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New Testament. As we come to the last days of 1922, our thoughts dwell upon the texts studied and the lessons drawn from them.

Instead of reviewing the lessons page by page, I venture to call attention to a root question—have we been studying the truth, or have we occupied our time with falsehoods? The really great question of the world today is whether the Bible is the word of God or the work of man.

If it is the work of man, it is the greatest of imposters and must sooner or later be exposed and discarded. If, however, it is, as we believe, the word of God, it will live and grow, because nothing that man has said or can say is comparable to the word of God.

**AN UNANSWERABLE ARGUMENT**

There are many arguments brought forward in support of the Bible—so many that I cannot in a brief Bible talk present even an abstract of them, but I venture to suggest what seems to be an unanswerable argument and one which rests upon proof within our own reach and within the comprehension of all.

The Bible is either the word of God or the word of man. Those who regard it as a man-made book should be challenged to put their theory to the test. If man made the Bible, he is, unless he has degenerated, able to make as good a book today.

Judged by human standards, man is far better prepared to write a Bible now than he was when our Bible was written.

The characters whose words and deeds are recorded in the Bible were members of a single race; they lived among the hills of Palestine in a territory scarcely larger than one of our counties.

**A DIAGRAM OF MAN'S EXISTENCE**

They did not have printing presses and they lacked the learning of the schools; they had no great libraries to consult, no steamships to carry them around the world and make them acquainted with the various centers of ancient civilization; they had no telegraph wires to bring them news from the ends of the earth and no newspapers to spread before them each morning the doings of the day before.

Science had not unlocked Nature's door and revealed the secrets of rocks below and stars above.

From what a scantily supplied storehouse of knowledge they had to draw, compared with the unlimited wealth of information at man's command today.

And yet these Bible characters grappled with every problem that confronts mankind, from the creation of the world to eternal life beyond the tomb. They gave us a diagram of man's existence from the cradle to the grave and set up warning signs at every dangerous point.

The Bible gives us the story of the birth, the words, the works, the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the ascension of Him whose coming was foretold by prophecy, whose arrival was announced by angel voices, singing peace and goodwill—the story of Him who gave to the world a code of morality superior to anything that the world had known before or has known since.

**A TASK FOR THE ATHEISTS**

Let the atheists and the materialists produce a better Bible than ours, if they can.

Let them collect the best of their school to be found among the graduates of universities—as many as they please and from every land.

Let the members of this selected group travel where they will, consult such libraries as they like, and employ every modern means of swift communication.

Let them glean in the fields of geology, botany, astronomy, biology and zoology, and then let them roam

at will wherever science has opened a way.

Let them take advantage of all the progress in art and in literature, in oratory and in history—let them use to the full every instrumentality that is employed in modern civilization.

And when they have exhausted every source, let them embody the results of their best intelligence in a book and offer it to the world as a substitute for this Bible of ours.

Have they the confidence that the prophets of Baal had in their god? Will they try?

If not, what excuse will they give? Has man so fallen from his high estate that we cannot rightfully expect as much of him now as 19 centuries ago?

Or does the Bible come to us from a source that is higher than man? **MANKIND'S MATERIAL GROWTH**

But the case is even stronger. The opponents of the Bible cannot take refuge in the plea that man is retrograding. They loudly proclaim that man has grown and that he is growing still.

They boast of a world-wide advance and their claim is founded upon fact. In all matters except in the "science of how to live" man has made wonderful progress. The mastery of the mind over the forces of nature seems almost complete, so far do we surpass the ancients in harnessing the water, the wind and the lightning.

For ages the rivers plunged down the mountainsides and exhausted their energies without any appreciable contribution to man's service; now they are estimated as so many units of horsepower, and we find that their fretting and their foaming was merely a language which they employed to tell us of their strength and of their willingness to work for us. And, while falling water is becoming each day a larger factor in burden bearing water, rising in the form of steam, is revolutionizing the transportation methods of the world.

The wind, that first whispered its secret of strength to the flapping sail, is now turning the wheel at the well, and our flying machines have taken possession of the air.

**THE IMPOTENCE OF MATERIAL THINGS**

Lightning, the red demon that, from the dawn of creation, has been rushing down its zigzag path through the clouds, as if intent only upon spreading death, metamorphosed into an errand boy, brings us illumination from the sun and carries our messages around the globe.

Inventive genius has multiplied the power of the human arm and supplied the masses with comforts of which the rich did not dare to dream a few centuries ago.

Science is ferreting out the hidden causes of disease and teaching us how to prolong life.

In every line, except in the line of character building, the world seems to have been made over, but these marvellous changes only emphasize the fact that man, too, must be born again, while they show how impotent are material things to touch the soul of man and transform him into a spiritual being.

Wherever the moral standard is being lifted up—wherever life is becoming larger in the vision that directs it and richer in its fruitage, the improvement is traceable to the Bible and to the influence of the God and Christ of whom the Bible tells.

**AN UNACCEPTED CHALLENGE**

The atheist and the materialist must confess that man should be able to produce a better book today than man, unaided, could have produced in any previous age. The fact that they have tried, time and time again, only to fall each time more hopelessly, explains why they will not—why they cannot—accept the challenge thrown down by the Christian world

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