**“A Mystery Revealed” *The Present Truth* 15, 27.**

E. J. Waggoner

Lord Kelvin, who is a recognised authority on Mathematics and Physical Science, has lately been tracing the probable history of the earth (according to geology) from its origin up to the time of the creation of living things. Of this latter he says:- {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 418.1}

Mathematics and dynamics fall short when we contemplate the earth, fitted for life but lifeless, and try to imagine the commencement of life upon it. This did not take place by any action of chemistry, or electricity, or crystalline grouping of molecules, under the influences of force, or by any possible kind of fortuitous concourse of atoms. We must pause face to face with the mystery and miracle of the creation of living creatures. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 418.2}

When men leave the plain, simple statements of the Bible regarding creation, their reasonings and speculations soon get them into a labyrinth of mystery that mathematics or dynamics cannot solve. But there need be no guess-work as to how the earth came into existence, or of the “creation of living creatures.” “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. For He spake, and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast.” Psalm 33:6, 9. It was God’s word that did it all-not only the heavens and the earth, but the creation of living creatures as well. “And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing, and beast after his kind; *and it was so*.” There it is, so plain, that a child can understand it, and the greatest worldly-wise man living knows no more of fact. Guessing is not fact, nor speculation truth. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 418.3}

**“The Gospel of Isaiah. ‘The King in His Beauty.’ Isaiah 33:17-24” *The Present Truth* 15, 27.**

E. J. Waggoner

(ISAIAH 33:17-24, LOWTH’S TRANSLATION.)

*17. Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty;  
They shall see thine own land far extended. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 419.1}*

*18. Thine heart shall reflect on the past terror:  
Where is now the accomptant? where the  
weigher of tribute?  
Where is he that numbered the towers? {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 419.2}*

*19. Thou shalt see no more that barbarous  
people;  
The people of the deep speech, which thou  
couldst not hear;  
And of a stammering tongue, which thou  
couldst not understand. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 419.3}*

*20. Thou shalt see Sion, the city of our solemn  
feasts;  
Thine eyes shall behold Jerusalem,  
The quiet habitation, the tabernacle un-  
shaken;  
Whose stakes shall not be plucked up for  
ever,  
And whose chords none shall be broken. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 419.4}*

*21. But the glorious name of Jehovah shall be  
unto us  
A place of confluent streams, of broad rivers;  
Which no oared ship shall pass,  
Neither shall any mighty vessel go through. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 419.5}*

*22. For Jehovah is our Judge; Jehovah is our  
Lawgiver;  
Jehovah is our King; He shall save us. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 419.6}*

*23. Thy sails are loose; they cannot make them  
fast;  
Thy mast is not firm; they cannot spread the  
ensign.  
Then shall a copious spoil be divided;  
Even the lame shall seize the prey. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 419.7}*

*24. Neither shall the inhabitant say, I am dis-  
abled with sickness;  
The people that dwell therein is freed from  
the punishment of their iniquity. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 419.8}*

Before studying this lesson, do not fail to read again the first portion of the chapter, and recall the lesson we there learned. The people here addressed are those who are able to dwell with the devouring fire, and amid everlasting burnings. Only those who have been tried as by fire, and have stood the test, so that they can dwell in the fire, can behold Him who is Light itself, and who has His fire in Zion, and His furnace in Jerusalem. (See Isaiah 31:9.) {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 419.9}

The picture here presented is beyond question that of the new earth, after the fire from the Lord has consumed sin and sinners; when only those are left, who can dwell with the consuming fire. It is the time when in all the earth “there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face.” Revelation 22:3, 4. They shall see the King in His beauty, and they shall also see the land stretching far to northward and eastward and southward and westward, as God promised to Abraham. Genesis 13:14-17. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 419.10}

“And they shall see His face.” “Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.” What is the beauty of the King, that to look upon it should fill up the measure of all happiness and bliss? Let us give it a little study, for when we know it, and can recognise it, we shall find the joy of life, even in this sin-cursed earth, marvellously increased. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 419.11}

That the Lord is beautiful, the verse before us states. The prophet Zechariah, seeing in vision the Lord saving His people like a flock, was moved to exclaim, “How great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty!” Zechariah 9:16, 17. His goodness and His beauty are linked together, for His beauty is the beauty of holiness. Now the goodness of God is infinite; it is the only goodness that there is in the universe; therefore the beauty of the Lord must be infinite. No tongue can possibly describe it; it must be seen to be appreciated, and seen not for a moment merely, but throughout eternity. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 419.12}

“Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.” Psalm 96:6. Zion itself, His dwelling place, is “the perfection of beauty.” Psalm 50:2. Even one of His creatures, the covering cherub that fell, is declared to have been “full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.” Ezekiel 28:12-14. What then must the Creator be? {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 419.13}

David “the sweet psalmist of Israel,” the one by whom the Spirit of the Lord spake (2 Samuel 23:1:2), spoke of the things touching the King, and he said, “Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into Thy lips.” Psalm 45:1, 2. To the psalmist wonderful revelations of Divine things had been vouchsafed, and so great was his appreciation of the beauty of the Lord that he said, “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple.” Psalm 27:5. To see the beauty of the Lord was his sole desire, and that is to be the reward of the righteous. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 419.14}

“The heavens declare the glory of God.” Psalm 19:1. They tell of His glory by revealing it in their shining; for He has set His glory “upon the heavens.” Psalm 8:1, R.V. Remember that everything exists only by the power of the life of God. All things were created by the Word of God, and the Word is life. “In Him all things consist.” Colossians 1:17. “We are His offspring” (Acts 17:28), but we are not the only products of His Being. The mountains and hills were “brought forth” by Him who from everlasting to everlasting is God. Psalm 90:1, 2. All are familiar with the term, “brought forth,” so that it is scarcely necessary to say that in the Hebrew the word is plainly “born,” and several translations have the text, “before the mountains were born.” {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 419.15}

The everlasting power and Divinity of God are clearly seen in the things that are made. Romans 1:20. The Father impresses His image on His offspring. So “He hath made everything beautiful in its time.” Ecclesiastes 3:11. “He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see? He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not He correct? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not He know?” Psalm 94:9, 10. In like manner we may continue, “He that hath clothed the heavens and the earth with beauty, and hath made all things beautiful, shall not He be beautiful?” {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 420.1}

All these things show us that the beauty that we see in created things is but the reflection or the reproduction of the beauty of the Creator. Just as there is no goodness but from the Lord, so there is no beauty except that which comes from Him. Take all the varied tints of all the beautiful flowers on earth (remember that, beautiful as they are, they are under the curse, and are but the shadow of what they were in the beginning, and of what they will be in the restoration), and add to these the richness of the meadows and the forest, and to this still the glory of the rainbow, and the dazzling splendour of the clouds kissed by the setting sun; let the telescope reveal to your admiring gaze a few of the star-clusters that shine with light of every colour, and remember that when the most powerful telescope and the art of the photographer have revealed to us the presence of countless millions of suns that are invisible to the naked eye, awing us with glimpses of measureless space, “these are but the outskirts of His ways,” and a very small whisper of His power. Job 26:14. Therefore all these things reveal to us only a very small portion of the beauty of the face of the Lord. Think of all the beauty in earth and sea and the heavens, even the heaven of heavens, concentrated into one single Presence, and you have the measureless measure of the beauty of the Lord. And all this wondrous beauty the saints of God will be privileged to gaze upon, and they will be made able to endure the sight! Truly, the face of God will be enough to satisfy anyone. No wonder the psalmist exclaimed, “As for me, I shall behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness.” Psalm 17:15. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 420.2}

What is the practical benefit of this study? Is it merely to inspire in us a desire to see that glorious sight, and thus stir us up to righteousness? Partly, but that is not by any means all. The chief thing is to let us know the possibilities set before us even in this life, as expressed in the inspired prayer, “Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us.” Psalm 90:17. If we but allow our hearts to be the sanctuary of the living God, then He that dwells between the cherubim will “shine forth.” Psalm 80:1. “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee.” Isaiah 60:1, 2. The beauty of the Lord is the beauty of holiness, and just as He has laid up great goodness for them that trust in Him before the sons of men (Psalm 31:19), so does He impart to them His beauty. The world will not recognise it, for they did not desire the beauty of the Lord when they saw Him; their standard of beauty is not the Lord’s standard; nevertheless the beauty is present whenever righteousness is present; and it is beauty that will never fade. That is the true test of beauty. By beholding the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, we become changed into the same image, even in this life, and are thus prepared for the full revelation of the beauty of the world to come, when the righteous shall shine forth as the sun. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 420.3}

Even now may we behold the beauty of the Lord, if our eyes are but anointed by the Spirit. In all His works, we may see the shining of His face. “Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance.” Psalm 89:15. So we may ever dwell in the house of the Lord; and ever behold the shining of His glorious face. “Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house; they will be still praising Thee.” Likewise in eternity, the saints, although privileged to roam throughout the entire universe, will always know themselves to be in the Presence of the King, everywhere beholding the beauty of His face. With this truth ever in our minds, we may realise to the full all that is contained in the expression “living near to the Lord.” {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 420.4}

Verses 18-20 make still more plain the fact that the time of which we are now studying is that after the wicked who have surrounded the camp of the saints, and the Beloved City, have been devoured by the fire from heaven. Revelation 20:9. “Thine heart shall reflect on the past terror,” but only to magnify the wondrous power and mercy of the Lord. Where now are those who counted the towers, and who in the madness of wickedness had devoted the holy city to destruction? No more shall they be seen, for they are as though they had not been. Jerusalem, instead of falling a prey to them, as they had planned, will be seen as “the quiet habitation, the tabernacle unshaken, whose stakes shall not be plucked up for ever, and of whose chords none shall be broken.” {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 420.5}

“But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams.” Is this literally true?-Most certainly; for God is ?the Fountain of living waters.” Jeremiah 2:13. From Himself flows the river of water of life-His own life flowing forth for the everlasting refreshment of His people. But this is true now for those who have eyes to see spiritual things, and who know the reality of them. It is from the river of God that this earth is watered. Psalm 65:9. It is full of water, even to overflowing, and never runs dry. The rain that falls from heaven to enrich the earth, is from that river. Consequently the streams of water on this earth are but branches of the same river. In the flowing streams and the waves of the sea we may see the life of God; then will it be no more a mere figure of speech that our peace shall be as a river, and our righteousness as the waves of the sea. Dwelling in the house of the Lord, we shall constantly see His face, and drink of the river of His pleasure. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 420.6}

Jehovah is our Judge, our King, and our Lawgiver, and He is this by right, because He will save us. Only He who can save has the right to give laws, and only to Him should we hearken. Our daily prayer is, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” That means that we should now regard the Lord as our King just the same as though we were now in heaven. He is the only rightful King; our part is to recognise His right to rule over us. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 420.7}

“And the inhabitants shall not say, I am sick,” or, as Lowth has it, “I am disabled with sickness.” That will be a glorious change from this present state. “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.” Revelation 21:4. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 421.1}

Why will there be no more sickness in that land?-The reason is given in the text: “The people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.” God, who forgives all iniquities also heals all diseases, and the healing is because of the forgiveness-a consequence of it. Few people realise the fulness of the blessing of forgiveness, and that is the reason so many Christians say that there is a much higher state in the Christian life than that of justification. They think that to live in the consciousness of sins forgiven is but a trifle compared with the blessings that God has for those who fully trust Him. But to live in the constant knowledge of sins forgiven is the highest possible for any creature. It is to live in fellowship with God. 1 John 1:7. Our sins are forgiven by the substitution of the righteousness of Christ, which means that it is by God’s giving us His life instead of ours. That means a complete transformation. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 421.2}

“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” The life of Christ, the stream from the throne of God, constantly flowing through us, and being our sole source of life, takes sin away. But when the Lord gives us His life, He gives us the whole of it. He gives us Himself, and He is not divided. Therefore He gives us His health as well as His righteousness. It is just as easy for the Lord to make a man perfectly whole as to forgive his sins, for it is all done by the same life. Indeed, if we but knew the extent of the gift of the righteousness which takes away sin, we should always take with it the healing of our bodies; it is ours, if we will but receive it. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 421.3}

Why is it that so many people who know the Lord as the One who forgives all their iniquities do not experience the blessings of health?-Simply because they do not understand and comply with the conditions. They know that “if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,” and so they confess their sins, and do not expect to continue them. They would not expect to be forgiven if they were not willing to cease from sinning. Well now, why not be as reasonable with regard to health? There are conditions of life and health. No one would expect the Lord to keep him from being burned, if he persisted in going into the fire. Even so we need not expect the Lord to keep us in health if we continually disregard the laws of health, any more than we should expect forgiveness if we ignored the ten commandments. God has given us food, drink, air, rest, and clothing, to keep us in health. If we eat and drink only the things that He has indicated as good for us, and in proper measure, allow our lungs the utmost quantity of the purest air, and do not contaminate it with vile tobacco poison, and if we have the right relation between labour and rest, then, trusting in the Lord, we may expect strength sufficient for all our duties, so that even in this life we need not say, “I am disabled with sickness.” This is practical godliness, which is profitable for this life as well as for that which is to come. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 421.4}

**“Warlike Tendencies” *The Present Truth* 15, 27.**

E. J. Waggoner

Every military country in Europe has its “war party,” and it is from this party that most of the perils which threaten peace are supposed to come. If there is a war party in England, it is comparatively inactive, but the continually increasing proportion of the national revenue which is being applied in military and naval directions, must have the effect of strengthening warlike tendencies. It is now no unusual thing to have prominent military chiefs referring to the necessity for some means of forcibly recruiting our army. Colonel Mathias of the Gordon Highlanders, said it few days ago,- {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 421.5}

As the commander of a regiment he knew there was great difficulty in getting man. They had to compete with the Labour market, and noises sufficient wages were offered, the army could not compete with Labour. In consequence of this state of things the country was within measurable distance of conscription. If men would not serve their country willingly, they would have to do it under compulsion. Every year England was painting the map redder and redder, and men must be found to defend her possessions. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 421.6}

**“Notes on the International Sunday-School Lessons. In the Fiery Furnace. Daniel 3:14-28” *The Present Truth* 15, 27.**

E. J. Waggoner

(Daniel 3:14-28.)

It seemed like a great thing for four young men, captives, to presume to know more about what was best for them than all he king’s wise men, and a very bold thing for them to mark out a course for themselves, entirely different from the one that had been planned for them; but in the chapter before us we have a test of faith and loyalty that was much stronger. It was, however, only the natural sequence of the first test. If these young men had not been true to principle in the first instance, they would not have stood in this trying time. The germ of all their faithfulness was in that question of eating and drinking. If any man will but eat and drink just as he ought to, and in the fear of God, he will not fail in anything else. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 421.7}

Nebuchadnezzar the king had made an image of gold, exceeding great and high, and set it up in the plain of Dura, where he assembled all the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, and the treasurers, the counsellors, and the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, in fact, all the great men in his kingdom, which meant all the great man of the whole world, for that was the extent of his kingdom. See Daniel 2:37, 38. Daniel’s three companions were there, for the king had set them over the affairs of the province of Babylon. Chapter 2:49. Where Daniel himself was, we are not told, as he does not appear at all in this affair; but we may be sure that he was not present, for if he had been there he would have stood for the truth as sturdily as did his companions This we know from his record. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 421.8}

When all were assembled, the herald cried aloud, “To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up. And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning, fiery furnace.” Daniel 3:4-6. You may be sure that the people in general needed no second bidding, after that decree was announced. “At that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut psaltery, and all kinds of music, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.” It was a gorgeous spectacle, and one calculated to dazzle the senses. Then the music must have been most ravishing and enchanting; people would almost involuntarily be bewitched by its charm into falling down and worshipping. It was so easy and natural to follow the crowd of great men, even if there had not been hanging over their heads that fearful threat to the disobedient. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 422.1}

But there were three men in that vast company who dared be peculiar, and who were not afraid to do differently from all the rest of the world. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, for so had Daniel’s three companions been named by the king, stood upright while all the rest fell prostrate. You may be sure that they did not like to be peculiar, that they did not stand up merely for the sake of attracting attention to themselves. It was very dangerous at that time for one to attract attention to himself. Brave men are never foolhardy. These men were not acting from a spirit of bravado, but from principle. They were not obstinate, but they could differently, because they knew the commandment of the God of heaven, “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me,” and, “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them.” Exodus 20:3-5. This command is from the King of kings, and takes precedence of any command made by any king on earth. Disregard of Nebuchadnezzar’s decree was therefore not disobedience, but the most perfect obedience. Both the king and his Hebrew captives were subjects of the King of the universe, and the fact that the king was disloyal did not absolve them from their duty. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 422.2}

The king, however, had forgotten his obligation to his Maker, and assumed that he was absolute ruler over the souls me well as over the bodies of men. Accordingly he was in a great rage and fury when the word was brought to him that three men, and captive Jews at that, had dared ignore his commandment. Yet there were noble traits in Nebuchadnezzar character, and even in his idolatrous pride and the rage of offended dignity, he would not act hastily. So he generously offered the Hebrews another trial. He might, according to the decree, have sent them at once to execution; but he did not. He would overlook this act of defiance to his authority if at the second sounding of the musical instruments they would fall down and worship the image. It is quite likely that the king also thought that there must have been some misunderstanding; for he could scarcely conceive that any one would deliberately disregard his decree, when such awful consequences of disobedience were staring them in the face. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 422.3}

