**Notes on the International Sunday-School Lessons. Fruits of Right and Wrong Doing. Malachi 3:13-18; 4:1-6” *The Present Truth* 15, 49.**

E. J. Waggoner

We make no apology for printing the whole of these passages of Scripture, for nothing that any man can write is comparable to the word inspired by God; moreover we are persuaded that but few would take the trouble to turn to the passage in their Bibles, and read it while reading the article, and without the text before the eyes, or in the mind, the talk upon it is of little profit. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 771.1}

“Your words have been stout against Me, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against Thee? Ye have said, It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered. Then they that feared the Lord spake with one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not. For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 771.2}

“Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord come. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse,” or, “with utter destruction.” {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 771.3}

A few general notes, to enable the student to read the passage understandably, are all that space will allow, and all that are necessary. If everybody knew how to read the Bible, and would read it, there would be no need of any such paper as this. Indeed, there would be little need of religious books of any kind; for to know how to read the Bible is to know the Lord; and to know the Lord well is to be in a position where one needs no other instructor. The promise to God’s children is, “they shall all be taught of God;” and when the time comes that all know Him, from the least to the greatest, “They shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord.” Jeremiah 31:34. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 771.4}

One should read the entire book of Malachi, in order to get a good understanding of the portion contained in this lesson. It is short, and will not take much time. From the reading it will appear that the service of God had degenerated into a mere form among priests and people, and that the people were weary even of the form. Not only were “the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith,” neglected, but, offerings, tithes and sacrifices were omitted or slighted. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 771.5}

**FALSE WITNESS AGAINST GOD**

Yet they could not see that they had said anything against the Lord. They had evidently not been guilty of open blasphemy, and so they boldly asked, when reproved, “What have we spoken against Thee?” They had said that is was vain to serve God, and that there was no profit in keeping His commandments. The Lord regarded these as very “stout” words against Him, and they certainly were. To say that the service of God is vain, and that there is no profit in keeping His commandments, is the same as saying that He is a liar; for He says that His commandments are sweeter than honey and the honeycomb, and that “in keeping of them there is great reward.” Psalm 19:10, 11. It is the same as saying that God Himself is nothing. What more terrible charge could be brought against God than to say that His service is vain? {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 771.6}

Are you sure that you have never been guilty of speaking such stolid words against God? Have you never become discouraged, and said that you “couldn’t see any use in trying to do right”? Have you never envied the wicked, and called the proud happy, and said that “they that work wickedness are built up,” and that people who look out for themselves, and do as they please, are better off than those who serve God? Have you never said, or thought, that the Lord did not care for you, and that He had neglected you, although you have given diligence to be faithful to Him? Have you never felt like “giving up” the Christian life, or at least that which you supposed was a Christian life, because you could not see that there was any profit in it,-no worldly profit, certainly, and no prospect of any spiritual gain? If so,-and who cannot plead guilty to some such thoughts and speeches at some time in his life?-then your words have been exceedingly “stout” against God. You have been echoing the devil’s false witness against the Most High. Surely it is time to repent. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 771.7}

**SPEAKING GOD’S PRAISE**

Malachi 3:16 is often quoted in meetings for prayer and testimony, as an incentive for people to bear testimony for the Lord. No doubt the speaking one to another includes such occasions, but it is most certain that it is not limited to them. They that fear the Lord have conversations with one another about His goodness, and they do not need to be exhorted and urged to do so. Love that is forced, and must be prompted, is not of much value. “All Thy work shall praise Thee, O Lord; and Thy saints shall bless Thee. They shall speak of the glory of Thy kingdom, and talk of Thy power; to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom.” Psalm 145:10-12. And this they will do spontaneously from the fulness of their hearts. The saints of the Lord will praise and bless Him in the same way that His other works do, only to as much greater a degree as they are greater than all things else. The heavens declare the glory of God without any urging to “do their duty.” Get acquainted with the Lord, and you will know that His service is not vain, but that is so blessed and joyous that you must tell of it to others. “Come and hear all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul!” “For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 771.8}

**THE LORD’S PROPERTY**

The Lord has an interest in this earth. He made it, and He has a desire to the work of His hands. Those to whom He let out His property have sadly neglected it, and have let it run down, and have failed to give Him what fruit it did raise; yet He has not parted with it, and proposes to take the property over at no distant day. When He makes up His property, those who have spoken to one another of His goodness, and have made known to the sons of men the glorious majesty of His kingdom will be acknowledged as His. They are not only His servants, but they are called sons. They serve the Lord, not as slaves, but as sons. At that time there will be no difficulty in distinguishing between the righteous wicked, between Him that serveth God, and him that serveth Him not, for the day that burneth as a furnace will burn them up. They will be nothing but stubble in the flame. But to those who fear the Lord the Sun of righteousness will arise, and they will be able to dwell with everlasting earnings. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 772.1}

**THE FATE OF THE WICKED**

This scripture shows sufficiently, if there were no other in the Bible to the same effect, that there will come a time when there will not be a sinner in the Lord’s dominions. Not because all will be converted, for the Lord tells us that the majority will go in the broad road to destruction (Matthew 7:13, 14), but because at the last day those who have utterly refused the Lord, will be utterly destroyed. The Lord is coming, and His fan is in His hand, “and He will purge His floor, and gather His wheat into His garner; but the chaff will be burned with unquenchable fire.” Matthew 3:11, 12. Then will the wicked “be as though they had not been.” Obadiah 16. “The wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of the lambs; they shall consume; in the smoke shall they consume away.” “For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.” Psalm 37:20, 10. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 772.2}

These truths concerning the final fate of the incorrigibly wicked are not arbitrary. They are a necessary consequence of the truth that Christ Jesus came into the world that “whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. The utter extinction of those who reject the Lord is not an arbitrary act of vengeance on the part of God, but is the inevitable result of their rejection of Christ, who is “the way, and the truth, and the life.” Since they reject “the Author of life” (Acts 3:15, margin), who is the only life, the One in whom alone men can live, and move, and have any being (Acts 17:28), it inevitably follows that they must cease to be. “Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there. If I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me.” Psalm 139:7-10. And wherever God is, He must reign. Therefore when men say that they will not have Him to reign over them, that they will not be led by Him, and that they will not have His right hand hold them, because they wish to be “free from restraint,” and declare that they will not live in His presence, it is plain that there is no place for them in the universe. The only place where they can flee from His presence is to get out of existence. And God, who gives to every man the desire of his heart, will graciously send them there. It is not necessary that He perform any arbitrary act in order to do this, but simply to let them be; when His life is withdrawn from them, according to their wish, they at once sink into nothingness. Outside of God there is nothing. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 772.3}

**NEW LIFE AND PERFECT HEALTH IN CHRIST**

When the Sun of righteousness arises it is with healing in His wings. He is our life. He who forgives all our iniquities also heals all our diseases. Psalm 103:1-4. He redeems our life from destruction. This He does by giving us His own life, which is eternal life. Now the characteristics of eternal life is that it is ever new, ever fresh. Who ever drinks of the water of life that Christ gives, has in him a well of water, ever springing up. John 4:14. The vigour of this life will be seen to be full when all things have been created new and sin and sinners have been cleared from the earth by the fires of the last, great day. Then the righteous will go forth, and from very exuberance of life, from the bare joy of being alive, shall leap and gamble as calves let loose from the stall. “Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing; for in the wilderness shall the waters break out, and streams in the desert.” Isaiah 35:6. But all this freshness is not to be reserved till the last day. Even now does the Sun of righteousness shine, and we may if we will rejoice in His healing beams. When the lame man at the gate of the temple was made strong in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, he went with the apostles into the temple, “walking, and leaping, and praising God.” Acts 3:6-8. “They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” Isaiah 40:31. The life is manifested, in order that we may have fulness of joy, and joy of the most real kind. The life is life indeed. “It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning.” Lamentations 3:22, 23. It is possible,-and whatever is possible with the Lord is our privilege and duty,-for men to live so fully by the life of the Lord, that His new mercies will make them feel new life every morning, so that they will be glad with the joy of life. This is not sentiment,-it is not a matter of theorising, but comes by consciously taking the life of the Lord as it is manifested in His gifts to us, and of receiving it fresh from the Fountain head, in the purest form possible. “Then shall thy health spring forth speedily.” The words of God our health to the flesh of all who will live by them. Proverbs 4:20-22. We must not try it for the mere selfish purpose of desire and to feel better physically, but because we wish to live wholly to the glory of God, who gives us life; doing this, we shall find even with the progress of years the freshness and buoyancy of youth. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 772.4}

**THE LAW OF MOSES A DEFENCE**

The law of Moses is not obsolete. Even down to the very last days, just before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord, it is to be remembered. If the Spirit and power of Elijah the prophet are given in connection with this law, to work a reformation among men, so that the Lord will not be obliged to smite the earth with utter destruction. “Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.” Isaiah 13:9. “The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.” Isaiah 24:4-6. But because some will remember the law of Moses, which God commanded him in Horeb, with all the statutes and judgments, and will not say that there is no profit in keeping His charge, there will be a few men left. “Fear not, little flock; for it is your father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 773.1}

Moved by the Holy Spirit, the Psalmist David prayed: “Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to Thy mercy remember Thou me for Thy goodness sake, O Lord.” Psalm 25:7. That therefore is a promise that the Lord will do as requested. What a comfort to know that all the sins and follies of our youth are forgiven, and that we need not be handicapped by them, but can run the race set before us as freely as though we had never sinned. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 773.2}

*“Why bowest thou, O soul mine.  
Crushed by ancestral sin.  
Thou hast a noble heritage  
That bids thee victory win.” {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 773.3}*

**“For Little Ones. A Child of Promise” *The Present Truth* 15, 49.**

E. J. Waggoner

I hope if you remember our little talk together a few weeks ago about the “the Parables of Jesus,” and that these are to be found all through the Old as well as the New Testament. Of the one of which we are going to talk to-day, the Apostle Paul especially tells us: “Which things are an allegory.” {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 778.1}

You have heard, have you not, the story of Abraham,-how God called him out from the heathen country where he had been born and brought up, and promised to lead him to a better country. God blessed him and gave him great flocks of sheep, and herds of cattle, many servants, and great riches. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 778.2}

But there was one thing that Abram (as he was then called) and Sarai his wife, would rather have had than all these. God had not given them any children, and this was a great disappointment and grief to them. Yet God had promised Abraham that his seed, or descendants, should be “as the dust of the earth,”-as numerous as the grains of sand that make up the dust of the ground. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 778.3}

One night when God was talking with his friend, Abram said to him, “What wilt Thou give me, seeing I go childless?” This seems to have been a gentle reminder to the Lord of His promise not yet fulfilled. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 778.4}

Then God “brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them; *so shall thy seed be*. And Abram believed God.” {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 778.5}

Yet the years passed, and the promised child was not given, and Abram and Sarai were so old that they began to give up hope. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 778.6}

At last one day when Abram was ninety-nine years *old*, long past time when fathers and mothers usually have little children of their own, God appeared to Abram again and said: {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 778.7}

“Thou shalt be the father of a multitude.” “Neither shall thy name any more be called *Abram*, but thy name shall be called *Abraham*; for the father of a multitude of nations have I made thee.” {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 778.8}

“As for Sarah thy wife, thou shalt not call her name *Sarai*, but *Sarah* shall her name be.” Sarah means “a princess,” and the reason why God gave her this name was; “She shall be a mother of nations; kings of people’s shall be of her.” {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 778.9}

Long afterwards when Paul was writing a letter to the Romans, he reminded them of this promise of God to Abraham and Sarah, and said that God “calleth the things that be not as though they were.” {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 778.10}

So when Abraham and Sarah had no children and no hope of ever having any, God called Abraham “the father of a multitude,” and Sarah, “the mother of nations and of kings.” If any man had done this it would have been a lie, but God can call anything just what He wishes it to be, and there is power in the Word that He speaks to make it just what He says. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 778.11}

Abraham knew the Lord, he knew that he is the Truth, and cannot lie; and so when God called him “the father of a multitude,” he rejoiced that he was to become so, and his faith made the promise of God a reality to him. We are told that he “against hope believed in hope, that he might be the father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, so shall thy seed be.” He was “strong in faith.” Faith comes by hearing the Word of God, and trusts only in that Word. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 778.12}

So Abraham did not think of himself, nor of his wife, and of their great age, and how unlikely, or even impossible, it was that they should have a son, but “*looking unto the promise of God*, he wavered not through unbelief.” {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 778.13}

God’s word is “Spirit and life;” it created all things in the beginning, and as Abraham and Sarah forgot themselves and thought of and looked to God’s word and promise, by the power of the Spirit that worked through the Word, the long-promised, long-expected son was born. When the fulness of God’s time was come, Isaac, “the child of promise,” was “born of the Spirit.” {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 778.14}

Next week we will tell you of another “child of promise” of whose birth the birth of Isaac was the type or shadow, and through whom we too may be “born of the Spirit,” and so become, like Him “the children of promise.” {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 778.15}

**“Items of Interest” *The Present Truth* 15, 49.**

E. J. Waggoner

-Paris has a place of worship for each 17,000 inhabitants; London one for each 2,000. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 782.1}

-“For every two Christians in Japan there are five Buddhist temples, in all about 263,000 houses of idol worship.” {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 782.2}

-According to the report, there are at present 1,744 cases of infectious diseases in Glasgow, of which 995 are scarlet fever. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 782.3}

-A Sunday law has been enacted in Dawson City, Alaska, and anyone violating this law lays himself liable to a heavy fine. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 782.4}

-A 20,000 fire at the Brownhill Colliery, Northumberland, on the 27th ult., has thrown 1,000 men of employment. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 782.5}

-By a new agreement, Russia has obtained the prolongation of her monopoly of railway building in Persia for an indefinite period. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 782.6}

-Lady Salisbury wife of the Premier coin rehearse, was buried on the 26th ult., with ceremonies exceedingly simple. She was loved by all. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 782.7}

-A projected new route across the Isthmus of Panama is being surveyed. The distance is only thirty-seven miles against forty-five of the Panama route. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 782.8}

-The London School Board declares that it will take 46,000,000 meals a year to supply dinners to the underfed scholars attending the Board Schools. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 782.9}

-The world’s agriculture occupies the attention of 280,000,00 men, represents a capital of ?4,800,000,000. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 782.10}

-Protestant missionaries have been forbidden by General Otis to sell or distribute Bibles or tracts, because the archbishop of Manila and the Spanish priest objected. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 782.11}

-It is estimated that at the present rate of raising money in America for missions, it would take four years to raise a sum equal to the amount spent their in one year for chewing gum. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 782.12}

-Anxious to make some little personal present to her soldiers serving in South Africa, the Queen has decided upon sending a half-pound can of chocolate to each man, with her compliments. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 782.13}

-A whale, measuring 66 feet in length, was captured in the Thames last week near Woolwich Arsenal. The struggle was an exciting one, and there were many narrow escapes before he was grounded on the beach. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 782.14}

-Messrs. Krupp will shortly supply the Turkish army with 108 quick-firing guns, after the model of the guns presented by the Emperor to the Sultan last year. From Messrs. Cramp, of Philadelphia, the sultan has ordered a cruiser, to cost ?600,000. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 782.15}

-It is reported from Bridgeport, Connecticut, U.S.A., that the law against kissing, enacted in the of King Charles II., is being revived. It prescribes forty lashes, administered on the bare back, for the man, and thirty for the woman caught kissing in public. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 782.16}

-A telephone of a novel character has just been invented in Paris, which receives and registers messages in the absence of the user. Political speeches, business communications, and music-hall songs can, therefore, be stored and taped at will. Experiments between Paris and Marseille are said to augur wide success for the new telephone. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 782.17}

-There is a sensible diminution of the smallpox epidemic in Hull. Since the first appearances of the visitation, there have been 552 cases, of which 13 per cent. have succumbed. During the past three weeks over 30,000 revaccinations have been affected there. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 782.18}

