**“The Sabbath-School. Acts 18:18-28; 19:1-20” The Signs of the Times, 9, 36.**

E. J. Waggoner

**Lesson for Pacific Coast.-October 13.
Acts 18:18-28; 19:1-20.
NOTES ON THE LESSON.**

“And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while.” Although they had fiercely risen up against Paul, and beaten Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, the apostle did not leave his work there until he was satisfied in his own mind that it was pleasing to Lord. While we should never place ourselves in danger unnecessarily, and thus tempt the providence of God, the servant of the Lord should look to his Master for indications of duty, and not suffer the world, or opposers, to deter him from his work. {SITI October 4, 1883, p. 437.1}

“Having shorn his head in Cenchrea, for he had a vow.” Conjectures on this text are very numerous, and commentators are much divided in respect to it. The original does not positively show to whom this statement refers, whether to Paul or Aquila. Dr. Clarke says that “Chrysostom, Isidore of Seville, Grotius, Hammond, Zegerus, Erasmus, Baronius, Pearce, and Wesley, referred the vow to Aquila. Jerome, Augustin, Bede, Calvin, Dodd, Rosenmüller, and others, refer it to St. Paul.” Where it is left so obscure we cannot think any importance attaches to it. And the nature of the vow cannot be determined. Dr. Barnes, after giving a number of conjectures which have been raised by different authors, discreetly says: “But where nothing is recorded, conjecture is useless.” Happy would it be for the cause and the honor of Christianity if everything not revealed were treated in the same manner. {SITI October 4, 1883, p. 437.2}

“I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem.” Here again conjecture has been busy as to this feast. Clarke and Scott suppose it was the passover, the Biblical Commentary says, Pentecost. But all agree that the passage is very doubtful. Clarke says: “The whole of this clause is wanting in ABE, six others, with the Coptic, AEthiostic, Armenian, and Vulgate. Griesbach leaves it in the text with the mark of doubtfulness,” etc. It is also wanting in various translations, and in the Revised Version. “But bade them farewell, saying, I will return again unto you, if God will.” {SITI October 4, 1883, p. 437.3}

“And a certain man named the Apollos.... an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures..... In the way of the Lord, and being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord.” The context makes this description of Apollos noteworthy. Notwithstanding his gifts and zeal, he was of *a teachable spirit*, willing to be instructed by Aquila and Priscilla. It would be well for the cause of truth, for the honor of Christianity, if all learned and eloquent men were so gifted with the grace of humility. This is the true spirit of a teacher. For how can one teach who has not first been taught? And how shall he be taught if he is not teachable? It is not difficult to graduate in the schools, or in theology, but there is no such thing as graduating in Christian experience or Bible knowledge. In these we are always “disciples,” learners. Nor did he wait for Paul to be his instructor; he was willing to have the way of God expounded unto him by any who were more fully instructed than he was. Though Aquila and Priscilla were helpers in the work, at that time here spoken of they were probably not public laborers in the gospel, if they ever were. {SITI October 4, 1883, p. 437.4}

Why would Apollos listen to those who were not eloquent as himself, who could not reason as powerfully as he could? We find the answer in the then prevailing method of teaching the faith. They reasoned-but not with “vain reasoning,” nor according to the demands of ‘science,” falsely so called, as is the custom of these days, but they “reasoned out of the Scriptures.” Acts 17:2. What the Scriptures said was a finality to the early Christians, no matter who presented the word. There is truly a great “falling away” from the simple faith of early times. {SITI October 4, 1883, p. 437.5}

“And when they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.” Acts 19:5. On this text we copy from “Thoughts on Baptism:” “Acts 19 does not afford so clear proof that they who were baptized unto John’s baptism were again baptized by the apostles as has been supposed by many. This was an unusual case, according to the record. On being questioned by Paul they said: ‘We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.’ They had not been baptized by John, but by Apollos, who had been converted at Ephesus a short time before the visit of Paul. Though this was years after the resurrection of Christ, Apollos new only the baptism of John, and baptized just as John had administered the ordinance, unto a belief in a Messiah who was yet to come. That they were unacquainted with the facts concerning Christ, and the fulfillment of John’s predictions of Christ’s work, is evident from their answer to Paul: ‘We have not even heard whether the Holy Spirit, is given.’ (Anderson’s translation.) The Revised Version gives the same form in verse 2. ‘We did not so much as hear whether the Holy Ghost was given.’ It was an error on the part of Apollos to teach the people that Christ was yet to come, when he had already died and was risen from the dead. This error of Apollos was corrected when Aquila and Priscilla expounded to him the way of God more perfectly. Those who were baptized by John in the faith of a coming Messiah, did not need to be baptized again when they accepted him. But those who were baptized in the faith of a coming Messiah after he had died and risen from the dead, needed to be baptized again, inasmuch as their first baptism was nearer to a denial of him who had come, than a belief in him, in every way seems just and fitting that Paul should commence with them as novices.” {SITI October 4, 1883, p. 437.6}

