which Socrates faced, and Jesus and Paul. Righteous men have faced it in all ages and feared not. Often it has quailed before their rebuke. It has recognized an authority higher than intellect, greater than that of physical nature, and has cried out, "We have sinned!.. The only difference in our own time is that we have noble-hearted and high-minded men, not at all troglodytes as to their personal conduct or ideals, who, writing with the magisterial authority vaguely supposed to be possessed by our modern science, deliberately acquit the wicked world. True, it is cruel, it is brutal; they would be ashamed, as high-minded gentlemen, to act on such principles; yet they declare with the finality of absolute truth that the world cannot act otherwise; it is simply carrying out Nature's decree.

The peculiar feature, then, of our times is, not that the world is on a primitive tooth-and-nail basis, but that it stands acquitted, nay, justified, by a verdict apparently based upon the doctrine of Evolution, and that conscience is discredited and put out of court by the apparent authority of those standards which have given us a supreme and magisterial position among the ages. The Troglodyte now has an unassailable backer in the scholar who sits on a judgment seat higher than that of Moses, and who says to the world, "You have no grounds for crying, '*peccavi*,' you have not sinned; you are doing just right; you are debtor to the flesh to live after the flesh. It is Nature's decree, not that you should be a brother to your neighbor, but that you should rob him and fight him for a livelihood."

Words would fail to tell how, from the time when Darwin's and Spencer's philosophies were published, this magisterial tendency has proceeded to assist the Troglodyte in cheapening character, by its judicial decisions based on the evolutionary hypothesis. It has not only enabled our primitive friend to throw bricks with greater cheerfulness, but it has made his *creed* impregnable; nay, it has enabled him to make all other creeds look foolish.

The Troglodyte always believed that preachers of righteousness retained the claw-foot under their shoes and stockings. He knew that prophets and apostles only waited for a chance to show their teeth. His intuition told him that generous people were really scabbing when they went about doing good. He saw by a kind of cosmic light that those great ideals upon which our higher morality fed were silly dreams. His reason told him that the power which makes for righteousness was a sun-god, or a highly developed form of ghost worship, or a fetish, due to the effect of environment. He always understood that the moral nature itself was a product of circumstances without the least atom of final authority, a kind of vermiform appendix which were best removed, since its place has been superseded by the exact knowledge of the cosmic law. Why should a man longer be punished by conscience when he has risen to an understanding of Nature's decree? What do we want of morals when reason has become supreme?

All this the Troglodyte knew in his heart, but he was a little shy of telling it because the stalwart moralists had the ear of public opinion. Now, behold a Daniel come to judgment, who has not only confirmed his suspicions, proved his creed, and made him a prophet of the cosmos, but has made the stalwart moralists themselves give up the validity of their

moral perceptions, while they try to explain that their opinions were really based on Evolution.

The scientific moralists are thinking their case over; many of them are still trying to patch it up with Evolution. They have not yet dreamed of falling back upon the validity of the moral perception itself. And there are a great many people who want to be good, but have lost faith in their moral ideals, and are humbly looking to the scientists and the philosophers for their moral nutriment. As to the prophets and apostles, their voice is still and small in the ear of a moral nature whose main study is to supply practical ethics enough to make business prosperous and the governing party secure.

EVEN HUXLEY HEDGED

Now Mr. Huxley long ago discovered the blunder that had been made in applying the theory of Natural Selection to Social Evolution. He saw that the cosmic light had failed at this point, and he introduced a variation as follows: "There is another fallacy which seems to me to pervade the so-called 'Ethics of Evolution.' It is the notion that, because, on the whole, animals and plants have advanced in perfection of organization by means of the struggle for existence and the consequent survival of the fittest, therefore men in society, men as ethical beings, must look to the same process to help them toward perfection. Social progress means a checking of the cosmic process at every step, and the substitution for it of another which may be called the ethical process. What we call goodness or virtue involves a course of conduct which in all respects is opposed to that which leads to success in the cosmic struggle for existence.

"In place of ruthless self-assertion it demands self-restraint; in place of thrusting aside or treading down all competitors it requires that the individual shall not merely respect, but shall help his fellows. Its influence is directed not so much to the survival of the fittest, as to the fitting of as many as possible to survive. It *repudiates* what we call the gladiatorial theory of existence. Laws and moral precepts are directed to the end of curbing the cosmic process and reminding the individual of his duty to the *community*, to the protection and interest of which he owes, if not existence itself, at least the life of something better than a brutal savage."

Mr. Huxley made this discovery just as any one of us might, by a simple common-sense observation of human nature as it *works* practically. He did not, however, sympathetically observe all the phenomena involved, and he excluded some of them for this reason. So then his theory of Social Evolution never could claim magisterial authority, simply because it is incomplete. It is no doubt a profound discovery that the altruistic principle conserves and builds up human society, while antagonism disintegrates it; that love conquers, overrules, and fructifies the lower competitive forces, as animal life conquers, overrules, and fructifies chemical affinity or gravitation in organic development.

But it was not original with Mr. Huxley; thousands of people had seen and applied it before he was born. Jesus was the real discoverer [revealer]; He first mastered the social or ethical principle. He found it to be universal good neighborhood or brotherhood, traced it to its source in God's fatherhood, flooded it with divine affection, put it into his own self-sacrificing life, and showed us how we might practically attain to it through his help. Since then the idea has been symbolized by the Cross of Christ, and has for eighteen centuries been regarded as the Christian solution,—though Christendom has too often been antagonistic to it.

Mr. Huxley asserted that this ethical process must be substituted for the cosmic process. Jesus and Paul declared it to be the supreme force in the cosmic process itself. Mr. Huxley's trouble was that he, too, fell under the great delusion of fancying that this philosophic form of truth was the final and ultimate one, and, therefore, he identified Natural Selection with the cosmic process itself; but when he followed his new light he lost his magisterial authority over the high church evolutionists; and they are, today, barking at the same old tree up which they suppose their truth has climbed though it has gone out of sight.

INTELLECTUAL MAGISTRACY WRONG

But, whichever theory is correct, could there be a greater delusion than this sense of magistracy? Have we anything to back it up? Have we any theory on any subject which is universally accepted or can be reckoned as a final and absolute form of knowledge? Philosophy is surely an enormous help to both intellectual and moral perception, but is it possible to have a philosophy that can take the place of perception? And if it were possible, what would become of perception, and of individuality, and of genius, and of inventive discovery under such a predetermining influence? I would not be understood for a moment as holding these writers whom I have quoted as

responsible for this tendency. We are all infected. We all take turns at it. Let us say that it is the *Zeitgeist* that has done it, and shake hands all around.