-In several hundred villages on the slopes of the Alps and Appennines, Italy, cannon are fired at a given signal from the weather observatory. The effect is said to be astonishing. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 782.19}

-Nineteen thousand arsenal employes are now busily employed at the Royal Laboratory, Woolwich Arsenal, preparing war stories for South Africa. They have been notified that the Imperial interest will necessitate their working through Christmastide. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 782.20}

-H. L. Hastings, the well-known writer of Anti-infidel literature has just died at Goshen, Massachusetts, U.S.A. His lecture on “The Inspiration of the Bible, or WIll the Old Book Stand?” had a sale of over 3,000,000 copies, in eighteen or twenty different languages. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 782.21}

-It is reported that in a recent examination among the students in China, the young Emperor had a question about the “Flood” put in the examination papers. This caused considerable stir among the people, and said the students in crowds to the missionaries to get Bible so that they might find the answer. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 782.22}

-One question that is before the Vatican for settlement, says an English Catholic authority, is whether “absolution” given by telephone, is valid. As the paper recently decided that the Pope’s blessing received by biograph was as potent as when received in the accustomed ways, it would seem that absolution by telephone might be allowed. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 782.23}

-In America there has recently been formed a society called the Anti-Kissing League, the object of which is to save children from being kissed by everybody. We are quite in sympathy with this move, and wish that a similar one might be inaugurated in England. This is one of the most prolific means of communicating contagious maladies, and parents should not permit promiscuous kissing of their children. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 782.24}

-A carpenter in Chicago, has invented a new implements of warfare, consisting of a series of kites, supporting a cable upon which a “trolley” kite was made to travel. The trolley kite carries a bomb of high explosive power, which is automatically released, and will support a weight of twenty pounds. The test made have all been of a highly satisfactory character. Thus one more in should of destruction is added to the long list of life-taking implements of war. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 782.25}

-The Khalifa, who for thirteen years, until the battle of Omdurman last September, has been the ruler of the Dervishers, was killed in a battle with the English on the 25th ult., and 9,000 prisoners taken. As a ruler he ranks as one of the worst in history, having caused the death of thousands of innocent people on the nearest pretext, and his authority was maintained by the wholesale slaughter of recalcitrant tribes. “The Soudan may now be declared open” are the words of the Sirdar. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 782.26}

-All is not peace and quiet in China, even in the face of the promise of the U.S. Government that the Cubans should have their independence, for according to the latest reports 1,000 armed Cubans have assembled in the Pinar del Rio, raised the Revolutionary flag, and are prepared to fight for independence. American military officers are confident that there is serious trouble ahead, and American troops in Cuba are being placed in readiness for action at a moment’s notice in case an outbreak occurs. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 782.27}

**“Back Page” *The Present Truth* 15, 49.**

E. J. Waggoner

After an interruption of several years, diplomatic relations have again been resumed between the Vatican and the Argentine Republic. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 784.1}

During the past year the St. Giles Christian Mission has provided 21,224 persons with a free breakfast on their release from prison, and has helped 5,998 to reform, nearly all of whom have signed the pledge. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 784.2}

A picture of the Pope blessing the world has recently been made, and is being extensively advertised by the Catholic press. It is said to be the Pope’s expressed wish that “those who see his benediction in this picture” should derive the same advantage from it as if it had been bestowed upon them personally. We have no doubt but they will. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 784.3}

“Our help is in the name of the Lord, which made heaven and earth.” Psalm 124:8. The same One who created heaven and earth also made us, and He is our Helper. He is our Help. He does not help us in the sense of adding His strength to ours, but He supplies all the strength we have. He who creates also redeems. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 784.4}

A newspaper notice of the first volume of *Encyclop?dia Biblica*, edited by Professors Cheyne and Black, says: “The reader will turn anxiously to such an article as ‘Creation,’ to find how the advanced critics regard the first chapters of Genesis,” and adds that the result “should be reassuring,” inasmuch as they are held to be derived only from Babylonian tradition, and “the writer of Genesis 1 handled the tradition in the interests of his great religious beliefs.” Of the book of Acts it is said that criticism “leads not only beyond a mere blind faith in its contents, but also beyond the unhistorical assumption that one is entitled to impose upon the author the demands of strict historical accuracy.” Paul’s “conception of God” is said to be “hampered by Jewish modes of thinking.” So it seems that, not content with turning away their ears from the truth, to fables, the leading theological teachers are seeking to “reassure” the people by setting forth the truth itself as a fable. Since the grossest heathenism resulted from changing the truth of God into a lie, we may tell to a certainty what will be the outcome of such “Biblical criticism” as that just noted. See Romans 1:25-31. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 784.5}

God promises to give us Himself. He says that He will pour water on him that is thirsty, and He is “the Fountain of living waters.” Jeremiah 2:13. When Christ, the representative of God, the One in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, came to this earth, He “emptied Himself.” Philippians 2:7, R.V. In Him God poured Himself out upon us, so that “of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.” John 1:16. Christ “poured out His soul [or life] unto death” for us. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 784.6}

The simplest way is always the best, for truth is always simple, and the more simple a thing is, the nearest it is to the truth. The Vicar of High Wycombe has demonstrated this practically. About ?500 was needed, and as he has conscientious objections to bazaars as a method of raising money for the Lord, he asked his people to forgo the pleasure and excitement of such an affair, by which it was estimated that ?400 could be raised, and to put the money into the offertory during a week of special services. The result was that within the week ?589 13s. 5d. was raised, which was more than the amount required. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 784.7}

That the Bible is the Word of God may be known by any person who can read it, or even by anyone who cannot read, but who can listen to it. It needs no Pope, no council, no “apostolic succession,” no society, no man of either high or low degree, to prove this fact to anybody who can read or hear. Indeed, none or all of these could possibly prove it to anybody; for however stoutly it might be asserted, there would always remain a question as to the authority of the one making the assertion. The question is one that must be settled by each person individually. Just as Jesus is not receive testimony from man (John 5:34),-flesh and blood cannot reveal the Christ, the Divine Word (Matthew 16:16, 17),-so the Bible does not depend upon man for proof of its truthfulness. The Holy Spirit speaking the words of the Bible to the heart and soul of a man is the only and the all-sufficient proof that it is the Word of God. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 784.8}

If thankfulness is indicated by heavy feeding, the people of New York must be very thankful. According to market reports for November 30th, which was “Thanksgiving Day,” a million and a half Nov. 30, which was “Thanksgiving Day,” a million and a half of turkeys, weighing ?22,000,000, and costing 3,000,000 dollars, were sold to families in that city, with which to celebrate the day. Truly there is much need for some one to call attention to the warning of Jesus, “Take heed to yourselves, lest that any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting.” {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 784.9}

Here is a puzzle for somebody to explain: Why is it that a man who under no sort of provocation would lower himself to the extent of spitting in another’s face, and who would be horrified and indignant at the bare suggestion that he could possibly be guilty of so boorish an act as to take wholesome food out of his own mouth and offer it to anybody else, will fill not only his mouth, but his nose as well with vile and poisonous tobacco smoke, and blow it into unoffending people’s faces, mouth, nose and eyes, without any thought that he is doing an ungentlemanly thing? {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 784.10}

When a cat cannot live on milk, it would seem that is high time for human beings to leave it out of their bill of fare. It seems that boracic acid is now extensively added to it as a preservative, and the effect is decidedly dangerous. Dr. Hill, a medical officer of health of Birmingham, stated before a recent meeting that a kitten fed on pure milk, to which boracic acid had been added in the same quantities as used by the ordinary consumer, got thinner and thinner, and died in five weeks. The use of boracic acid is, however, on the decrease, and its place is being taken by formaldehyde, which is still more powerful. The preservative is added by the farmer, and the retailer often puts in more. The safest course for all is the only food that cannot be adulterated, and that is the diet originally provided by the Creator. Milk is only for babes, and nature provides it them free from adulteration. When teeth appear, that is one indication that the use of liquid food should cease. {PTUK December 7, 1899, p. 784.11}

**“Front Page” *The Present Truth* 15, 50.**

E. J. Waggoner

“In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.” Proverbs 3:6. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 785.1}

The exactly literal rendering, as given in the margin of the revision, is naturally much better, as it gives the thought more fully: “He shall make thy paths straight,” or “plain.” Know Him, recognise Him, in everything, and He will make your way plain and right. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 785.2}

This throws the responsibility on the Lord; not that we should shirk anything, but we should not assume that which is entirely beyond our capacity. “The way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” Jeremiah 10:23. This being the case, he should not try, to plan his own way, or to direct his own steps. God is the only one who can do it, therefore it should be left entirely to Him. In recognising Him at every step, and acknowledging Him, we place ourselves unreservedly in His hands. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 785.3}

In one of David’s inspired prayers we have the very same expression as in our text: “Lead me, O Lord, in Thy righteousness because of mine enemies, make Thy way plain before my face.” Psalm 5:8. We see that the Lord makes our way plain by making His own way plain before our face; for His way is the way in which we are to walk. He is the way. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 785.4}

The Lord’s way is righteousness. “As for God, His way is perfect.” Psalm 18:30. Therefore it is that the psalmist prayed, “Lead me, O Lord, in Thy righteousness.” The assurance concerning the one who hears the voice of the Lord, and heeds it, is that “righteousness shall go before him, and shall make his footsteps a way to walk in.” Psalm 85:13. Such ones are blessed, because they are “undefiled in the way, walking in law of the Lord.” “They also do no iniquity; they walk in His ways.” Psalm 119:1, 3. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 785.5}

God’s way is always right. It is not so because He takes pains to make it so, but because He Himself is right. He is, and that is all that there is to be said. He cannot be other than He is, else He would deny Himself, and that He cannot do. In other words, He cannot cease to be. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 785.6}

Men are prone to judge God by a human standard, and to say that in the work of salvation He could have done differently if He had chosen to, but that in His wisdom He chose to do as He has done. That is a mistaken idea. There is but one right way, and that is the way that God does. Men are obliged often to stop and weigh matters, and to decide between two or more ways that seem to open before them; both ways cannot be right, for if they were there would be no choice between them, but both must needs be followed; for we are in duty bound to do everything that is right; it may be that both of the ways that we are considering are wrong, and we are obliged to pause, because of our ignorance, and because we have in us tendencies to evil, which have to be contended with. There is always before us a choice between two ways: the evil and the good; and because we often choose the wrong way, instead of allowing God to choose for us, we have to say later on, “If I had to that to do over again, I should do differently.” {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 786.1}

Not so with God. He never looks back upon His way with regret. He is never obliged to say, “If I had that to do over again, I should not do the way I did.” He does not try experiments. He is right and therefore all He has to do is to act out Himself. By His own word, His own life, He created the heavens and the earth, and when He saw everything that He made, “behold, it was very good.” He was perfectly satisfied, and there was nothing that He wished to change. It is for this reason that when sin entered into the world God was not thrown into confusion. His word had gone forth, and it could not be altered; all He had to do was to go on in the same way that He had begun, and to prove how firmly His word was established. The word that created continues its working, and re-creates. Throughout the eternal ages God pursues one steadfast course, without deviating to the right or to the left, and without needing to stop to think out it is best for Him to act. He lives His own life, and that is perfect. His way could not be changed, simply because His life cannot be other than it is. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 786.2}

God is revealed in Christ, for no one knows the Father save the Son, and He to whom the Son will reveal Him. Matthew 11:27. There is “one God and Father of all, and who is over all, and through all, and in all.” Ephesians 4:6. Christ is the word that in the beginning was with God, and was God, and “the Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart.” Romans 10:8. Therefore “if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Simply let the Word have free course; do not hold down the truth, but acknowledge it; and the Word that was made flesh will be manifest in your flesh even as it was in Jesus of Nazareth. This is what it is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. “As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” John 1:12. Merely to believe that there was such a person as Jesus of Nazareth, and that He was indeed the Son of God, hundreds of years ago, is not to believe on Him. To believe on Him is to receive Him and to acknowledge Him in the life; to allow Him through the eternal Spirit to live in you the same life that He lived of old. This is to acknowledge the Lord, and this will ensure your walking in the right way-the way of the Lord’s righteousness. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 786.3}

When we acknowledge Him in all our ways, we shall not need as heretofore, to hesitate between two ways, since for us there will be only one way-His way. We shall know that way, because He has promised that they who continue in His words shall know the truth. We shall never be guilty of saying that our way is right, for we shall know that all our own ways are wrong; in that “we have turned everyone to his own way,” we have gone astray (Isaiah 53:6); but we shall not hesitate to declare that God’s way is perfect, and that it is God that maketh our way perfect, because He makes His way our way, setting us in the way of His steps. It will most certainly not be the way that we should have chosen, for our ways and thoughts are not His ways and thoughts; but we shall be content, since “He knoweth the way that I take; when He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold.” {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 786.4}

**“Notes on the International Sunday School Lessons. Christ’s Coming Foretold. Isaiah 9:2-7” *The Present Truth* 15, 50.**

E. J. Waggoner

Who can ever become weary of the grand words of the evangelical prophet of Israel? What a richness, a luxuriance, there is in them, and what rhythm? How easy it is to remember them! They fasten themselves in our memory, never to be effaced. There are but few of them in this lesson, but they are wonderfully comprehensive. Let us read them. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 786.5}

“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. Thou hast multiplied the nation, Thou hast increased their joy; they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden, and the rod of his oppressor, Thou hast broken as in the day of Midian. For all the armour of the armed man in the tumult, and the garments rolled in blood, shall be even for bursting, for fuel of fire. For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the Government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform this.” {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 786.6}

The lesson begins with darkness, and ends with light. The preceding chapter closes with the statement that upon the earth there shall be “trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish.” “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.” Christ is the light of the world; there is no life but from Him, and His light is the light of righteousness, for He is “the Sun of righteousness.” That the prophecy in our lesson refers to the first advent of Christ, is made plain by comparing the first two verses with Matthew 4:15-17. It was

when “the Word of life” was manifested, that the light came into the world. “In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.” {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 786.7}

But God did not leave the world in darkness for four thousand years. Far from it. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light, and there was light.” Genesis 1:1-3. The Word of life-the light of men-was “from the beginning.” 1 John 1:1. It was the eternal life, shining for the salvation of all men. And men saw the light-and rejoiced in it-in the far-away olden time. Abraham saw it, and was glad. John 8:5, 8. When the light shone forth out of the darkness in the beginning, “God saw the light, that it was good,” from that time it has been bringing good news. Thus long has “the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ” been in the world. “There be many that say, who will show us any good? Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us.” Psalm 4:6. From “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6), has all the good come, that has ever been known on this earth. “Turn us again, O God, and cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.” Psalm 80:3. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 787.1}

“God be merciful to us and bless us; and cause His face to shine upon us; that Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving health among all nations.” Psalm 72:1, 2. “Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord in the light of Thy countenance. In Thy name shall they rejoice all the day, and in Thy righteousness shall they be exalted.” Psalm 89:15, 16. Thus sang the Psalmist hundreds of years before Jesus walked in “Galilee of the Gentiles.” Ah, the light that shines forth from Jesus of Nazareth was enlightening the earth ages before the glory of God shown round the shepherds of Bethlehem, and the angel said, in fulfilment of the words of Isaiah, “Unto you a child is born,” a Saviour. “And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not.” {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 787.2}

There is healing in the wings of the Sun of righteousness. He makes people feel whole-“every whit whole.” To those that sat in the shadow of death, light has sprung up. The light of life scatters the shadows of death. “The light of His countenance” has in it “saving health.” Let “the joyful sound” bring out over all the earth, that He who heals the sick, gives sight to the blind, cleanses the lepers, raises the dead, brings the captives out of the dark prison house, and binds up the broken-hearted, has come to earth, and that His healing presence has never departed. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 787.3}

Then why are not all healed and set at liberty? {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 787.4}