But there was no misunderstanding. The three men had not acted without full knowledge of what they were doing, and they told the king that they did not need another trial. They could answer him now as well as later, that they would not worship his image. Listen to their bold language: “O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning, fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.” Daniel 3:16-18. There was no doubt nor hesitancy in their answer. They were very prompt and bold, but calm and deliberate. They had confidence in God’s power to deliver them; but even if He should not see fit to save them from the furnace of fire, that would make no difference. They were not serving the Lord for personal gain. They did not have the notion that God was under obligation to give them an easy time if they served Him, as so many have. There are very many who would be willing to serve the Lord, if He would insure them against hardships; and there are very many professed ministers of the Gospel, and religious teachers, who are inculcating this notion, and teaching the people that they cannot be expected to do what they think is right unless the way is made so easy that there will be no possibility of their suffering. We see this in the demand for Sunday laws, in order that men may be free to keep the day which they hold to be the Sabbath. They profess to believe that God’s law demands Sunday observance; yet by making pleas for human laws restraining employers from requiring labour on that day, they virtually say that men do not need to serve the Lord unless everybody also does, or if men in high positions are against it. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 422.4}

There was no mistaking the answer of the Hebrews. Such a seeming defiance of his authority the king was not accustomed to, and he could not endure it. So he commanded that the rebellious men should forthwith be carried to execution. Such a flagrant disregard of authority must receive signal punishment, so that all others might take warning, and orders were given that the furnace should be heated seven times hotter than usual. Then the three men were bound in their mantles, their turbans, their hose, and all their other garments, just as they stood, and were cast into the superheated furnace. So hot was the furnace that the men who were appointed to cast the captives in were killed in the act. What must have been the terrible fate of the men who were cast into it bound in all their inflammable clothing? {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 422.5}

A wonder took place. The executioners were slain, and the condemned men were set at liberty, and that by the agent of death. Such a thing was never known before. Nebuchadnezzar himself was the first to notice it. He rose up in haste and amazement, and said unto his counsellors, “Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?” He can hardly trust his own senses, and seeks confirmation of what he sees with his own eyes. “They answered and said, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.” Only their bonds were loosed. Thus would God demonstrate to all the world that His servants are free men. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 422.6}

In the face of this record, how weak and foolish sound the excuses sometimes made by men, for not serving the Lord. “I could not live, if I should keep the commandments.” Well, the three Hebrews lived, and no one will ever be placed in a more desperate situation than they were. Men sometimes shrink from going as missionaries to some heathen land, because it is so hot there, but no one can ever get into a hatter place on this earth than those men were in; yet they lived. Their experience demonstrates that there is no place where men cannot live and prosper if God is with them. They were better off after they want into the furnace than they were before. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 423.1}

In their case we see the fulfilment of Christ’s words, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” Matthew 28:20. His name is I AM, therefore He says, “When thou passest through the waters, I am with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.” Isaiah 43:2. There was not so much as the smell of fire on their garments. A fiery furnace can become a pleasure garden, where men can walk to and fro at their ease, if the Lord be with them. They who walk righteously, and speak uprightly, can dwell with the devouring fire, and even with “everlasting burnings.” Isaiah 33:14, 15. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 423.2}

Although these three man were nominally captives, they were the most powerful men in the entire kingdom, not excepting the king himself; and the king was the first to acknowledge the fact. “Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego, who hath sent His angel and delivered His servants that trusted in Him, *and have changed the king’s word*, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.” Then compare that with the words of the Apostle Paul: “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” Romans 6:12, 13. There was not defiance of man, but yielding to God. In yielding was their strength, for they trusted in the Lord Jehovah, in whom is everlasting strength. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 423.3}

It would have been an easy matter for those men to compromise with their consciences, by saying, “We can fall on our faces, so as not to attract attention to ourselves, and thus incur the penalty, but we need not worship the image. We can be calling on God in our hearts.” No, it would not have been an easy matter for *those* men to reason in that way, but it comes very natural to a great many. What a failure their whole lives would have been if they had. What a glorious opportunity they would have missed. “Oh, yes; we could stand out for the truth as well as they did, if we were sure that God would interfere to save us.” Exactly; we could serve the Lord if we had confidence in Him, and could trust Him. The difficulty is that everything is so commonplace when we are called upon to witness for the Lord. The way looks so shut up, that we just dare not go ahead. But those men had no assurance that they would not be burned alive. To all appearances that was the last of them. But that made no difference; they would serve the Lord whatever happened, and God honoured them in their honouring Him. The same God lives to-day, and He has the same power to deliver. His law also is just as holy as it was then. Not one jot of its requirements has been relaxed. Men have set it at naught, and kings and rulers have enacted laws contrary to it, and even requiring its transgression, as, for instance, the laws requiring observance of Sunday instead of the Sabbath, and also laws requiring men to kill their fellow-men; and thousands of professed Christians think that these human laws absolve them from their duty to the law of God. But since God has not changed, things are in exactly the same condition that they were when Nebuchadnezzar set up his image in the plain of Dura, and commanded all men to fall down before it. Where are the men who will be faithful even unto death? {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 423.4}

**“Whited Sepulchres” *The Present Truth* 15, 27.**

E. J. Waggoner

When Christ was here on earth, He had a good deal to say about people who “say and do not.” These He likened to a whited sepulchre, filled with dead men’s bones. This at first thought seems like an extreme comparison, but it is not altogether a figure of speech. How often it is that people make a profession of religion, unite with the church, and to outward appearance pass as God’s children, while at the same time sin reigns within the heart. Then when God looks upon such an individual, professing to be what he is not, He sees beyond the exterior, and takes cognizance of the thoughts and intents of the heart. There He sees sin; but sin is death. So instead of the body of that person being the temple of the Holy Ghost, it is really a seplechre, filled with dead men’s bones. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 423.5}

God does not desire that we should be sepulchres filled with death, but living temples filled with His Spirit. So instead of drawing over our iniquity a covering that will make us appear outwardly to he righteous, God would have us to be covered with the covering of His Spirit, that will cleanse from all iniquity and sin. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 423.6}

**“Choosing” *The Present Truth* 15, 27.**

E. J. Waggoner

Men were created free moral agents, with the power and privilege of choice; and God calls upon them to choose between right and wrong, life and death. “Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.” Joshua 24:15. “Choose life that both thou and thy seed may life.” Deuteronomy 30:19. There is nothing arbitrary about it-every one is left free to choose as he sees fit, but it makes a great difference what that choice is, for on it hang eternal consequences. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 424.1}

When Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, he made a choice that he afterwards regretted; and even though he sought it with tears, there was no place found for repentance. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 424.2}

When the strife between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot became so great that a separation was necessary, Lot was given the first choice; and because the plain of Jordan was “well watered,” he chose that, and “pitched is tent toward Sodom.” His choice was a selfish one, to satisfy present desires; and for a time it appeared outwardly that it was a wise one, so far as worldly success was concerned, but in the end it proved to be the very worst he could have made, as he lost all of his worldly possessions, and escaped from the doomed city only with his life. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 424.3}

Not so with Moses. Although heir to the throne of Egypt, with every possible worldly prospect before him, he “refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 424.4}

Ah, there is the secret. It is to look beyond the present. The wise man said, “Walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.” Ecclesiastes 11:9. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 424.5}

So many to-day are choosing this world, the pleasures and benefits that it can give, but the choice is a poor one, for all the world can give is only transitory and unsatisfactory. But he who chooses the world to come, like Mary “hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 424.6}

**“Little Folks. Summer Morning” *The Present Truth* 15, 27.**

E. J. Waggoner

Some time ago we had a little talk together about the equinox, at the time of the Vernal or Spring Equinox. This, you may remember, is the time, about the end of March, when the days and nights are of equal length all over the world. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 426.1}

Since then the days on our part of the globe have been growing longer and warmer, because we have been turning nearer and nearer to the sun. And now we have passed “midsummer day,” or what is called the “summer solstice.” This time, about June 21, is called the “solstice” from two Latin words meaning “the sun,” and “to stand,” because at this time the sun seems to stand still for a little while, to make a pause, and remain for a short time at the same point in the heavens, before we pass further away from it again to the time of short days and nights. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 426.2}

It is at the time of the summer solstice that we get the longest and warmest days in all the year. Perhaps you do not know how long you have long before the daylight has faded. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 426.3}

Only two or three hours of darkness, and then the soft dawn of the sweet summer morning-the smiles of God breaking again over the earth in the returning sunlight, causes all mature to rejoice and smile back at Him in return. For you know that the light of the sun is all the reflection of the glorious light shining from the beautiful face of Jesus, who is “the Light of the world.” {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 426.4}

See how *joyfully* everything greets Him. The clouds blush beautiful colour. The flowers open their petals and pour forth their sweetest fragrance, as the sunlight kisses the dew from their leaves and it is carried away again in the form of vapours to refresh other thirsty plants perhaps thousands of miles away. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 426.5}

The sweet birds one by one awake; and begin the day with a glad song of praise to the Light of the world who has brought them again from their slumbers. First there is a faint, drowsy chirp or twitter here and there, which swells as others add their notes to a full chorus of joyful praise. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 426.6}

All this is going on while you, little children, are peacefully sleeping in your beds in the early morning hours of these glad summer days. But at last you too awake, and how do *you* greet Him? God loves the flowers, the birds, and all His other works that praise Him. But, oh, there is something which He loves much more, for which He listens much more eagerly, and that to hear His children praise Him, to see their hearts turning to Him in love and thankfulness for all His loving care for them. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 426.7}

Then, dear children, as you awake each morning and see “His smile in the glad sunshine,” will not you too give Him smiles of love and songs of praise, and offer to Him the sweet incense of worship, giving yourselves to Him who “giveth you richly all things to enjoy.” {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 426.8}

Think how much it has cost Him to do this-to give to you life and all them blessings. He gave up His own life, poured it out upon the cross, so that He might be able to give life to you. He wants to give you life and all the blessings of His love, not for a few years only, but “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have *everlasting* life.” {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 426.9}

As you think of the great love of God and all His goodness to you, as you Iearn to take all these gifts of His love as coming to you direct from your loving Father in Heaven, you will long to see His face, and to live for ever in the light of His countenance, and sing His praises. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 426.10}

Think how it pleased the dear Saviour when the little children of Jerusalem owned Him so their King and shouted His praises. To those who rebuked them for their He said, “Have you never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast Thou perfected praise?” {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 426.11}

And He is “the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” Just as much now as then He listens for and loves the praises of His little ones. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 426.12}

An old philosopher once said that the learned manners from the mannerly,-by doing exactly opposite to what he saw others do that was disagreeable to him. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 426.13}

**“Tea-Drinking” *The Present Truth* 15, 27.**

E. J. Waggoner

The poisonous effects of tea were lately illustrated in a case which was reported in all the papers. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 430.1}

By drinking thirty cups of tea daily a New York man reduced himself to such weakness that he had to undergo treatment in a hospital. The over-indulgence, it was found, had destroyed six out of every seven of the corpuscles of the blood, rendering the life-fluid thin and powerless. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 430.2}

The fact that a man could drink so many cups of tea daily shows that there is nothing nutritious in tea. If there were, a sense of satisfaction would take away the desire for more. Now that it is proved what is the effect of tea-drinking tin a large scale, tea-drinkers may know how the stimulant is affecting them, in proportion to the amount they consume. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 430.3}

Very few people will admit that they are slaves to the craving for tea. A simple way of ascertaining whether this is so, is to leave off using it. If no inconvenience is caused, they should be thankful to have escaped the influence of the stimulant, and adopt a healthier beverage. If they suffer any inconvenience from its disuse, they may certainly know that it is high time to leave it alone. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 430.4}

While it is sometimes true, because of disordered digestions and other personal considerations, in the case even of wholesome articles of diet, that “what is one man’s food is another’s poison,” it is always true of nervous stimulants like tea and coffee, which are harmful in themselves, that if they poison one man they will have the same effect upon another. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 430.5}

**“Jottings” *The Present Truth* 15, 27.**

E. J. Waggoner

-About a million students leave school in India every year, 926,000 of whom are utterly ignorant of Christian truth. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 430.6}

-There is great discontent in Spain over the proposed taxes for increased fortifications. Riots have taken place, attended by bloodshed. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 430.7}

-The United States Government is reported to be making preparations for the enlistment of nine regiments of volunteers for service in the Philippines. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 430.8}

-All convicts under sentence of penal servitude who have not passed the third standard will be kept from labour for one hour daily until they are sufficiently educated to pass. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 430.9}

-Schemes for the arrest of armaments and the disuse of Dum-dum bullets, and similar implements of warfare, have been laid before the Peace Conference, but do not meet with general support. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 430.10}

-A National Animals’ Hospital is to be established in London. It will be mainly intended for the benefit of animals maimed in the streets. Ambulances will be provided for the conveyance of such animals. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 430.11}

-A new Government has been formed in Paris, and has succeeded in obtaining a vote of confidence by a majority of twenty-six. The reform of military abuses is the ambition, and will probably prove the downfall, of the new Ministry. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 430.12}

-Bishop Tugwell, who was arrested on a criminal charge of libel for saying that most of the deaths among white men on the West Coast of Africa, were due to excessive use of alcohol, has been released. The prosecution was abandoned. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 430.13}

-Organ-grinders in Verviers, Belgium, are by law compelled to appear every morning before the police superintendent and play their instruments. The organs which chance to be out of tune must be set in order before a licence to play on the street will be granted. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 430.14}

-The largest room in the world, under one roof and unbroken by pillars, is at St. Petersburg. It is 620 ft. long by 160 in breadth. By daylight it is used for military displays, and a whole battalion can completely manoeuvre in it. By night 20,000 wax tapers give it a beautiful appearance. The roof is a single arch of iron. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 430.15}

-A labour war is raging in Denmark. It began in an insignificant dispute over joiners’ wages, but there are now 40,000 men locked out, and the federated employers threaten to shut out another 40,000 unless their terms are accepted. There are only 100,000 industrial workers in the whole country, so that the light will involve the whole population unless it is quickly brought to a termination. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 430.16}

-The United States Navy Department is making experiments with a shell which bursts into lfame when it touches the water. Such an article has been known to pyrotechnists from the days of Troy, but this is a new thing nevertheless. It is loaded with carbide, and on contact with water an electric wire ignites the gas at a burner. The object is to cast a brilliant light over the sea so as to expose the whereabouts of an enemy’s ships or batteries. The inventor claims that the flame cannot be extinguished by wind, even though it should blow a gale. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 430.17}

**“Back Page” *The Present Truth* 15, 27.**

E. J. Waggoner

The Peace Conference having rejected the Czar’s disarmament scheme, the *Daily Mail* says:- {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 432.1}

The Peace Conference has proved a failure. It was foreseen from the first that there would be immense difficulty in arriving at any basis of reduction in armaments. It would be practically impossible to prevent one Power secretly spending more than its neighbours, or drilling larger forces, where the motive to snatch an advantage was so strong. No Power believes in its neighbours, and that is why Europe is an armed camp to-day. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 432.2}

That is the exact truth. What is the remedy?-There is only one thing that can cast out fear and distrust, and that is perfect love-the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit. In Christ alone is there peace, in the world is strife and war. The only preparation for peace is the Gospel of Christ. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 432.3}

One of the charges against ancient Israel was that they said to their seers, “See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things.” {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 432.4}

Many to-day, rather than receive an unwelcome truth, deliberately blind their eyes end close their ears to dangers and warnings, and so walk into the trap the devil has set for their destruction. Their hearts rebel against the words of truth, preferring rather to hear “smooth” words-slippery things-something that will not lodge in the heart and prick the conscience. Such are in “slippery places.” {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 432.5}

God would deal faithfully with people. His word is sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. So the word that comes to every soul means either life or death. The truth divides between those who really know God and those who do not. It is because truth and error are so mixed together that the message must be a cutting one, that it is given in love. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Let us welcome His instruction, and foIlow the truth to have its sanctifying effect on our hearts, and fit us for His kingdom. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 432.6}

Many professed Christians rally round the creed of their church rather than the Word of God. New truth may come to them, and they see it, but rather than devise their creed, they reject it. But this is not as it should be. No man can know all the truth of God. The path of the just shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Truth is progressive. Like a tree it grows and expands, and when a new truth appears, he whose heart is open to receive truth, will recognise it as another branch of the tree, and thank God for it. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 432.7}

In a notice of Archbishop Ireland’s visit to this country, the *Catholic Times* takes occasion to speak of the progress which the Roman Catholic church had made in the United States of America, under the leadership of such prelates as Archbishop Ireland, who are “foremost in serving the interests of the State.” As showing the popularity of “the church” in that country the *Times* says: “To-day the voice of the Catholics is recognised as a potent factor in the affairs of the nation, and there is no public man whose words command more general attention than those of the Archbishop of St. Paul.” This is undoubtedly the truth. The President of the United States is a Presbyterian, but Cardinal Gibbons and Archbishop Ireland, who hold no office, have more influence with him than any other man in the country. It will doubtless not be long before the affairs of that country will be largely directed from the Vatican. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 432.8}

**“Investigating Spiritualism” *The Present Truth* 15, 27.**

E. J. Waggoner

The New York *Independent*, which is one of the oldest and most influential religions journals in the United States, has announced its sympathy with Spiritualism. In an editorial entitled, “May Spiritualism be Investigated?” it boldly takes the position that it should be, and commends the labours of the Harvard professors, who have through their investigations become quite converted to Spiritualism. The editor, after stating the almost universal belief in “the continued existence after death of the spirits of human beings,” says: “It no longer seems as absurd to imagine that we may possibly communicate with the spirits of the dead as it did twenty years ago.” The *Independent*, therefore, pronounces the investigation of Spiritualism not only legitimate, but necessary. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 432.9}

“Well isn’t it so? Isn’t it lawful and necessary to investigate all things?” {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 432.10}

“Certainly not?” {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 432.11}

“But doesn’t the Bible tell us to prove alI things?” {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 432.12}

Yes, it does; but that does not justify every man in drinking all the whiskey he caught hold of, to see if it is really intoxicating. It doesn’t warrant a man in putting his hand in a viper’s nest, to see if its bite is fatal. There are different ways of investigating things. A man may most thoroughly investigate Spiritualism without ever coming in contact with a medium; and that is the only safe way of investing it. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 432.13}