It was Count Ito who said that when he was preparing the Japanese Constitution he tried to think how Buddha would look at the matter, and he added, "I think that I did succeed fairly well in getting into his skin." It might be worth while if some of us would occasionally try to get outside the epidermis of our so-called modern thought, and take a straight look at the age from an exterior point of view; it need not be so far off as Buddha, but sufficiently remote to afford a good perspective. It is quite possible that from such a clear, cool height of vision our generation might seem to be, like Nebuchadnezzar, a little touched in the head.

I have selected these writers because they are strictly logical, and, unlike some of us, they do not straddle. They take the most authoritative type of Evolution, the one which most deserves to be regarded as Nature's decree, the one which Mr. Huxley styles the cosmic process, the only type of philosophy which could at the present day by any possibility be exalted to the rank of a final standard, and they think it out to the bitter end. If we have any clear cosmic torch, this is the one. They hold it high and wave it wide. By its illumination we see the column of humanity with reversed arms turning its back on all the great ideals toward which it has crawled upward in the space of a hundred thousand years or so, cheapening the moral nature, and marching back without conviction of sin toward the original homunculus. This is a dark picture, certainly.

True, if we remove this cosmic torch things do not look so dark. There are at least as many people today as ever working for the interests of righteousness and peace and human brotherhood. They make fewer practical blunders, they keep the issues clearer, they utilize the results of science, they bring to the task a broader scientific knowledge, a profounder sympathy for human conditions, a greater willingness to look at all sides. Witness President Eliot's noble contribution to a better understanding between labor and capital. These people are putting up a stout fight for the moral nature, and they meet with much success among the plain folk. They vitalize character, for the moral nature feeds upon revelations and ideals as the body feeds upon bread.

BLIND LEADERS OF THE BLIND

But the great difficulty with these people is that they are all fools. This does not mean that they are obliged to have guardians appointed over them; in reality, many of them are guardians of the commonwealth or community to which they belong. They are not dull in practical affairs; their foolishness consists in the fact that all their high ideals and inspirations rest upon a so-called semi-mythical or subliminal basis which they cannot prove before this infallible tribunal that has indorsed our friend the Troglodyte. They cannot make their articles of faith square with any specific type of evolutionary doctrine, or prove their revelations to the latest type of scholarship. Our magisterial authorities are withholding a verdict on their case until the Society of Psychical Research has finished its investigations.

This lack of intellectual status gives them a phantasmal appearance, which probably caused Mr. London and Mr. Adams to overlook them altogether. Indeed, one frequently hears in intellectual circles the statement that no one today believes in such articles of faith. But it is the fools who bring practical light to the social question.

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VIEWED FROM THE WATCH TOWER

We devote considerable space to the foregoing because it treats an important subject from a standpoint with which we agree,—although it differs from our own, in that it ignores the divine revelation on which we build everything. We added sub-headings to assist the elucidations. From the Scripture standpoint alone is this subject perfectly clear. From God himself we get "the white light" of absolute truth on these matters. From this our standpoint all is much more plain.

Ours is the true "magisterial" or decisive view which alone can speak with authority and silence criticism. "Let God be true, though it make every man a liar."

The fall of our race from the divine likeness, through disobedience explains why all men have a basis for moral sense and higher attainments, which for a time have been dwarfed by the over-cultivation of the selfish propensities. The tendency of Sin is ever downward, its offspring is Death, its Husband is Selfishness. Righteousness has for her husband Love, and the offspring by divine arrangement is Life-everlasting.

Many are the voices and influences favoring degeneracy through sin, appealing to the powerful selfish desires. One voice from on high appeals for righteousness to our higher qualities of mind, weak and impaired by the fall and atrophied through lack of exercise.

The great appeal of the Law Covenant was made only to the Jewish nation, and its influence was beneficial not to the Hebrews only, but also to neighboring nations who took knowledge of Israel's hopes and aims. Other appeals were through the prophets to Israel, and they, too, were partially effective. But the great appeal of God to men was made in due time through his Son, the voice from heaven. The message was not merely a law showing our woe-begone condition, but additionally it spoke peace with God, the forgiveness of sins, through our Lord's great sacrifice for our sins. This was God's true voice or message of love and mercy.

"HE THAT HATH AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR"

But alas, only a few hear at all, and still fewer hear the voice distinctly. The ears of moral and religious perception are dulled by the fall, and additionally by the confusing din of selfishness and necessity aggravated by the god of this world. Those who hear also see things invisible to others,—see with the eye of faith. The opening of the eyes of their understanding comes to them as a result of their hearing and accepting the voice and being begotten again to a newness of life. These are "the very elect," now being called and prepared for the kingdom honors and services.

From these "elect" even now radiates an influence which affects many favorably—many who see not the heavenly vision open to the "elect" and who hear not the voice from heaven. These are the civilized whose moral perceptions are quickened, and amongst whom arise many of the moral reformers who battle nobly against the degenerate conditions common to the entire race.

Shortly, as soon as "the very elect," the church, the "bride" of Christ, shall have been selected and prepared by the trials and disciplines of this present evil world, and been glorified and united to her Lord, the Redeemer,—then the next great step in the divine program for the uplift of the world will begin. Then, for the thousand years of Christ's Messianic reign, he and his "elect" bride will bless the world of mankind by restraining Satan and every form of sin, and by inculcating Righteousness and uplifting to the lost image of God all who then, knowing righteousness, shall will to follow its dictates.

"THE WORLD KNOWETH US NOT"

Meantime, however, the Lord's plan is seen clearly only by the "elect." The worldly wise, although benefited by its influences, wander into labyrinths of their own confusing notions, and attribute the progress in the world not to the voice from heaven, but to Evolutionary progress. Framing a theory accordingly, they are ignoring the work of God's grace and claiming "the survival of the fittest." The foregoing article explodes again the error of this theory—criticising it from its own level of human reason.