Oh, “Many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them were cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.” Yet the light shone for all. It still shines. From those who take the veil off their hearts, the shadow of death will flee away before the life-giving beams of the Sun of righteousness. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 787.5}

And they shall joy according to the joy in harvest. “Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.” Psalm 97:11. The sowing-time is the promise of the harvest. What though the corn of wheat falls into the earth and dies, and the storms of long, dark winter nights howl above it? The promise in sure: “If it die, it bringeth forth much fruit;” therefore He who sees with the eye of faith may rejoice as much amid the blasts of winter as when the golden light of autumn reveals the glory of the ripened sheaves. So although the rod of the oppressor is grievous, and for a season “for ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations,” “the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ; whom having not seen, ye love; in whom though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.” 1 Peter 1:6-9. Rich men now oppress the poor; the just are condemned and killed; but the joy of the coming harvest is reflected in their faces, and for very joy they do not resist; but take all patiently. “Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” James 5:6-8. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 787.6}

“The harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.” Matthew 13:39-43. All the armour of the armed man-the furies oppressor-shall be only for a burning, for fuel of fire. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 787.7}

Whereby may we know this? By this: “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.” The first coming of Christ had in it the power and the glory and the joy of the second advent. That little Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger, is “the power of God.” A “tender plant” it was, weak as any other babe that ever was born, yet Herod trembled, and raged against it in vain; “for the weakness of God is stronger than men.” 1 Corinthians 1:25. That Child shall yet cause all the kingdoms of this world to totter and fall and crumble into pieces that cannot be found, while “of the increase of His government in peace there shall be no end.” {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 787.8}

Often during His short revelation on this earth did the “Holy Child Jesus” show forth His power and glory. Once was it seen that nothing less than “the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” were veiled by the flesh of the Carpenter of Nazareth, and the three disciples in the holy mount were “eye-witnesses of His majesty.” 2 Peter 1:16-18. For the light that encircled Him then was not light that shone *upon* Him, but light that shone *from* Him; “the glory as of the only begotten of the Father” was always visible to those who could recognise it in the form of “grace and truth.” John 1:14. So we see that the mighty power that will be revealed in the shaking heavens and earth at the second coming of Christ, will be but the power of Christ’s coming in the flesh. It is the same “power of the Highest” that overshadowed Mary, enabling her to bring forth the “holy thing” that was called the Son of God; and it is the same “power that worketh in us” even now, to form Christ in us the hope of glory. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 787.9}

There is not so much difference between the first in the second advent of Christ, as people are wont to think. The prophets, as in the instance before us, often mentioned them together as one. The second is but the further unfolding of the first. No man believes in the first, who does not also believe in the second. He who was, is the One who *is*, and who *is to come*.” Revelation 1:8. He is not divided; we must take the whole of Him or nothing. If we do not accept Him as the One who is coming again to take visible possession of His own inheritance, then we do not fully realise His power as our present sovereign Lord. Never in eternity will there be any more power manifested in Jesus than was necessary to bring Him to birth in Bethlehem of Judea, and to raise Him from the dead. And that is the power by which He now dwells in every living heart. The power of His coming to Judgment, is the power of His humble birth, and the power of the cross. Only by the cross are repentant sinners saved, and reprobate sinners destroyed. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 788.1}

Therefore lift up your heads and rejoice. The time of tribulation is the time to “joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.” Romans 5:1-3, 11. The oppressor may be as cruel and fierce as ever; “your adversary the devil” may be as active as ever; there may be visible oppression; but Christ has promised “liberty to the captives,” and the liberty is ours. The power by which He will at the last “rend the heavens,” and “come down” (Isaiah 64:1), is the same power by which He now rides on a cherub and flies on the wings of the wind to the help of His afflicted, tempted ones. Psalm 8:1-10. Then why not now rejoice over the conquered foe. Do you expect to be glad when the Lord comes to claim His own? You will not unless you rejoice now, even while surrounded with trials. The crown will be given only to those who “love His appearing;” and none love His appearing who do not know the power of it in His blessed presence. “A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.” John 16:20. Therefore, “rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, rejoice;” for “unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.” {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 788.2}

“Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills be joyful together before the Lord; for He cometh to judge the earth.” {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 788.3}

**“The Gospel of Isaiah. A Stupid, False Witness. Isaiah 44:9-29” *The Present Truth* 15, 50.**

E. J. Waggoner

(Isaiah 44:9-20.)

“They that fashion a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and their own witnesses see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 788.4}

“Who hath fashioned a god, or molten a graven image, that is profitable for nothing? Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed; and the workmen, they are of men; let them all be gathered together; they shall fear, they shall be ashamed together. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 788.5}

“The smith maketh an axe, and worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with his strong arm; yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth; he drinketh no water, and his faint. The carpenter stretcheth out a line; he marketh it out with a pencil; he shapeth it with planes, and he marketh it out with compasses, and shapeth it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man, to dwell in the house. He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the holm tree and the oak, and strengtheneth for himself one among the trees of the forest; he planteth a fir tree, and the rain doth nourish it, Then shall it be for a man to burn; and he taketh thereof, and warmeth himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied; yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire; and the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image; he falleth down unto it; and worshippeth, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 788.6}

“They know not, neither do they consider; for He hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand. And none calleth to mind, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh and eaten it; and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? He feedeth on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?” {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 788.7}

One must search long to find a finer piece of description than this. True to the life, it is at the same time wonderfully cutting and sarcastic; its accuracy, however, is what makes it so. The passage will bear reading many times, and after the reader has done with laughing at the poor, stupid idolater, who makes his own god, he may turn the laugh against himself; for this image-maker’s descendants and counterparts are found in every country under heaven, and in every society, and every church. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 788.8}

The careful reader cannot fail to notice that the court is still in session. We ourselves are in the court room. The case will be on until the Judgment day comes. Now the witnesses are being examined, and are giving in their sworn testimony. The trial is to decide who is God, whether the Maker of the heavens and the earth, or the things that man makes, and so, really, man himself. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 788.9}

In the verses preceding the beginning of this lesson, we have the Lord’s witnesses again addressed. Indeed, the whole of the preceding chapter concerns them. They are the redeemed of the Lord, those whom He gathers out of every country, who are called by His name, and whom He has created for His glory, and who show it forth. God has blotted out their iniquities, and poured His Spirit upon them in floods, which they have gladly received, so that they may testify to Him. “One shall say I am the Lord’s; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.” To them God speaks, and tells them not to be afraid. He is the first and the last,-the only God,-and they, as His witnesses, are not to be afraid to lift up their voices with strength, and to declare His name and fame. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 789.1}

“We know that no idol is anything in the world, and that there is no God but one.” 1 Corinthians 8:4. There are many that are called gods, but there is only one God, namely the living God, who made all things. No idol is anything, and “they that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.” Psalm 115:8. Therefore the maker and worshipper of an idol is nothing. That is what our lesson tells us: “They that make a graven image are all of them vanity.” This word “vanity,” is from the Hebrew word meaning “emptiness,” “confusion,” as in Genesis 2:1. “The earth was without form.” Job 26:7: “He that stretcheth out the north over the empty place.” Isaiah 24:10; 34:11: “The city of confusion is broken down;” “He shall stretch upon it the line of confusion.” Isaiah 29:21: “a thing of naught.” Isaiah 41:29: “Their molten images are wind and confusion.” That is all there is to an idol, and it is all there is to the one who makes and trusts in one. That is, it is all there is to anybody who does not trust in the Lord Jehovah. The Judgment day will prove this, when all who have rejected God will cease to be, so that neither he nor his place will be found. Psalm 37:10. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 789.2}

“Eyes have they, but they will see not.” This is spoken of the idols of silver and gold, which are the work of men’s hands. These false gods have their witnesses, even as the Lord has His; but on the principle that everybody is like the object of his worship, “their own witnesses see not nor know.” The reason for this will soon be made clear, if the reader has not already seen it. But first, let us contrast these witnesses with the “Faithful and True Witness,” and with those who range themselves on His side. He says, “We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen.” John 3:11. Peter and John, two of the Lord’s witnesses, said, “We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” Acts 4:20. God does not desire that His witnesses shall speak anything else. He says, “Go and tell the things which ye do hear and see.” A man who testifies to what he has seen, and what he knows, can answer without fear under any circumstances; but the one who tries to tell what he has not seen, and what he knows nothing about, and what indeed does not exist, will very speedily be put to shame. “If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching.” John 7:17. There is therefore no need for anybody to be in doubt. The mere curiosity seeker will not find anything; the man who wishes to make an exhibition of his knowledge, will not be able to give any testimony that will bear cross-examination; but whoever wishes to do the will of God,-whoever yields himself to the Lord,-will know. “If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” John 8:31, 32. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 789.3}

What constitutes the real difference between the worshippers of the true God and those who trust in the things of naught?-Just this, that the first trust in something, and the others in nothing. Now remember that a man is absolutely nothing of himself. It is only by the Spirit of God that men are made, and by the breath of the Lord that they receive life and understanding. Job 32:8; 33:4. “All nations are before Him as nothing; and they are counted to Him as less than nothing, and vanity.” Isaiah 40:17. All the substance, the reality, that there is to any man is the presence of God. This is the grand truth that all the world needs to learn. Whoever thinks that he is something, when he is nothing, deceives himself. Galatians 6:3. That is the trouble with the idolater here described as a type of his class. “A deceived heart hath turned him aside.” He does not know that there is nothing real but God, and that in Him all things hold together. That is what makes men so proud and boastful. That is the secret of all self-confidence and vain-glory. Now if a man recognises this truth, and trusts in the Lord wholly, yielding his body as the temple of the Holy Spirit, he will be “filled with all the fulness of God,” and there will be substance, reality, to him and his words. He will be able to speak with authority. It is God that worketh in him, and it is the Holy Spirit that speaks in him. But when a man who is nothing to begin with, rejects the source of all life and wisdom, and trusts in that which he himself has made, and which must of necessity be nothing, it follows that the whole thing is emptiness. His words and deeds are wind, and he himself is but chaff. His own testimony carries him away; or, as in Isaiah 1:31, the strong is tow, and his work is a spark, so that he has nothing but destruction in himself. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 789.4}

“Let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; yet they shall fear, and they shall be ashamed together.” Numbers do not make strength. A thousand million ciphers are of no more value than one alone. A lie does not become the truth because ten thousand men testify to it. Men cannot create anything; and that is the root of the whole matter. People who know that a single lie will be of no avail, imagine that very many of them will stand. But it is folly. “Ye have ploughed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies; because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men.” Hosea 10:13. “The hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place.” Isaiah 28:17. No man can possibly have any more strength than he has with God in him alone. God’s presence in another man will not answer for me; so that I cannot trust even in a good man; how much less, then, in a wicked man. “Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou bear witness in a cause to turn aside after a multitude to wrest judgment.” Exodus 23:2. “Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished.” Proverbs 11:21. Let no one rest in any way that he is pursuing, confident in the thought that “everybody does so,” or that it has been the custom for many years. Find out for yourself what the Lord says, and then you will know that you have the truth, and that your way will stand. His Word is the only real foundation. “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 3:11. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 789.5}

Anyone who reads this, anybody who can read the Bible, can see at once the folly of the man who makes a god out of a tree. It would seem that no one could possibly be so foolish as to worship a thing that he himself has made, and could say to it, “Deliver me, for thou art my god.” Part of the tree he uses for cooking his dinner, and the remainder he makes into a god. Surely he ought to be able to see that there is no more power to the portion of the tree which he worships than in that which he burns in the fire. Yet the thing is done by men of as good mental ability as any of us. “The deceitfulness of sin” is amazing; and this deceitfulness is in every human heart. See Jeremiah 17:9. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 789.6}

There is nothing more common in this world than self-justification-the desire to maintain one’s own cause, and to demonstrate that one is in the right, and has done no wrong. We have all had experience in this. The tendency is inherent in human nature. “They all with one consent began to make excuse.” Luke 14:18. That is, they all began to show what they regarded as a good reason for not complying with the summons that the king issued. Now if a good reason, a reasonable excuse, can be given for any course, that shows that the course is right. So every excuse that anybody makes for his acts,-for not serving God,-is a claim that he is all right in himself, without heeding the Lord. In what are we trusting, when we do that?-Manifestly in ourselves,-in the works of our own hands. Then we do not differ a particle from the man who is described in this chapter. A deceived heart has turned us aside, and we are feeding on ashes. If we confess our sins, we shall find mercy from God, because in confessing them we are acknowledging that God is, and that He is in the right; and He is mercy. All that is needed therefore, is for us to confess our sins, not because God stands on His dignity, and wishes to humiliate us, but because only by confessing that we are wrong and that He is right will we trust in Him, who is the only source of life and righteousness. “Go and proclaim those words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause Mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, and that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God.” Jeremiah 3:12, 13. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 790.1}

“A deceived heart has turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand.” How is there a lie in the right hand of the man who trusts in the woks of his hands, that is, in anything that he has done,-the man who will not confess to God, but who maintains that he has life and righteousness in himself?-The answer is very easy. Read the preceding verses. The man who proposes to save himself by his own works, “is hungry, and his strength faileth; he drinketh no water, and is faint.” But afterwards he eats and drinks, and is satisfied. But he did not make the food and drink, and he knows it. All the strength that he has comes from what he eats and drinks, that is, from something outside of himself, which he has received. The strength of our right hand is the strength that God has given us, yet we talk and act as if it were our own. Therefore it is evident that there is a lie in our right hands whenever we do so. Yes, we ourselves are lies, for we profess to be something when we are nothing. Every morsel of food that we eat, and upon which we depend for strength to go about our daily work, or which we use in self-gratification, is an evidence that we are wholly dependent on God. The easiest thing in the world to know is God. Anybody who has sense enough to know that eating will give strength, has no excuse for not knowing God. Ah, there are very many stupid people in this world; very many false witnesses. Shall we hearken to the Lord, and be wise, or shall we continue in our folly? {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 790.2}

**“For Little Ones. ‘Christ in You’” *The Present Truth* 15, 50.**

E. J. Waggoner

Now the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto the city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. And he came in unto her, and said:- {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 794.1}

“Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee.” {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 794.2}

But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this might be. And the angel said under her: {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 794.3}

“Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God. And behold thou shalt bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest.” {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 794.4}

What a wonderful and glorious promise, was it not? And was not Mary indeed “highly favoured”? She thought so; then marvelled greatly at the gracious words. The thought that came first to her mind and lips was, “How shall this be?” How could anything so wonderful take place,-that she should bring forth the child who should be the Son of God and Saviour? {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 794.5}

Did you know the Lord has sent a message, a promise, to you, which will make you, if you believe and receive it, just as “highly favoured” as was Mary? Did you know that He wants His Son Jesus Christ to “be formed in you”? This is what the Apostle Paul told his “little children” in one of his letters to them. He said also that this was the whole secret of the riches of the glorious Gospel, the Good Tidings,-“Christ in *you*, the hope of glory.” Not Christ born of Mary in the Bethlehem stable,-but Christ in *you*. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 794.6}

Then do you not think that you, like Mary, “have found favour with God”? And surely you will want to know as she did, “How shall this be?” So that you may not do anything to hinder this gracious purpose of God. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 794.7}

Then listen carefully to Gabriel’s answer to this question, for Christ can “be formed in you” only through the same means, and by the same power, that He was born of Mary. “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that Holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 794.8}

How much was Mary herself to do to bring this to pass? Nothing at all; all was to be the work of the Holy Spirit of God. And there is nothing of all, dear children, that you can do to form Christ within you, so that His love and meekness, for His weakness, gentleness, and power, shall be seen in your life. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 794.9}

But “the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee,” dear little one. He is with you everywhere; you cannot go where He is not. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 794.10}

“Whither shall I go from Thy presence, and whither shall I flee from by Spirit?” Wherever you go the Spirit of God is there; and wherever He is, the power of the Highest is overshadowing you to form Christ in you if you will let Him. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 794.11}