God’s word is light. It supplies the test by which everything is to be tried. It tells us to “try the spirits,” but does not tell us to go and experiment with them. “To the law, and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is cause there is no light in them.” The man who has never attended a Spiritualist meeting, nor conversed with a medium, but who knows God’s Word, has a far better understanding of it than the wisest professor in the world can have, who into the midst of it to investigate it, without the Bible. The man who stands at the mouth of a cave and flashes a search light in, will learn far more of its interior than the man will who goes into its murky recesses without a light. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 432.14}

One thing is sufficient to condemn Spiritualism utterly, and that is that it denies the very foundation of the Gospel life only in the cross of Christ. It not only denies that, but is itself a denial of the very foundation of Spiritualism is the teaching that every man has life in himself, regardless of Christ. In fact, Spiritualism is a repudiation of the atoning blood of Christ. So Christianity and Spiritualism are fundamentally opposed. They are as opposite as light and darkness. We can well understand how men of the world, who know not Christ, can talk about investigating Spiritualism; but for those who profess His name, and who have known something of His saving power; to recommend an investigation of it, indicates a terrible departure from the faith. They would be shocked at the proposal to investigate Paganism with a possible acceptance of it, and yet a knowledge of the first principles of the Gospel is sufficient to teach anybody that Spiritualism is only Paganism. {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 432.15}

“Enter not into the path of the wicked; and walk not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it; turn from it, and pass on.” {PTUK July 6, 1899, p. 432.16}

**“The Handwriting on the Wall. Daniel 5:17-31” *The Present Truth* 15, 28.**

E. J. Waggoner

The portion of Scripture covered by this lesson is but the closing part of a most interesting and instructive history, and therefore we must first gives some attention to what precedes. Nebuchadnezzar, who had brought Babylon to the highest pitch of grandeur and greatness, was dead, and his son Nabonadius, who had associated with himself Belshazzar his son, was ruling in his stead. The third chapter of Daniel, which we have already studied, and also the second, show us something of how God had dealt with Babylon, and how He had revealed Himself to the king. The fourth chapter, which is passed by in these lessons, recounts Nebuchadnezzar’s pride and its abasement, and gives his humble acknowledgment of his sin and of the goodness and greatness of God. The time of the fifth chapter is nearly seventy years later than that of the first. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 433.1}

**A BLASPHEMOUS ORGY**

At the time when the events of this chapter occurred, Babylon had been besieged by Cyrus, king of Persia, commanding the combined forces of Media and Persia, for about a year. As yet nothing decisive had been accomplished. The walls of Babylon were very thick and high, and a deep and wide moat surrounded the city. The soldiers of Cyrus had been engaged in cutting a canal round one side of the city, extending from a point on the Euphrates River above the city to a point below, as it passed through the city; but the Babylonians, feeling secure in their stronghold, with provisions laid up for many years, laughed at this sort of warfare, and gave themselves no concern. As if to emphasise their unconcern, the people were this night celebrating with unusual hilarity a heathen festival. The king made a special feast to a thousand of his lords, drinking himself drunk in their presence, while they all “praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.” The vessels of the house of God were brought out, and the king’s courtiers and courtesans drank wine out of them, thus wantonly insulting the God of heaven. It was a wild scene of licentious carousing, in which the king, who felt himself superior to the Majesty of the universe, allowed himself to be no true king, but a mere thing lower than the brutes. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 433.2}

**COWARDICE OF BLASPHEMERS**

“In the same hour came forth fingers of a man’s hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king’s palace, and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king’s countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.” Daniel 5:5, 6. The king’s conscience made a coward of him. He could boldly blaspheme the God of heaven as long as He kept silence, but when God began to manifest Himself in a special manner, he trembled like a leaf in the wind. He had fancied himself a king, and could boast of his power, believing all the flatteries of his princes; but now he was revealed before them as a miserable, shrinking, trembling thing. Where was now his confidence in the gods which he had been praising. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 433.3}

**VAIN CONFIDENCE**

“The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and show me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom. Then came in all the king’s wise men; but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof. Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonied.” Daniel 5:7-9. But the king’s wise men were not familiar with the handwriting of God. They had not studied in His school. They had so long worshipped the work of their own hands (Isaiah 2:8), that the hand of God was to them a hidden mystery. God “frustrateth the tokens of liars, and maketh diviners made;” He “turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish.” Isaiah 44:25. When He speaks, His words are so deep that all human wisdom sinks into insignificance. It was with reference to this very time that these words were written more than a hundred years before. See the remainder of Isaiah 44, and chapter 45:1-4. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 434.1}

It was now the time of punishment for the wickedness of Babylon. Long before, God had sent its people warning, and had wrought wonderfully among them; but because judgment upon their evil works was not executed speedily, their hearts were fully set to do evil. This very time, and this very circumstance had been accurately foretold through the prophet, before any of the actors in the scene were born. God had said to Babylon and its rulers:- {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 434.2}

“I was wroth with My people, I have polluted Mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didst show them no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke. And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it. Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: but these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments. For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me. Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know. Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail. Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee. Behold, they shall be as stubble.” Isaiah 47:6-14. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 434.3}

**A FAITHFUL WITNESS**

The astrologers and necromancers could not prevail, and Daniel, the servant of the despised and blasphemed God of Israel, was called in to make known the mystery. To him the same rewards were offered that had tempted the astrologers to try their skill; but they were no inducement to him; yet he unhesitatingly promised to make know the writing and its interpretation. Daniel had long been a student in the Lord’s school, and he knew His handwriting, and had no trouble in deciphering it. It was a terrible message that he had to deliver, but he had no fear. He had so long been accustomed to stand before the God of heaven and earth, that he could not be abashed by the tinsel and gaudy splendour of a profligate court, nor elated by the promises of rewards offered by the ruler of a kingdom of a day. Very plainly and forcibly he recounted to the king the history of God’s dealings with his ancestors, and how the lesson had not been laid to heart. God had abased the haughty pride of Nebuchadnezzar, and the king, in a writing sent to all the world, had humbly acknowledged the God of heaven as supreme; “and thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified.” Daniel 5:22, 23. What a striking arraignment this was! How insignificant Belshazzar’s gods must have seemed to him at that moment! Talk about wise men, when they did not know any more than to praise senseless pieces of metal, and in the same breath belittle the name of Him who gave them breath! {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 434.4}

**EMPTINESS**

Then was the writing again placed on the wall, and these words appeared: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. The words themselves were not difficult. Anybody present could have pronounced them. Literally translated, they are, “Numbered, Numbered, Weighed, Divided.” But what could they signify? “God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.” Twice was this repeated, for emphasis. A most accurate account had been kept, and there was no mistake in the books. The end of the kingdom had come; it was about to fall to pieces by its own weakness. “Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting.” God weighs the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance (Isaiah 40:12), yet “by Him actions are weighed.” 1 Samuel 2:3. His scales are wonderfully accurate, and are adapted to the greatest things as well as the least. Belshazzar had been placed in them, and had been found lighter than air. He weighed absolutely nothing. “Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie; to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.” Psalm 62:9. That which men call “gravitation” is but the power of the presence of God, to whom alone power belongs; outside of Him there is no weight whatever; Belshazzar had rejected the Lord, and therefore when laid in the balances he went up like the fine dust. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 434.5}

**SUDDEN DESTRUCTION**

Only one thing remained to be said: “Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.” Even then the soldiers of Cyrus were marching into the city through the river bed, the waters of which had been drained off. Sudden retribution was about to fall upon the head of the basphemous king of Babylon. “In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom.” The judgment came as a thunderbolt, yet it was not sudden; for the warning had long been given. The destruction of Babylon was not only a representation of the judgment of the last day, but was in reality the beginning of it, for the punishment then will be finished when the Lord shall appear. Even as it was in Belshazzar’s day, “when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.” 1 Thessalonians 5:2, 3. And thus the story ends. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 435.1}

**FOR OUR LEARNING**

Yet it is not ended for us. It is written for our learning, and if we have not learned it, then we are as guilty as Belshazzar was. The pride and self-confidence of the Babylonians was the cause of their fall. The very feast in which they were congratulating themselves on their safety was used by Cyrus for their complete overthrow. Trusting in their strength, they relaxed their watchfulness, and there was nothing to hinder the conqueror from marching into the very heart of the city; and even if he had been seen, the drunken lords and rulers were in no condition to repel him. Now the same destruction that was prophesied upon Babylon is to come upon all the earth. See Isaiah 14:24-27. Nations and kings may say, that they are well fortified against all invasion: but that is just what Belshazzsr said. When God brings judgments, so that no one can know whence they come, who can he prepared against them? Only those who make the preparation of putting on Christ. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 435.2}

**VANITY OF EARTHLY HONOURS**

In the very hour of his death king Belshazzar commanded that the promised rewards should be conferred on Daniel. He was clothed in purple, the royal colour, a chain of gold was placed about his neck, and a proclamation was issued that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom, next to Belshazzar himself. Daniel knew the value, or rather, the worthlessness, of these honours. The kingdom was defunct, and with it all its honours would perish. He would not have cared for them, even if it had beer. in the beginning of the kingdom, instead of at the close, for he served a King who could give more real and lasting rewards. But let it not be forgotten that the rewards and honours which Belshazzar conferred that night were just as valuable as any that are ever conferred by any earthly monarch. All the kingdoms of this earth, like that of Belshazzar, are but for a day. In the sight of the Lord, all nations are “less than nothing, and vanity.” Isaiah 40:17. Why then should anybody be elated at the thought of what kings can bestow? or seek worldly honour and preferment? The thing offered cannot be as great as the power offering it, and that is less than nothing! With what trifles men who are called wise amuse themselves? “It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.” Psalm 118:8, 9. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 435.3}

**“The Covering of the Lord” *The Present Truth* 15, 28.**

E. J. Waggoner

When the children of Israel would seek help in emoting off the yoke of bondage they were under to the king of Assyria, instead of going to the Lord, they took counsel of the king of Egypt, and sought to make him their strength. For this they were called “rebellious children,” who “take counsel, but not of Me; and that cover with a covering, but not of My Spirit,” “therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion.” {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 435.4}

Just as it was then, so is it to-day. The strength of the church is not found in seeking alliances with the world. The Lord is the strength of His people, and to seek help from any other source is to trust in a broken reed. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 435.5}

But it is so easy when a people have let go their hold on God to reach out after something they can see, to form unholy alliances to carry on their cherished plans. Indeed, it is these very ones who are always so greatly concerned about the future of themselves and the work in which they are engaged. They are the ones who are always ready to appeal to the civil law to help forward the cause of Christ on the earth. But this is not as God would have it; and their end will be as that of Israel,-that which they thought to be their strength, will be their shame and confusion. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 435.6}

It would be well for the people to see this-not merely as churches and denominations, but as individuals. All need to know this truth, that without the covering of God’s Spirit, they are not safe for a moment. By faith it must be accepted as a protection from the fiery darts of the enemy, and when it is thus accepted, it will be a protection from every evil that can come to them. “Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.” {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 435.7}

**“Hope” *The Present Truth* 15, 28.**

E. J. Waggoner

Hope is the desire for something with the expectation of receiving it. Now sin and sorrow, blasted hopes, sickness and death, cruet wrongs and base injustice are the common lot of man. The “blessed hope” is that when Jesus comes all this will come to an end; for God shall wipe away a tears; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.” And more: Jesus said to His sorrowing disciples, “Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you. And if l go to prepare a place for you, *I will come again and receive you unto Myself*.” What those mansions are like, “eye hath not seen, ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man.” What a blessed hope! “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.” 1 John 3:3. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 435.8}

**“The Gospel of Isaiah. The Earth Desolated. Isaiah 34:1-17” *The Present Truth* 15, 28.**

E. J. Waggoner

(ISAIAH 34:1-17, LOWTH’S TRANSLATION.)

*1. Draw near, O ye nations, and hearken;  
And attend unto Me, O ye peoples!  
Let the earth hear, and all the fullness  
thereof;  
The world, and all that spring from it. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 436.1}*

*2. For the wrath of Jehovah is kindled against  
all the nations;  
And His anger against all the orders  
thereof:  
He hath devoted them; He hath given them  
up to the slaughter. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 436.2}*

*3. And their slain shall be cast out;  
And from their carcasses their stink shall  
ascend;  
And the mountains shall melt down with  
their blood. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 436.3}*

*4. And all the host of heaven shall waste  
away;  
And the heavens shall be rolled up like a  
scroll;  
And all their host shall wither;  
As the withered leaf falleth from the vine,  
And as the blighted leaf from the fig tree. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 436.4}*

*5. For My sword is made bare in the heavens;  
Behold, on Edom it shall descend;  
And on the people justly by Me devoted to  
destruction. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 436.5}*

*6. The sword of Jehovah is glutted with blood;  
It is pampered with fat;  
With the blood of lambs, and of goats;  
With the fat of reins of rams;  
For Jehovah celebrates a sacrifice in Bozrah,  
And a great slaughter in the land of Edom. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 436.6}*

*7. And the wild goats shall fall down with  
them;  
And the bullocks, together with the bulls;  
And their own land shall be drunken with  
their blood,  
And their dust shall be enriched with fat. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 436.7}*

*8. For it is the day of vengeance to Jehovah;  
The year of recompense to the defender of the  
cause of Zion. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 436.8}*

*9. And her torrents shall be turned into pitch,  
And her dust into sulphur;  
And her whole land shall become burning  
pitch, {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 436.9}*

*10. By night or by day it shall not be extin-  
guished;  
For ever shall her smoke ascend;  
From generation to generation she shall lie  
desert;  
To everlasting ages no man shall pass through  
her; {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 436.10}*

*11. But the pelican and the porcupine shall in-  
herit her;  
And the owl and the raven shall inhabit  
there;  
And He shall stretch over her the line of  
devastation,  
And the plummet of emptiness over her  
scorched plains. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 436.11}*

*12. No more shall they boast the renown of the  
kingdom;  
And all her princes shall utterly fail. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 436.12}*

*13. And in her palaces shall spring up thorns;  
The nettle and the bramble in her fort-  
resses;  
And she shall become an habitation for  
dragons,  
A court for the daughters of the ostrich. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 436.13}*

*14. And the jackals and the mountain-cats shall  
meet one another;  
And the satyr shall call to his fellow;  
There also the screech-owl shall pitch;  
And shall find for herself a place of rest. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 436.14}*

*15. There shall the night-raven make her nest,  
and lay her eggs;  
And she shall hatch them, and gather her  
young under her shadow;  
There also shall the vultures be gathered to-  
gether;  
Every one of them shall join her mate. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 436.15}*

*16. Consult ye the book of Jehovah, and read:  
Not one of these shall be missed;  
Not a female shall lack her mate;  
For the mouth of Jehovah hath given the  
command!  
And His Spirit itself hath gathered them. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 436.16}*

*17. And He hath cast the lot for them;  
And His hand meted out the portion by  
line;  
They shall possess the land for a perpetual  
inheritance;  
From generation to generation shall they  
well therein. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 436.17}*

The subject of this chapter is very easy to discern, and is manifestly that indicated in the title. The whole chapter is devoted to the one subject, so that it is easy of comprehension. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 436.18}

Here is a proclamation of something that concerns the whole earth. All the earth, and all the nations on it are called to hear what the Lord has to say. It is nothing less than the proclamation of the wrath of God against all the nations. The most cursory reading of the chapter must convince anybody that the things here set forth are not limited to any one section of the earth, nor to any one people. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 436.19}

There is a strange idea very prevalent among readers of the Bible, and in religious circles, namely, that in ancient times God confined His attentions specially to one people-the Jews; that He was shut up to them, and cared little or nothing for any other people. How anybody who reads the Bible could get such an idea is most strange. This chapter alone is enough to show the contrary; it is addressed to all the nations of the earth. The prophet is commissioned to preach to all mankind, and so understands his mission. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 436.20}

Think how much of the book of Isaiah is directly addressed to other people than the Jews. Chapters fifteen to twenty-three are entirely devoted to other nations, who are directly appealed to by name. Moab, Tyre, Egypt, Assyria, and all the great nations are addressed one by one. And then other chapters mention the whole earth, showing that the events with which the prophet had to deal were not local. Indeed, the book begins with an appeal to the whole earth, and to heaven as well. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 436.21}

From the earliest times God has showed Himself the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews. There were no Jews at all until more than two centuries of the world’s history had passed, yet in all that time God had had faithful men, a proof that He was revealing Himself to whomsoever would accept Him. The Jews themselves originated from a man taken from the midst of heathendom. People in these days seem to think that they must perpetuate the blindness of people of other days. Because the Jews in their national conceit imagined that the Lord did not care for any other people than themselves, most Bible readers have thought that it must have been so. But the fact was very evident from the beginning, to any person who would use his eyes and reason, that God is no respecter of persons, but that “in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him.” The book of Isaiah, as indeed the books of all the other prophets, was addressed to the nations at large as well as to the Jews. And it concerns all the nations on earth today. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 436.22}

If one follows the book of Revelation in connection with Isaiah, it will be very apparent that the prophet John had no new message given him for the people. The Apostle Peter testifies that the message given to the ancient prophets was the same that the apostles had to give. 1 Peter 1:10-12. Compare for instance verse 4 of this chapter with Revelation 6:12-14. In many cases the words in Revelation are but a repetition of those used by the earlier prophet. That does not show that he was a mere borrower of other mens’ message, but that the Holy Spirit had the same message to give by the two men. Both had a message for the last days. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 437.1}