A little while,—a very little while—and the world will witness an exemplification of its God-ignoring theory. When anarchy will prevail and anarchists will claim that they are the "fittest" type of the human family. Ah! that will be a rude shock to these philosophers and their dreams. Thank God for his Word instructing us that he has so timed matters that at that very juncture the "elect" will be glorified and take the control of earth's affairs—at the very point where otherwise selfishness would so run riot that "no flesh would be saved."

"WATCH YE! STAND FAST IN THE FAITH"

BEREAN SCRIPTURE LESSONS.—SUGGESTIONS AND OUTLINES
FOR PROFITABLE CLASS STUDIES

For some time past we have been receiving letters inquiring how little gatherings of the Lord's people can use the hour of their Sunday gatherings most profitably. Some of these letters are from brethren chosen as elders or leaders, saying that they are quite incapable of getting up a "sermon," and find it impossible to prepare even a Bible study in an attractive and interesting form, though the dear brethren, full of love for the Truth, do not complain, but rather encourage them.

Other letters are from those who take no public part and who, while sympathizing with their meeting-leaders in their endeavors to imitate nominal church purveyors, are wishing and praying for the opening of some "door" of help which will make the "assembling of themselves" more profitable to all.

It was in response to this "cry" of the Lord's people that we prepared the WATCH TOWER Bible, in the margins of which, in addition to the Scripture references, we gave DAWN and

TOWER references. In the front of that Bible, which so many of you possess, we gave some suggestions on "Berean Bible Study," and in the back part we gave extended references and also a *Topical Index*. It was our hope that these would meet the requirements, but we find that they do not. Many of the Lord's earnest ones have so long been used to "swallowing" whatever was offered them as spiritual nutriment that they had never learned how to feed themselves at the Father's table. Others who knew how to get at the food properly found their time so consumed in the "things needful" and pressing that they had little time to prepare lessons of a profitable kind for themselves or others, even after the matter had been outlined as in the *Topical Index*.

THE BEREAN STUDIES NOW PROPOSED

Appreciating the needs, we requested some of the "pilgrim" brethren to give examples of these Berean Studies at the various places visited. However, even this did not serve the purpose, because the visits of the "pilgrims" being few and more like those of the apostles of old, the friends begrudged the time of even one service—particularly since it requires several meetings of the Berean type to demonstrate its value and arouse the proper enthusiasm.

Now as meeting all these requirements we are having prepared Outline Lessons for each month of this year, beginning with March. One peculiarity about these lessons is that they do not *teach*, but merely question, and refer the student to the Scriptures and the WATCH TOWER publications bearing thereon. Thus thought is stimulated and the Truth the more clearly impressed.

The thirty questions of the March Lesson following might serve for thirty Sundays; but having so much good food we can afford to fare sumptuously and take several questions for each meeting. As to how many, would depend somewhat on the number in attendance, and how accustomed they are to analytical study, and how expert the leader of the meeting. It might be well for the classes to appoint several of the seemingly capable brethren to lead in turn, that the most able in this respect might be discerned. These will probably be found amongst those you have already chosen as Elders.

If the class be a small one, of say seven, it might be well to apportion to each one question for the following Sunday. The Elders, for instance, might be requested by vote to make such apportionment of the questions. A week for the examination of the one question should enable each one to bring on the next Sunday thoughts and texts and WATCH TOWER and DAWN quotations that would be helpful, interesting, profitable to all. As all are WATCH TOWER readers assignments can be made by number, thus: Brother A—, question No. 4; Sister H—, No. 5, etc.

Where the class is larger, say twenty to forty, the questions would best be apportioned to seven or eight of the most capable members of the class to present the answers to the questions. In any event, each subject or question should be open to general discussion after the presentation of the formal reply by the one appointed to that service.

So used the thirty questions below should furnish abundant food for profitable study by the largest classes for nearly or quite a month. Our prayers go with these suggestions, that the result may bring praise and honor to our Lord and strength and victory to his people.

CONCERNING FAITH—MARCH LESSONS

(Following each question are texts of Scripture in reply, then references to page numbers of DAWN and WATCH TOWER giving comments; the first six letters of the alphabet represent the respective DAWN volumes, and the TOWERS are designated by the letter "Z" and the year. The mark ¶ refers to paragraph in article containing comment.)