Only believe His promise, as Mary did, and say like her: “Be it unto me according to Thy Word.” Then yield yourself to the sweet influence which His Spirit is shedding round you every moment, and His power will fill you with the new life of the Lord Jesus Christ, and make you a true “child of promise,” “born of the Spirit.” {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 794.12}

Does this remind you of the child we spoke of last week,-Isaac, the child of promise? Perhaps you can see better now some of the beautiful lessons that God was teaching Abraham when He promised him a son, who should be born of the Spirit, and could come in no other way. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 794.13}

He was “preaching the Gospel beforehand under Abraham,” showing him how, by the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ should be born, not only into the world, but formed in his own heart, to save him from his sins. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 794.14}

Like Mary, “Abraham believed God.” This was all that he needed, all that you need to do, in order to receive the fulfilment of all His promises. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 794.15}

Another time we will find some more of the Gospel lessons that are hidden in the life of Isaac; but next week we must tell you of the fulfilment of the promise that God sent to Mary by the angel Gabriel. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 794.16}

**“Items of Interest” *The Present Truth* 15, 50.**

E. J. Waggoner

-According to Reuter, a serious native anti-Christian rising is announced at Chian-fu, China. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 798.1}

-Nearly 340,000 has been received by the Lord Mayor of London for the Transvaal War Fund. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 798.2}

-The *S.S. Himalaya*, which recently arrived in London from Melbourne, had on board 412,000 eggs for the London market. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 798.3}

-The total results of the self-denial week observed by the Salvationists in Australia amount to 27,100, an advance of 2,000 over 1898. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 798.4}

-The *United Presbyterian* suggestively observes that “the world is practically at peace, except the two great English-speaking nations, who have been foremost in advocating peace.” {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 798.5}

-It is reported that a price of ?5,000 has been placed on the head of Mr. Cecil Rhodes, which some will be paid to any Boer who will bring him dead or alive. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 798.6}

-The trans-Atlantic steamship *Majestic*, of the White Star Line, has been converted into a transport, and this week, Wednesday, leaves for South Africa with 2,000 troops. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 798.7}

-During the week ending November 30 there were forty-six fresh cases of plague in Mauritius, twenty-nine of which prove fatal, making the total number of deaths from plague thirty-six. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 798.8}

-A firm of solicitors in London, well known in legal circles, fell last week with liabilities amounting to ?300,000 with practically no assets. The crash was so terrifying that one of the members committed suicide. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 798.9}

-There has been a serious outbreak of typhoid fever in one of the principal cities of New York, U.S.A., due to the disease being communicated through milk supplied by a milk and whose wife was ill with the disease. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 798.10}

-A great business block of buildings in Philadelphia, U.S.A., including the premises of the Lippincott publishers, has been destroyed by fire. The damage is estimated at nearly three-quarters of a million sterling. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 798.11}

-The Anglo-American Rapid Vehicle Co. is the name of a new industry that has lately filed the articles of incorporation in America. The capital stock is placed that ?15,000,000, and it is formed for the purpose of combining the most important English and American automobile companies. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 798.12}

-And expressman in New York has a three-year old colt which he has taught to drink beer and whisky and to chew tobacco. The pores frequently goes the rounds of the saloons with his owner, and many persons treat him in order to see him drink. In one evening it is reported that he drank 120 glasses of beer, and was made dead trunk thereby. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 798.13}

-In future mourning envelops are not to be allowed to pass through the post in France. The reason given by the postal authorities is that black-edged envelopes are easily tampered with. They can be opened, and it damaged in the process a little ink will conceal the damage. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 798.14}

-There left for the Transvaal last week on the steamer *Karami*, one of the heaviest cargoes of war material ever dispatched from the British shores. Among the ammunition are forty million rounds of small-arms ammunition in 3,640 boxes; 7,000 rounds of shrapnel and, and shall, and 4,000 rounds of 5 in. lyddite shell into 2,000 boxes; 851 boxes of fuses and forty boxes of pistol ammunition. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 798.15}

-A break for stopping steamships has just been invented by a Liverpool man whereby it is claimed that a vessel sailing at twenty knots an hour can be stopped within a space equal to twice her length. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 798.16}

-The first tests in the United States of the Pollak-Virag system of rapid telegraphy were made a few days since. Between Chicago and Buffalo (1,000 miles) 90,000 words an hour were transmitted. Between Chicago and Milwaukee, 140,000 words were correctly transmitted in the same length of time. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 798.17}

-At a recent meeting of the American Board of Commissary for Foreign Missions held in Providence, U.S.A., it was reported that over 2,000 Congregational churches, more than a third of all, and 4,880 of the 5,500 Sunday-schools, or nearly ninety per cent. of all made no contributions for foreign missions. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 798.18}

-Because of the representations of the German Governor has to the comparative weakness of the Triple Alliance, the Common Government of Austria has asked that the appropriations to the Naval and Military Budget be increased to 6,000,000 florins more than last year. The demand has caused considerable comment. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 798.19}

-The Danish merchants and farmers have to ship to the English troops in South Africa 50,000 packages of butter as a Christmas present. Cigarettes and tobacco seem to be the favourite present, for one tobacco firm has sent 100,000 cigarettes, and to one Lady Anderson and other tobacco man presented 20,000 cigarettes for the use of the wounded. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 798.20}

-Last summer the Canadian Government sent over to Finland Prof. Mavors of the Toronto University to see if he could not divert to Canada some of the Finns suffering from the attorney of the Russian Government. As a result the Government has been notified that 15,000 Finns will come out to Canada next spring and locate on farms in the Northwest. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 798.21}

-Sir Henry Tate, of sugar refiner fame, died in London on the 5th ints. Amassing a great fortune, he spent lavishly in establishing art galleries, libraries, and founding scholarships. He it was who saw in a little device for cutting sugar into cubes, a valuable invention, and to get up after it was rejected by several sugar refiners, and with it made his fortune. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 798.22}

-The New York *World,* in giving an itemised list of expenditures connected with the late *Shambrock-Columbia* yacht race, states that Sir Thomas Lipton expended ?190,000 in building his yacht and carrying out the race with her for America’s cup. That is a vast sum to be spent by a single individual on a sport, and is possible only in these days of colossal fortunes. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 798.23}

-The *Denton Grange* from Southampton for South Africa one day last week, having on board quite a remarkable cargo, consisting of thirteen traction engines, two steam ploughs, sixty ambulance vans, forty-two for rich and living vans, twenty ammunition than, 170 buck waggons, 1,000 tons of hay, 1,000 tons of oats and bran, and a large quantity of water-pipes for water stations from Capetown to Pretoria for the use of traction engines. She is expected to reach Capetown in about twenty-three days. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 798.24}

-According to a Vienna correspondent, the Countess Dunen-Borkowaka, a young widow of Vienna, renowned for her beauty, has just met with a horrible death. She had contracted the habit of smoking cigarettes while reading in bed. Yesterday morning the Countess was found burned to death in her bed-room. Only her skeleton remained. Having gone late to bed, she had evidently dropped asleep with a lighted cigarette in her fingers. The pillows seemed of caught fire, and she was doubtless ablaze before being able to cry out for help. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 798.25}

**“Back Page” *The Present Truth* 15, 50.**

E. J. Waggoner

Two more numbers complete this volume of PRESENT TRUTH. In keeping with our purpose to make every number as good as we possibly can, and steadily to improve, we hope to be able to do much better in the coming year than in the past. We are planning for some material improvements in the way of better paper, new headings, and better and more numerous illustrations. As to the matter, we trust that the Lord will enable us week by week to give “meat in due season.” Have you received a blessing reading the paper? Surely, then, the least that you can do in acknowledgement of it, is to put others in the way of receiving a blessing, by placing the paper into their hands. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 800.1}

In this issue of the paper we have really the last of the Sunday-school lessons for the year 1899, as the next one is a review of all the lessons for the year. Accordingly next week’s paper will contain no Sunday-school lessons notes. The next number but one, however, the last one of this volume, will contain the first one of the series for 1900, and there will be no intermission during the year, with. The lessons for next year will be on the life of Christ, and the incidents selected for study are the most striking ones in the Gospels. We hope to have suitable illustrations to accompany the notes, which we trust will be no less interesting and profitable to the general reader than to the Sunday-school teacher and scholar. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 800.2}

The prominence and the praise given to the young buglar who with his own hand shot three Boers at the Elands Laagte, is bearing fruit. The *Daily Mail* has received from a schoolmaster in Suffolk a watch and chain, subscribed for by the children of this school, and accompanied by a letter from the children to the boy trumpeter, of which the following is a portion:- {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 800.3}

“Our schoolmaster reads us the war news every morning, and what we liked best was to hear about you, and how you shot the three Boers, and we thought we should like to send you a Christmas present.... We are pleased you are our young countryman, and we hope if any of us are ever soldiers we will do our duty like you.” {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 800.4}

Thus the children are being taught that duty is done and fame is won by killing people. Yet even in battle, the bravest deeds that have been done have been in connection with saving life, and not in taking it. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 800.5}

People are always heedless of warnings of danger that they cannot themselves see. This is shown by the continued free use of milk as an article of food. Speaking a week ago before the Royal British Nurses’ Association, the chief inspector of the local Government board, Sir Richard Thorne-Thorne, said that milk is “one of the most dangerous of all foods,” because probably 90 per cent. of our cows are tubercular. In view of this, it is surely little less than foolhardy to go on using milk day after day. Why will people deliberately risk their lives when it is not necessary? {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 800.6}

Let no one beguile himself into complacency with the thought, “I know where my milk comes from, and the people take the very best care of their cows,” or even with, “I keep my own, and so I am sure that the milk is good.” It will be admitted that no cows could have better care, or would be more likely to be healthy, than those of Her Majesty’s herd, yet it is a fact that not long since out of forty that she had examined, no less than thirty-four were found to be tuberculous, and were immediately ordered to be killed. That is, in the herd of the best house in the kingdom, kept in the best possible condition, in the cleanest surroundings, 85 per cent. were tuberculous. And yet people will not open their eyes to the fact that the plague is upon the cattle, and upon them heavily. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 800.7}

The gambling instinct-the readiness to “take chances”-is inherent in human nature. So all men gamble with life. A danger to life is pointed out, and although they recognise the danger, they will say, “well, I’ll risk it; I’ve escaped so far, and I take my chances.” Now it is true that many people who use tuberculous milk do not get tuberculosis, yet it is equally true that many who think they are “all right” have the germs of the disease in them. One thing is certain: that diseased food, even if it does not produce actual disease, cannot possibly make healthy tissue and build up healthy bodies. At its best, milk is not food for adults; at its worst, no one should think of touching it. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 800.8}

What has the use of milk, whether tuberculous or not, to do with the Gospel? Why devote space to it, that ought to be devoted to the exposition of Bible truths, and to exhortations to godliness? Ah, the Gospel is the promise of life, and “godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” Life is sacred, it is the gift of God, and belongs to Him, and is not to be trifled with; to Him we must render an account for the way we use it. Even the law of the land recognises the evil of suicide, and punishes the one who attempts it. No man has the right to destroy his life, or to put it in danger unnecessarily. On the contrary, we are in duty bound to develop the life that is in us to the highest possible point, and to keep our bodies in the highest state of health, that we may be able to render in this world the service to God which is His due. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 800.9}

Healing of diseases is coupled with forgiveness of sins. Psalm 103:3. The redemption of the body is contemplated in the Gospel just as surely as the saving of the soul. There is every evidence in the Bible that God regards a healthy body as necessary as a sinless soul. “I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper, and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.” 3 John 2. “The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it.” 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24. But just as the forgiveness of sins involves the keeping of the commandments,-the ceasing to sin,-even so the healing of disease by the Lord involves the observance of the laws of life,-the abandoning of everything that tends to cause it. Surely this should not be thought a hardship. We can well understand and sympathise with the child who seriously objects to taking the nauseous mixture which the doctor orders; but it is strange that men should so persistently refuse to adopt a course of life which is in itself good. All the Lord asks is for us to leave off the thing that is injurious. Truly “His commandments are not grievous.” {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 800.10}

**“The Gospel of Isaiah. Abolishing the Enmity. Isaiah 44:21-28” *The Present Truth* 15, 50.**

E. J. Waggoner

(Isaiah 44:21-28.)

*“Remember these things, O Jacob;  
And, Israel; for thou art My servant;  
I have formed thee; thou art a servant unto  
Me;  
O Israel, by Me thou shalt not be forgotten.  
I have made thy transgressions vanish away  
like a cloud;  
And thy sins like a vapour;  
Return unto Me; for I have redeemed thee. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 805.1}*

*Sing, O ye heavens, for Jehovah hath effected  
it;  
Utter a joyful sound, O ye depths of the  
earth;  
Burst forth into song, O ye mountains;  
Thou, forest, and every tree therein!  
For Jehovah hath redeemed Jacob;  
And will be glorified in Israel. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 805.2}*

*Thus saith Jehovah, thy redeemer;  
Even He that formed thee from the womb;  
I am Jehovah, who make all things;  
Who stretch out the heavens alone;  
Who spread the firm earth by Myself;  
I am He who frustrateth the prognostics of the  
imposters;  
And maketh the diviners mad;  
Who reverseth the devices of the sages,  
And infatuateth their knowledge;  
Who establisheth the word of His servant;  
And accomplisheth the counsel of His mes-  
sengers;  
Who sayeth to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be in-  
habited;  
And to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built;  
And her desolated places I will restore;  
Who sayeth to the deep, Be thou wasted;  
And I will make dry thy rivers;  
Who sayeth to Cyrus, Thou art My shepherd!  
And he shall fulfill all My pleasure;  
Who sayeth to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built;  
And to the temple, Thy foundations shall be  
laid.” {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 805.3}*

**A CONTRAST**

What a contrast we have here between the true God, and the god made by a man who cannot work a single day without fainting from hunger and thirst, and who takes a portion of the material from which his god is made, and cooks his dinner with it. These things are to be remembered. This was written for us in this nineteenth century. That man who makes his god out of an ash tree is no more of a heathen than is any other man who does not trust in the Lord. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 805.4}

**THE BLESSING OF SERVICE**

It is a blessed thing for any man to hear the Lord say to him, “Thou art My servant.” To whom does He say it?-To every one who will listen to Him. Jesus tasted death for every man, and all have been purchased by the blood of Christ. As soon as anyone yields to the Lord, to serve Him, that moment he is the Lord’s servant. Romans 6:16. Then he has all the privileges of the Lord’s house. The Lord’s servants are all free men. The loosing of them from bondage is the mark of servitude to Him. Psalm 116:16. The Lord’s servants, that is, those who give themselves wholly to His service, are known by their freedom. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 805.5}

In verse 21 we have literally, instead of “I have formed thee; thou art My servant,” “I have formed thee My servant.” God creates man His servant. When God made man in the beginning, man was God’s servant. But he was made a king, with absolute authority over all the earth and everything connected with it. So the Lord’s servants are all kings by birth. There are many different grades of servants just as there are different degrees of ability; but the Lord has no one in His service, who is lower in rank than king. Men have lost the dominion. Adam lost control of himself, and therefore all his authority was gone; but Christ came to restore that which was lost; in Him we are created anew, and then the authority is restored. We are given complete dominion over ourselves, and the man who can rule himself can rule anything else under heaven. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 805.6}