A few facts gleaned from various parts of the Bible will help us to read this chapter more understandingly. First, we must remember that when the Lord comes the second time it is for the consummation of the salvation of His people, and this is effected by the destruction of the wicked, who will be on the point of exterminating them. For “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.” 2 Timothy 3:13. This statement immediately following the one that “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution,” shows that at the last day the people of God will be in more bitter persecution than at any other time in the world’s history. Before the flood the earth was filled with violence, and at the coming of the Lord it is to be in the same condition as then. Genesis 6:11, 12; Matthew 24:37. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 437.2}

Remember also that both righteous and wicked live together on this earth until the end of the world (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43), and that there is no secret coming of the Lord, but that when He comes it will be openly, so that all can see Him, and the pomp and awful majesty will be such that none can help giving heed. See Revelation 1:7; Acts 1:11; Matthew 24:23-27; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17. At that time the wicked who still remain alive after the plagues that have come on the earth, will be destroyed by the brightness of Christ’s coming, and the righteous, both dead and living, will be caught up, immortal, to be ever with the Lord. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; 2 Thessalonians 2:8. This is the first resurrection. “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” Revelation 20:6. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 437.3}

But the rest of the dead, that is, the wicked, will not live again until the thousand years are finished. At the end of that time they will be raised, and will be deceived by Satan into thinking that they can capture the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, which has come down from God out of heaven, and while surrounding it will be destroyed. Revelation 20:5-9. This is in brief the outline of events in connection with the coming of the Lord, as set forth in the Scriptures. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 437.4}

During this thousand years, in which the saints are reigning with Christ in heaven, sitting in judgment on the earth and on fallen angels, the earth will be a desolate waste, as set forth in the chapter before us. In the twentieth chapter of Revelation we read of “the bottomless pit.” Now the word there used in the Greek corresponds exactly with the Hebrew word in the first chapter of Genesis, where we are told that in the beginning the earth was without form, and void. It was chaos. The Septuagint has exactly the same word: the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the abyss. In the eleventh verse of this chapter of Isaiah, we have, in “the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness,” the exact words that occur in Genesis 1:2. So we find that during the thousand years the earth will be desolate, uninhabited by man, and unfit for human habitation. This is the time described in this chapter. In the thirteenth chapter the condition is set forth, in the account of the judgment upon Babylon. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 437.5}

This condition of things is said to last for ever and ever; yet the very next chapter describes a condition of Eden beauty on this earth. In 2 Peter 2:10-13 we read of the destruction of the earth in the day of the Lord, yet we are assured that there shall be, “according to His promise,” “new heavens and a new earth.” So we learn that the duration of that which is spoken of as being for ever and ever, depends on the nature of the thing spoken of. When God is the subject, or the saints whom He has made immortal, then we know that there is never any end; but when it is something that is contaminated by sin, then we know that there will be a limit to its continuance. “Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities round about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 7), yet the places where they once stood are now a desolate plain. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 437.6}

One special lesson must be indicated before we leave the chapter. Notice how the vilest and most loathsome creatures are described as inhabiting the desolate earth. They hold sway over it while it is destitute of men. This is the natural end of the first sin, and of all that have succeeded. In the beginning man was given complete dominion over the earth, and over everything on it. That dominion was the rule of righteousness. But man sinned, and the dominion and the glory departed from him. More and more has he been losing his control over the earth and its creatures. Instead of governing the lower orders of animals, he is exterminating them as fast as possible. Wherever man goes, destruction marks his course. Finally, when sin has come to the full, and has ripened to the harvest, the condition that existed at the first will be utterly reversed, and only vile and hateful creatures-scavengers-will rule where once man had sway. All this terrible fall is involved in every sin. This is what the rule of man brings the earth to. Then will be seen in its fulness, or rather, in its emptiness, the result of man’s having his own way. Shall we not be warned in time, and submit ourselves to the rule of the One who has power to govern with stability? {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 437.7}

**“The Love of the Truth” *The Present Truth* 15, 28.**

E. J. Waggoner

One of the reasons why there is no more power seen in the preaching of the Gospel to-day is because so many who proclaim it have not really received “the *love* of the *truth*.” Their words in the pulpit and their writings are like the drippings of honey, and one would naturally think from their professions that their hearts were open to the reception of any truth from any source. As instance will illustrate: A member of the congregation of a popular church went to his pastor with a new-found Bible truth in which he was rejoicing, thinking that all he would have to do would be to present it, and his pastor would gladly accept it. But to his disappointment the truth was rejected, with the reply: “That is unpopular; if I should accept it and preach it, I would lose my place and position and my usefulness would be ended.” A further conversation with him showed conclusively that much of the preaching he did, and the truths he enunciated, were merely for effect, and not that he believed and practised what he taught. Jesus met this class of people in His day, and this is what He said to their followers: “All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works, for they say and do not.” {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 439.1}

**“Evil Counsel” *The Present Truth* 15, 28.**

E. J. Waggoner

An increase in the crop of gamblers and a corresponding increase in all the crimes that accompany gambling, may be expected as the result of the Duke of Westminster’s recent utterance concerning betting on horse races, which has been widely published. He said that there was nothing wrong in betting, provided people could afford to lose. People who could not afford to lose ought not to bet, but wealthy people, to whom the loss of the amount staked would be no hardship, might bet with impunity. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 439.2}

That is from the same piece as the statement that drinking alcoholic liquor is all right, provided only those drink who can do so without injury to themselves. The fallacy of the Duke’s advice to people not to bet unless they can afford to lose, lies in the fact that nobody bets to lose. Even the rich man bets to win, and if he thought that he should lose in any given case, he would not risk anything on it. It may be that he doesn’t care for the money, but only for the excitement; but the fact remains that whenever any man bets he does so an what seems to him almost a certainty of winning. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 439.3}

The poor man who bets expects to better his condition. There is more to entice him to gamble than there is the rich man; because he needs more money, and expects to better his financial condition; it is a business venture with him, and the fact that, because of his poverty, so much depends on the result, makes the excitement with him more intense than with the rich man. Therefore the Duke’s utterance as to the harmlessness of betting in itself, which, corning from the source it does will be quoted as authority, will only result in an increase of the evil among those who are most injured by it. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 439.4}

For betting is an evil, and only an evil. In the first place the unnatural excitement is injurious. A thing that has not in itself enough interest to attract one, without the added stimulus of betting, is not worth enough to engage the attention of men. In all legitimate employment, in honest labour, the successful accomplishment of the task is sufficient incitement. Moreover it is dishonest for any man, whether rich or poor, to attempt to get something for nothing. Betting, no matter by whom indulged in, is akin to theft. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 439.5}

This is itself is sufficient to condemn all betting. The fact that no one can afford to lose is of minor consequence compared with the fact that all gambling is sinful. It is a species of intoxication, and the fact that *some* can keep within a certain limit both in gambling and drinking, does not destroy the fact that with most the excitement draws them on until they cannot resist. How many penniless men there are to-day who once “could afford to bet;” they had so much money that the loss even of a few thousands on a wager did not inconvenience them. Now they cannot afford to bet; but they can in reality afford it as well as they ever could. It is sad when men whose rank and position give them great influence use that influence in a way that can tend only to the ruin and degradation of their fellow-men. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 439.6}

As we look upon the trees of a field to see whether they are bearing good fruit or not, so God looks upon us. He desires that we be “trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord,” bringing forth the fruits of righteousness. And this is not merely an illustration, for the very principles put into operation to make a field fruitful, are the ones which if applied to the Christian life will cause it to yield an abundant harvest. When the Lord said, “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow,” he meant that by doing so, we could learn how to grow spiritually. What is needed is more of the simplicity of the Gospel, for in its simplicity lies its greatest power. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 439.7}

The world is so full of deceit-so much of appearance when the reality is absent. The thing people seek to know is what others think they are, not what God knows them to be. The Christian is not to care what people think he is, but to care what God says and what God thinks of him. It is a rare thing to find men of this character, for it is directly contrary to worldly policy. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 439.8}

**“Little Folks. Heat” *The Present Truth* 15, 28.**

E. J. Waggoner

Now, while these long sunny days are here, and you can watch and see so plainly the effects of the sun’s heat upon the earth, it will he a good time for us to have a few talks together about Heat and Moisture. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 442.1}

The earth would soon be destroyed by the burning rays of the sun when is shines full upon us, were it not for the moisture that God sands in the rain to keep it from getting parched and burned up. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 442.2}

Through these two things, heat or fire, and moisture or water, God is working out His great purposes in the earth. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 442.3}

These good gifts come down to us from above. Light and heat God gives us through the sun, and water through the clouds. But the sun and the clouds are only the channels, the means through which God is giving Himself to us. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 442.4}

Last week we learned that Jesus is “the Light of the world,” and “our God is a consuming fire,” we are told in His Word. But this tells us also that He is “the fountain of living waters.” {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 442.5}

Perhaps you have read in the Book of Revelation about “the sea of glass mingled with fire,” that is before the throne of God,-water flowing forth from His throne so pure and clear and transparent that it looks like glass, and mingled with it the fire of God’s glory that lights and warms the universe. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 442.6}

Fire and water, then, though seem to us so opposite, are really but different forms of the life of God, coming forth from Him to warm and bless and refresh us and all the earth. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 442.7}

All the heat that we get anywhere in this world comes to us through the sun. You may be wondering if this can be true of the fires that are lighted to warm yet in the winter when the sun’s rays are so feeble. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 442.8}

Yes, even the cheerful, blazing fires in our grates are really the summer sunbeams that have been stored up in the trees and are now let out to help us in our need. Some of the trees were buried in the earth, and after many, many years hardened and changed to coal. To look at the black lumps you would not think there was much sunshine there, would you? But when they are put where they can get to the right heat, the light will burst forth and the heat will come out from the sunshine that was stored up there ages ago. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 442.9}

How lovingly our Heavenly Father has provided for our needs in preparing for us this wonderful supply of stored up sunshine, to keep us warm in the cold weather, to cook our food, warm the water for our baths, and help us in so many ways. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 442.10}

All fire is the same, the stored-up rays of the sun, which is the glory of the Lord. When the sun has set in the evening and no longer lights us with its direct rays, we use what we call “artificial light.” We light up our candles, lamps, or gas. But in these as in the wood and coal we are only using up the sunlight stored in these things, and it is still really the glory of God that is giving us light, for “the whole earth is *full* of His glory.” {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 442.11}

Now during these long summer days the earth is storing up a supply of heat which will “radiate,” or pass slowly from it in the winter, and keep us warm when we cannot feel the heat of the sun. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 442.12}

You will perhaps be reminded by this of our talks in the winter about the garment that God spreads over the earth to keep in this heat in the cold weather,-snow for the ground and ice for the water. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 442.13}

If you do feel during these bright sunny days a little too warm, or even uncomfortably hot, think of the wonderful work of the sunshine, and how everything in the earth is storing it up for out future use,-the trees for our comfort and warmth, the fruits and vegetables and grains for our food, and even the ground itself to keep us warm in the winter. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 442.14}

Then I am sure you will not want to complain of the heat, but will thank God, the giver of all good, that He causes the light of His face to shine upon us and bless us. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 442.15}

**“Jottings” *The Present Truth* 15, 28.**

E. J. Waggoner

-A proposal has been laid before Parliament for the acquisition of the Royal Niger Company’s territory, at the price of ?866,000. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.1}

-An epidemic of attempts at train-wrecking is reported from all directions. In Kent alone there have been eight attempts within a year. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.2}

-Owing to a disagreement between tea importers and dealers, the sale-rooms were boycotted last week. Out of 19,000 Iots put up for auction, scarcely 1,000 were bid for. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.3}

-Part of the troops proceeding to Natal have been inoculated against malaria. If the treatment proves an effectual safeguard it will be extended to all troops sent to malaria regions. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.4}

-At Thurso, a school of 105 whales, mostly small, was driven ashore by the fishermen, and sold at ?36. A traction engine and steamer had to be employed to remove the putrid carcases. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.5}

-The United States Post Office has begun to use automobiles in the place of horse waggons. It was found that the mails from forty letter boxes, over a distance of six miles, were collected in less than half the usual time. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.6}

-A new torpedo-destroyer, which has been built on the Tyne, is expected to reach a speed of forty-three miles an hour by means of the turbine system. Experiments are being made with a view to adapting this system to the trans-Atlantic steamers. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.7}

-An old and long-forgotten law has been dragged to light in New York. A boy aged fifteen was charged under the statute with having attended a theatre alone, it being enacted that no one under sixteen years of age shall go to a theatrical entertainment without a guardian. The judge sentenced the boy to six month’s imprisonment, but suspended the sentence. He said he desired to warn all children and theatre managers in New York of the existence of the law in order that they might be careful in the future. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.8}

-The riots in Belgium continue and a geeral strike is threatened if the government do not withdraw an unpopular Electoral Bill. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.9}

-A New York clergyman has subsisted entirely on water for forty-eight days. The fast was undertaken for the purpose of relieving chronic stomach trouble. He is now rapidly improving and the ailment has apparently disappeared. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.10}

-At Crewe a goods train was derailed and then run into by a goods express. A passenger excursion train, which could not be stopped in time, crashed into the wrekage. No lives were lost, but the goods trains and all the engines were ruined. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.11}

-A disastrous storm is reported from Calvert, Texas. Rivers have everywhere overflowed their banks, a great quantity of property has been destroyed, and many persons have been drowned. Every bridge within a radius of ten miles has been swept away. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.12}

-Fast boats built for fruit and passenger service are to start running between Jamaica and England next summer. The government is subsidising the line. Each boat is to have storage for at least 20,000 bunches of bananas. This measure is expected to bring about a more prosperous condition in Jamaica. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.13}

-In Germany the kinematograph is being used to illustrate surgical lectures to students. A celebrated surgeon has been enabled to take a perfect series of pictures of various kinds of operations from the first cut of the knife to the laying on of bandages. Every phase of the operations was thrown on the screen with marvellous accuracy. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.14}

-Any man is at liberty to practise medicine in China, and many a man who cannot succeed in any other line will buy a book of prescriptions and start as a “doctor.” There are ninety medical missionaries from Great Britain in China, and as many or more from America; but what are two hundred medical missionaries among three or four hundred millions of people? {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.15}

-Denmark is said to be uneasy over the possibility of her neutrality being infringed in the event of a naval war in the Baltic, and is hopeful of obtaining assistance, if necessary, from the United States, to secure that her neutral position shall be respected by the combatants. The smaller nations do not seem to have taken much stock in the Peace Conference organised by the great Powers. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.16}

-Dr Ostegren, who has made exhaustive experiments with liquid air has invented an apparatus which can turn out liquid air at the rate of 1,500 gallons daily. The product registered 400 degrees below zero. It can be made at a cost of five cents per gallon. With a better engine he could produce liquid air at two cents per gallon. Coincidentally with Dr. Ostegren’s discovery, Mr. Brady, of Chicago, announces that he has patented a cask in which liquid air may be safety carried. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.17}

-New York Socialists had an excellent opportunity last week of demonstrating the value of their principles, but failed to rise to the occasion. At their annual picnic, through some blunder in the steamboat arrangements, over 4,000 men, women and children, could not get home, and had to spend the night on an island, cold and hungry. The neighbouring farmers sold them bread and water at extortionate prices. Free fights and rioting took place all night. Some of the rowdies built a fire, captured two committeemen supposed to be responsible for the mismanagement, and attempted to burn them alive. A Labour leader, who stopped the performance, was severely handled, and several people were badly injured in the méleé. One child was shot dead. Reforms that do not begin at home will never make them better. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.18}

**“Back Page” *The Present Truth* 15, 28.**

E. J. Waggoner

Did you ever close a prayer with the words, “in the name of Jesus?” {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.19}

“What a strange question”! you exclaim; “I never pray any other way.” Good! but did you ever, after praying, wonder if your prayer would be answered, and, if appearances were contrary, doubt it entirely? {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.20}

You are obliged to confess that you often have; that sometimes even while you were praying, there was in your mind a question whether it was of any use to make the request, or not. Your prayer was something of an experiment, was it not? You did not think of it in that way, but now that the case is stated, you see that it is so. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.21}

Now do you know what it means to use those words when praying, whether at the beginning or at the close? You ought to; yet if you did; you would never doubt when you pray. They mean that we are certain of receiving the blessings we ask for. It is the expression of positive assurance that the matter is settled, and that the things desired are coming in good time. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.22}

What is our warrant for saying, “In the name of Jesus”? What right have we to use His name when we pray? We have His authority for it. He says: “Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it.” John 14:13, 14. If it were not for that assurance, we should never think of using His name in prayer. Then when we do use it, why should we not use it for the purpose for which He gives it to us? Any other use is to take it in vain. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.23}

But you say, “Perhaps I ought not to have the things that I have asked for; how can I then be sure that I shall have them?” {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.24}

If you are not sure, find out. Instead of asking positively for a thing that you are not sure you ought to have, and thus paving the way for doubt, ask the Lord if you ought to have it, and thus leave the matter with Him, confident that if it is good for you it will come, and be perfectly content if it does not come. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.25}

There are many, many things which we may he, sure it is God’s will to give us. If we study His Word, the revelation of His will, we shall know them. If we ask anything according to His will, we know that He hears us; and when we know, that He hears us, we know that we have the things we desired of Him. 1 John 5:14, 25. Then we can give thanks when we pray, which we cannot do if we are in doubt. We are told to let our requests be made known to God with thanksgiving. Philippians 4:6. If there is doubt, there can be no thanksgiving; and if there is no thanksgiving, there is no true prayer. Then do not doubt, but “pray without ceasing.” {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.26}

Last week Lord Lansdowne presented a Bill in Parliament, looking toward conscription, although it was expressly stated that it is only to provide for a remote contingency, and not to be put in force at once. It is a fact that it is difficult to get the number of volunteers necessary to keep the Army up to the required state of efficiency, and as was stated in presenting the Bill, the military system of the country rests on compulsion as a last resort, and the people must be reminded of their obligation, in case of necessity, to some form of compulsory service. Consequently it is thought best to have the necessary machinery ready to hand. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.27}