“He went into the synagogue and spake boldly for the space of three months.” The apostles always gave the Jews the first opportunity of hearing the doctrine concerning Christ. Speaking three months boldly in the synagogue certainly effected his purpose. And in this the churches of this day might learn a lesson. Objection is made against those who preach the advent near, and the special message of warning which is to precede the advent, that they seek to proselyte members of the churches, instead of endeavoring to convert sinners. The charge is unjust, they preach to all classes. But if they have a *neglected duty* or a *rejected truth* to proclaim, it is certainly right to present it to the professed servants of God, that they may have the light they need. The word of the Lord says: “Cry aloud, spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins.” Isaiah 58:1. It is no excuse for the neglect of this order that they seek the Lord daily, and delight to know his way, and take delight in calling upon him. See verse 2. No matter how zealous they may be in worship, if they are indulging in sin they must be warned. The Saviour confirmed the words of the prophet, that they worship in vain who teach for doctrine the commandments of men and made void the commandments of God through their traditions. Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:1-9. {SITI October 4, 1883, p. 437.7}

When the Jews had been fully warned, Paul having spoken in the synagogue for the space of three months, some of them turned to actively opposing his doctrine, and he left them, and separated the disciples from the congregation. But he did not leave the city. It is not likely that a large proportion of the people had heard him in the synagogue of the Jews, and with commendable perseverance he determined to proclaim the truth to all, while the opportunity was afforded, and the minds of many were already awakened on the subject. He labored, speaking daily in a public place, and continued thus doing for the space of two years; “so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.” In this a great purpose was accomplished, worthy of the labor and the time employed. {SITI October 4, 1883, p. 437.8}

The position and importance of the city of Ephesus made it a desirable point for the apostle to labor in for so long a time. The goddess Diana and her famous temple were here, of which Dimitrius said “whom all Asia and the world worshipeth.” The Temple of Diana was considered one of “the seven wonders of the world.” It was built at the expense of all Asia Minor; and Barnes says, “by contributions from a great number of princes, and doubtless multitudes from all parts of the earth came to Ephesus to pay their homage to Diana.” Thus by Paul’s remaining here so long opportunity was given to all in Asia to hear the word of the Lord. We should wisely exercise our judgments in improving the openings presented to us by Providence for furthering the cause of truth. {SITI October 4, 1883, p. 437.9}

“Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all.” Magical arts, enchantment, divination; all this was declared to be an abomination to the Lord. Deuteronomy 18:9-12. It was done by consultation with the men’s professing to be the spirits of the dead. When these magicians became converted to the doctrine of Christ they quit those practices of the heathen. And this proves that the standard Christianity under the preaching of the apostles was quite different from that acknowledged in the churches of the present day; for now, under the name of “Christian Spiritualism,” divination, or consulting with “familiar spirits,” carried on within the church, and many of the most imminent ministers of the land are in the habit of constantly consulting those who practice witchcraft, or mediums. Not many are aware, and very few are willing to be convinced of the fact that under the working of the “mystery of iniquity,” many of the practices of the old pagan worship are grafted into the Christian faith, and their influence is largely felt even to the present day. This idea of the spirits of the dead being in Heaven, becoming our guardian angels, with whom we may hold intercourse through some medium, or necromancer, is increasing in popularity, instead of its being avoided as the Lord commanded. That they will continue until the coming of the Lord, and that they are still abominable in his sight, see 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; Revelation 16:12-15; 21:8. {SITI October 4, 1883, p. 437.10}