1. What is faith? Heb. 11:1; 1 John 5:4; E. 125, ¶ 1; F. 689 (1st line).

2. Name the two component elements of faith. Z. '95-134.
3. How does faith differ from credulity? F. 689, ¶ 1.
4. What is the importance of a *proper* faith? Heb. 11:6; F. 315, 693, ¶ 1; Z. '94-329 (2nd col. ¶ 1-3).
5. What is the relation between faith and knowledge? Rom. 10:17, A. 13, ¶ 1; A. 20, ¶ 2; A. 21, ¶ 1; Z. '94-329 (1st col. ¶ 2); Z. '99-3 (2nd col. ¶ 1).
6. How is faith "the gift of God?" Eph. 2:8; Z. '98-107 (1st col. ¶ 2); Z. '01-156 (1st col. ¶ 2, 3).
7. Is faith in Christ necessary to salvation? Acts 4:10-12; John 3:16, 36; A. 102, ¶ 3; Z. '97-278. (See Topical Index,—"FAITH.")
8. What is the immediate result of faith in Christ during the Gospel Age? Rom. 5:1; A. 231, ¶ 4; Z. '00-188 (1st col. ¶ 3, and 2nd col. ¶ 1, 2).
9. How is Jesus the "author and finisher of our faith?" Heb. 12:2; Z. '95-147 (1st col. ¶ 1).
10. Is a simple confession of faith necessary? Rom. 10:10; Z. '00-149, (2nd col.); Z. '00-180 (1st col. ¶ 5); Z. '02-270 (1st col. ¶ 1, 2, 3).
11. Is *feeling* an essential part of faith? Z. '92-267.
12. Explain the difference between faith as a basis for justification and faith as a fruit of the Spirit. F. 688-692.
13. What is "the good fight of faith?" 1 Tim. 6:12; Z. '98-153, 158, (2nd col.).
14. How should we fight the good fight? Z. '95-201, 202; Z. '98-158, (1st col. ¶ 2); Z. '98-159 (2nd col.); Z. '01-72 (2nd col. ¶ 3).
15. For whom and against whom do we fight? Phil. 2:12; 1 John 3:16; Eph. 6:12; Z. '98-153-155; F. 599-658.
16. What does it mean to "walk by faith?" 2 Cor. 5:7; F. 631, ¶ 2, 3; Z. '00-57 (1st col.); Z. '95-92, 93; F. 142, ¶ 2.
17. Why are trials of faith permitted? James 1:3, 4; 1 Pet. 4:12, 13; F. 642-644; Z. '96-54; Z. '95-134, 135.
18. What are some of the present rewards of faith? 1 Cor. 2:9, 10; F. 689 (¶ 2) to 692; F. 686, ¶ 3.
19. What is the future inheritance of faith? 1 John 3:2; Rev. 2:10; F. 693, 694, F. 721 (¶ 1, 2) to 729.
20. What is the "*rest*" of faith? Heb. 4:1-11; F. 392-394; Z. '95-168, 169; Z. '99-253 (1st col. ¶ 1).
21. Define "*full assurance*" of faith and hope. Heb. 10:22; 6:11; Z. '00-169, ¶ 1.
22. How may we *attain* and *retain* full assurance of faith? Z. '98-247; E. 249, 250.
23. What are the hindrances to full assurance of faith? Z. '00-169, 170.
24. How may we increase our faith? F. 691, ¶ 2; Z. '96-86 (2nd col. ¶ 3).
 - (a) By prayer. Z. '96-162, 163.
 - (b) By study. F. 315.
 - (c) By repeating and *claiming* the promises of God. Z. '00-170 (1st col. ¶ 4).
 - (d) By watching our experiences. Z. '00-170 (2nd col. ¶ 1, 2).
25. Name some features of "present truth" which have increased your faith.
26. What is the relation between faith and *works*? James 2:14, 17, 18, 22; Z. '00-343 (1st col. ¶ 1, 2); Z. '01-231 (2nd col. ¶ 2, 3).
27. Who constitute the "household of faith?" Gal. 6:10; Z. '00-368, (2nd col.).
28. Explain James 5:14-16. F. 631-638.
29. What is the significance of the symbols, *shield* and *anchor*, in connection with faith and hope? Eph. 6:16; F. 657, ¶ 5; Heb. 6:19; Z. '02-345 (1st col.).
30. What will be the relation between faith and knowledge in the Millennial Age? Z. '00-238 (2nd col. ¶ 1, 2) to 239; F. 106, (¶ 3) to 107.

"ONCE I WAS BLIND, NOW I SEE"

JOHN 9:1-11.—MARCH 19.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"I am the Light of the world."

Our Lord's miracles and parables touch almost every side of every question when rightly understood. True, our Lord's own explanations of his parables and dark sayings are not elaborate, not deep. He left the elaboration for his disciples under the guidance of the holy Spirit. The reason for this is given in his own words, "I have many things to tell you, but ye cannot bear them now." The reason for their being better able to bear them, understand them and appreciate them later on was because then the work of our Lord's sacrifice having been finished at Calvary, and he having ascended on high, presented

the merit of his sacrifice as the atonement price for the sins of his church, and thus made it possible for them to receive the holy Spirit not previously given unto them—not enjoyed even by the disciples as a begetting spirit before Pentecost.

One of these partially expounded lessons of our Lord's ministry is found in the lesson before us. A man born blind, a wayside beggar, had drawn the attention of the Lord and the apostles, and his healing and the preparation therefor serve as an opportunity for a far-reaching lesson, only a part of which, however, the apostles could learn at this time. They had the

thought that all the sickness and pain and sorrow in the world was the result of sin. They had this thought properly, because the Scriptures had so indicated, assuring them that if they walked in the Lord's ways they would have blessings of health and prosperity in all of life's affairs for themselves, their families, their flocks and their herds. Properly enough, then, they understood that the various evils witnessed on every hand were in some degree the result of sin, either of the individual or of his ancestors, inherited.

NEITHER THIS MAN NOR HIS PARENTS

The man blind from his birth started a query in their minds as to the sin which led to the blindness, and being "unlearned and ignorant men," it need not surprise us that they were not very logical in their thoughts nor in the question they asked, "Whether did this man sin or his parents, that he was born blind?" Of course the man himself could not have sinned before he was born; of course, therefore, whatever responsibility there was came to him through inheritance, as the Lord had declared that "I will visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those that hate me," those who wilfully violate his laws. True, there was at this time a heathen idea respecting the transmigration of souls, which taught that all humanity had at some previous time lived in some other condition either better or worse than the present one. But it would be extremely unlikely that the apostles, "unlearned," should have any particular knowledge of these theories of the heathen, which were known chiefly to the educated; and as for the Hebrew Scriptures, not a word in them favored such a thought, but the very contrary.

This same heathenish thought still prevails in the far East, India, etc., and has been slightly introduced again in civilized countries under the name of Theosophy. It is one of the main delusions ensnaring the people known as Mormons. The Scriptural teaching is that God created man in Eden, and that all the families of the earth are the posterity of this first man, Adam; and because of this relationship to Adam as their father, and their consequent relationship to his sin and its penalty, death, therefore all in Adam die—his entire race is a dying race. The belief in the ransom settles this doctrine most thoroughly, showing that our Lord's life redeemed the life of father Adam, and thus incidentally redeemed all who lost life through him. "As by man came death, by man also came the resurrection from the dead; as all in Adam die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." "Of one blood God hath made all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." —Acts 17:26.

Our Lord's reply, that neither the blind man nor his parents had sinned, is not to be understood as implying that these people were absolutely perfect, sinless, spotless—not to be understood as contradicting the Scriptures, which declare, "There is none righteous, no not one; all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." The words simply signified that the blindness of this man was not a penalty for his personal sin or for some special sin of his parents. This need not imply either that God had specially intervened to cause blindness in this case—rather we may suppose that the blindness came through the general weakness of heredity, or by what might be termed the accidents incidental to our present imperfect condition as a race of sinners. A similar expression on our Lord's part was made in respect to those men upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, killing them. Our Lord said, "Suppose ye that these men were sinners above others? I tell you, nay; unless ye shall repent ye shall all likewise perish."

The thought is that the whole world is under condemnation to death. We are a race of convicts, and death conditions are properly, justly permitted to prevail, not interfered with, because the lives of all humanity are forfeited through original sin and disobedience, and through our inheritance of the weaknesses and imperfections and unfitness resulting. All are thus perishing, and had it not been for divine mercy, in providing the Redeemer and the great sacrifice for sins, there would be no hope for any as respects the future life; death to all would signify that they had perished. And even though all the way has been opened for the dying race, nevertheless repentance for sin, acceptance of Christ as the Savior, and obedience to his voice, are necessary to our escape from the sentence of sin—death.