The Bill, which was read the first time, does not allow any person liable to military duty to escape by the payment of a penalty, or fine, or by procuring a substitute. If anyone refuses to serve, he is to be fined, and made to serve for five years. And thus the “preparation for peace goes merrily on.” {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.28}

**“The Mark of Christianity” *The Present Truth* 15, 28.**

E. J. Waggoner

Only a few days ago I was reading a statement concerning the origin of the creeds of the church. It was stated, and truthfully, too that the church felt the necessity of same sort of password, something by which the believers would be known. So the formulas beginning, “I believe,” followed at first by a few simple statements, and later by many complex ones, were invented. Whoever could repeat these was regarded as a Christian, just as at the present time the child is considered ready for confirmation when he knows the catechism and the creed. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.29}

Strangely enough the people of old did not see, any more than people who make creed synonymous with Christianity do to-day, that anybody can learn creed, and that an unrepentent sinner can repeat it as glibly or as solemnly as a pious man. Indeed, the hypocrite wiIl repeat it with even more unction than a sincere Christian. Such a password may very easily be stolen, so that it cannot mark any distinction between the followers of Christ and the followers of Satan. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.30}

There is just one sure mark by which to distinguish the Christian, and that is the life. The presence of the life of God in the soul, keeps it separate from the world. Moses said: “If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? Is it not in that Thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.” Exodus 33:15, 16. Jesus said, “By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.” John 13:35. The love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, is a mark that cannot be successfully counterfeited. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.31}

The fact that the church felt the necessity of adopting a creed in order to distinguish Christians from the world, shows that the life and Spirit of Christ was no longer characteristic of the mass of professed Christians. The formation of creeds was therefore a confession that the church had lost its distinguishing features, and was at the same time the means of enabling the world to carry on its worldliness under the guise of Christianity, and by that means the name has been brought into disrepute, so that many conscientious people have supposed themselves to be despisers of Christianity, when they really despised only the sham appearance of it. Thus “the church” has often been a stumbling-block. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.32}

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this; to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” James 1:27. “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.” 1 John 2:18. {PTUK July 13, 1899, p. 448.33}

**“Daniel in the Den of Lions. Daniel 6:10-23” *The Present Truth* 15, 29.**

E. J. Waggoner

In the third chapter of Daniel we have the record of a trial that came to the three companions of Daniel: in this chapter we have the account of a test to which Daniel himself was put. As in that one we read nothing of Daniel, so in this one we hear nothing of his three companions; but we may be sure that they were as loyal to the truth of God as was Daniel, and as they had previously showed themselves to be. We need not take it for granted that Daniel was the only one in the whole kingdom who was faithful to God, but as the whole affair was worked up simply to entrap Daniel, any others would not be noticed. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 449.1}

Daniel’s character and talents made a place for him. There is always work for those who are fitted for it. Daniel had held the position of greatest responsibility in the kingdom of Babylon, and when the kingdom passed into the hands of the Medes and Persians he was really indispensable, so he was first under Darius as he had been under Nebuchadnezzar. There were three presidents over the one hundred and twenty provinces of the empire, and of these three Daniel was one, and was preferred above the others. All the accounts of the realm had to pass through the hands of these three presidents, and we may be sure that there was no cheating as long as Daniel was one of the three. The princes who had to render account regularly to the presidents, could not bribe them, for Daniel would not suffer such a thing; and his two companions in the presidency were prevented by his sturdy integrity from filching from the public treasury. Such honesty in public affairs was an unprecedented thing, and was appreciated by the king, who thought to place Daniel over the whole realm. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 449.2}

The favour in which Daniel was held, together with his strictness in business, made the other presidents and the princes envious. Small minds are always envious at the success of others; but they were incensed against Daniel by the additional fact that he was a check upon their evil purposes. There was no opportunity for them to enrich themselves while he was at the head of affairs. So they sought to find some occasion against him in his conduct of the affairs of the kingdom, but could not find anything whereof to accuse him, “forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.” His adversaries were forced to acknowledge his integrity, saying, “We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.” What a grand thing it is when that can be said of a man, and by those who are most anxious to find a fault in him. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 449.3}

The good do not always have an easy time in this world. Jesus said to His disciples: “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you.” John 15:18. “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” 2 Timothy 3:12. The reason for this is given in this exhortation: “This is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.” 1 John 3:11-13. From this text we are assured of the reason why the princes of Medo-Persia wished to have Daniel out of the way. It was because his works were righteous, while theirs were evil. With him removed, they could manipulate the funds as they pleased, and they would not be under the condemnation of his presence. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 450.1}

Accordingly a conspiracy was formed, and the king was made a party to it, without his knowledge. Indeed, nothing could be accomplished unless they had the king’s consent, and they could not expect that the king would remove his most faithful officer. So they had to manufacture a new crime. Very subtly was their plan laid. It was a very common thing for Eastern monarchs to receive divine honours, as though they were gods, and such homage was quite acceptable to them, since it was easy for them to persuade themselves that they really were what their flatterers called them. Therefore it was not at all surprising to Darius when a great company of the chief men in his kingdom came to him, and said, “King Darius, live for ever! All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask any petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into a den of lions. Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.” {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 450.2}

“Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.” He readily fell into the trap, never thinking of his favourite, Daniel. If they had not lied, in saying that *all* the presidents had been in consultation over this matter, his suspicions might possibly have been aroused; nevertheless when integrity and loyalty to principle are so rare as they are, it is not natural for kings to consider the few in whom such virtues are found, especially when they are persuaded that any measure will be “for the public good.” It does not take long to persuade most officials or seekers after office that whatever contributes to their advancement and exaltation is for the good of the public. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 450.3}

The plot was fairly hatched, and the decree was published. How did it affect Daniel? It did not affect him in the least. When he knew that the writing was signed, “he went to his house; and his windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as aforetime.” Think how much is conveyed in that statement. Daniel prayed to his God just as he had done before. Note that as he prayed he *gave thanks*. Not a word about the decree; no frantic request for protection; he acted as though there were no such thing. He saw no cause for fear, but only for thanksgiving, “as aforetime.” In this he fulfilled the Divine injunction, “Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.” Philippians 4:6. Without thanksgiving there is no prayer. The peace of God which passeth all understanding kept Daniel. He was the least perturbed man in the whole kingdom. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 450.4}

How easy it would have been for most professed Christians to find “a way out of the difficulty;” only Daniel did not find himself in any difficulty. Some would say, “There is no harm in complying with the law, since it does not demand the worship of any false god, or of any man; it merely says that we must not ask anything of any god or man except the king; and for the next thirty days we will not ask anything of anybody.” Very plausible, isn’t it? Or they would say, “If you will pray, then do it so that no one will know it. You are not obliged to let anybody know when you pray.” Ah, what a movement in favour of *secret* prayer there would have been about that time, if any prayer at all. Daniel, however, was not seeking plausible excuses for not praying to his God. He was too well acquainted with the Lord, and loved Him too well for that. He served the Lord, and that continually. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 450.5}

Suppose that Daniel had acted according to any of these or similar excuses; what would he have virtually been saying? Simply this, that he could not trust the Lord to take care of him when everything seemed to be against him. It would have been admitting all the claims to the heathen, that their gods were greater than the God of Israel. It would have been exalting the king and his decree above God and His law. It would have shown that all his previous prayers had been a mere form, a pretence, without heart or feeling. It would have shown that Daniel had no faith in God. But he had *faith*, and therefore he could not act in any such way. His service of God was from the heart, and he had prayed because he believed in God; and just because he believed in God, he could not act as though he did not believe in Him. It is such times as that, that determine whether or not a man really loves and serves the Lord. Daniel would not bear false witness against God. When men were banded together against God, in the person of His servant, then was the time for faithfulness. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 450.6}

Yet Daniel was not the man to flaunt his religion in the faces of men; no vain boaster; his religion was a part of his life; the same every day, and therefore he did just as he had been in the habit of doing. When he went to his room his windows were open, and he did not take the trouble to shut them. Why should he? He had not done so before, and there was no more reason now than there ever was, since his God had not changed. He went about his devotions as quietly and regularly as in former days. That he was not in the habit of making noisy demonstrations when he prayed is evident from the fact that his enemies had to assemble to *find* him praying. But it is worth noting that they were quite sure of finding him at prayer. In that heathen kingdom Daniel was not ashamed to have it known that he worshipped Jehovah. And why should he be? is not Jehovah King over all? He is not One to be ashamed of. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 450.7}

Only one step now remained to fasten Daniel in the trap that was set for him. The grave counselors of State, whose minds were supposed to be absorbed in considerations of public interest, had plotted against an innocent, upright man, had acted the part of sneaking spies, and now they had only to be informers. But it would not do to go at once and denounce Daniel to the king, for they knew that he was Daniel’s friend. So they took the precaution to get the king committed to the enforcement of the law. They said to him: “Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any god or man within thirty days, save of thee, O King, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.” That was just what they wanted. The king could not escape now. Having admitted that the law could not be changed, he could not possibly make an exception in favour of Daniel. “Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day.” How artfully they sought to prejudice the king against Daniel. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 451.1}

“Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him, and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him.” But all was in vain. The princes were inexorable. They had framed the law for the express purpose of catching Daniel, and they did not propose to allow him to escape; so they held the king to the decree, reminding him that the honour of the kingdom was at stake, since a law once passed could not be revoked or changed. “Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee.” What a wonderful influence there is in a steadfast Christian life! The king well knew that there was a power with Daniel that was with none of his other officers, and not even with himself, king though he was. He knew that Daniel had more than human power with him, and therefore he believed that the power that had made Daniel what he was, and that had kept him amid all temptations, would still keep him, even in the den of lions. And he was right; for there was no greater miracle wrought for Daniel when he was in the lions’ den than when he was in the king’s court. The same power that will keep a man upright in the midst of temptation will keep him from the jaws of wild beasts. Our adversary the devil goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour; and when a man is kept safe from his attacks, it is but a light thing to keep him from the beasts of the forest. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 451.2}

After passing a sorrowful night, the king went to the den very early in the morning. Although he had expressed the belief that Daniel would be delivered, he was not absolutely sure of it. The king evidently had a far worse night than Daniel had. A man may be far happier and more at ease in a den of lions than others are in a palace. The king’s grief showed itself in his voice; as he came to the den and called, “O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee?” Daniel 6:20. We can see that the king was quite convinced that his gods were nothing in comparison to the God of Daniel; but here was a test question: “Is thy God able to deliver thee?” Yes, He was. “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.” Psalm 34:7. This had been fulfilled in the case of Daniel, who replied, not forgetting the respect due the king; “O king, live for ever. My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions’ mouths, that they have not hurt me.” The penalty had been executed, and therefore Daniel could be taken out of the den without any violence to the majesty of the law. “So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.” His faith saved him. Faith has wondrous power; by it men have “wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, cut of weakness were made strong.” Hebrews 11:33, 34. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 451.3}

“Perhaps the lions were not hungry.” You may be sure that some of the enemies suggested that thought, and contended that Daniel should be left in the den until they recovered their appetite. Well, if they were not hungry, then there certainly could be no objection to putting these informers in for a little holiday from the cares of business; and whether they were hungry or not the king was disposed to deal very summarily with the malignant crowd. “The king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives, and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.” That settled the question. Those men who had been under the control of the great roaring lion who walks about seeking to devour, had no protection against these lions. The result of the whole affair was that Daniel was prospered more than ever, and the knowledge of the true God was published by the king to all people, and in all languages on earth. Thus even the wrath of man is made to praise God. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 451.4}

**“The Gospel of Isaiah. The Earth Restored. Isaiah 35:1-10” *The Present Truth* 15, 29.**

E. J. Waggoner

(ISAIAH 35:1-10, LOWTH’S TRANSLATION.)

*1. The desert and the waste shall be glad;  
And the wilderness shall rejoice, and flourish; {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 452.1}*

*2. Like the rose shall it beautifully flourish;  
And the well-watered plain of Jordan shall  
also rejoice;  
The glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it,  
The beauty of Carmel and Sharon:  
These shall behold the glory of Jehovah,  
The majesty of our God. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 452.2}*

*3. Strengthen ye the feeble hands,  
Confirm ye the tottering knees. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 452.3}*

*4. Say to the faint-hearted: Be ye strong;  
Fear ye not, behold your God!  
Vengeance will come; the retribution of God;  
He Himself will come, and will deliver you. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 452.4}*

*5. Then shall be unclosed the eyes of the blind;  
And the ears of the deaf shall be opened: {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 452.5}*

*6. Then shall the lame bound like the hart,  
And the tongue of the dumb shall sing:  
For in the wilderness shall burst forth waters,  
And torrents in the desert: {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 452.6}*

*7. And the glowing sand shall become a pool,  
And the thirsty soil bubbling springs:  
And in the haunt of dragons shall spring  
forth  
The grass, with the reed, and the bulrush. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 452.7}*

*8. And a highway shall be there;  
And it shall be called the way of holiness;  
No unclean person shall pass through it;  
But He Himself shall be with them, walking  
in the way,  
And the foolish shall not err therein. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 452.8}*

*9. No lion shall be there;  
Nor shall the tyrant of the beasts come up  
thither:  
Neither shall he be found there;  
But the redeemed shall walk in it. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 452.9}*

*10. Yea, the ransomed of Jehovah shall return:  
They shall come to Sion with triumph;  
And perpetual gladness shall crown their  
heads.  
Joy and gladness shall they obtain;  
And sorrow and sighing shall flee away. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 452.10}*

“The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be.” Ecclesiastes 1:9. This is most emphatically true of the things that God has made. For “I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it.” Ecclesiastes 3:15. When God made the world, and all things beautiful, “He created it not in vain.” The fact that God made the earth perfect, is proof that it will be perfect. Not one of God’s plans can ever fail. To man’s short sight it may seem as though everything had failed; but God has eternity for His own, and can afford to be misunderstood and yet to wait. A few years, or a few thousand years are not a finger’s breadth compared with eternity. So although sin brings complete desolation upon the earth, the end of sin, which is destruction, will be self-destruction; and death, the last enemy, having been swallowed up in victory, the earth will be renewed, and “the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.” {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 452.11}

“It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.” The places once most fertile are now most desolate. The earth is waxing old like a garment; but like an old garment, it is soon to be changed, and then it will reflect to perfection the excellency and beauty of Jehovah. We have learned something of the beauty of the Lord; that wondrous beauty will yet be seen even in the most desolate and barren portions of this earth. Is it not a glorious prospect? What assurance have we of this? Is not the assurance of God’s Word sufficient? But we have ample demonstration of it in the fact that man, who was made to rule over a perfect earth, and was therefore himself made perfect, but who fell, and thereby caused the desolation of the earth, is himself by the Word of God made a new creature even now in this present time. When the king is restored to his kingly state, is that not proof that he will have back his dominion? {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 452.12}

In view of this, what is said?-“Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, Fear not.” When does this apply? Is it in the time spoken of in the first two verses?-Most certainly not; for in the earth renewed there will be no occasion to say to anybody, “Fear not!” The people shall then “dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.” No; now is the time when the assurance of what God will certainly do for even this sin-cursed earth must be set before the faint-hearted, to encourage them. The “blessed hope” is “the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” Titus 2:13. “He will come and save you.” {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 452.13}

What else should be said to them that are of a fearful heart?-This: “Behold your God!” Where?-Everywhere. “Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.” Jeremiah 23:24. When Christ appears in the clouds of heaven there will be no fearful ones among His people. That will be the moment of the joy of deliverance. No one will then need to say, “Behold your God!” for “every eye shall see Him.” “And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: This is the Lord, we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.” Isaiah 25:9. Therefore this exclamation, “Behold your God!” is to be uttered now in the ears of all the fainting ones of earth. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 452.14}

“That which may be known of God is manifested in them; for God manifested it unto them. For the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and Divinity.” Romans 1:19, 20. He upholds all things by the Word of His power. Hebrews 1:3. To be able to see God in all the things that exist, to know that He has not forsaken the earth, is enough to put courage into any man. What means it that He is here?-Nothing less than that He claims all things as His own, and is determined to stay by them. Though they be marred, and the Divine image may be almost effaced, yet He does not become disheartened or disgusted with them, but will by His presence restore them as at the first. If He did not claim them as His own, and did not intend to make them again worthy of Himself, He would not remain in them; the fact that He tarries even amid the curse, is sufficient proof that He means salvation; and what He purposes He will surely perform. Therefore behold your God in the lowest and meanest created thing, that you may know that He has not forsaken man, His crowning work. Be of good courage; He will come and save you. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 452.15}

“Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing.” When shall all this be? Well, it will certainly be when the Lord comes to save His people, for then the dead themselves will be raised incorruptible, and the living will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, to immortality. 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17. At that time there will surely not be a saint of God with any blemish either of soul or body. Christ will have “a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” Ephesians 5:27. But we are warranted in believing that a restoration will take place even before the appearing of the Lord, not indeed to immortality, but to soundness of mortal bodies. When Jesus comes “every eye shall see Him.” But there is even stronger evidence than this. Christ’s presence here on earth brought healing to all that were diseased in any way. The proof of the Divinity of His ministry was this, that “the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached unto them.” Matthew 11:3-5. Now there was never a time in the world when there was more need of convincing proof of the genuineness of the Gospel than now. When Satan works with “all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness” (2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10), as he sees the end near, God will not leave Himself without witness among men, but will also work with many miracles and wonders and signs. The Christ who once walked among men, revealing the Father, will be reproduced in all His people, so that no particle of evidence will be lacking. So as He then healed all who were sick and blind and lame, wherever He went, we may be sure the same thing will be done again, when all His people learn to behold Him still among them and in them. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 453.1}