**GOD’S WATCHFULNESS**

Surely there is not a more comforting passage of scripture in the Bible than this. It is full of tender, comforting words. “O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of Me.” “He that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.” Psalm 121:3-4. How often we hear somebody say that God has forgotten him. Why, the very breath that he uses in saying it, is an evidence that God has not forgotten him. A man is not a mere machine. He is not like a clock which the owner winds up, and then leaves to run down when the spring has uncoiled. If that were the case, then everybody would live at least to old age. No man lives of his own power, for “there is no man that has power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death.” Ecclesiastes 8:8. We lie down, and go to sleep, and we awake, simply because the Lord stays awake and watches. In the beginning He breathed the breath of life into man’s nostrils, and He has continued doing that every moment since. If He thought only of Himself; if He gathered unto Himself His Spirit and His breath; all flesh would perish together, and man would turn again to dust. Job 34:14-15. But God does not forget a single individual; therefore we live. This does not imply that when a man dies it is because God has forgotten him. Not by any means. No; the God who has so complete a grasp of details that He knows every sparrow, and the number of the hairs upon every head, as well as the names of all the innumerable stars, can never be accused of forgetfulness. Details do not worry Him. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 805.7}

**SIN ABOLISHED IN FLESH**

Where are our sins?-They are in us, in our own lives, of course. “From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evil things come from within, and defile the man.” Mark 7:21-23. Then when God says, “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins,” what does He mean?-Simply this, that by His life He cleanses us from all sin-takes it out of us. “If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7. The Hebrew word here rendered “blotted out,” is the word meaning to wipe off, as one would wipe words from a slate or blackboard. God takes the sins, and obliterates them. Do not make the mistake of saying that there is no such thing as sin, as some people do. There is sin, and it is very real; but it is not in Christ. “He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin.” 1 John 3:5. He has “condemned sin in the flesh.” Romans 8:4. In His own flesh He has “abolished the enmity” (Ephesians 2:15), which is the carnal mind. Although He was in the flesh, the mind of the flesh had no control over Him. But it was our flesh that He took, therefore He has abolished sin in the flesh of every one who will confess Him. It is literally blotted out. He took upon Himself all the sins of the world, yet no person ever saw the slightest trace of a sin in or on Him. In Him the sins were as effectually effaced as if they had never existed. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 805.8}

**“COME BACK! ALL IS FORGIVEN”**

When the child plays truant from school, he is afraid to meet the master. The youth gets into bad company, and fears to go home. Conscience-a guilty conscience-makes cowards of us all, ever since Adam and Eve hid themselves from the face of the Lord in the garden of Eden, after they had eaten the forbidden fruit. People judge the Lord by their own hard, unforgiving natures, and think that since they have sinned against Him He must be angry with them; this keeps many away from Him; they do not believe that He will accept them if they come to Him. But He says, “Return unto Me; for I have redeemed thee.” He tells us that the sins are blotted out, so that we need have no fear of returning. Nothing is held against us; all is gone in Christ. More blessed than all this is the fact that in this blotting out of our sins their power is destroyed, so that they cannot have dominion over us. God Himself has provided the way so that we need not come back like culprits, cringing and cowering with fear, but like sons, confidently, expecting mercy, and grace to help in time of need. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 805.9}

**THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH INTERESTED**

Here is something for the heavens and earth to rejoice over. How often the heavens and earth are called upon, in connection with the work of redemption. In the very first chapter of Isaiah, the heavens and earth are called upon to witness that God has nourished and brought up children, who have rebelled against Him. Now the same heavens and earth are called upon to rejoice, from the utmost heights to the lowest depths, because God has redeemed His people. Why should all nature be called upon to rejoice in this? Ah, there is good reason for it, because all nature was as it were placed in pawn, pledged to man’s redemption. God upholds all things: in Christ all things hold together; so when God gave Christ, interposing Himself by an oath, thus pledging His own existence for man’s salvation, the whole creation was placed over against the redemption of man. Humanly speaking, all nature was risked by the Lord in the grand enterprise of redeeming man. If the work had failed, if God had broken His word, then His life would have been forfeited, and the universe would have been dissolved. God and all creation, therefore, have a far greater interest in the redemption of man, than any man can have, or than all mankind can have. Their existence depends upon man’s salvation. So we can well understand why “heaven and nature” should be called on to sing the grace of God that bringeth salvation, and why they should respond. What a strong ground of faith this gives us. There is not a thing in God’s universe that has not an interest in our redemption, and there is nothing that is not calculated to help us in the way of life. Nothing is against us, but everything is for us. “All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come: all are yours; and ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” 1 Corinthians 3:21-23. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 805.10}

**GOD CREATES BY HIMSELF**

God had no helper in the creation of the universe. The Word was with God in the beginning, but the Word was God. He who by Himself created the heavens, and spread out the earth, is competent to redeem His people. Redemption is but creation anew, and the fact that God is Creator, and that without any aid,when indeed there was no one else to give aid,-He created all things, is sufficient proof that what He has promised concerning man, He is fully able to perform. This is the reason we are called upon in the very last days to give glory to God, and to worship Him as the One who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. Revelation 14:6-7. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 805.11}

**THE INFALLIBLE WORD IN MEN**

That which God does by another is as firm as if done without any agency. He confirms the word of His servant. He has reconciled us to Himself, and has put into us the Word of reconciliation. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19. “He whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God.” John 3:34. Whoever speaks only the Word of the Lord, need have no fear that one of his words will fail. “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God” (1 Peter 4:11), and he may speak with all boldness. The tokens of liars will be frustrated, and diviners will be seen to be mad, and the worldly-wise will be taken in their own craftiness, and their knowledge shown to be foolishness; but the simple truth uttered by the lowliest follower of God will stand as long as the sun and moon endure. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 806.1}

The last reference in this chapter, concerning Cyrus and his work, will be considered in connection with the first verses of the next chapter, where the subject is continued. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 806.2}

**“The Gospel of Isaiah. God, the Ruler of Nations. Isaiah 45:1-7” *The Present Truth* 15, 50.**

E. J. Waggoner

(Isaiah 45:1-7.)

“Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him, and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron; and I will give thee the treasurers of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob My servant’s sake, and Israel Mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name; I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known Me. I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside Me; I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me, that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside Me. I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness; I made peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things.” {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 819.1}

When Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had a dream describing a calamity that was to befall him, he was told that it was to let him “know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will.” Daniel 4:25. In the scripture before us we have a wonderful example of the truth of this, and also an illustration of the fact that nothing happens by chance, and takes God by surprise, but is provided for long beforehand. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 819.2}

Isaiah prophesied “in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.” Isaiah 1:1. Hezekiah reigned twenty-nine years (2 Chronicles 29:1) and as he lived fifteen years after his great illness (Isaiah 38), we know that he had reigned fourteen years at that time. But Isaiah had at that time been prophesying at least forty-six years, for Jotham and Ahaz had each reigned sixteen years. 2 Chronicles 27:1; 28:1. We know not certainly how long Isaiah prophesied in the reign of Uzziah, but the sixth chapter seems to indicate that he began in the last year of his reign. The point is that in 714 B.C., which was about the date of Isaiah’s special message to Hezekiah, Isaiah had been prophesying between forty-five and fifty years; and that as he did not prophesy later than Hezekiah’s reign, he died before the year 698 B.C. We are therefore safe in putting the date of the scripture which we have before us as not later than 712 B.C. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 819.3}

Of what importance is this fact? It shows the minuteness of God’s foreknowledge, and the perfection of His plans for the salvation of His people. Babylon was captured by Cyrus in the year 538 B.C., when he was sixty-one years old. We find therefore that Cyrus was named, and his work was described in detail, more than one hundred and thirty years before he was born, and about one hundred and eighty-four years before the work was done. That is to say, more than one hundred years before the children of Israel were carried captive to Babylon, the Lord had not only foretold their release from captivity, but had named the man who should be instrumental in setting them free, and had given a minute description of the incidents of the capture of the city. In view of this, how forcible are the words “I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside Me.” {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 819.4}

In order that the exactness of the prophecy may be better appreciated by the reader, we quote the following brief account of the capture of Babylon from Rawlinson’s “Great Monarchies.” It may be necessary to state, for the aid of some, that Babylon was very large, surrounded by a wall of immense height and thickness, and stored with provisions sufficient to last twenty years. The river Euphrates passed through the city, dividing it into two parts, but there was also a wall on each side of the river, the whole length of its passage through the city, and the twenty-five streets which led across the river were enclosed by huge gates of brass. Having described the progress of Cyrus to Babylon, against which his army began a seemingly hopeless siege, Rawlinson continues:- {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 819.5}

“Withdrawing the greater part of his army from the vicinity of the city, and leaving behind him only certain corps of observation, Cyrus marched away up the course of the Euphrates for a certain distance, and there proceeded to make a vigorous use of the spade. His soldiers could now appreciate the value of the experience which they had gained by dispersing the Gyndes, and perceived that the summer and autumn of the preceding year had not been wasted. They dug a channel or channels from the Euphrates, by means of which a great portion of its water would be drawn off, and hoped in this way to render the natural course of the river fordable. When all was prepared, Cyrus determined to wait for the arrival of a certain festival, during which the whole population were wont to engage in drinking and reveling, and then silently in the dead of night to turn the water of the river and make his attack. All fell out as he hoped and wished. The festival was held with even greater pomp and splendour than usual; for Belshazzar, with the natural insolence of youth, to mark his contempt of the besieging army, abandoned himself wholly to the delights of the season, and himself entertained a thousand lords in his palace. Elsewhere the rest of the population was occupied in feasting and dancing. Drunken riot and mad excitement held possession of the town; the siege was forgotten; ordinary precautions were neglected. Following the example of their king, the Babylonians gave themselves up for the night to orgies in which religious frenzy and drunken excess formed a strange and revolting medley. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 819.6}

“Meanwhile, outside the city, in silence and darkness, the Persians watched at the two points where the Euphrates entered and left the walls. Anxiously they noted the gradual sinking of the water in the riverbed; still more anxiously they watched to see if those within the walls would observe the suspicious circumstance and sound an alarm through the town. Should such an alarm be given, all their labours would be lost. If, when they entered the riverbed, they found the river walls manned and the river-gates fast-locked, they would be indeed caught in a trap.” Enfiladed on both sides by an enemy whom they could neither see nor reach, they would be overwhelmed and destroyed by his missiles before they could succeed in making their escape. But as they watched, no sounds of alarm reached them-only a confused noise of revel and riot, which showed that the unhappy townsmen were quite unconscious of the approach of danger. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 819.7}

“At last shadowy forms began to emerge from the obscurity of the deep river-bed, and on the landing places opposite the river-gates scattered clusters of men grew into solid columns-the undefended gateways were seized-a war shout was raised-the alarm was taken and spread-and swift runners started off to show the king of Babylon that his city was taken at one end.” (Jeremiah 1:31) In the darkness and confusion of the night a terrible massacre ensued. The drunken revelers could make no resistance. The king, paralyzed with fear, at the awful handwriting upon the wall, which too late had warned him of his peril, could do nothing even to check the progress of his assailants, who carried all before them everywhere. Bursting into the palace, a band of Persians made their way to the presence of the monarch, and slew him on the scene of his impious revelry. Other bands carried fire and sword through the town. When morning came, Cyrus found himself undisputed master of the city, which, if it had not despised his efforts, might with the greatest ease have baffled him.” {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 819.8}

Note the statements of the prophecy: “I will loose the loins of kings.” At the very hour when Cyrus was making his entrance into the city, while Belshazzar was engaged in a wild, idolatrous feast, God caused a writing to appear on the wall of the banqueting hall. “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 5:6. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 819.9}

“And the gates shall not be shut.” All the skill of Cyrus, and even his stratagem of diverting the course of the river, would have availed nothing, if the gates leading to the river had not been left open. His army might have marched into the city, and out again if it could have got out, but could have inflicted no damage. But in that night of idolatrous revelry, everything was neglected and the way was open. The gods whom the princes praised gave no protection. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 819.10}

This entire prophecy is devoted to showing that there is none but God. He is the Creator and the Redeemer. He can create, and He can destroy. Nothing takes place without His counsel or consent. Everything works out His will. He makes even the wrath of man to praise Him. Psalm 66:10. Kings and nations think that they are controlling, and are doing their own will, when they are simply working out God’s plan. We must not make the mistake of thinking that God plans all their wicked practices, but however wicked they are, however opposed to His will, they carry out His purpose even by their opposition. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 819.11}

It was God who said to Jerusalem, “Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof.” He said it, and Cyrus was His agent in carrying it out. God also said to the deep, “Be dry,” and it was He who dried up the rivers. So when Cyrus was digging his channels, and turning aside the Euphrates from its bed, he was simply doing God’s work. What a marvelous, awe-inspiring thought-that men are factors in the great plan of the Most High God! And how glorious when they yield themselves willingly and understandingly! All the events of this earth’s history, are not for the benefit of those who are enacting them, but for the salvation of God’s people. Instead of being afraid when wars and rumours of wars and tumults come, thinking they are about to be overwhelmed, the faithful followers of God may be of good courage, knowing that out of these very alarms, and even by means of them, God is working out their deliverance. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 819.12}

God did his work through Cyrus, “that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside Me.” And how widely was the name of God known in consequence?-Over all the world. The kingdom of Babylon was world-wide. See Daniel 2:37-38; Jeremiah 27:4-7. Of course this came under the dominion of Cyrus, and so the decree for the building of the temple ran thus:- {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 819.13}

“Now in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled; the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, King of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also into writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus, King of Persia. The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and He hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all His people? His God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel (He is the God) which is in Jerusalem.” Ezra 1:1-3. So we see that the one true God was proclaimed by Cyrus throughout all the world. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 819.14}

“What a wonderful tribute from a heathen king!” some will exclaim. Why do you say, “a heathen king”? True, Cyrus was a Persian. He was brought up in ignorance of the true God: but so was Abraham. Joshua 24:2. God revealed Himself to Abraham, and he believed, and so became the friend of God. Cyrus was surnamed by God while he was yet ignorant of Him, even long before he was born, yet he came at last to know God, and he acknowledged Him before all the world, declaring Him to be God, and confessing that he held his title from Him. What more could anybody do? If there was ever a Christian king in any land, then certainly it was Cyrus, of Persia, as well as Nebuchadnezzar, of Babylon. This man, direct from heathenism, did what the Israelites, with a long ancestry of believers failed to do. {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 819.15}

Cyrus was, therefore, an Israelite, even by his own confession. Read his proclamation over again. He declared his belief in the Lord of heaven, who had brought him to the throne, and said, “He is the God,” and at the same time declared Him to be “the Lord God of Israel.” God takes from among the Gentiles a people for His name (Acts 15:14), and Cyrus, the Persian, was one of them. It is not the flesh, but faith, that determines who are Israel. “God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.” {PTUK December 14, 1899, p. 819.16}

**“Drinking to Drown Trouble” *The Present Truth* 15, 51.**

E. J. Waggoner

“I drink too drown troubles.” {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 801.1}

Quite right; I do also, and I find it works admirably. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 801.2}

“Come, then, here’s a public house; let’s go in and have a drink together.” {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 801.3}

No, thank you; I don’t drink at such places. I drink, indeed, too drown troubles; but I have found that when a person drinks at public houses, or of the liquor that is sold at such places, his trouble not only reappears in an aggravated form, but brings a dozen more with it. The house at which I drink supplies a drink that drowns the trouble so that it is swallowed up for ever, and destroys also the cause of it. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 801.4}

“Tell me about it; for it is truly as you say, the drink does not effectually drown my troubles; the more I drink the more trouble I have. I should like to know a better way.” {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 801.5}

I will gladly tell you not only a better way, but the very best way. It will not take long, although the subject is vast enough to keep one talking a lifetime. Yet it is very simple. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 801.6}

The secret is simply this: I drink from the fountain of life, while you drink from the stream of death. Life, real life, in its purest form, is freshness, and buoyancy, and gladness. It is not trouble, it makes no trouble, and it renders its possessor so light and vigorous that he rises above all trouble, no matter how great. Look at birds, how joyous and happy they are; they have their troubles, as great for them as any that oppress us, and of the same nature, too; but they are never cast down. They never mourn for anything except the loss of a mate or their young, and even then their mourning does not last for ever, and is music while it continues. For the loss of property, however, for destruction of their buildings, for disappointments and reverses, they never complain for a moment. Notice, too, that they never get up dull and peevish and fretful in the morning, they never seem to have headaches or rheumatism, but sing and hop and fly about as though they could not contain themselves for very joy. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 801.7}