Many will agree with us thus far who would fail to go further along what we believe to be logical, scriptural grounds, namely, that in God's providence not only has his love provided the redemption and the opportunity for blessing to the world, but that the same love and wisdom will ultimately provide that all shall see the great light and hear the voice of him that speaketh from heaven, and thus either accept or reject the favor divine, the life everlasting, on terms of full obedience. We hold that it is in full accord with the entire testimony of

Scripture that few now have the ability to see or to hear; that the majority are both blind and deaf to this message in the present time, some completely blind and completely deaf, others partially blind and partially deaf. The glorious assurance of the Lord's Word is that in God's due time all the blind eyes shall be opened and all the deaf ears unstopped.

THE MORN COMETH AND A NIGHT ALSO

This was the very lesson which the Lord taught from this incident—taught to the extent that his hearers were able to appreciate it. He declared, "While I am in the world I am the Light of the world; I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work." Then he proceeded to the opening of the blind man's eyes, that the latter might see him as the Light of the world. True, the opening of blind natural eyes could not give sight to the eyes of his understanding, the eyes of the heart; but it could and did figure or illustrate this, which was the real essence of our Lord's teachings, of which this miracle was a part. Without in the slightest degree disparaging our Lord's many miracles upon the blind, lame, deaf, etc., we can readily see that these were incidental, and only in a secondary sense his mission.

We can see, too, that while multitudes were healed, still greater multitudes remained unhealed; and that if it had been our Lord's special mission to heal all the lepers and all the blind and all the deaf, and to have awakened all the dead of Palestine, then he failed most signally in accomplishing the work. But that was not the work which he came to do. He came to be the Light of the world in a much larger sense than this. He came to do the work of him that sent him; and to finish that work and the special feature of it that was then due was the sacrificing of himself, the laying down of his life in the service of his brethren, in the declaration of the good tidings, in the teaching of the people through parables, dark sayings and miracles, which subsequently under the holy Spirit's illumination would guide a certain class to the real seeing, the real understanding and the real fellowship of heart with him and his work and with the Father, that was intended.

It will be at his second advent that our Lord will be "the Light of the world" in the full, glorious sense which the Scriptures everywhere set forth:—"The Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his beams." With the ushering in of that glorious sunlight begins the new day for which we hope and pray,—the "day of Christ." We now reckon the day as beginning at midnight, but God supervised the Jewish reckoning on this subject and under that supervision the day begins in the evening, progressed to midnight and then to the dawning, and by and by to the full light of day. In harmony with this God-given picture of the day we may see that our Lord's ministry was in the eventide which followed the Jewish day, the day of Moses. A little of its light still remained, and in that light the Lord personally, and subsequently through his disciples, established the Gospel church. He well knew of the dark night that would follow his ministry, in which darkness would cover the earth and gross darkness the heathen.

The Lord's words then signified that he realized the opportunity at hand and did with his might what his hands found to do, what was possible to be done under all the circumstances and conditions prevailing, and with a realization that the night was drawing rapidly upon the Jewish people, and that not only his own work would be cut short soon by his death, but that all opportunities for dealing with the Jews would soon be at an end. The apostles after Pentecost entered fully into the Master's spirit in respect to this shortness of the time, and labored incessantly first with the Jews and only subsequently with the Gentiles, until all the elect had been gathered from the once favored nation, even though these were but a remnant, as the apostle explains. The rest were blinded, went into complete darkness, while the light of divine favor through the Lamp, the Word, was sent amongst the Gentiles to gather out of them also an elect class for membership in the spiritual Israel, for membership in the body of Christ, to be light-bearers under present conditions, through trials and difficulties and oppositions, and, by and by, to be associates with the Lord as members of the glorious Sun of righteousness, the great Light which in the duly appointed time shall enlighten the whole world.

As we near the morning watches we have the evidence of day drawing on; and as we listen to the voice of the Prophet, we hear him declare in answer to our query, "Watchman, what of the night?" the message, "The morning cometh, but a night also," and then assures us that, although we are now in the very dawn of the morning, a fierce storm is to break and cause another "night" of darkness and of trouble upon the world and upon Christendom to sift, to separate, to purify the elect. Our hearts, however, are encouraged with the assurance that

with the breaking of that storm will come the full splendor of the Millennial morning, and with it the Sun of righteousness blessing and illuminating the world. Moreover, in that time the assurance is that all the blind eyes shall be opened so that the whole world will be able to discern that "The Light of the world is Jesus."

"ANOINT THINE EYES WITH EYE-SALVE"—REV. 3:18

The making of an eye-salve of the dust of a Palestine road, mixed with the saliva of our Lord's mouth, seems rather peculiar at first. We would naturally be inclined to say, "How strange! Do not put that stuff upon the man's eyes, for that will only make them worse. That dust is full of all manner of impurities; that very dust has helped to blind thousands and thousands of the people of this country." A traveler in that vicinity 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 has lost one or both eyes, and from my own observation of that city I should not hesitate to say that the statement is not exaggerated."

Why, then, did our Lord use a clay or ointment made out of that dust, apparently so unsuitable, and then send the blind man to the Pool of Siloam to wash and receive his sight? We answer that probably a deep spiritual lesson is contained in it, a lesson for all the apostles and for the followers of Jesus from then until now. As the blindness of the man was figurative of the general blindness upon the people, blindness to the truth, blindness to the light of the world, so this method of healing the blindness will illustrate the method the Lord has been using throughout this Gospel age. The secretions of our Lord's mouth might well represent his grace and truth, while the earth used may well represent the poor earthly talents of us and his disciples. Who are we, that we should be made the instruments of God in opening the eyes of the blind—we who are imperfect ourselves, blemished, fallen? But the spirit of the Lord's lips coming upon us so transforms our energies and talents as to make them useful in his service. By the grace of God, as his mouthpieces, representatives, his followers have opened the blind eyes, not of all people, but of many, nevertheless.