“In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.” That will be fulfilled when the wilderness and the solitary place are made new, and the desert blossoms as the rose; but we may expect to see it fulfilled even before the coming of the Lord. When Israel went out from Egypt, water was brought from the flinty rock for them in the desert. God “turned the rock into standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters.” Psalm 114:8. When God sets His hand again the second time to deliver His people, “there shall be an highway for the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.” Isaiah 11:16. Therefore we may expect to see the same wonders, and even greater ones, repeated. “Behold, the days come, saith The Lord, that they shall no more say, the Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.” Jeremiah 23:7, 8. The wonders of the last days will entirely eclipse the miracles of the exodus from Egypt. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 453.2}

“An highway shall be there.” Where? Without doubt in the new earth, in the holy city; but we should miss the joy of the Scripture if we put it all off till the future. Christ is the way, the way of holiness, and the way is plain. “The way ye know.” Anyone can find it; it is revealed unto babes; and the most simple cannot make any mistake in it. “The redeemed shall walk there.” {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 453.3}

Even now “God hath visited and redeemed His people.” Therefore now the redeemed must have a place in which to walk. And they shall walk in the way, and they “shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads.” Mark that it is with singing that they come into Zion. They do not wait until they get there to sing; they sing now. It is because they sing that they get there. Read 2 Chronicles 20:1-30, and note verses 21 and 22. It was when Israel began to sing and to praise the Lord, that they gained the victory. Then let the desert resound and be made glad with singing. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 453.4}

*“Let those refuse to sing  
Who never knew our God;  
But children of the heavenly King  
Must speak their joys abroad.” {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 453.5}*

This they must do, because they “are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel,” and {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 453.6}

*“The hill of Zion yields  
A thousand sacred sweets,  
Before we reach the heavenly fields,  
Or walk the golden streets.” {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 453.7}*

**“The Jewish Sabbath” *The Present Truth* 15, 29.**

E. J. Waggoner

It seems more than likely that before long the reproach which men have sought to fasten on the Sabbath of the Lord by calling it the “Jewish Sabbath” will be without even apparent foundation. In America business interests have led many Jews to feel that they cannot lose a day every week, and there are many indications that the same sentiment is growing here. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 453.8}

The *Daily Mail* said last week, {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 453.9}

Metropolitan Jewry is at present deeply interested in, and not a little disturbed by, a proposal which has been made to hold services on Sunday for those who cannot attend synagogue on the Sabbath. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 453.10}

The proposal emanates from West Hampstead, the abode of a large section of Jews of the middle and upper-middle classes. Competition and the consequent necessity of constant attention to business, to say nothing of the Jewish interest in the Stock Exchange, it is argued, prevent the majority of the wealthier Israelites from attending the usual Sabbath morning service. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 453.11}

The organisers of the movement argue that any service is better than none; but that the matter is regarded with some apprehension by the ecclesiastical authorities may be evidenced from the fact that the Chief Rabbi recently devoted the whole of his sermon at a London synagogue to strenuously opposing the innovation, which he feared might lead, as it had done in some cases in America and Germany, to the substitution of Sunday for the Jewish Sabbath. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 453.12}

God’s true Sabbath stands in no need of unconverted supporters or human legislation. It is a part of His will, and will exist and be honoured when all its detractors have passed away. Isaiah 66:22, 23; 1 John 2:17. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 453.13}

The Lord desires to see His Sabbath receive its right place in the lives and hearts of men, as the sign of His sanctifying power (Ezekiel 20:12), but He does not want any to profess its observance for the sake of outward appearance. “Unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare My statutes, or that thou shouldest take My covenant in thy mouth? seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest My words behind thee.” Psalm 50:16, 17. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 454.1}

These words are also a strong rebuke to the many religious teachers and workers who excuse themselves from obeying the fourth commandment by saying that it would injure their influence over those whom they desire to help. When a man does not obey the Word of God himself, the Lord shows here that He does not want him to think to teach others the right way. The foundation of all real work for others is to be right one’s self. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 454.2}

**“Little Folks. Heat” *The Present Truth* 15, 29.**

E. J. Waggoner

When we were talking last week about heat, we said that the earth is now, during these long sunny days, staring up a supply of heat for the winter season, when it will give it out gradually. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 458.1}

Although, as we told you, all the heat in the world comes really from the sun, yet its rays are not hot in themselves, neither do they warm the air as they pass through it. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 458.2}

If this were so we should find that the higher we rise from the earth, and the nearer we get to the sun, the warmer it would be. But just the opposite to this is really the case. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 458.3}

Some gentlemen who went up in a balloon five miles above the earth suffered terribly from the cold, and their beards were all crusted over with frost. The temperature was twenty-nine degrees below zero. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 458.4}

You know, too, that the tops of high mountains are covered with snow all the year round, for at such heights there is never enough heat to melt it. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 458.5}

You are perhaps wondering how this can be, and it is well for us to reek for the reasons and the meaning of all the works of God; for in them all He is showing us His eternal power and love, and teaching us wisdom, so that we may learn to he au by watching Him at work and learn the ways of our Heavenly Father. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 458.6}

In order to make heat, the sun’s rays must strike against something. As they touch the earth they produce heat which is reflected or “radiated” from the earth into the air to warm it. Therefore the air that is nearest to the earth is the warmest, and it gets gradually colder the farther we get from the earth’s surface. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 458.7}

In the summer the sun shines for so many hours in the day that large quantities of beat are produced and given off in this way, and the air gets very warm, as at present. During the night when the sun is not shining the earth gives out some of the heat that it has received during the day. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 458.8}

The amount of heat that the sun’s rays produce depends upon the position in which they reach the earth. When the sun is right overhead, so that its rays came straight down, they strike the earth with more force than when they come slanting direction. And besides this a larger number of rays strike in the same place. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 458.9}

This is why it is so much hotter at noon when the sun is just over our heads than at sunrise or sunset, or any other time in the day when its rays come to us in a slanting direction. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 458.10}

Now can you think, dear children, of any benefits that come to the earth through this wonderful arrangement? What would happen if the air were warmed directly by the sun’s rays passing through it instead of by the gradual radiation of heat from the earth? The days would be unbearably hot, and at night when the sun was withdrawn everything would freeze; and nothing could live at all in the winter months. So we see how in all this God is working for the good and comfort of all His creatures, and to preserve the earth that He has created. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 458.11}

Then there is another which those find who live countries like India and Africa. Since the higher up you go the cooler it becomes, those in these hot climates who live near the mountains find it easy to escape from the intolerable heat in the summer into the refreshing coolness of the upper air. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 458.12}

At the bottom of Chimborazo, a mountain in South America nearly 30,000 feet high, you would find a very hot, marshy region, with rich forests inhabited by tigers, monkeys and other creatures belonging to hot climates. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 458.13}

Higher up the mountain there is a cool, temperate region of continual spring, with trees and animals suited to the mild climate. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 458.14}

If you should climb the mountain higher, you would at last find yourself surrounded with ice and snow, and suffering from the most intense cold. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 458.15}

Of this place it has been said: “Summer, winter, and spring are here distinct thrones, which they never quit.” {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 458.16}

**“Jottings” *The Present Truth* 15, 29.**

E. J. Waggoner

-The brother of the Czar and heir-apparent to the throne of Russia, has died of consumption. The Czar has three daughters but no son. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 462.1}

-The Fen country is beginning to rival Kent as a fruit-growing district. Thousands of acres are devoted to the cultivation of small fruits and flowers. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 462.2}

-Considerable speculation has been aroused in political circles by the exchange of complimentary telegrams between the German Emperor and the French President. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 462.3}

-The Peace Conference is expected to close at the end of July. An Act will be drawn up embodying the scheme of arbitration which has been decided upon by the delegates. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 462.4}

-The Chinese Government has just given out contracts for eight warships at an estimated coat of a million and a half sterling. Part of the work is coming to England. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 462.5}

-The commercial travellers of America are organising against the trusts, in the belief that such combinations will ultimately involve a loss of ?10,000,000 per annum to the travelling salesmen. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 462.6}

-America has refused the proposal of Austria to submit to arbitration the question of an indemnity for the relatives of the Hungarian miners shot at the Hazelton Mine Riot in Pennsylvania two years ago. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 462.7}

-Captain Watkins, the commander of the *Paris*, acknowledges that the stranding of his vessel was wholly due to an “unaccountable error” on his part. His certificate has been suspended for two years. The *Paris* has been got off the rocks and towed into Falmouth harbour. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 462.8}

-Over 2,000 saloons have been opened in Cuba since the Spaniards were driven out. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 462.9}

-Protestant missions in India and China claim that 4,000,000 converts and 9,000 missionaries are now reported in these countries. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 462.10}

-According to a reliable authority, for every missionary landed in Africa, there are landed 70,000 casks of rum, 10,000 casks of gin, and fifteen tons of gunpowder. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 462.11}

-The town of Dover is suffering from a plague of green flies such as was never known in their history before. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 462.12}

-Plague similar to the bubonic has broken out at Grand Balsam, on the Gold Coast. Three hundred people, including three European physicians, are stated to have died from it. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 462.13}

-An American Colonel has discovered that by using spectacles, field-glasses, or a telescope fitted with violet glasses, the flash of the rifle and the atmospheric effects of smokeless powder can be detected from long distances. The soldiers in the Philippines are to be supplied with spectacles of this colour. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 462.14}

-The 1,300 buses of the General Omnibus Company carry 190,000,000 passengers a year and rum 29,000,000 miles. The yearly receipts are ?1,200,000. The 18,931 horses consume 250,000 quarters of provender every year at a cost of ?828,000. The number of men operating this traffic is 5,000. The ticket system saves the company ?100,000 a year. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 462.15}

-A large number of German colonists in the southern provinces of Russia are preparing to leave for the United States and other countries in order to escape military service and certain special taxes which have lately been imposed upon them, and which they were promised immunity from when they emigrated to Russia from Germany. Prominent among these are the Mennonites. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 462.16}

-It is believed that London is about to experience another water famine, which will be even more serious than the one of last summer. The flow in the Thames has been lower during May and June than it has ever been before. Even though rain should fall in abundance it will not now suffice to prevent the water famine. It is getting very evident that the present sources of supply are insufficient. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 462.17}

-A pest has appeared in a number of American cities on the Atlantic Coast, in the form of a species of flying beetle, which has been dubbed the “kissing bug.” It seems to sting people for the most part on the lips, causing the parts to swell to an enormous size, and one case of death has been reported from the effects of its bite. So serious is the pest regarded, that the National Government has granted public funds for research concerning it. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 462.18}

-There has lately been started in New York City a new organisation whose principal work is the establishing of “tea saloons” to offset the saloons that dispense wines, beers and liquors. Philanthropic as this appears on the surface, it will indirectly support the publicans, for the excessive use of tea creates an appetite for something stronger, which can only be satisfied by what is dispensed at the saloon. True temperance goes deeper than most people think. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 462.19}

-The fiercest hail and thunder storm within living recollection has visited Canterbury. It would appear that a waterspout broke in that vicinity. Thousands of gallons of water, mud, and shingle washed down into the city, and the basements of all the houses and tenements in the suburb were soon filled with the turbid liquid. The rush of water was preceded by a hailstorm of such fierceness that it was dangerous for anyone to be out. In many cases the lumps of ice measured over an inch and a half in diameter, one nusery man having over 1,000 panes of glass broken. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 462.20}

**“Back Page” *The Present Truth* 15, 29.**

E. J. Waggoner

“How much ought I to give? {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 464.1}

This question, frequently asked, means very often, “How little can I give?” “How much is necessary in order to have it, look well in comparison to the gifts of others?” {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 464.2}

There is just one standard of liberality, just as there is but one standard of everything good and that is the Lord Himself. He “giveth to all liberally.” Whoever gives less than God gives, does not give enough, and cannot be called liberal. This is not a rash assertion, but a Bible truth. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 464.3}

What does God give? He gives Himself. He purchased the church with His own blood. Acts 20:28. God was in Christ, who loved us, and “gave Himself for us.” This gift includes everything; for “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” Romans 8:32. It could not be otherwise; for “in Him all things consist.” {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 464.4}

God gives us all things in giving us Himself, yet if He should withhold Himself, He would give us nothing; for we cannot get anything at all outside of Him, and He is not divided, He cannot give us a part of Himself without giving us the whole. With Him it is everything or nothing, and so it is always everything. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 464.5}

The grace of God is manifested in giving. “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.” 2 Corinthians 8:9. He impoverished Himself to enrich us; He gave everything He had; He “emptied Himself.” Philippians 2:7, R.V. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 464.6}

The spirit of Satan is directly opposed to the Spirit of God. Christ would not hold on to what was His by right; Satan, on the other hand, was determined to get everything for himself, even when he had no right to it. Christ said, “I will give;” Satan said, “I will get.” {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 464.7}

There are only these two minds in the world. When the spirit of Satan controls, there is selfishness, so that even though large donations be made, an evil motive takes away all their value. When the Spirit of Christ prevails, there is unselfish liberality, It is always the Spirit of Christ in a man, that leads him to make a real gift; therefore since it is only Christ who gives, the truly liberal man gives everything. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 464.8}

Whoever gives everything, gives himself. He gives everything, in that he gives himself. A man may give all his goods to the poor, and yet really give nothing. If love be lacking,-the love that purifies the heart,-there is no liberality. The offering that God accepts is the “offering in righteousness.” It is with the “sacrifices of righteousness,” that God is well pleased. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 464.9}

Christ saw the rich men cast of their abundance into the treasury, and He saw a poor widow drop in “two mites; which make a farthing,” and He declared that she had given more than they all. Why?-Because she gave all she had. Her gift showed that her soul was in the work of God; she had given herself. The brethren in Macedonia gave liberally out of their deep poverty, because they “first gave their own selves.” 2 Corinthians 8:5. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 464.10}

Men are often deceived by appearances. See some one make a donation of thousands of pounds, they say, “What a liberal man!” It may be, and it may not be. Money is the easiest thing in the world to give. The man who has not a penny may be more liberal, and may actually give more than the one who bestows thousands. The man with the money may withhold that which is most needed, namely, *himself*, his love and sympathy. Christ had no money, the apostles had no money, but they imparted the gift of life, and that includes everything. Their lives flowed out to others. He who gives this, gives as much as God does, by God’s own system of reckoning. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 464.11}

The poor person need not, therefore, waste time in regrets, saying, “How I wish I were able to give something!” Why you are able to give everything; you can give yourself. That is the most that God Himself can give, and yet it is the least that you can give and give anything at all. God is not deceived, although men are, and by Him the vile person is not called liberal, nor the churl-or the deceitful person-bountiful. Isaiah 32:5. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 464.12}

This settles the whole question of giving. A heart given to God, that He may purify it, and then the life of God, which has cleansed it, flowing out to others, is the whole of the matter. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” Romans 12:1. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 464.13}

The man who attempts to compel respect for himself generally succeeds only in making himself an object of ridicule. People respect, without compulsion, those who are worthy of it. The numerous prosecutions in Germany of authors and editors for commenting on the Kaiser’s speeches, simply serve to sharpen the wits of unfriendly journalists, and provide additional matter for scathing comment. One paper in Berlin discourses on the “inflexible will,” which the Kaiser attributes to himself, and while careful to keep within the bounds of the law, writes in this wise:- {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 464.14}

The Tsar Nicholas I., had his will broken at Alma, Balaclava and Inkerman, and died of a broken heart. Napoleon’s inflexible will led him to Moscow, Elba, Waterloo and St. Helena. Charles XII., of Sweden, had his will broken at Pultava and Bender. Charles I., of England, was a man of inflexible will. It led him to Naceby and Marston Moor. Philip II.’s will resulted in the downfall of the Spanish world dominion {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 464.15}

The journal concludes by saying, “The great Elector, Frederick the and William I. never glorified their inflexible wills. This wise reserve was part of the historical greatness of these rulers.” {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 464.16}

It is not well to glory in the possession of an inflexible will. If one were right in every respect, it would be different, for then there would be no need to change, but in view of the corruption harboured by every human heart, it becomes men to walk humbly. Too often men, whose wills cannot be bent, are not above stooping to fraud and meanness in the execution of their purposes. All flesh is grass, and all the glory of it as the flower of the field, which soon passes away! God does not change, but men must, or they will never become like Him. The curse of militarism which turns whole nations into machines for war, exerts even a worse influence on the head of the nation than his unfortunate subjects, and the more he partakes of the nature of a machine, the more “inflexible” he gets. It is a pitiable state. {PTUK July 20, 1899, p. 464.17}

**“Notes on the International Sunday-School Lessons. The New Heart. Ezekiel 36:25-36” *The Present Truth* 15, 29.**

E. J. Waggoner

In order that we may get the most possible benefit from this study, we will quote the portion of Scripture that it covers, beginning one verse back. It reads thus:- {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 466.1}

“I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be My people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you; be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. Thus saith the Lord God: In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the Lord build the ruined places, and plant that which was desolate. I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it.” {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 466.2}

There are some gracious promises in this lesson that can be appreciated by everybody; but the full benefit of it cannot be obtained without some knowledge of what has gone before. It is always a difficult matter to take a text out of its connection and to treat it as it deserves. A very brief outline of the conditions under which this scripture was written, and of God’s purpose concerning Israel, will be of value both in this lesson and in the two that follow. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 466.3}

God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt in fulfilment of the promise made in the covenant with Abraham. See Exodus 6:2-8. That covenant was confirmed in Christ (Galatians 3:16, 17) and could be fulfilled only through His death and resurrection. In the inspired thanksgiving of Zacharias, the father of John the forerunner of Christ, we learn that Israel’s being saved from their enemies, and from the hand of all that hated them was in performance of the promise of God to the fathers, and His covenant with Abraham, and their deliverance from their enemies was in order that they might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life. Luke 1:71-75. Their life, moreover, was to be everlasting, because the covenant made with Abraham was an everlasting covenant, and the promise was that he and his seed should have the land for an everlasting possession, which would involve their living for ever. Genesis 17:6-8. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 466.4}