The reason for this? They live near to heaven, and take the gift of life direct from the hands of their Maker. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 801.8}

“Consider the lilies;” give heed to the springing grass and flowers, the sparkling stream, that laughs as it hastens to be lost in the sea, the dew, the rain, the air, and the sunshine; see what a freshness is in them all, showing that pure life is joy and happiness. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 801.9}

Now read: “How excellent is Thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures. For with Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light shall we see light.” Psalm 36:7-9. Here we see that the drink that comes from God’s house is joy-the joy of eternal youth. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 801.10}

Then listen to the words of the Author of Life: “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” John 4:14. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 801.11}

“Where can I find this water of life? How can I get hold of it, so that I may drink it?” {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 801.12}

It is all about you; you are surrounded by it. “The life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.” And we make known this life until you, “that your joy may be full.” 1 John 1:2, 4. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 801.13}

*“It breathes in the air,  
It shines in the light;  
It streams from the hills,  
It descends to the plain,  
And sweetly distills  
In the dew and the rain.” {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 801.14}*

It is “new every morning” (Lamentations 3:23) and is given to us so that we may be “renewed day by day.” 2 Corinthians 4:16. It makes our greatest affliction seem but light, and with it even tribulation itself becomes a means for our rejoicing. See Romans 5:1-11, especially verses 2-4, 11. We are surrounded with the love of God, and His love is life, because it is Himself. He is love, and He is life. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 802.1}

“But surely, since everything comes from God, I get my life from His hand just as directly as you do, or as the birds do. The food that I eat, and even the liquor that I drink, is manufactured from materials that He has created, and given to us.” {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 802.2}

There is an important item that you overlooked. Let me explain it to you in so few words that you cannot fail to remember them. You not know that the water from the purest fountain may become corrupt and deadly by the addition of poisonous matter, or by stagnation? Do you not see that there is a vast difference between drinking from a spring just as it gushes out of a rock, and from that stream after it has been dammed up, or dead animals and sewage have been cast into it? That is the secret of the whole matter; you drink from the stream after it has been allowed to stagnate, and has been corrupted and poisoned by man’s devices; I go to the fountain-head for it; I get my life is directly from God as it is possible to find it, pure, uncomplicated, and unadulterated, and recognise Him in the gift. Thus I taste the freshness of it. This principle should be carried out in every detail. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 802.3}

With God is the fountain of life, for He is the life. He is love, therefore His love is life. Now when the love of God is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit, the free gift to all, you will see “the path of life,” and you will find that in God’s presence is fulness of joy, and that His right hand pleasures for evermore. Psalm 16:11. You will “obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” You will find that the “saving health” of the light of God’s face (Psalm 67:1, 2) makes you “perfectly whole,” giving you a “perfect soundness,” not only in body, but in soul, forgiving all your iniquities and healing all your diseases, redeeming your life from destruction, and satisfying your mouth with good things, so that your youth may be renewed like the eagle’s. Psalm 103:2-5. You will find, what De Leon searched for so long in vain, the fountain of eternal youth, and that without leaving home. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 802.4}

Try it! “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!” Oh, taste, and see that the Lord is good! {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 802.5}

**“‘Putting on Christ’” *The Present Truth* 15, 51.**

E. J. Waggoner

Text: For as many of you as had been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Galatians 3:27. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 802.6}

Without being at all technical, it is worthwhile to understand the words we use; for if we do not, then the text does not mean anything to us. The word baptized-taken in this connection-has a very deep significance, and is very plain too. If that had been fully understood, the perversion of baptism would never have taken place. There would have been no question as to the “motive baptism.” *Baptism*, means to immerse, to plunge, to submerge. It was a very common word among the Greeks. When they went to take a swimming bath, a place where they plunged into the water, they went to a *baptisterion*. We use the same word, leaving off the ending. The swimming pool of to-day was the baptistry of the Greeks. Baptism was simply an immersion in any kind of fluid. The smith, having heated his iron hot, would baptize it to cool it off. A dish might be baptized into water or oil. The hands or the whole body would be baptized-plunged-in water, for cleansing. Jesus Christ used the word, in the sense in which it was commonly understood by all the people. So much for the meaning of the word. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 802.7}

The text speaks about being “baptized *into Christ*.” When a person is baptized into Christ, it means that he is submerged in Christ. One may take a bath every day-He may baptize himself into water every day of his life,-but that is not baptism *into Christ*. So you see, while the name presents very vividly the *act*, yet the form, the very form described by the name, make be present, and there be no *Christian baptism*. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 802.8}

Faith is the simplest thing in the world. It is the most natural thing in the world. It is the first thing that ever comes to a human soul. The one thing that God has given to every soul of mankind is the power to believe; but it makes all the difference in the world what a person believes-what he has faith in. The very same faculty with which a man believes one thing, he may use to believe another thing. That simple trust which the little child has in the word of its parent, is the faith that saves, when centred in the Lord. It is no new thing that a person must manufacture; there is no way of believing in order to be a Christian; all the difference is in the object toward which his faith is directed. One has but to exercise the faith he has every day, toward another object. So many people say they cannot believe, and then they try to manufacture something they call faith, and it is not faith at all. What the man should do is to centre his faith on Christ,-the faith that he exercises every day in the ordinary duties of life,-and that will make him a Christian. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 802.9}

Baptism into Christ means changing from one phase of life into another. We might say it is becoming absorbed into something else. The man who heretofore has been absorbed in himself, buried in his own thoughts, plunged into his own ways, is now absorbed into Christ, buried in him, swallowed up in His ways and His thoughts. It is a transformation. The man who has lived in one atmosphere, now changes, and breathes in another atmosphere. He has lived in one world, and now he passes from that into another-which is a passing from death to life,-through death to life. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 802.10}

When we are baptized into Christ, absorbed in Him, the difference between what we were and what we are now is the difference between a dead man and a live one. We are all dead in trespasses and sins. We are helpless, we cannot do anything, that is, we cannot do any good deeds. The perfect man is the man who comes up to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; brought up to that level where he can reach out and do the things that Christ did. So far as that is concerned, we are dead. Men are utterly helpless, utterly ignorant, unable to do or even to think the things that they should, unable to grasp the things that pertain to the Spirit of God. Men walk before God, surrounded by spiritual things, and yet are utterly unconscious of them, and do not know if there be so much as a Holy Spirit. You talk about spiritual things, and they are foolishness to them. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 802.11}

Now when we are buried in Christ, have put on Christ, then we are raised to life with Him, and we see that He is the reality of all things. There is nothing real except with Him. It becomes very easy for one to enjoy the Lord when one believes and understands that the Lord is every good thing, and that there is nothing good except from Him. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.” When we believe that, and believe there is nothing good except from Him, and that He gives only good to us, although it may be contrary to our natural likings, then we can like things which we once did not like, because they are from Him, and they are good because they are from Him. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 803.1}

This Scripture tells us that by nature we are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; but in Him is all fulness. In Him are all the riches hid. He is the light, and He gives sight to the blind. He is clothed with light, and He Himself becomes the clothing of those who trust in Him; so as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, are clothed with Him as a garment. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 803.2}

We see the Man Christ Jesus as one single individual in this world, and we see what He was like. He gave an example of a Christian life for thirty-three years. In Him we see what a Christian is. If that were all, however, it would be of no help to us. I used to think about the Lord, and the more I thought of Him and the more I heard of Him the more discouraged I got. Really it seemed to me that I could be a better Christian without Christ than with Him. This seems a paradox, but yet you may have had something of the same experience. That is to say, I would be a great deal better satisfied with myself when I didn’t think about the Lord, than when I did think of Him. When I didn’t see the example I could be a good deal better satisfied with myself. Now I remember when I went to school I used to have a copy set at the top of the page of my writing books. I looked at the copy, and wrote one line underneath, and then for the next line I would look at the line I had written and so on down. I felt very well satisfied with my writing-and the best satisfied with the last line of all, until I compared it with the copy at the top, and then I saw how far below the standard it was. So according to my own standard I could be a better Christian; but when I looked at Christ, and saw how far I came from being like Him, I grew discouraged. It was a long time that Christ was not a help to me, and so I was the less a Christian. Now we are to look to Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith; but looking at Him as One afar off, or apart from us, even though near, is nothing but discouragement. When you look to Him as a good man, as the one perfect man, the fulness of God, who in everything pleased God, and who is the pattern, and then say to yourself, “I ought to be like that, and I must be that way,” there is nothing but discouragement in it. You actually get discouraged looking at the Lord, simply because the thing is so high that it is unattainable. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 803.3}

I used to look at others and say, “I wish I could do as well as they can-they are not so bad by nature as I am.” How many, many people have gone through that same experience. They have been baptized, taken into the church, but they have never put on Christ,-baptized in water, but not baptized into Christ because they do not know Him. I had heard about Him, but as a Saviour, as a Deliverer, I did not know anything about Him. So for a long time I lived the life of discouragement, so far as any satisfaction was concerned, for several years my Christian experience was a failure, until at last I gave up entirely. I said, “I cannot do right, I was not made that way.” And truly I had not been made that way, for “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.” I had not been made new, and of course I could not live a new life. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 803.4}

As many as are baptized into Christ, must of necessity put on Christ. How can that be? That was the question of Nicodemus, and his objection was the objection of others as well: How can this man give us His body to eat? How can that Man become me and I become Him? Then comes the simple revelation of God in all the things He has made. Everything that God has made shows His everlasting power and Divinity. He gives us breath, and that is a constant proof to us, repeated every moment, of His power to fill us with the Spirit of righteousness and life. Sometimes in taking gymnastics you can feel the thrill of life tingle in your very finger ends. It makes you a new man. Many of us have been made new physically when we have been at the very verge of the grave,-all but dead. Where did that new life come from? From within?-No, but God gave us life-fresh air, good food, pure water;-these are given as a proof of the power of God to lift a man up and make him a new creature. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 803.5}

“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whether it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” God gives His Spirit as the wind, as the breath He breathes into us, that we may receive the Spirit as freely as we receive God’s air. Baptism into the water is simply the symbol of our plunging into the water of life, the blood of Christ, the fountain open for sin and uncleaness, the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; that is what we are baptized into, for His name is Himself. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 803.6}

You remember when Peter spoke to the Jewish Council when the man who had been healed from an incurable lameness stood there; he said, “Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in *the name* of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, ... even *in Him* doth this man stand before you whole.” The name of Jesus of Nazareth is Jesus Himself. And what does it mean?-Saviour, Deliverer. The Saving power is in Himself. Virtue, power, went out from Him, and that healed the people. He is life; He is the Saviour, and His name is just what He is,-Jesus. Baptized into the name of Jesus Christ,-into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost,-means taking all the fulness of God’s life, and letting all of God’s gifts combined come in to lift us up. “And they that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee; for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek Thee.” Psalm 9:10. Whoever knows the name of the Lord, will put his trust in Him, and will not be disappointed. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 803.7}

I tell you it is a wonderfully blessed thing to know the name of the Lord. There is power in that name-not in the five letters that compose it,-but in the name itself, for it is *life*. You cannot put Jesus on the wall; you cannot picture Him with chalk; you cannot write Him with ink, but He is written by the Spirit of the living God, in the very being, because He is life and energy. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 804.1}

There were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, who thought they would use the name of Jesus. They were sorcerers. They had seen Paul drive out evil spirits, and so when they saw a man possessed of an evil spirit, they came to him and said, “We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.” But the evil spirit answered, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?” And at that they were driven out of the house, wounded and bruised. Yet when those who had the name and knew it, spoke the name of Jesus, there was power, not only to cast out devils but to heal the sick. “In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise and walk.” *In* the name the lame man got up; he stood in that name, and the next day you remember Peter said to the rulers that it was in the name of Jesus that the man stood there whole. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 804.2}

There is just as much power in the name of Jesus to-day as ever. Any professed Gospel that does not come casting out devils, is not the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The devil is just the same roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, the same wily adversary of souls to-day, that he has been all these six thousand years. This same spirit works in the children of disobedience to-day that did when Christ was here in the flesh. The devil must be driven out of a man in order that Christ may fill him. No matter in what form the Word of God is, it has the same power to drive out devils from man that it ever had, and it will do it just as effectually now as ever. And when you and I are conscious of the devil coming in like a flood, filling our hearts with whisperings of evil, making us feel that everything is a fraud, and our past profession is useless, and that he will hold us anyhow-don’t believe him. The devil, you know it is said, goes about as a roaring lion. Lions frighten their prey by roaring. When the lion roars, the timid beasts of the forests lose their power, and then he springs upon them. Just so the devil frightens people into thinking that they must give up before he has them at all, and then when they become discouraged and frightened, it is an easy matter to get his claws upon them. Now don’t let him get that advantage. You need not, for “we are not ignorant of his devices.” {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 804.3}

**“The King of Glory” *The Present Truth* 15, 51.**

E. J. Waggoner

*“Hark the herald angels sing,  
Glory to the new-born King.” {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 810.1}*

Angels rejoiced and sang for joy when this beautiful world was created, and man was formed to be its king. “The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” But their songs of joy were soon changed to mourning when they saw that earth had lost its king, and the blight of sin had come over the fair world. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 810.2}

How glad, then, they must have been to bear to earth, to the sons of men, the good tidings of the coming King, through whom the curse should be taken away from the whole earth, and of whose kingdom “there should be no end.” {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 810.3}

This was the message, you remember, sent to Mary by the angel Gabriel. Mary was then living at Nazareth, but the Word of God had said that the King, the Shepherd and Ruler of His people, should come forth out of Bethlehem. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 810.4}

So when the time for the royal birth drew near, the Emperor of Rome sent out a decree that all the world should be taxed, and this made it necessary for Joseph and Mary to go to Bethlehem. And while they were there, in fulfilment of the prophecy, Mary “brought forth her firstborn Son; and she wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 810.5}

*“Cold on His cradle the dewdrops are shining,  
Low lies His head with the beasts of the stall  
Angels adore Him, in slumber reclining.*Maker*and*Monarch*, and*Saviour of all!*” {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 810.6}*

What a sight for the angels to see,-their Maker and Monarch, their Creator and King, a tiny helpless babe “wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger”! {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 810.7}

And did they honour Him any less, or cease to worship Him, when they saw His helpless human form? No! listen to the words of their glad song of praise: “*Glory to God in the highest!*” {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 810.8}

That little baby lying in the Bethlehem stable with the beasts of the stall was “God in the Highest,”-the Most High-to whom the angels of God were offering deeper love and adoration than ever before. For when God brought the First-begotten into the world He said: “Let all the angels of God worship Him!” {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 810.9}

We sometimes sing:

*“Lo, He laid His glory by,  
Born that man no more may die;”*

but this is not true. He *cannot* lay aside His glory, for it is the beauty and power of His own life and kingly character. Those who lived with Him on the earth said of Him: “We beheld His glory, full of *grace and truth*.” {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 810.10}

He did not “lay His glory by,” but He veiled its bright shining in our weak, human flesh, so that He might come near to bless and save us. But this very veiling only made His true glory, His grace and truth, even more plainly seen. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 810.11}

When He became a little human child, and lived and died on this earth for our sakes, He was showing to angels and to men the depths of shame and sorrow to which He, the Creator and King of all, will go, so that He may help and save any of His creatures who are in trouble, even through their own folly and sin. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 810.12}

So even the angels knew Him better than before when they saw the baby lying in the manger. They saw more of His glory, and sang with deeper gladness songs of praise to God in the highest, to whom belongs “the kingdom and the power and the glory,” because He is *the Saviour* of all. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 810.13}