The value of the books which were burned is variously estimated, it not been known what currency was referred to. It was, however, somewhere between $8,500 and $25,000. “To what purpose was this waste?” (Matthew 26:8) Judas would have suggested that they should be sold, and the proceeds given to the poor. In modern churches they might have been put up for “a raffle,” and thus much money brought into the church treasury. But they were connected with a work of iniquity; a work which the Lord abhorred, and their possessors proved the thoroughness of their conversion by destroying them. On this Dr. Barnes well remarks: “The universal prevalence of Christianity would make much that is now esteemed valuable property utterly worthless, as, for example, all that is used in gambling; and fraud; in counterfeiting; in distilling ardent spirits for a drink; and the slave trade; and in attempts to impose on and defraud mankind.” To which may be added, the enormous expense incurred in raising, preparing, and in trafficking in tobacco. But that evil could be eradicated only by a purer type of Christianity than that generally recognized at the present day. {SITI October 4, 1883, p. 437.11}

And these converts were not ashamed to destroy the property which was valued so highly by the world. They “burned them before all.” There is power in the truth when preached in its purity, to separate men from the works and workers of iniquity. {SITI October 4, 1883, p. 437.12}

**“The Sabbath-School. 1 Thess. Chapters 1-3” The Signs of the Times, 9, 37.**

E. J. Waggoner

**Lesson for Pacific Coast.-October 13.
1 THESS. CHAPTERS 1-3.
NOTES ON THE LESSON.**

It is the opinion of the best critics that the epistles to the Thessalonians were written from Corinth. When Paul was forced to cease his labors in Berea, he was conducted by the brethren to Athens, but Silas and Timothy remained at Berea. Acts 17:13, 14. As soon as he reached Athens he sent word for his fellow-labors to join him. Verse 15. It seems evident that they did join him at Athens, and that Timothy was sent from Athens to Thessalonica, to learn the condition of the brethren. The following Scriptures imply this: Acts 17:16 says that “Paul waited for them at Athens.” He had sent them a command to come to him with all speed, and if they obeyed, he would not have to wait long. In 1 Thessalonians 3:1, 2 we read: “Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; and sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith.” This strongly implies that Timothy was sent from Athens to Thessalonica, but he was not the bearer of the epistle to the Thessalonians, for it is in Paul’s first epistle that he speaks of having sent Timothy. It was in consequence of the good report of their constancy that Timothy brought, that Paul wrote his first epistle. Nothing is said about Silas being sent with Timothy, and he may have been sent on some other errand, but Acts 18:5 shows that they returned from Macedonia in company, and found Paul at Corinth. It was then and there that Paul wrote his first epistle to the Thessalonians. {SITI October 11, 1883, p. 449.1}

Although Silas and Timothy are associated with Paul in the opening sentence, we are not to conclude that they had an equal share with him in the writing of the epistle. It simply shows that they endorsed what Paul wrote. This would not be a minor matter, for the Thessalonians were, doubtless, better acquainted with Silas and Timothy than with Paul. On the other hand, if Paul were well known, and his worth as an apostle of Jesus Christ were fully appreciated, to mention his helpers in connection with himself, would increase their influence among those to whom he wrote. And this was what Paul desired, for he had no petty fear that he should not be appreciated, and he also expected and intended that younger men succeed him in this work. {SITI October 11, 1883, p. 449.2}

The comments of Dr. Clarke on 1 Thessalonians 1:3 are so good that we give them entire:- {SITI October 11, 1883, p. 449.3}

“This verse contains a very high character of the believers that Thessalonica. They had faith, not speculative and indolent, but true, sound, operative; their faith worked. They had love, not that gazed at and became enamored of the perfections of God, but such a love as labored with faith to fulfill the whole will of God. Faith worked; but love, because it can do more, did more, and therefore labored-worked energetically-to promote the glory of God and the salvation of men. They had hope; not an idle, cold, heartless expectation of future good, from which they felt no excitement, and for which they could give no reason, but such a hope has produced a satisfying expectation of a future life and a state of blessedness, the reality of which faith had descried and love anticipated; a hope, not hasty and impatient to get out of the trials of life and possess the heavenly inheritance, but one that was as willing to endure hardships as to enjoy glory itself, when God might be most honored by this patient endurance. Faith worked, love labored, and hope endured patiently. {SITI October 11, 1883, p. 449.4}

“It is not a mark of much grace to be longing to get to Heaven because of the troubles and difficulties of the present life. They who love Christ are ever willing to suffer with him; and he may be as much glorified by patient suffering as by the most active faith or laborious love. There are times in which, through affliction or other hindrances, we cannot *do* the will of God, but we can *suffer* it; and in such cases he seeks a heart that bears submissively; suffers patiently, and endures as seeing him who is invisible, without murmurings or repining.” {SITI October 11, 1883, p. 449.5}