When the promise was made to Abraham, he was distinctly told that he should die before the land could be possessed (Genesis 15:1-16), and Stephen tells us that he had not so much of the land as to sat his foot on, although God had promised it to him. Now since no word of God can fail, it necessarily follows that the inheritance which God promised to Abraham and his seed was only such an inheritance as can be obtained through the resurrection from the dead. This appears in the words of Paul when he stood before Agrigpa: “Now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers unto which promise our twelve tribes instantly serving God day and night hope to come. For which hope’s sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?” Acts 16:6-8. Every promise, therefore, to place Israel in their own land, involves the resurrection of the dead. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 467.1}

The nature of the true Israel must also be borne in mind. “They are not all Israel, which are of Israel; neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children; but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.” Romans 9:6-8. The children of promise are counted for the seed, because the word was “In Isaac shall thy seed be called.” Isaac was the child of promise, and he was born after the Spirit (Galatians 4:22-29); therefore as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the children of God, and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. Romans 8:14-17. “And if ye be Christ’s then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Galatians 3:29. Only Christians indeed, therefore, those who are born of the Spirit, and who walk after the Spirit, are children of Abraham, and Israelites indeed. They are those in whom there is no guile. John 1:47. “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” Romans 2:28, 29. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 467.2}

The children of Israel might have received the fulness of the promise soon after they left Egypt, for God was leading them to the Mountain of His inheritance, the place which He had made for them to dwell in, even the Sanctuary which His hands have established (Exodus 15:17); and this is in the heavens, in the New Jerusalem which is above, “the mother of us all.” Hebrews 8:1, 2; Galatians 4:26. But they did not believe, and therefore they could not enter in. Hebrews 3:18, 19. Ever since their failure, the promise has been left to us. Hebrews 4:1. David was king over all Israel in the land of promise, yet when he sat in his house, “and the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies” (2 Samuel 7:1), God said to him, “I will appoint a place for My people Israel, And will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more as beforetime.” Verse 10. And when David was delivering the kingdom over to Solomon, at the time when it was greatest, he said, in the presence and on behalf of all the princes and rulers of Israel: “We are strangers before Thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers.” 1 Chronicles 29:15. It is only by taking out from among the Gentiles a people for His name, through the Gospel, that God builds up the house of David. Acts 15:14-18. Christ is the One by whom the kingdom is to be restored to Israel, for “the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.” Luke 1:32, 33. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 467.3}

Ezekiel prophesied at the time of the captivity of Israel. Long before the time when the scripture that we are studying was written, he had said to Zedekiah, whose name was a reminder of his rebellion against God, “Thou profane, wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, Thus saith the Lord God: Remove the diadem, and take off the crown; this shall not be the same; exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high, I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him.” Ezekiel 21:25-27. When the kingdom passed from Zedekiah to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, three overturnings or revolutions were foretold, which should give the dominion successively to Medo-Persia, Grecia, and Rome: then there should be no more world revolutions until the coming of Christ, who will destroy all the kingdoms of the earth, and scatter them like the chaff of the summer threshing floor, so that no place will be found for them, and will then reign for ever over an earth made new. See Daniel 2:44, 45; 2 Peter 3:10-13. We know, therefore, that the promises in this vision pertain to the work and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Certain it is that since the days of Ezekiel the Jewish people have never had a place of their own, so that the promise has not yet been fulfilled. It was not fulfilled by the return of Israel from the Babylonian captivity, and can be fulfilled only in Christ and His coming. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 467.4}

With this explanation, there need not much be said on the text before us, since it is straightforward reading. God promises to take His people from among the heathen, and bring them into their own land. The land which belongs to the people of God is no part of “this present evil world,” from which they are delivered by the death of Christ (Galatians 1:4), but the country for which faithful Abraham looked, “that is, an heavenly.” Hebrews 11:14-16. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 467.5}

In gathering them from among the heathen, to bring them into their own land, God sprinkles clean water, even the pure water of life, upon His people, to cleanse them from all their iniquities. “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses, us from all sin” (1 John 1:7), and the Spirit and the water and the blood agree in one. 1 John 5:8. The clean water with which God sprinkles His people as He gathers them is the blood of Christ. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 467.6}

This cleansing is a thorough one, and since the filthiness which we have contracted among the heathen permeates us completely our cleansing involves an entirely new creation. God has to give us a new heart, which means a new life, for out of the heart are the issues of life. “If any man be in Christ there is a new creation.” He promises to put His Spirit in us, so that we shall walk in His statutes, and keep His commandments; for the law is spiritual. Then, says God, “ye shall be My people, and I will be your God.” Compare this with the promise of the new covenant (Jeremiah 31:33, 34), and the promise to Abraham. Exodus 6:6-8. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 467.7}

The heathen will see the fulfilment of God’s promise to Abraham and his Seed, for they will all come up and surround the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, after it comes down from God out of heaven. Revelation 20:7-9. The people of God, redeemed from all their enemies, even from the last and greatest enemy, death, will go forth from the New Jerusalem over the renewed earth, and build cities and inhabit them, and plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them. Isaiah 65:17-23. It is true that before they go forth the wicked will be destroyed in the fire that renews the earth; but the heathen will nevertheless know that the Lord builds the waste and desolate and ruined cities, for they will see the proof of it in the New Jerusalem, which will stand upon the site of the old city, only greatly enlarged. Zechariah 14:1-9; Isaiah 49:18-22. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 468.1}

“Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God.” This is humiliating, and may well cause us to be ashamed and confounded, but is wonderfully encouraging. The reason why so many people become discouraged, and doubt the possibility of their salvation, is that they think that it is their own worthiness that must be taken into account. “I am too unworthy for the Lord to take notice of me;” “I am so sinful that the Lord surely will not receive me,” are common expressions. Now comes the most comforting assurance that our unworthiness has nothing to do with the case. It is not for our sakes, but for His own sake, that the Lord forgives our sins. “I even I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.” Isaiah 53:25. So we can say with all boldness and assurance:- {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 468.2}

*“Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bid’st me come to Thee;  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.” {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 468.3}*

**“The Gospel of Isaiah. A Prayer for Healing Answered. Isaiah 38:1-8, 21, 22” *The Present Truth* 15, 29.**

E. J. Waggoner

(Isaiah 38:1-8, 21-22, LOWTH’S TRANSLATION.)

1. At that time Hezekiah was seized with a mortal sickness; and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amos, came unto him, and said unto him: Thus saith Jehovah: Give orders concerning thy affairs to thy family; for thou {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 468.4}

2. must die; thou shalt no longer live. Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, and {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 468.5}

3. made his supplication to Jehovah. And he said: I beseech Thee, O Jehovah, remember now how I have endeavoured to walk before Thee in truth, and with a perfect heart; and have done that which is good in Thine eyes. And Hezekiah wept, and lamented grievously. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 468.6}

4. Now [before Isaiah was gone out into the middle court] the word of Jehovah came unto him, saying: Go [back], and say unto Hezekiah, {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 468.7}

5. Thus saith Jehovah, the God of David thy father: I have heard thy supplication; I have seen thy tears. Behold [I will heal thee; and thou shalt go up into the house of {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 468.8}

6. Jehovah. And] I will add unto thy days fifteen years. And I will deliver thee, and this city, from the hand of the king of Assyria; {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 468.9}

22. and I will protect this city. And [Hezekiah said: By what sign shall I know that I shall go up into the house of Jehovah? {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 468.10}

7. And Isaiah said:] This shall be the sign from Jehovah, that Jehovah will bring to effect this word which He hath spoken. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 468.11}

8. Behold I will bring back the shadow of the degrees, by which the sun is gone down on the degrees of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. And the sun returned backward ten degrees, on the degrees by which it had gone down. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 468.12}

21. And Isaiah said: Let them take a lump of figs; and they bruised them, and applied them to the boil; and he recovered. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 468.13}

In studying this lesson, reference should be made to the record in 2 Kings 20:1-11. It will be noticed that the Lowth’s Translation, which we have reprinted here, two sections are inserted in brackets in the fourth and fifth verses, from the corresponding verses of the account in 2 Kings. Also, in order that the record of the event may be complete in one lesson, verses 21 and 22 are brought into the narrative in the regular course, instead of being left, as in our common version, at the close of Hezekiah’s song of thanksgiving. Let the student diligently compare this reading with that in his Bible. There is no alteration, but only a bringing of the different parts of the narrative into one. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 468.14}

“At that time.” At what time? For an answer read chapter 36 and 37. The lesson itself (verse 6) indicates that it was at the time that the king of Assyria was besieging Jerusalem. Read also the accounts in 2 Kings 18 and 19. and 2 Chronicles 32. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 468.15}

The first thing that claims our attention in this study is the kindness of God in giving Hezekiah timely warning of his approaching death. For what reason Hezekiah was to die at that time, is not stated, and we have no business to conjecture. It would do no good if we should. Of one thing we may be sure, and that is that it was not because Hezekiah was a bad man. The record concerning his reign is that “he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father had done.” 2 Chronicles 29:2. He “wrought that which was good and right and truth before the Lord his God. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered.” 2 Chronicles 31:20-21. No king has ever had a better testimony given him than that. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 468.16}

One of the most common things when a kind, benevolent, and good person dies, is to hear people say, “What had he done, that he should be taken away? if it had only been such and such an one, I could understand it, for he would never have been missed; but to take away so useful a member of society,-it is inexplicable.” Or sometimes a parent says, when a devoted and pious child is taken, “What have we done, that she should be taken from us?” Just as though God never thought of anything but devising some means of punishing people, and trying to make them miserable! Just as though it would be a mark of greater mercy on the part of God if He should allow all the unprepared ones to die, leaving behind only those who are ready either for life or death! God has “no pleasure in the death of him that dieth.” Ezekiel 18:32. “The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.” Isaiah 57:1. The death of a good man, indispensable as he may seem to be, is often the greatest mercy that could befall both him and those who are left behind. Indeed, we may be sure that whatever takes place, the mercy of God endures for ever. “Though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. For He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.” Lamentations 3:32, 33. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 469.1}

**DEATH A COSTLY THING**

Let no one, however, think that it is a light matter to the Lord that any person, whether good or bad, dies. Death is not in God’s plan for men. He is the living God, and the God of life. He is the Father of all, and from Him all parental love comes. There is no fatherly love on earth that is not simply a little fragment of the love of God for all men. Then let any father think of his own sorrow at the death of a loved child, and he will have an exceedingly faint idea of the sorrow that moves the heart of God when one of His children dies. See Jesus shedding tears at the grave of Lazarus, even when He knew that in a few minutes He would call His friend back to life. Read the one hundred and sixteenth Psalm. Note especially the fifteenth verse: “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” That word “precious” is from the same word that is often rendered “costly,” and it always has that meaning, as anyone will know, who considers it origin. So we should read the verse as it appears in several versions, “Costly in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” It costs the Lord more than the human mind can compute, for Him to allow one of His saints to die, even though it be necessary. Death is an expensive thing to the Lord. It costs Him many a heartache. It is a personal loss to Him; He feels it, because every creature is a part of Himself. “We are His offspring,” and “in Him we live, and move, and have our being.” Acts 17:28. But more, it is a loss to Him in the great work that He has to do in the earth. It is a common thing for men to say that God could get along without any of us, as though He were so self-contained and so self-satisfied and so far above all human feelings that nothing can move Him; when the fact is that everything moves Him. God has given the earth to man, and has never recalled the gift. Through man He has purposed to rule the world, and although we in our selfishness may not be able to understand it, it is a fact that God cannot get along without man. He showed this in that He gave His life for us. He could not live without man. He desires man to be His constant companion. It is for that purpose that He created man. Therefore we may be sure that it was not with a light heart that God said to Hezekiah, “Thou shalt die, and not live.” {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 469.2}

**DEATH AN ENEMY**

Hezekiah did not wish to die; the thought of it was most painful to him. “Hezekiah wept sore.” Was it because he felt that he had been a bad man, and therefore dreaded to meet His God?-No; for he had so little consciousness of guilt that he could recount to the Lord the integrity in which he had walked before Him. If dying means, as the theologians tell us, to be with the Lord, why should Hezekiah have felt so sorrowful at the thought of dying?-Ah, he knew better. There is no man in his senses that would not rather live than die. The tears that people shed over the dead, even while they try to make themselves believe that death is a friend, show that it is impossible for anybody to believe that lie. Every funeral train and every tear are testimonies to the effect that death is an enemy, and not a friend. Death speaks of the devil, the adversary of mankind. The righteous hath hope in his death, simply because he has the assurance through Christ that death shall be destroyed, and he be delivered from its grasp. Death is always and everywhere a thing for tears, and not for joy. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 469.3}

**“NO” AS AN ANSWER TO PRAYER**

The Lord heard Hezekiah’s prayer, and allowed him to live a little longer. Yes, “He heard his prayer.” How natural it is for us to say that, when we have prayed for something, and have got it. But suppose we do not get it, what then?-Then we shake our heads mournfully, and say, “The Lord didn’t see fit to hear us.” Just as if there were ever anything that God did not hear. People in their selfishness generally have the idea that the universe is run for their own individual benefit, regardless of anybody else, and each one thinks that his own wishes should be attended to in every detail, and at once, no matter how many others may be distressed by it. So if God does not say “Yes” to every request of theirs, they feel that they have been greatly abused, and even insulted, because, say they, “I prayed to the Lord, and He did not answer me.” Haven’t they ever heard that “No” is as much an answer as “Yes” is? And has not God as good a right to say “No” once in a while as any earthly parent has, who knows several things that his child does not know? Many a child has lived long enough to find out that the answer “No,” to a request for some much-longed-for thing, which seemed to him almost like a death blow, was the greatest blessing that could have been given him. It is always so when God says it, for He gives everything that is good, and He gives nothing that is not good. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 469.4}

**HEZEKIAH GAINED NOTHING**

But Hezekiah received “Yes” as an answer to His prayer. We will not say that he received “a favourable answer.” He got what he asked for, although it was directly contrary to what God had said he should have. Did he really get it, though? “Certainly he did,” you say. Let us see. What did he ask for?-He asked for a reversal of the decree that had gone forth, that he should die, and not live. “And he did live,” you say. How long?-Fifteen years. That is not very long, and when that time had elapsed, what then?-Why, then he died. Yes, that was what God had said concerning him. He had to die just the same as if it had happened fifteen years before; death is just the same one time as another. But how much better off was Hezekiah after the close of that fifteen years than he was at the beginning? What had he gained by trying to overthrow the word of God? Ah, God works all things after the counsel of His own will; His word will be fulfilled sooner or later, and it is well for mankind that it is so. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 469.5}

**HEZEKIAH’S HEALING A PUBLIC CALAMITY**

Whatever Hezekiah may have gained personally in his own feelings by the result of his prayer, it is certain that the people lost by it. We do not hear very much of Hezekiah after that incident. He appears only once, and then in a circumstance that is not greatly to his credit. But we know that in that fifteen years Manasseh was born, for Manasseh was only twelve years old when he succeeded him at his death. Read a little about him: “Manasseh was twelve years old when he began his reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem; and he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord had cast out from before the children of Israel. For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he reared up altars for Baalim,-and he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom; also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards; he wrought much evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger. So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel.” 2 Chronicles 33:1-9. “Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the Lord.” 2 Kings 21:16. Surely the people of Israel had no reason to be very jubilant over the result of Hezekiah’s prayer. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 470.1}

**RIGHT AND WRONG PRAYING**

When we look at what followed, it seems quite evident that it would have been better if Hezekiah had kept still and allowed things to take the course pointed out by the Lord. “What! Isn’t it always right to pray to the Lord for what we want, especially for life and health?” Yes; provided we pray in accordance with the will of God. That is always the rule. We must allow that God knows best. He sees the end from the beginning; and when God tells a man that he is to die, and sends a special messenger, a holy prophet, to bear the message, the very best thing for that man, and for everybody else, is that he should die. There is “a time to be born, and a time to die” (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 2), and knowing how much the death of one of His children costs the Lord, we may be sure that the time for a man to die is when God says so. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 470.2}

“Shall we then not dare ask the Lord for a continuance of life?” Why not? We have not received any message from the Lord, telling us that we are to die, and not live. On the contrary we are told, “Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sin, they shall be forgiven him.” James 4:13-15. That is for us, unless we have received some direct intimation from the Lord that we are to be an exception. But let us remember that it is the prayer of faith, that saves the sick, and that “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” Romans 10:17. Then we must not ask for anything contrary to the Word of God, and we must know the Word of God as personally addressed to us. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 470.3}

**THE USE OF REMEDIES**

“And Isaiah said, Let them take a lump of figs; and they bruised them, and applied them to the boil; and he recovered.” Some one will say, “Why, Hezekiah was healed by natural means, after all; it was a strange and unusual remedy, to be sure, but it was a remedy, nevertheless.” Well, what of it? “Oh, when the Lord heals, He does not use remedies.” Ah, how did you learn that? Does not the Lord use instruments for the performance of His will? He uses things that are, and even things that are not, for the accomplishment of His purpose. Do not imagine that a thing is any the less a work of God, because He has done it through some agency, human or otherwise. Know this, that there was never a person healed of any disease in this world except by the Lord, and that He always uses some means, visible or invisible. The means is none the less real, if it is invisible. Do not get the idea that when you see a thing done, and see the thing that doest, it is not from the Lord; and that the miracle occurs only when you cannot see anything but the result. The words of the Lord are medicine, whether they are in visible form, or are invisible. Proverbs 4:20-22, margin. It is His Word that He sends to heal the afflicted. Psalm 107:20. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 470.4}