What a blessing we realized when such human clay was used of the Lord for the anointing of our eyes, and what a privilege was granted in that we have been made the clay ointment the Master has used in the blessing of others. But the anointing was not sufficient, it needed more; it needed the washing at the fountain. And so after the Lord has used us, his servants, as the clay in his hands for the anointing of blinded eyes, it is necessary that we should direct them to the fountain of his truth and grace, where they may wash, where they may realize that the cleansing is of the Lord's provision entirely, and that however good the clay and however thorough the anointing, no blessing could come except as they obediently and in faith accepted the grace and truth as the refreshing stream of divine favor to their enlightenment.

The miracle of the opening of the eyes of one born blind was so notable that it attracted the attention of all in the neighborhood. None had ever before heard of any physician able to restore sight to one who was born blind. The matter was brought to the attention of the Pharisees and Doctors of the Law as a wonderful instance of divine power, or to see if they could offer any other solution for the matter. Evidently this was a part of our Lord's design and a part of what he meant when he declared that the man was not born blind as a punishment for sin, but for the glory of God. God allowed nature to take its course in this manner and to produce an exception or freak of nature, and now the one who had been thus afflicted in the past was made the recipient of a special blessing which fully compensated him. Let us learn to view all of life's affairs from this standpoint. Whatever we may have that by nature would seem to be disadvantageous or a hindrance to us, the Lord is able to so overrule as to make of it a blessing, a proportionately greater blessing.

The Pharisees, full of envy against Jesus, perceived that his influence was gaining daily with the people, and this made them the more bitter against him. In their wrong condition of heart they had already prejudged his heart and his motive, not by the fruits of his life, but by their envious sentiments. Of course, under the circumstances, the judgment would be warped and twisted, leading to wrong conclusions. They catechised the parents, who feared to give any expression on the subject, because they had heard that the rulers of the synagogue had determined that if any one should confess Jesus he should be excommunicated, should not be permitted to attend the synagogue or fellowship with others or enjoy its religious privileges, should be counted unworthy the name and privileges of

a Jew, should be treated as an outcast from God and his people. They, therefore, answered that their son was of age and that he could speak for himself.

The son was questioned over and over with an evident desire to find some fault with the procedure, to show that it was not a genuine miracle, etc. The man formerly blind became justly indignant at the special attempt to traduce the one who had so befriended him, and in answer to the Pharisees' statement that he should give glory only to God, because the one who had performed the miracle was a sinner, he demurred. As they repeated their questions he became more indignant at their evil spirit and said, "Why do you ask so many questions? Are you anxious to become his disciples? He touched a sore spot and aroused their wrath, and they declared that he was a disciple of Jesus, and cast him out of the synagogue and ostracised him. It was after this that Jesus found him. We read, 'Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and when he found him he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? and he answered, I believe, and worshipped.'"

HOW HINDRANCES MAY ASSIST US

In this we have a fresh illustration of how hindrances and difficulties and obstacles may become the greatest helps and aids under God's providences to those who are of the right condition of heart. This poor blind man, an ignorant beggar, seemingly most unfortunate of men, seemingly least cared for by the Lord, was evidently at heart honest and sincere. This was demonstrated by his after conduct, because character, principle, cannot be put on in a moment, but is a matter of development. It was doubtless because the Lord saw in his heart this sincerity that he specially favored him with the blessing of the opening of the eyes, and that it was because he was honest enough and fearless enough to confess the Lord in a proper manner that he was still further favored, and that the Lord sought him out and granted him the opening of the eyes of his understanding in addition to the opening of his natural eyes. If we could but receive this lesson fully and completely into our hearts, what a great blessing it would bring us as impressing upon us the necessity for honesty of heart, and as proofs to us of the willingness of the Lord to make all things work together for good to them who love him—even to them who are of the right attitude of heart, which would love the Lord if it knew him. To such he is willing to grant his favors and the opening of the eyes of their understanding—not suddenly, but step by step. As we follow the Lord's directions we get one blessing after another.

Let us draw further a lesson as between the experiences of this blind man and the spiritual lesson already suggested. Some of us were born blind or nearly blind as respects the ability to see our heavenly Father's glorious face and the reflection of the same in our Lord Jesus. We were born blind through no folly of our own and through no folly of our parents, perhaps. Darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people—the darkness of idolatry and heathendom upon the majority of the world, and the darkness of the dark ages upon the so-called Christian world. We saw not the Lord and our fancies, inspired by the great adversary, were gross misunderstandings of the wisdom, justice, love and power of our Creator.

The Scriptures tell us that the darkness or blindness came from the adversary, the god of this world, who blinds the minds of them who believe not, lest the glorious light of God's goodness should shine in their hearts from the face of Jesus Christ our Lord. In the Lord's own time and way he sent us a blessing through the poor dust of the earth, blended and tempered with the secretions of his mouth, and sent the message, too, that we should wash at the fountain. Thus washing we realized the forgiveness of sins and saw in a new light the love and mercy of our Father in heaven. Then came testings, not to destroy us, but to prove us and to develop us if we were sincere at heart.

The agencies used by our Lord for our blessing were produced perhaps by our friends. The threat of ostracism was before our mind as we confessed the blessing we had received and the source from which it came. All possessed with the right spirit in the matter surely followed the course of this blind man of our lesson, and courageously confessed the blessings received and the quarter from which they came. Now as then such a confession brings repudiation, contempt, sarcasm and casting out, but now as well as then obedience and the acceptance of such experiences mean an additional manifestation to us of divine favor.

It was after we had endured something for the Lord's sake and for the truth's sake, and rejoicing in our opened eyes, that the Lord found us in a particular sense and revealed himself to us in a still higher and more favorable blessing, and thus we became his disciples in the highest sense—his followers. Let

us continue to follow him; let us continue to take whatever experiences come to us in the path of duty, and realize that it is a privilege to be on the side of the right and the truth. Those who are faithful now in the present time of trials and testings will, as the Lord's disciples, be privileged in turn to be used of him in anointing the eyes of others, and thus all the members of the body under the guidance of the Lord, the Head, will during this present time work the works of him that sent us, and let the light shine out, realizing that the opportunities for service will soon now be closed—the night is coming when no man can work.

THE HIDDEN CROSS

The multitude saw but the cross of olive wood
The Man of Sorrows bore, nor knew how underneath,
Close pressed upon his heart, a *hidden* cross he wore—
A dark and bleeding weight of sin and human woe,
Made heavier with the sentence of God's broken law,
And crowned with thorns of scornful and malicious hate,—
A cross the world's Redeemer found on Jordan's brink,
Nor laid it down until he came to Calvary.