But “earth asleep unconscious lies” while all the angels of God are worshipping the babe “with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” How they must have longed to give the message of salvation and to share their joy with those for whose sake the King of Glory had become a poor babe, that they through His poverty might be rich. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 810.14}

But the children of men are wrapped in slumber. Yet not all: “There were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night;” and to these was given the high honour of being the first to hear and carry the good tidings. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 810.15}

“And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them:- {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 810.16}

“Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign until you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 811.1}

“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 811.2}

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.” {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 811.3}

“And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even to Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 811.4}

“And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this Child.” {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 811.5}

This glad tidings, this beautiful Gospel message which the angel said should “be to *all people*” is for each one of you, dear children. “Unto *you* is born this day *a Saviour* which is Christ the Lord,”-“Christ in you” to be your King, to save from sin, and to make you pure and holy. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 811.6}

Are you not glad, as the shepherds were when they heard this good news, and will you not, like them, carry the joyful tidings to others, and make known what God has made known to you about His Holy Child Jesus? {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 811.7}

**“Items of Interest” *The Present Truth* 15, 51.**

E. J. Waggoner

-Three million sterling has just been ordered to be spent, to bring the metropolis main drainage up to date. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 814.1}

-The Metropolitan police force numbers 15,694, and has charge of 678 square miles, and costs the ratepayer 9d. in the pound. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 814.2}

-American machinery to the value of ?500,000 has just been ordered from that country for the erection of an electric plant at Rugby. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 814.3}

-The Governor of Shantung has been dismissed on account of his inability to deal with the anti-missionary troubles which have been rife throughout the province. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 814.4}

-The Viceroy of India had just made public the fact that 2,205,000 persons are now on relief. Showers have fallen in parts of Madras, but there has been no rain elsewhere. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 814.5}

-Over 100,00 idle miners at the collieries of South Wales and Monmouth resumed work last week at a small advance of wages granted under the sliding scale agreement. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 814.6}

-A lifeboat, containing eighteen lifeboatmen, put away at a signal of distress off Suffolk port, but in the heavy sea was overturned and six of the men became entangled in the rigging, and were drowned. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 814.7}

-Spanish gold to the value of $19,000 was found recently by some Cuban wreckers in the wreck of the Spanish cruiser *Almirante Owuendo*, which was run aground during the Spanish-American fight near Santiage. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 814.8}

-Mrs. Mary Jones, of Chester, has just died at the age of eighty-three years. She was the mother of thirty-three children, and was recently awarded a prize by a London periodical for being the mother of the largest family in the United Kingdom. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 814.9}

-It has just been ascertained that in Paris a mastiff was trained to assist thieves. It was in the habit of bounding against old gentlemen, and knocking them down, whereupon the owner of the dog would come forward professing great regret at the occurrence, and while assisting the man to his feet, would relieve him of his purse and watch. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 814.10}

-The British War Office has order 960,000 pounds of corned beef from Chicago, the meat to be supplied within ten days. A special summer carries it to the South Africa. It is hoped that it will not prove to be “embalmed” as was so much of the meat furnished the American government by Chicago packers during the Spanish war. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 814.11}

-The transport *Ismora*, laden with horses, ambulance waggons and supplies and artillery pieces, with several hundred men, struck a sunken rock near St. Helena Bay, while on her way to south Africa, and went to pieces. Only twenty of the nearly 300 horses on board were saved, and all the guns were lost. The horses were trained chargers, and the loss is counted guite serious. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 814.12}

-A special crusade against consumption is being made in Northamptonshire by the newly-formed branch of the National Society.A special appeal is made to agriculturists to aid the movement by taking precaution against the spread of the scourge among their cattle, and the President of the Society has set the example of destroying a large portion of his fine herd of cattle because they were found to be tuberculous. When people come to realise that fully three-fourths of all the causes of tuberculosis are contracted from the use of cows’ milk, they will cease its use, and thus remove one of the prime causes of the disease. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 814.13}

**“Back Page” *The Present Truth* 15, 51.**

E. J. Waggoner

If every reader of the PRESENT TRUTH would secure one other reader, the circulation of the paper could be doubled with but very little trouble. If you are receiving good, you surely ought to wish others to share in it. Will you not make the effort? {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 816.1}

In four days last week there were over eighty alarms of fires in London, and some of the fires were of large proportions. Taking the whole year, the average number of fires is eleven a day, so that last week the number was nearly doubled. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 816.2}

The *Chronicle* says that “the famine in India is growing more acute. The number of people receiving assistance is not a quarter of a million more than was the case last week. And the suffering is not limited to the poor ryot and peasant cultivators, who feels the pinch of actual hunger, but is reaching the small landowners above them, and the traders who have advanced money to both in hopes of a favourable turn in the prospects of the farming community.” {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 816.3}

Several London hairdressers were recently prosecuted for violating an Act of Charles II., by carrying on their business on Sunday. The magistrate had no option but to convict, but showed what he thought of the prosecution, by fining the defendants only one penny each, without costs. It is but just to say that prosecutions for Sunday labour are not at all popular, being opposed to ruling love of personal liberty; nevertheless the statutes in behalf of the Sunday remain, to be used whenever anybody wishes to give vent to his religious zeal or to bring somebody into trouble. Besides, “public sentiment” has been known to undergo changes. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 816.4}

The *Church Family Newspaper* characterises as “a serious mistake” on the part of those who desire to uphold the sanctity of the Sunday, on the ground that “the Act itself is all but obsolete,” and that by the insignificant fine “a whole proceeding was reduced to a farce of a highly injurious character.” Speaking of the subject in general it says:- {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 816.5}

We regret the growing laxity of Sunday observance as one of the most alarming symptoms of modern modes of thought and conduct. It is very largely owing to the evil example set in high places, and to the excessive pursuit of pleasure by those who have the largest opportunities for self-indulgence throughout the other six days of the week. Possibly the disregard of Sunday may be also in some measure traced to the omission of the ante-Communion service at a morning prayer instead of its constant reiteration as in earlier days. But if the people are to be brought back to the due recognition of the day it must be through spiritual influence brought to bear upon the higher classes and not by legal prosecutions of the poor. However well-intentioned such proceedings may be, they will assuredly and deservedly failed. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 816.6}

With the last part of the paragraph we are in decided agreement: Let the efforts in behalf of Sunday observance rest wholly on a spiritual basis. That is the only ground that any Christian can take (see 2 Corinthians 10:4, 5), and the Bible is the only spiritual guide; if it were made the real basis of all efforts to promote Sunday observance, the case would soon end, for the Bible has not a word in favour of the practice, but to the contrary. ‘Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy works; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.” {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 816.7}

The two paragraphs that follow are from the *Daily Chronicle*, and are noteworthy as showing how lightly the journal which, above all others, poses as the champion of morality, treats one of the worst vices of the time:- {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 816.8}

Stirred by such headlines in the New York newspapers as “Cigarettes made him a Lunatic-A Bright Schoolboy becomes a Chattering Beggar from their Use,” and “Made Mad by Smoking-Danced, Raved, and Prayed-Strapped to Stretcher, the Young Tailor was carried Singing to Insane Ward,” the *Lancet* (which it must be admitted watches over our national health with maternal care) lately appointed an analytical sanitary commission to look into the composition of American cigarettes. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 816.9}

Of the investigation was on foot half a dozen kinds of the more popular English cigarettes were also analysed. The report of the inquiry is of the most satisfactory character. The tests for opium, phosphorus, arsenic, and mercury-the presence of each of which in cigarettes has been alleged at one time or another, did not yield any results in a single instance. As the *Lancet* says, “there is not a single factor upon which can be fairly based an allegation of the presence of a substance producing injury to health.” {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 816.10}

Doubtless the *Lancet*, as well as the *Chronicle*, thinks that now all opposition to cigarette-smoking ought to cease; but the fact is that this report, calculated to quiet any fears the people may have, calls for more earnest agitation than ever. For the danger of cigarettes lies primarily, not in any opium, phosphorus, mercury, or arsenic that they may contain, but in the tobacco, of which they chiefly consist, the active principle of which, as the *Lancet* well knows, is a poison more virulent than any of those mentioned. False prophets are they, crying “Peace, peace,” when there is no peace. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 816.11}

The *Daily Mail* says: “More than one correspondent traces our recent reverses to the fact that the engagements were begun by us on Sunday.” Yet if we remember correctly, the most brilliant victories in the Spanish-American war were one on Sunday. Moreover, whenever anyone loses a battle, the opposing army wins it; if therefore the defeat on one side is to be attributed to Sunday fighting, to what is the gain on the other side do? Would they not be warranted in regarding it as a premium for fighting on Sunday? This shows the folly of trying to prove a thing evil by certain results. The only standard of right and wrong is God’s Word. {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 816.12}

**“Power Over All Devils” *The Present Truth* 15, 51.**

E. J. Waggoner

Power Over All Devils .-When Jesus sent the first disciples out to preach, He “gave them power and authority over all devils.” Luke 9:1. This was great power, but no greater than He still gives to every one of His followers. “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” James 4:7. This is positive, if our resistance is such that the devil flees from us, it is very evident that we have power over him. Authority is given us over him, even the authority that Jesus had, when He said, “Get thee hence, Satan,” and “the devil leaveth Him.” And this power and authority must be “over all devils;” for if there were a single demon over which God’s people had not power, that one would effectually prevent them from overcoming, and would wreck their lives. “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable.” {PTUK December 21, 1899, p. 816.13}

**“The Birth of Jesus” *The Present Truth* 15, 52.**

E. J. Waggoner

(Luke 2:1-16.) 1

Many, many times since that night nineteen hundred years ago has the story of Christ’s birth been repeated, yet {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 817.1}

“The old, old story is ever new.” {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 817.2}

Everybody is familiar with every detail, yet no thoughtful, reverent person can ever read it without learning something. Indeed, so full of instruction is the narrative, that only a small portion of the Scripture devoted to this week’s study can be taken under consideration. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 817.3}

**FULFILLING THE SCRIPTURE**

“The fulness of time” had come. “And it came to pass in those days, there went out a decree from C?sar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled.” How little the Roman Emperor thought that he was simply an agent in the Lord’s hands for the fulfilment of prophecy, and that his decree would be remembered only in connection with the birth of a King infinitely greater than he. Some hundreds of years before, it had been prophesied that out of Bethlehem should the Ruler of Israel come; Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth, and the time was at hand; doubtless both were expecting the birth of the coming One in their home in Galilee; but “the Scripture cannot be broken,” and so the decree was issued, which brought them to Bethlehem. Who shall say that God did not move the Roman Emperor to issue that decree for the sole purpose of securing the fulfilment of His Word! How often men, bent only on carrying out their own will, have been simply the unconscious agents of God’s will. God works all things after the counsel of His own will. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 817.4}

**HER FIRST-BORN SON**

“And she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger.” In no particular was Christ separated from mankind. A theology borrowed from paganism would allow Him nothing in common with us. Not only would it have Him so far removed from ordinary flesh that His mother must be born without any trace of sin in her flesh, but He must be so far separated from any connection with humanity that no other infant could ever occupy the same body that He had once inhabited; but all this is contrary to fact. There is no meaning to the word “first-born,” if no others are born afterwards. When Christ was buried, He occupied, as was fitting, a tomb in which no man ever had lain; but that did not prevent it from being used again. In all things He was made like His brethren. He was “born of the seed of David according to the flesh.” His flesh was just the same as that of all other men; He was one with us in all things, except in sin; and even there He is one with us, in that He takes our sin and shows us how to bear it so that it is destroyed. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 817.5}

**LOWLY LABOURING MEN**

It was eminently fitting that the birth of Him who was to be the Shepherd of Israel,-“that great Shepherd of Israel,-“that great Shepherd of the sheep,” (Hebrews 13:20),-should be first announced to shepherds in the fields, and that they should be the first to make it known to others. “With the lowly is wisdom.” Proverbs 11:2. Of what use would it have been to announce the birth of Christ to the priests and rulers-worldly princes? They would have scoffed at it. “What! that babe in the manger a King! How absurd! What nonsense!” If anybody feels inclined to doubt that the rulers of the Jews would have mocked and scoffed at the idea that the little babe was a King, he has only to glance at the record of Christ’s betrayal and crucifixion. Then they mocked Him because of His weakness, and derided His claim to being King. Matthew 27:39-48. They might have had the honour of announcing the birth of the Saviour, if they would have believed it. God always sends His truth to those who are willing to receive it. It has always been the case that reformations begin with what are termed the “lower classes.” They formed the bulk of the believers on Christ. The question was asked, “Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him?” as though that proved that He could not be true. He was not in fashion. “Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.” 1 Corinthians 1:26. He who despises a doctrine because its adherents are few and poor, would reject Christ for the same reason. “He that despiseth the poor reproacheth his Maker.” {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 818.1}

**“THE SIGN”**

“And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.” Of what should that be a sign?-A sign that a Saviour, Christ the Lord was born. “The Jews require a sign.” 1 Corinthians 1:22. Well, there they had a sign, and they always had it before them, for the same lowliness was continued through the whole of Christ’s life. What a sign! Isaiah prophesied of the Coming One “mighty to save;” God had told David that He had “laid help on One that is mighty;” and now as proof that there had “come out of Sion the Deliverer,” the angel tells the shepherds that they will find a little helpless baby, wrapped up in a bundle, and lying in a manger. There He is! that helplessness is the sign. Wonderful! yet even so it was all through His life: “I can of Mine own self do nothing.” John 5:30. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 818.2}

“God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.” 1 Corinthians 1:27. He says, “My strength is made perfect in weakness.” 2 Corinthians 12:9. Therefore the Apostle Paul said, “When I am weak, then am I strong.” If that is so, then the weakest ought to be the strongest. Exactly. It is out of weakness that God has established strength, with which He stills the enemy and the avenger. Psalm 13:3. A little babe is the best manifestation of the power of God that overcomes the world. Of God’s people it is said that they “out of weakness were made strong.” Hebrews 11:34. The whole of the Gospel is summed up in the acknowledgment that God is Almighty, and that we are absolute helplessness. God is everywhere, upholding all; therefore, as soon as one who has no strength recognises that fact, the mighty power of God manifests itself. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 818.3}

See how God has removed all possible ground for complaint and discouragement. If He had said, “My strength is made perfect in the power of the ocean, the whirlwind, the tempest, and he who can exhibit the most might, the most endurance, is the one who approaches most nearly to Me,” then we might well have expected many sighs of discouragement. Then the complaint, “Oh, I’m so weak, I know I can never overcome,” might have been in place. But how is it? Why, He has manifested Himself in the lowliest, humblest, poorest, weakest possible form, and has said that there is the perfection of His power. That is the wisdom of God, and the power of God. It is all the power He asks or expects anybody to have. So whenever a person would begin to complain, or to excuse his failure, by saying, “I’m so weak,” he finds his mouth stopped. At the very weakest point anybody can be, there he finds the Lord. God says, “I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble.” Isaiah 57:15. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 818.4}

**THE FIRST ADVENT INCLUDES THE RECORD**

The span of Christ’s manifestation in the flesh is from the manger to the cross. In weakness He came, and in weakness He ended His work. “He was crucified through weakness.” 2 Corinthians 13:4. Nevertheless “He liveth by the power of God,” and that is how we are to live. Christ is coming again; but His coming in the clouds of heaven, “with power and great glory,” will be only the manifestation of the power that lay in the manger and hung on the cross. The “hiding of His power,” is from His side, where once the spear pierced, but where the stream of glory issues. Hebrews 3:4, margin. He is King of glory solely because of His humility. Philippians 2:8, 9. He is coming to save His people; but He will save at His second coming only those whom He has already saved at the cross. That manger in Bethlehem is capacious enough to contain all mankind: it contained Divinity. The second coming will be only the complete manifestation of the first. In the manger Christ was the Son of God; but it was the resurrection from the dead with power according to the Spirit of holiness, that demonstrated the fact. When He comes again, it will be for the purpose of showing all men that He really lives. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 818.5}