Remedies are always in place when people are sick, and are always perfectly consistent with fervent prayer for their recovery, even with the course that is set forth in the fifth chapter of James. But remember that they must be only the Lord’s remedies. They must be remedies which are the embodiment of the living Word of God. They must not be things which contain death, and are themselves but the agencies of death. God heals by imparting life, not by giving death. “Men ought always to pray,” but that does not mean that they should sit still and do nothing. We ought to pray for our daily bread; but the command to do that comes from the same source as the command that “if any would not work, neither should he eat.” 2 Thessalonians 3:10. When we have done an honest day’s work, and have received food as the reward, we are to thank God for the gift just as much as if the ravens had been sent to feed us while we sat by the brook. It is from His hands just the same. And so we are always to pray for the recovery of the sick, and at the same time to make use of every means that God has made known to us as serviceable. This does not include poisonous drugs, for they are not life-bearers, but death agents. And then if, after applying the means that God Himself indicated, the patient recovers, we are to thank the Lord just as heartily for the performance of a miracle of healing as if we had heard Him speak with an audible voice, and tell the disease to depart. The Lord is the Great Physician, and there is not a medical man in the world that cannot learn things from Him that will astonish him. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 470.5}

**A SIGN FROM THE LORD**

The Lord gave Hezekiah a sign by which he might know that he should recover. We notice by reading 2 Kings 20:8-10 that Hezekiah was very particular as to the sign. He did not want any doubt about it. So the shadow on the dial was made to go backward ten degrees. Wonderful! Yes; but no more so than the healing of Hezekiah. Nay, it was no more wonderful than is the daily going forward of the shadow. Everything is wonderful, for in everything the eternal power and Divinity of God are manifest. We have known professed Christian men who had the audacity to attempt to explain the miracle of the going backward of the shadow on the dial, as well as the standing still of the sun in the days of Joshua. Some people think that they are in duty bound to seem to know as much as the Lord; but all will at the last be obliged to admit that the Lord knows many things that we do not. We would not minimise the going backward of the shadow, or the standing still of the sun, but would magnify the miracles that are taking place every day, and which are unnoticed because of their frequency. The fact that the sun keeps its place in the heavens, and that all the heavenly bodies move in their courses so exactly that men who watch them closely can tell to a second when to expect them at any particular point, is a stupendous miracle. God placed them in the heavens “for signs,” as well as “for seasons, and days, and years.” Genesis 1:14. They are signs to all men that the power and mercy of the Lord are everlasting. They are signs of the faithfulness of God, which is established in the very heavens. When we see the shadow moving forward we may be as sure of the fulfilment of the Word of God to us as Hezekiah was when he saw it going backward. No word of God can fail, and every sunbeam is proof of it. God has not left Himself without witness, and we are not obliged to ask for something special in our case. All we have to do is to look round us. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 470.6}

**“‘What Is Truth?’” *The Present Truth* 15, 29.**

E. J. Waggoner

The question of Pilate at the trial of the Saviour should be the honest inquiry of very soul,-“What is truth?” And why?-Because it is by the truth that men are sanctified and made free. John 8:32; 14:6. What then is truth? The answer is simple and short,-“Thy Word is truth.” To know God’s Word is to know the truth; but this means more than to give a formal assent to it, for the Psalmist says, “Thou desirest truth in the inward parts.” Psalm 51:6. This is apparent, for by the law (which is the truth, Psalm 119:42,) all are to be judged. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 471.1}

Error comes in with sin; and as there is no union between righteousness and sin, so truth and error cannot mix. Truth does not naturally find a lodgment in the carnal heart, for by it sin is made known, and sin never invites inspection. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 471.2}

Almost from the very beginning of the human race there has been a fierce struggle between these two opposing forces, and in the latter days especially is this conflict to be waged more than ever; for so insidious will the work of Satan be that, if it were possible, the elect themselves will be deceived. Mark 13:24. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 471.3}

With the truth there is no compromise. Every decision must be clean-cut. There can be no half-way position. “He that is not with Me is against Me.” There is no neutral ground. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 471.4}

**“Job’s Singing School” *The Present Truth* 15, 29.**

E. J. Waggoner

An old deacon greatly surprised his good wife one cold winter evening by sayig to her, “My dear, I am going out to organise a singing school.” In astonishment she looked up and said, “Why you can’t sing a tune; how can you teach music?” He made no reply, but left the house, harnessed the horses, took a good supply of provisions and fuel, and started for the home of a poor widow with six children. He found her in a destitute condition, with no fire, and the children crying for something to eat. When he made known the object of his visit, and laid before the family what he had brought, tears of joy filled their eyes, and their heartfelt thanks were showered upon him. When he returned home his wife inquired how he had succeeded in getting up his singing school, and he replied, “First class.” Then taking from the shelf the family Bible, he read, “The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy.” “That is the kind of singing school I have started, one of Job’s singing schools,” he said, “and it was a success.” {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 471.5}

**“Denmark” *The Present Truth* 15, 29.**

E. J. Waggoner

The little kingdom of Denmark does not desire war with any country, and has no motive for war. It does not desire the territory of any other power; its people are industrious, frugal, and prosperous; and it would have everything to lose, and nothing to gain, by a war. yet it has one great anxiety, which is just now specially troubling it, and that is, that it will not be *allowed*, by the other and greater powers, to retain its position of neutrality. What a striking comment upon the confidence that men have in the present talk about peace. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 471.6}

**“A Cheering Thought” *The Present Truth* 15, 29.**

E. J. Waggoner

The marks of sin are plainly visible everywhere around us. Disappointments are on every hand, tears flow freely, heart-strings are bleeding and torn, our loved ones are snatched from our embrace; and were it not for the hope of the Christian, we should truly be “of all men most miserable.” But thanks be to the God of love, while it is appointed for man *once* to die, he does not need to die *twice*. And it is a most solemn yet joyful thought that the time is drawing near when the entombed millions who have fallen asleep in Jesus will hear the shout that will call them forth from their dusty beds, and in the twinkling of an eye be made immortal. “Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless.” {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 471.7}

**“Little Folks. Fire and Water” *The Present Truth* 15, 29.**

E. J. Waggoner

“All power in heaven and in earth is given unto Me.” These are the words of Jesus, and the Psalmist also tells us that “power belongeth *unto God*.” If we really believe these words of God, we shall see, wherever there is any power working in the earth, the hand of God. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 474.1}

Think of the power of running water, which, through what is called “the science of Hydraulics,” is put to so much practical use for the service of man, to turn his mills and water wheels, etc. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 474.2}

But whose is this power? Where does the water come from, and who causes it to flow? It all comes from God, the “fountain of living waters,” and the One who moves all things in the universe by His Spirit that first “moved upon the face of the waters.” Therefore this “power belongeth unto God.” {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 474.3}

Think again of the power of fire or heat, and the wonders that are wrought by it, of the mighty changes that take place under its influence. It can make solids into liquids, and liquids into gases or vapours. What could be done without it in our homes, our manufactories, and in all nature? {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 474.4}

This fire and heat, we have learned, comes from the sun, the shining forth upon this earth of God’s glory. All this therefore simply shows us *the power of His glory*, the transforming power of the light of His countenance. “Thine is the kingdom and *the power and the glory*.” {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 474.5}

Now we will think for a little while of something that is produced when these two things, fire and water, are brought in contact with each other, something very familiar to you all,- {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 474.6}

**STEAM**

You see it every day, but have you, I wonder, ever thought what it really is? Even in this we may see the wonderful power of God’s life working, and how He has placed this at the service of man. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 474.7}

We said that heat can change solids to liquids and liquids to gases or vapours. This is proved to us very often by what we can see of its motion upon water. In the winter when the water is very cold, it takes the solid form that we call ice. But when the warmer weather comes the solid ice is changed by the sun’s heat into liquid flowing water. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 474.8}

But when it becomes warmed still more, like everything else it expands, spreads out and gets lighter, with the heat, until at last it evaporates, becomes so thin and light that it passes into the air and rises up to form the great billowy clouds that float there over our heads, through which God waters and refreshes the earth. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 474.9}

In the power of the great sun working upon the waters of the ocean, warming and drawing them up into the sky in this way, it is easy for us to see God’s hand, and to know that it is His power working. But He wants us to learn from this to see the same thing everywhere, and to recognise His power wherever we see it at work. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 474.10}

We have learned how fire and water come from God through the sun and the clouds, and all the power that is in them is the power of God’s life. Men see the fire, the heat with which God supplies the earth through the sun, to warm the water which flows to us from Him. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 474.11}

Then through the laws of His life which are working in both the water and the fire, some of the power, the heat that is in the fire, passes into the water and it expands into steam (of the wonderful power of which we will tell you move another time). This power is used to work all kinds of heavy and intricate machinery, to drive the engines which draw long train-loads of people at immense speed over the land, and to push, the huge steamboats across the ocean. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 474.12}

But whose is the power that is doing all this? It is the power of God, whose life is in the water, and from whom comes the heat that changes it into the form of vapour steam. Man cannot create or make power, but can only use the power which God is giving him in all these things. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 474.13}

Men use their talents to find out how best to control a small portion of the power with which God has filled the earth, to supply their own wants. But how few there are who recognise in it all that “power belongeth unto God,” and that “there is no power but of God.” So they do not “glorify Him as God,” but “become vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart is darkened.” {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 474.14}

May you, little children, be kept so “pure in heart that you may see God”-see Him working everywhere and in all things, and so learn to “Fear God, and give glory to Him.” {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 474.15}

**“Jottings” *The Present Truth* 15, 29.**

E. J. Waggoner

-Russia, has placed orders for 20,000,000 dollars’ worth of war material with the United States. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 478.1}

-It is computed that 7,000 swans’ skins are annually imported into London to make “puffs,” used by ladles to lay powder on the face. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 478.2}

-Quite a number of the fashion-leading women of Paris have decreed that the corset must go, and to this end have begun a crusade against it. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 478.3}

-In the last three months the fire insurance companies of New York have paid in losses two and a half times as much as they have taken in premiums. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 478.4}

-A single fly, if unmolested from the beginning of the fly season, will produce through itself and its successors, in a single season, the almost unbelievable number of 2,080,820. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 478.5}

-At Lambeth, detectives discovered a spurious coin mint, one of the most extensive ever brought to light in the metropolis. The floor was literally strewn with bogus florins, shilling pieces, etc. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 478.6}

-France last week launched a new submarine torpedo boat, costing ?38,000. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 478.7}

-The Dowager Empress of China has issued an edict directing financial reforms, brought about from her study of the works of a leading Chinese reformer. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 478.8}

-Over twenty-five deaths from lockjaw have occurred in New York City and surrounding country, due to accidents from toy pistols, etc., while celebrating the Fourth of duly. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 478.9}

-Two additional battleships, one cruise, two gunboats, fourteen destroyers, twenty-five torpedo boats and one submarine torpedo boat are ordered by the Budget Committee to be added to the French Navy during 1900. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 478.10}

-The whole of the American correspondents at Manila have entered an emphatic protest against the alleged systematic suppression and falsification of news carried on by the censorship. They state that the true facts in the case have not been reported. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 478.11}

-Extraordinary qualities are possessed by the River Tinto, in Spain. It hardens and petrifies the sand of its bed, and if a stone falls in the stream and alights upon another, in a few months they unite and become one stone. Fish cannot live in its waters. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 478.12}

-Upon application of the Sanitary Inspector to Bermondsey Vestry, orders were issued for the destruction of several tons of strawberries, raspberries, etc., because of the unwholesome condition of the fruit. A large proportion of it was consigned to Lipton’s jam factory. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 478.13}

-The so-called Tugrin fog dispelier, expected to prove a boon to mariners, is simply a three-inch tube eight feet long, through which warm air is forced by a blower. A hole is thus cleared, ensabling the navigator to see several hundred feet through the densest fog. Fog is still an unsolved problem. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 478.14}

-According to the report just given, lunatics are increasing in London at the rate of 500 a year, and it is calculated that by 1901, accommodations will be required for 15,918. An appropriation of ?1,000 has been made by the Asylums Committee for inquiries and preparations of preliminary designs for further accommodation. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 478.15}

-Nine shop-keepers were prosecuted at Sheerness for Sunday trading. The magistrate imposed a fine of five shillings in each case, on technical grounds, but declined to make any order for the payment of costs, on the ground that he thought it absurd to invite people to that place for fresh air, and then make it impossible for them to get even an apple or an orange. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 478.16}

-London requires 600,000 cows to supply it with the products of the dairy, 84,000 being needed for milk alone. Nearly 12,000 of these “milk machines” spend their lives in sheds, and hardly ever see daylight, so to speak; 4,000 horses are engaged in delivering the products, and rather more than 30,000 hands are engaged permanently in the traffic. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 478.17}

-The Peace Conference is proving itself to be a farce. Russia has, since the proposal of the Peace Conference, never ceased arming. War vessels are being built and ordered at a hitherto unheard-of rate; new guns are being bought, and orders have just been placed in America for ?5,000,000 of ammunitions of war; and the latest proceedings at The Hague confirm the belief that nothing will prohibit the use of newly-invented engines of war. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 478.18}

**“What Is in Your Heart?” *The Present Truth* 15, 29.**

E. J. Waggoner

Hezekiah king of Judah was a good man, who “did that which was right in the sight of the Lord.” He could remind the Lord that he had walked before Him in truth and with a perfect heart, and done that which was good in His sight, and God did not correct him. Isaiah 38:3. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 480.1}

Nevertheless at one time Hezekiah acted very foolishly and wickedly. God had wondrously healed him, and had given him a sign in the heavens, which could not but be known in all the earth; yet when messengers from Babylon cams to enquire about it, Hezekiah, instead of using the opportunity to lead them to God, vainly showed them all his treasures, like a child exhibiting his toys. We read that he “rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up.” 2 Chronicles 32:25. Pride goeth before destruction, and in this instance we see how it prepares the way for it; for the vain-glorious exhibition of the treasures of the kingdom only aroused the cupidity of the Babylonians, and resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 480.2}

But how could Hezekiah, who had always lived a humble, godly life, turn so suddenly to folly, and to sin against God? The answer is: “In the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart.” 2 Chronicles 32:31. We see, therefore, that all this folly was in Hezekiah’s heart, unknown to him, even while he was serving God in truth and uprightness. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 480.3}

The hearts of all men are alike. All have the same nature. “From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness.” Mark 7:21, 22. These things are in the heart, not of a few men only, but of all mankind. No one need say that none of these things are in his heart, for they are all there, even though they have not all appeared openly. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I the Lord search the heart.” Jeremiah 17:9, 10. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 480.4}

Was not Hezekiah a converted man? was he not a Christian?-Certainly he was. The history of his life shows that. Yet all this evil was present, waiting the time when it could reveal itself. In the flesh of no man dwells there any good thing. It is only when we walk in the light as God is in the light, that the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin. 1 John 1:7. The life-blood must continually flow through us, to cleanse away the impurity. Only in the Lord have we righteousness and strength; there is none in us. If we allow Him to leave us for a moment, some of the wickedness of the flesh will manifest itself. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 480.5}

Many are trusting in themselves, and congratulating themselves upon their own supposed righteousness. They are ready enough with their condemnation of others, forgetting that much of their own seeming goodness is simply lack of opportunity or of special temptation to do wrong. Forgetting to give God the glory, they will surely some time be allowed to exhibit the weakness of their lives. If from such a fall they learn, as did Peter, to trust in the Lord, then even that will contribute to their salvation. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 480.6}

None of us have any reason to boast over another. “By the grace of God I am what I am.” “Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” 1 Corinthians 4:7. We have no occasion to boast of any goodness that appears in us, since it is all of God; but we have much reason to be ashamed of any sin, because grace from God is given us in sufficient measure to overcome all sin. Although sin, like a beast of prey, always croucheth at the door, with its desire toward us, we may rule over it; but this can be only when we recognise that the sin of all the world is ours, and in humility trust in the Lord. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 480.7}

Even though God should for a little moment leave us, He will gather us with great mercies. Isaiah 54:7, 8. But this history of Hezekiah was recorded in order that we might know what is in our hearts without its being necessary for God to leave us. Even while we are serving God in truth and righteousness, we may and should know that we stand only by the power of God’s hand. “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” “Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” Jude 24, 25. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 480.8}

**“Rejoicing in Truth” *The Present Truth* 15, 29.**

E. J. Waggoner

Rejoicing in Truth .-Love “rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.” 1 Corinthians 13:6. It “thinketh no evil.” What is love?-“Love is the fulfilling of the law.” Romans 13:10. True love-the love of God-is “that we keep His commandments.” 1 John 5:3. Love is righteousness. Now here is a test by which we may know ourselves. If we find a sort of satisfaction in hearing that some person has some weakness, some bad habit that he has not overcome, or if we find any pleasure in talking or hearing of the failures of any person, especially if that person be one from whom we expect better things, then we may know that the very evil of which we are talking or hearing is in our own hearts and lives. Our satisfaction in hearing of the evil is because we regard it as a sort of excuse for our own sin. If the love of God is in our hearts, the mere thought of another’s failure will give us pain. God is love, and He takes no pleasure in hearing or seeing evil. Our sin causes Him pain and sorrow. Moreover, He thinks no evil concerning us. He is not suspicious, but treats us as though we were good, in order to draw us and hold us to the good. “For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” Jeremiah 29:11. {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 480.9}

**“Back Page” *The Present Truth* 15, 29.**

E. J. Waggoner

Every nation is represented in the Peace Congress; at the same time every nation is planning for an increase in its military force, each one expressly stating, however, that this preparation is designed only for defence, and not for attack. But if no one ever attacks, there will be no occasion for defence, and if there were any mutual confidence among nations, some of them, at least, would relieve themselves of the burden of preparing for defence which we are assured will not be needed. Who believes it? {PTUK July 27, 1899, p. 480.10}