Oft times it seemed he almost craved some human aid,
Some sympathizing heart to share that cruel cross.
Jerusalem, Jerusalem, hadst thou but known
What time that cross bore heaviest on the yearning heart
Of him, thy King! And yet, O slow of faith and hard
Of heart, "Ye would not," and the King passed on his way;
And of the people there was none with him! He trod
Alone the valley of this dark world's shame and woe.

O, chosen three, had ye but watched with him "one hour"
That awful night in dark Gethsemane, ye might
Have lightened some the cruel weight of that dread cross,—
Have known and shared with him that agonizing woe.
Alas! alas! Your eyes were heavy and ye slept.
So now, "sleep on and take your rest," ye weary ones.
An holy angel's wing hath eased the hidden cross—
Your Master, strengthened, waits that other cross to bear.

The great time of trouble just preceding the shining forth of the Sun of righteousness is near. The little time between now and then is for the very purpose of selecting out the Lord's true people and applying to them the eye-salve of truth and informing them where they must wash, and in general in bringing to them the blessings of joint-heirship and discipleship until the body of Christ shall be complete. Very shortly, to those thus faithful, will be the privilege also of association with our Lord and Head as the Light of the world in the blessing of all the families of the earth.

Which one bore heavier on the way to Calvary?
The cross the cruel Roman soldiers laid upon
The Blessed One? Ah, no! it was the unseen cross
That crushed him to the earth, that wrung from those pale lips
The agonizing cry, "My God! my God! oh, why
Hast thou forsaken me?" In grief earth rent her breast,
The sun grew dark; "'Tis finished," and the price is paid,—
The hidden cross had pierced that loving, tender heart!

"Take up thy cross and follow me," the Master said.
Ah, yes! his faithful Bride must also bear a cross,—
The hidden cross, made not of life's vicissitudes
Alone, its ills and pains, its loss and poverty,—
The outward signs the multitude behold.
Ah, no! we follow in his steps who went before
Us in the narrow way. We, too, must bear the woe,
Be touched with feeling of the world's infirmity,
Its weary weight of sin and curse of broken law.
Let us, therefore, go forth to him "without the gate,"
Lay down our lives in sacrifice, spend and be spent;
And while we clasp this cross more closely to our breast,
Press on toward Calvary, for there our Bridegroom waits
To take the cross of woe, and give a crown of joy!

—G. W. S.

THE CENTRAL PURPOSE OF GOD'S MESSAGE

JOHN 20:31.—MARCH 26.

"But these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life through his name."

The beautiful words of our text set forth clearly the entire object and purpose of all of God's messages during this Gospel age, and hence the object or purpose of all the preaching done in his name and by his authority. When we consider the unlimited power of God, we are at first inclined to wonder why so little of it is displayed during this Gospel age in connection with the proclamation of the great Gospel message—with the legions of angels who could communicate with mankind and instruct them respecting God and his character, who could communicate as in the olden times, as when Moses was taught from the burning bush and Abraham by the visit of strangers to his tent.

When we consider, too, how God could teach the world by signs and lessons and disciplines, without a word of instruction either from human lips or from angels—if he would punish their wrong doing and reward their right doing promptly and markedly, it would leave no question in the minds of any respecting right and wrong, respecting that which would be pleasing to the Lord and that which would be displeasing. How speedily this course would have brought in the reign of righteousness and have effected a world of reformation. Again, the Lord could blazon out in letters of fire upon the sky, in every language under heaven, the messages respecting his pleasure and displeasure. No wonder that some have thought it strange that divine wisdom should adopt the plan which has been adopted and which has seemed to have been so ineffectual as respects the righting of the world of mankind—so ineffectual that now, after more than eighteen centuries of preaching, the great mass of the world are in absolute ignorance of Christ and the Father, and almost none see clearly and distinctly the true significance of the message he has sent us.

However, as we begin to get the eyes of our understanding more and more widely open to the appreciation of the teachings of the Lord's Word, we see more and more clearly his plan and the wisdom of the course he has adopted, which is briefly expressed by the Apostle when he says, "It has pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:2)—preaching which seems to be so foolish,

to be so weak, to be the poorest way the Lord could have possibly chosen to make known the riches of his grace—a way so open to hindrance through the weaknesses and imperfections of the human channels used!

IGNORANCE NOT A SAVIOR

Nor will it do to answer, as some have done, that not merely those who hear the Gospel message are profited by it, but that "millions are saved who have never heard of the historic Christ." The words of the Apostle quite contradict this thought: "It pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe," implies that those who do not believe are not saved, and implies also that not the belief of anything or everything is saving but merely the believing of that which is preached by divine authority—"The faith once delivered to the saints."—Jude 3.

How closely in line with this is our text in this lesson, "These things were written"—the Gospel narrative of the words and acts of our Lord, and also the words and acts of the apostles, in order that men might believe on Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, and that believing they might have life through them. No hope is here held out of life without believing, and no hope held out on a vague faith will be satisfactory. It was not sufficient to believe that Jesus was the God-Man and that he died on a cross at the hands of his enemies, a notable martyr for liberty and righteousness;—more than this must be believed.

It is not sufficient to believe anything less than that Jesus was the Son of God—not the son of Joseph; it is not sufficient to believe in him in any other way than as the Son of God, and that additionally he is the Messiah—the one long promised as the seed of Abraham, whose mission it shall yet be to bless all the families of the earth: "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." All this seems to be the Gospel; to believe anything less seems to be lacking the faith here enjoined; to believe all of this seems to be essential to discipleship. We cannot help how many of the wise and learned and good have rejected this scriptural statement of the object of this Gospel age, and have determined that it must be otherwise

and prefer their own opinions, their own reasoning, to the message of the Lord through his Son and his inspired apostles.

If such a statement as this were held in our minds alongside some false theory—such, for instance, as the one which declares that all who are not saved in the present time pass to an eternity of torture without hope of escape—then such a blending of the truth of God with the errors inspired by the adversary would be sure to cause confusion in our minds; and the word of the Lord, to the effect that salvation could only be had through faith in Christ, would seem to leave the way to God too narrow and to practically destroy all hope for the world in general and to make the God of love to appear to be heartless, loveless, and evil-intentioned, since he knew the end from the beginning and had the power to have brought all to the knowledge of Jesus, or to have made some other arrangement than the preaching through imperfect vessels the way of access to faith and his favor and love and the life which he will give.