“For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad.” Verse 8. There can be no better recommendation of a Christian than that by his life the word of the Lord is sounded forth. This is more likely to be the case in heathen than in so-called Christian countries, because, as did the Thessalonians, they received the word “in much affliction.” Those who live in a land where Christianity is popular, are very liable to fall in with that type of Christianity that is popular, and that is not a kind that will recommend them either to God or to man. {SITI October 11, 1883, p. 449.6}

That the Thessalonians did suffer severe persecution, we learn from the 14th verse of the second chapter. “For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Jesus Christ, for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews.” The record in Acts, having to do only with Paul, states that the Jews set the whole city in an uproar on account of the apostles. But after the mob once became aroused, we cannot suppose that they would quietly settle down without proceeding to acts of violence against those who received the apostles’ doctrine. In this case, as in others, the Jews were the instigators of the persecution, but took no active part in carrying it on. {SITI October 11, 1883, p. 449.7}

We are not left in doubt as to what doctrine Paul preached to the Thessalonians. From Acts 17:2, 3 we learn that he preached only Scripture doctrine. He was not content with mere assertions, but he reasoned. A reasoning sermon is a good sermon; but the reasoning must be Scriptural reasoning. The trouble with too many sermons of the present day is that human reason enters into them too largely. Paul preached “that Christ must needs have suffered and risen from the dead,” but did not leave his hearers with this. He also taught them to wait for his coming from Heaven. 1 Thessalonians 1:10. Without this last part, his preaching would be incomplete. Any preaching of the gospel that leaves out Christ’s second advent, is not Scriptural preaching. The death and resurrection of Christ afford the Christian a strong ground for hope of salvation; but since that salvation is to be revealed only at Christ’s second coming, John 14:1-3; Colossians 3:4; 1 Peter 1:5; Hebrews 9:28, etc., if that coming should be studiously concealed, the hope aroused by the knowledge of the resurrection of Christ would be turned into despair. Should Christ not come, then the plan of salvation would be as much a failure as it would have been had he never risen from the dead. But Christ is coming again, and this thought should be to us an ever-present blessed hope. {SITI October 11, 1883, p. 449.8}

Inexperienced Christians are liable to be misled by the statement of their teachers that the Christian life is one of peace and joy, and that happiness can be found nowhere else. This is true, but some think that therefore they should have no trials, but should find everything easy and pleasant. When afflictions come they think that God must certainly be displeased with them, or has forsaken them. The trouble is that they do not realize that the Christian finds joy and happiness in a far different matter from what the worldling does. Paul feared that the Thessalonians might become discouraged by their persecutions, so he sent Timothy to comfort them, “That no man should be moved by these affliction; for yourselves know that we are appointed there unto.” Chap. 3:3. He would have them learn to “glory in tribulation;” to take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses *for Christ’s sake*. When they come for this cause we may rejoice; but no one should feel elated over trials that are brought on by his own perverseness. Shame is called for in such a case. E. J. W. {SITI October 11, 1883, p. 449.9}

**“The Sabbath-School. 2 Thessalonians” The Signs of the Times, 9, 39.**

E. J. Waggoner

**Lesson for Pacific Coast.-November 3.
2 THESSALONIANS.
NOTES ON THE LESSON.**

“Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.” 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9. From these verses we learn (1) that the time for the punishment of the wicked and the reward of the righteous is when the Lord comes. No one can say that this coming is at the death of the individual, for the Lord will be “revealed from Heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire.” The rewards are not given until that time comes. So Christ himself says, “Behold I come quickly; and my reward is *with me*, to give every man according as his work shall be.” Revelation 22:12. {SITI October 25, 1883, p. 473.1}

2. We learn that God’s righteousness is just as clearly manifested in recompensing tribulation to the wicked, as it is in granting rewards to the righteous. The punishment of the wicked is not an arbitrary thing which God could remit if he chose to do so. He does not punish in order to gratify malice or revenge. “I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord; wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.” Ezekiel 18:32. God is under obligation to punish the wicked. The principles of his Government demand it, should he not do so, but suffer his laws to be broken with impunity, no saint would have any assurance of protection. God’s Government would soon cease to exist, and he would be unable either to protect or reward his loyal subjects. It is true that God is love, and this love is manifested in the judgment of the wicked as clearly as in the reward of the righteous. Those who say that, because “God is Love,” he will not punish the guilty, do not realize that they are defaming his character and Government. Most men think that it is just and right for earthly governments to punish law-breakers; why should they imagine God less just than man. {SITI October 25, 1883, p. 473.2}