**“GREAT JOY”**

“Good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.” What is the joy?-A Saviour! {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 818.6}

*“Joy to the world! the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King!  
Let every heart prepare Him room;  
And heaven and nature sing.” {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 818.7}*

When Philip went down to Samaria, and preached the Word, so that devils were cast out, and the afflicted were healed, “there was great joy in that city.” Acts 8:8. There is always joy in victory, and God gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. God does not wish the world to go bowed down with sorrow. He says, “Look up! Lift up your heads.” Christ, the anointed King, came to proclaim liberty to the captives; “to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.” Isaiah 61:1-3. This joy is “to all people;” then let everybody be glad and rejoice in the great salvation that by the grace of God has appeared to all. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 818.8}

**OUR SAVIOUR**

For unto you, is born a Saviour. The message is to you, whosoever you are who read these lines, and to everybody else. The Saviour is born to you. “The Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart;” that thou mayest do it. Romans 10:8. Somebody says that a child was born to Mary that night. Oh, no; He was born to you. He did not belong to her, but to the world. He is “the Son of man.” He is your Son, and mine. He is our child, and formed within us, He is “the hope of glory.” {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 819.1}

**UNHESITATING FAITH**

The shepherds said one to another, “Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.” They did not say, Let us go and see if this thing is so. Ah, how very cautious we are when God speaks; we cannot believe until we have tried every test. God comes, making known the most exceeding great and precious promises, such as would make men leap for very joy, and lo, straightway they begin to devise some means to keep from accepting them. They try every way possible to prove that the promises are only a delusion. Men act toward God’s promises just as a child does toward bitter medicine. One would think, to see how loth men are to take God at His word, that he is announcing some terrible calamity, something to be dreaded, instead of a blessing to be enjoyed. So they hold it off, until when at last they do hesitatingly embrace it, after every possible objection has been removed, half of its sweetness for them is gone. But the shepherds, as soon as they heard the message of God’s great salvation, said, Let us go and see this thing which is come to pass, which God hath made known unto us. There is an example for us. You need not wait to hear the word of the Lord, for it is speaking now. Believe it, and “the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.” {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 819.2}

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and He delighteth in his way. Though he fall he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with His hand.” Psalm 37:23, 24. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 819.3}

**“Let It Shine” *The Present Truth* 15, 52.**

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It is not necessary to say to one who really knows the Lord, and the joy of His salvation, that he should let others know of it, for the gladness will not be hid. God has called us out of darkness to His marvelous light, on purpose that we may show forth His excellences. “The life was manifested,” and wherever it is cherished it cannot fail to be manifested. Simply let the light shine as it comes to you, that is, let it shine in you, and others will be sure to see it. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 821.1}

**“An Offering” *The Present Truth* 15, 52.**

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How happy Abraham and Sarah must have been when at last they held in their arms the little boy, Isaac, for whom they had waited so long! We may be sure that they taught him just as soon as he was old enough to understand, all about the promise of his birth, and that the seed of Abraham should be “as the stars of heaven for multitude,” and that he was the one through whom this promise was to be fulfilled. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 826.1}

Remember that Isaac was “born of the Spirit,” and so the beautiful fruits of the Spirit must have been early seen in his life: “Love, joy, peace, a long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” What a sweet child to have in the home, and how happy he must have made his parents. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 826.2}

But remember, dear children, that you too may be born of the Spirit, just as he was, and that “Christ may dwell in *your* hearts by faith,” so that you too may be loving, joyful, peaceful, kind as He was, and be a delight and blessing to those around you. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 826.3}

After many happy years, when Isaac was growing into a strong young man, God spoke again to Abraham; and this time his voice filled the loving father’s heart with grief and trouble: “Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and offer him for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains that I will tell thee of.” {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 826.4}

How could this be, when God had said: “In Isaac shall thy seed be called,” and had told him that through Isaac he was to become “the father of a multitude?” And if now he should slay Isaac, how then could the promise of God be fulfilled? {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 826.5}

All these perplexing thoughts must have passed through Abraham’s mind, as well as the anguish of having with his own hand to take the life of his only and much-loved son. Yet so perfect was his faith in God’s word, that he did not hesitate for a moment, but early in the morning he rose up and started off with Isaac to the place that God had told him of. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 826.6}

“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac, ... accounting that God was able *to raise him up even from the dead*.” Abraham believed in “God which quickeneth the dead,” and he knew that God who had given Isaac to him could bring him back again from the dead, which would not be any more wonderful than his birth had been. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 826.7}

As they drew near the place where the offering was to be made, “Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand and a knife.” What a picture: Isaac carrying the wood upon which he himself was to be offered, and Abraham bearing the knife and the fire which were to slay and to consume his own son. “And they went both of them together.” {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 826.8}

“And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father, and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering; so they went, both of them together.” {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 826.9}

At last, at the place God told Abraham of, the altar was built, the wood made ready, and the time had come for Isaac to learn that *he* was the offering that God chosen. He might have refused to be offered, and could easily have escaped if he had wished to do so. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 826.10}

But no: he had come all the way with perfect trust in his father, not knowing what was to be the end of the journey, and now that this was made known to him they still “went both of them together.” Freely Abraham offered his son to God, and freely Isaac gave his life, sharing his father’s faith in God’s promise. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 826.11}

“And Abraham stretched forth the knife to slay his son; and the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham; and he said, Here am I. And He said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from Me.” {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 826.12}

“And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and behold a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up instead of his son.” {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 826.13}

What a joyful journey home the father and the son must have had! To Abraham it was just as though he had received Isaac again from the dead, and to Isaac as though he were newly risen, for the life that he had freely given up had been given to him again. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 826.14}

Before this time God had “preached the Gospel unto Abraham;” but some of its lessons he could never have understood without this trial. And the story of it is to teach us also some sweet Gospel lessons about which we will talk another time. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 826.15}

**“Items of Interest” *The Present Truth* 15, 52.**

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-A leading member of the French Automobile Club has wagered 100,000 francs that he will ride sixty-two miles in an hour on his new electric car. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 830.1}

-Over ?30,000 has been raised by the American friends of Britain and London, for fitting out the hospital ship *Maine*, for service in South Africa. She sailed December 18th. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 830.2}

-The Health Protection Society of Cleveland, U.S.A., have undertaken a campaign against the side-saddle for women, which they hold to be injurious, and they advocate the ordinary masculine position on horseback for women. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 830.3}

-Li Hung Chang, the noted Chinese statesmen, has recently been appointed Minister of Commerce, which is regarded as a step in the right direction, as it will doubtless help to greatly improve foreign commercial relations with China. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 830.4}

-In London there more than 100,000 persons of the criminal class known to the police, and three-fourths of these have at one time or another been charged with burglary or housebreaking. During the past year there were nearly 2,000 reported burglaries in London, more than half of these being unoccupied houses. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 830.5}

-The plan of the Emperor to increase the German navy has been formulated and has been submitted to the Reichstag by Prince Hohenlohe, and broadly speaking, entails the expenditure of ?17,000,000. Germany has now seventeen battleships constructed or in the course of construction, and this Bill contemplates that the number will be doubled, not for aggressive warfare, but for protection of its acquired interests in other parts. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 830.6}

-From the *Tablet*, a Catholic publication, it is learned that quite a percentage of the Parochial School patronage comes from Protestants, in one school “sixty per cent. being non-Catholics.” An interesting item in connection with the report is that in this particular school “every child was presented for examination in religious instruction.” “As the twig is bent, the tree’s inclined;” so it is not to be wondered at that there is so little difference between much of the so-call Protestant faith in England and Catholicism. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 830.7}

-Mr. Justice Grantham, in his charge to the Grand Jury at the Autumn assizes for the County of Durham, a few days since, made the following observation which needs no comment: “I have been coming among you for many years to assist in the administration of justice; but I am sorry to say that only with the exception of one occasion I have never had to charge the Grand Jury of the county with such a terrible list of crime as we have to deal with on the present occasion. It is a black calendar, and drink is manifestly the cause of the state of things. There are three murders, four manslaughters, eleven of wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm, and two of shooting, and, in nearly every case drink is that the bottom of the act.” {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 830.8}

-One Cororner in East London held fifty-two inquests during last week, which is counted almost as a record-breaker. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 830.9}

-It is reported that an armed company of Kurds recently pillaged the Armenian village Kostur, and massacred about 300 inhabitants. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 830.10}

-A violent cyclone passed over portions of Mozambique on the 18th inst., doing immense damage to house property, with no small loss of life. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 830.11}

-General Henry Lawton, second in command to General Otis, head of the American forces in the Philippines has just been killed by a Filipino sharp-shooter. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 830.12}

-The American liner *Paris* has been purchased from the Underwriters, and it will be reconstructed, and fitted with new engines and boilers, and will bear a new name-that of an American city. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 830.13}

-The *Woman’s Missionary Friend* says that according to the last census taken in the presidency of Madras, there were 23,938 little girls under four years of age, and 142,606 between the ages of five and nine years, who were married. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 830.14}

-Severe shocks of earthquake were experienced in different parts of Germany on the morning of the 18th instant. At places houses were shaken to their foundations, but there has been no loss of life reported, and the damage done was not serious. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 830.15}

-An expedition has been organised by Baron Toll, of Russia, to explore the Islands of New Siberia and the Sannikoff country, to which so far as known, no man has yet penetrated. The expedition will set sail from the Norwegian port in June next. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 830.16}

-In the last twelve months no fewer than 17,000 umbrellas were left in London cabs and omnibuses.Some 3,000 purses containing sums up to ?250, left in these public vehicles, were taken by drivers and conductors to the Lost Property Office, Scotland-yard. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 830.17}

-Captain Leary, naval governor of Guam, the largest island of the Ladrone group, has found it necessary to the establishment of his authority in the island, to expel from it all but one of the seven Catholic friars who had practical control of affairs under the Spanish regime, because he states that the friars resisted every decree and effort at reform, no matter of what character. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 830.18}

-A plan is on foot whereby it is represented that India can be evangelised on inter-denominational lines. It is to select Eurasians in India, bring them to England, educate and train them for missionaries, after which they will return to India as native missionaries. The headquarters of the work is to be in London, and the first experiment is to be with eighteen or twenty of these persons. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 830.19}

-The Prince of Wales has accepted the Presidency of the Congress of the National Association for the prevention of Consumption, which is appointed to be held in London in the early spring of 1901. Everywhere the people are waking up to the fact that consumption is indeed the Great White Plague, which is claiming its victims by almost unnumbered thousands, and every effect possible is being made to stay its fearful ravages. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 830.20}

-An old family Bible was recently purchased with other books at an auction sale in London, and when it was opened for perusal some time afterward, there were found pasted between two of the leaves six five pound notes. On the back of one of the notes was a written statement, dated in 1840, to the effect that the writer had worked hard for the money, but having no lawful heirs had made “whosoever shall own this Holy Book her lawful heir.” Perhaps this will give a little impetus to Bible reading. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 830.21}

**“Back Page” *The Present Truth* 15, 52.**

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It must not be supposed that everybody who is in the gutter is there because he loves that place. Many who are in the “horrible pit” and the “miry clay” would gladly get out, but they do not know how; they have not strength to help themselves out, and they do not know of any power sufficient to lift them out. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 832.1}

There are thousands who are bound by the courts of debasing sins, who have nearly worn themselves out trying to break loose, and have not been able. They are looked upon by others as being gross and depraved, whereas they have strong desires for a better life, and bitterly bewail all their own bondage. There are many unjust judgments rendered in this world. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 832.2}

The only right and charitable course is to assume that everybody desires to do better, and then to show the way. Christ is the way. He is the higher, the highest, life. By Him men can not only see the desirableness, the infinite advantages of the perfect life, but can attain to it. “It is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” He has already descended “into the lower parts of the earth,” so that there is no pit so deep but He can lift us out. He is there for that purpose. He has redeemed all who are “snared in holes” and “hid in prison houses.” He has proclaimed absolute liberty to all captives. It is true that no one need stay in bondage unless he loves his chains, but the fact that people are in that condition does not necessarily prove that they love it. Show them the light of life, and many will gladly walk in it. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 832.3}

Those who are indulging in sentiment over the closing of the nineteenth century, and the beginning of the twentieth, may have the satisfaction of knowing that they can say all their fine thoughts over again next year, when the century really ends. It takes one hundred years to make a century, and in beginning to count, we always begin with one. It takes nineteen hundred full years to make nineteen centuries. The first century began with the year 1, and the twentieth century will begin with the year 1901. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 832.4}

This beginning and ending of the century is after all only an arbitrary manner. It was long after the birth of Christ before anyone began to reckon from it. And when, after several hundred years, the birth of Christ was used as the date of a new era, the time of His birth was not accurately ascertained, and the date was set three or four years this side of the actual event. Christ was born three or four years after the year, 1 A.D. as a matter of fact more than nineteen centuries have already passed since the birth of Jesus, and we are now well into the twentieth century. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 832.5}

Whoever stops to think of this, will see that there is no special sacredness or importance attaching to the closing year of the century, or the beginning of the new one; for as a matter of fact, the closing of the century, next year, will be just nineteen hundred years since-nothing in particular. Nominally it marks nineteen hundred years after Christ; actually it does not. It is only an instance of how far everybody is off, who tries to celebrate the events in matters of religion. People will sit up till midnight on the 31st of December, to “watch the old year out,” calmly unconscious of the fact that to begin the year in midwinter is altogether unnatural and arbitrary, and that even allowing that midwinter, instead of spring, were the close of the year, whoever watched for it at midnight would be several hours too late, since the natural day closes at sunset. So people go on, celebrating things at times when they could not possibly have occurred; and the one thing which God wishes them to celebrate-the Sabbath-they ignore. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 832.6}

Two men, both well-known in the world, yet differing most widely from each other, died on the 22nd inst. One, the Duke of Westminster, one of the richest men in England; the other, Dwight L. Moody, one of the greatest evangelists in the world. While they Duke was known as an upright, honourable man of the world, it is safe to say that the plain, unlettered preacher, of lowly birth, and reared in poverty, will have a hundred mourners to the nobleman’s one. There is probably not a village in the world, where the English language is spoken, nay, not one where the Bible is known and Christian literature is read, where Moody’s name is not known, and unknown thousands have been helped by hearing his talks or reading his simple writings. The nobleman gave money freely; the preacher gave life. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 832.7}

“If thou be the Son of God.” This was one of Satan’s strong temptations, and still is. Christ had heard the words from heaven, “This My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” and now the devil would make Him doubt them. Everything combined to strengthen the doubt that the devil suggested. Jesus was alone in the wilderness, surrounded by wild beasts, and hungry. No one, not even the members of His own family, understood Him and His work. How natural the thought, “If I were the son of God, I should not be thus forsaken;” but Jesus did not yield to it. He withstood the temptation, that we may also. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 832.8}

For there is no temptation that besets us more frequently than this. True we have all the promises of God, and His assurance that He has accepted us in the Beloved, and that He is our Father; yet the enemy will seek to make us believe that the words which we have heard were spoken to somebody else. We have heard the Lord speaking to our souls, but others have not recognised the voice, and so we have been tempted to think that perhaps we were mistaken. Such a suggestion must not be listened to; it is dishonouring to God. To think that He does not care for us, because we are so weak and poor and unworthy, is to charge Him with being like selfish man. The Father has no respecter of persons. Christ, the emaciated and forsaken in the wilderness was as much the Son of God as when on the mount of transfiguration, and He asserted His relationship. To as many as received Him He gives power to become the sons of God. {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 832.9}

There is an abundance of evil in the earth. Evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, “deceiving and being deceived;” but it does neither ourselves or anybody else any good to dwell upon the particular evil deeds that are perpetuated. It is the goodness of God, not the wickedness of men, that leads to repentance. “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” {PTUK December 28, 1899, p. 832.10}