But we notice that our text says nothing about the lost receiving life eternal in torture. On the contrary, it implies that they are without life, declaring that only those who believe in the proper manner can have the life which he gives. And this reminds us of our Lord's own words to the same effect—"He that hath the Son hath life, he that hath not the Son hath not life."

"THAT THE WORLD MIGHT BELIEVE THROUGH HIM"

It is a fact beyond dispute that few come under the conditions of our text. Few believe in Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, whom he will use according to the prophecies for the blessing of all the families of the earth, and few thus believe to the extent necessary to enter into life with him. Few believe enough respecting our Lord to bring them to the point of full faith in his blood as their cleanser from sin, or to bring them to the further step of a full consecration then to his service, or to hold them in the narrow way to the end of the journey, when the crowns of life will be given at the appearing of the Life-Giver at his second advent. And if only a few, only a little flock, thus hear the message, the preaching, and if these things were merely written for the benefit of these, where comes in the world?—the world which, according to one view, is in eternal torture or going thither; or, according to a more moderate view, is in death, the second death, or going thither—on the broad road to destruction.

How can the Lord Jesus ever fulfil the prediction that he is to be the Light of the world to those who have never seen him and never heard his name, either with the natural or spiritual eyes or with the natural or spiritual ears? How can the declaration ever be fulfilled that the Lord tasted death for every man, and that all the families of the earth are to be blessed through him?

We answer that there is but the one way of understanding

this entire matter and that is the Scriptural way, which takes in not merely the few isolated texts, but includes comprehensively all the teachings of the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation. It is to the effect that during this Gospel age God's purpose is merely the selection of those who have an ear to hear—of those who, when the message is sounded, have heard and to some extent understood and appreciated it, and who will go on in the understanding and appreciation to a full and grander grasp of the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the love and mercy of God.

These "the love of God constraineth," the still small voice is heard by their hearts, they "walk by faith and not by sight," and need not to have the heavens emblazoned with the divine commands. To them day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge, and the entire heavens are ablaze with messages of God's favors and blessings, which imply also his justice and his love. To these the message of salvation through the blood of Christ appeals; they are not wise above what is written; they accept divine wisdom as better than human wisdom and the divine Word as preferable to the traditions of men. These, under the guidance of the holy Spirit, are making increase not only in their numbers century after century, but also making increase of their character development individually; and when the age shall close it will be found that God's wisdom and love and power will have been exercised in such a manner that they shall have found and prepared the peculiar people of the Lord, the little flock, the royal priesthood, who, at the second coming of their Master, shall be received by him as a bride company, to be his joint-heirs in the glorious kingdom for which we pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven."

"THEN SHALL THE RIGHTEOUS SHINE"

With the completion of this elect class—chosen because they were found to be lovers of righteousness and haters of iniquity, and because they were willing to walk in the narrow way and to follow the Lamb through evil and through good report and to walk by faith and not by sight—shall ultimately come the blessing of the Lord in the first resurrection, and they shall be made partakers of glory, honor and the divine nature. Then, the Scriptures assure us, they shall shine forth as the Sun in the kingdom of their Father,—shine for the blessing of all the families of the earth, shine for the scattering of all the ignorance and superstition and clouds and darkness which now enslave the race, shine that all the blind eyes may be opened and all the deaf ears unstopped, shine that the knowledge of the glory of God may fill the whole earth, shine out that the willing and obedient of the world may see the right way and be drawn by the light of grace and truth of God along the highway of holiness to the end thereof, life eternal, through the merit of him who loved the world and bought it with his own precious blood.

ENCOURAGING LETTERS FROM FOREIGN FIELDS

A TESTIMONY FROM EAST INDIES

The following testimony is from a native East Indian, who was formerly an active ordained minister in the Methodist Church Mission there and in Jamaica. He is using this testimony amongst his former associates in ministerial work, to arouse their interest in the harvest message:

DEAR FRIEND:—

It is with pleasure that I write to you about what I have found to be so ennobling and satisfying, and with which I am now being blessed. I cannot here attempt to give the kind of testimony I would like to give of the Lord's gracious dealings with me, to his glory and for the edification of fellow creatures.

While working for the Society of Friends in St. Thomas several religious books were put into my hands from time to time to read. Although I was conscious of justification and enjoyed more or less the joy and peace resulting from this condition since 1884, the perusal of these books led me to think that there was something yet higher, richer and more satisfying to be had which I had not attained. I made it a matter of prayer, and thought much over it.

In due time another book, entitled "The Divine Plan of the Ages," was sent to me on loan from America, in case I did not like to purchase it. I began to read this carefully and with prayer. To my surprise I found it more—far more instructive and enlightening, containing more food for the mind on almost every page of it than any other production of uninspired pen I had ever known before or since. When I reached the place where the pious and able author treats on consecration and its object, I could not resist the temptation of going down upon my knees and giving up myself to God in a particular sense,

and in every respect. The act of thus yielding oneself to the Lord was a pleasurable one to me. I arose from my knees feeling that I had done the right thing, and the joy that filled my soul I could hardly contain.

Allow me to recommend to you as a duty and a pleasure, this little work of 356 pages. It contains rich messages from the "Great King," calculated to make the bad good and the good better, and so it does wherever it is rightly used. It is a real eye-opener—a veritable key of the Bible. It is more than a match for the enemies of the Bible—the "higher critic," "evolutionist," "Christian Scientist," "skeptic," and "infidel." If you wish to be aided to see things in their harmonious, consistent and soul-refreshing beauty—things that go to show what wonderful provision God has made for his church—"the sanctified" ones "in Christ Jesus," and for the world of mankind—things which duly magnify his love, justice, wisdom and power as a harmonious whole without contradicting each other in the least—if you wish to see these, then read this telling little book, "The Divine Plan of the Ages," which will lead you into the treasury of God's own Word—the mine of things "new and old." Read it with Bible in hand and then think of the result of your investigation. I am acquainted with the main teachings of the leading denominations of "orthodoxy"—hence I know what I am recommending to others.

"Light is sown for the righteous." The "sure word of prophecy . . . shineth more and more to the perfect day." It is of a growing nature—outgrows all that are fixed and stationary—the creeds of men which cannot keep pace with the verities of a progressive revelation. Faulty translations and human traditions have done much to obscure the clear and consistent teachings of God's Word. Hence it becomes us "to give