3. To the saints Paul says, “Them that trouble you” shall receive tribulation at the last day. Then the persecuted ones can have no occasion to either do or say anything in the way of retaliation. God has pledged the honor of his Government that his loyal, persecuted subjects shall be avenged, and he will do it speedily, though he seem to bear along with them. “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” {SITI October 25, 1883, p. 473.3}

4. The nature of the punishment of the wicked is clearly brought to view.” Shall be punished with everlasting destruction. “No stronger term could be used to signify this final utter extinction. This verse is an inspired explanation of Matthew 25:46. Here we are told that at the coming of the Lord the wicked “shall go away into everlasting punishment.” It is claimed by many that this proves the unending existence of the wicked, because “everlasting” is the same as “eternal,” which describes the life of a righteous. But the text under consideration informs us that their punishment is to be “destruction.” As Paul says in Romans 6:23, “The wages of sin is *death*,” which is the same as destruction. Having once been destroyed, the wicked will to all eternity remain destroyed. The action in their case will be final. Before that destruction is fully accomplished there will be much suffering; “indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish” will be rendered unto “every soul of man that doeth evil.” These are but accessories to the great punishment, which is death. We firmly believe that the Bible teaches that the wicked will be punished eternally; but our readers will note that this does not necessarily mean the eternal conscious suffering; if it did, then the wicked would have eternal life, which is promised to the righteous alone. {SITI October 25, 1883, p. 473.4}

From the first part of the second chapter, it seems evident either that some of the Thessalonians had gained the idea from Paul’s first letter that Christ’s coming was near at hand, or that some one had written to them to that effect, claiming Paul as their authority, or even personating him. However this may be, it is certain that Paul had no such idea, for he plainly says so. Some writers will persist in saying that the first epistle shows that Paul expected the Lord to come in his day; but we prefer to believe him when he says that he did not. {SITI October 25, 1883, p. 473.5}

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4. Dr. Barnes has given full and good comments on this text, and we give the following extracts. The facts which he states are worth preserving for reference:- {SITI October 25, 1883, p. 473.6}

Most Protestant commentators have referred it to the great apostasy, under the Papacy, and, by the “man of sin,” they suppose there is allusion to the Roman Pontiff, the Pope. It is evident that we are in better circumstances to understand the passage than those were who immediately succeeded the apostles. Eighteen hundred years have passed away since the epistle was written, and the “day of the Lord” has not yet come, and we have an opportunity of inquiring whether in all that long tract of time any one man can be found, or any series of men have arisen, to whom the description here given is applicable. If so, it is in accordance with all the proper rules of interpreting prophecy to make such an application. If it is fairly applicable to the Papacy, and cannot be applied in its great features to anything else, it is proper to regard it as having such an original reference. Happily, the expressions which are used by the apostle are, in themselves, not difficult of interpretation, and all that the expositor has to do is to ascertain whether *in any one great apostasy all the things here mentioned have occurred*. If so, it is fair to apply the prophecy to such an event; if not so, we must wait still for its fulfillment. The word rendered “falling away” (*apostasia, apostasy*), is of so *general* a character that it may be applied to *any* departure from the faith as it was received in the time of the apostles. {SITI October 25, 1883, p. 473.7}

*And that man of sin*. This is a Hebraism, meaning a man of eminent wickedness; one distinguished for depravity. Comp.John 17:12; Proverbs 6:12, in Heb. The use of the article here-*ho anthropos,*-“*the* man of sin,” is also emphatic, as in the reference to “*the* falling away,” and shows that there is allusion to one of whom they had before heard, and whose character was well known; who would be *the* wicked one by way of eminence. See also verse 8, “*that* wicked”-*ho anomos*. There are two general questions in regard to the proper interpretation of this appellative; the one is, whether it refers to an individual, or to a series of individuals of the same general character, aiming at the accomplishment of the same plans; and the other is, whether there has been any individual, or any series of individuals, since the time of the apostles, who, by eminence, deserve to be called “*the* man of sin.” That the phrase, “*the* man of sin,” may refer to a *succession* of men of the same general character, and that it does so refer here, is evident from the following considerations: (1.) The word “king” is used in Daniel 7:25; 11:36, to which places Paul seems to allude, to denote a succession of kings. (2.) The same is true of the *beast* mentioned in Daniel 7, 8. Revelation 13, representing a kingdom or empire through its successive changes and revolutions. (3.) The same is true of the “*woman* arrayed in purple and scarlet” (Revelation 17:4), which cannot refer to a single woman, but is the emblem of a continued corrupt administration. (4.) It is clear that a succession is intended here, because the work assigned to “the man of sin” cannot be supposed to be that which could be accomplished by a single individual. Statement of the apostle is, that there were then tendencies to such an apostasy, and that “the man of sin” would be revealed at no distant period, and yet that he would continue his work of “lying wonders” until the coming of the Saviour to destroy him. In regard to this “man of sin,’ it may be further observed. (1.) That his appearing was to be *preceded* by the “great apostasy;” and (2.) that he was to continue and perpetuate that apostasy. His rise was to be owing to a great departure from the faith, and then he was to be the principal agent in continuing such a departure by “signs and lying wonders.” He was not himself to *originate* the defection, but was to be the creation or the result of it. He was to rise upon it, or grow out of it, and, by artful arrangements adapted to that purpose, was then to perpetuate it. {SITI October 25, 1883, p. 473.8}

The question now is on the applicability of the phrase “the man of sin” to the Pope. That his rise was *preceded* by a great apostasy, or departure from the purity of the simple gospel, as revealed in the New Testament, cannot reasonably be doubted by any one acquainted with the history of the church. That he is the *creation* or *result* of that apostasy, it is equally clear. That he is the grand agent in *continuing* it, is equally manifest. Is the phrase itself one that is properly applicable to him? Is it proper to speak of the Pope of Rome, as he has actually appeared, as “*the* man of sin?” In reply to this, it might be sufficient to refer to the general character of the Papacy, and to its influence in upholding and perpetuating various forms of iniquity in the world. It would be easy to show that there has been no dynasty or system that has contributed so much to uphold and perpetuate sins of various kinds on the earth as the Papacy. No other one has been so extensively and so long the patron of superstition; and there are vices of the grossest character which all along have been fostered by its system of celibacy, indulgences, monasteries, and absolutions, that it would be a better illustration of the meaning of the phrase “man of sin,” as applicable to the Pope of Rome, to look at the general character of the Popes themselves. Though there may have been some exceptions, yet there never has been a *succession* of men of so decidedly wicked character as have occupied the Papal throne since the great apostasy commenced. A very few references to the characters of the Popes will furnish an illustration of this point. Pope Vagilus to the Pontifical throne through the blood of his predecessor. Pope Joan-the Roman Catholic writers tell us-a female in disguise, was elected and confirmed Pope, as John. Pistana says that “she became with child by some of those that were round about her; that she miscarried, and died on her way from the Lateran and to the temple.” Pope Marcellinus sacrificed to idols. Concerning Pope Honorius, the Council of Constantinople decreed: “We have caused Honorius, the late Pope of Old Rome, to be *accursed*; for that in all things he followed the mind of Sergius the *heretic*, and confirmed his wicked doctrines.” ... Of the popes, Platina, a Roman Catholic, says: “The chair of Saint Peter was usurped, rather than possessed, by moniters of wickedness, ambition, and bribery. They left no wickedness unpracticed.” See the *New Englander,* April, 1844, p. 285, 286. {SITI October 25, 1883, p. 473.9}

*Sitteth in the temple of God*. That is in the Christian Church. It is by no means necessary to understand this of the temple at Jerusalem, which was standing at the time this epistle was written, for (1.) the phrase “the temple of God” is several times used with reference to the Christian Church: 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:21; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; Revelation 3:12; and (2.) the temple was the proper symbol of the church, and an apostle trained amid the Hebrew institutions would naturally speak of the Church as the temple of God. The temple at Jerusalem was regarded as the peculiar dwelling-place of God on earth. When the Christian Church was founded, it was spoken of as the peculiar dwelling-place of God. See the passages referred to above. He dwelt among his people. He was with them, and walked with them, and manifested himself among them-as he had done in the ancient temple. The usage in the New Testament would not lead us to restrict this language to an *edifice* for a “church,” as the word is now commonly used, but rather to suppose that it denotes the Church as a society; and the idea is, that the Antichrist here referred to would present himself in the midst of that church as claiming the honors due to God alone. In the temple at Jerusalem God himself presided. There he gave laws to his people; there he manifested himself as God; and there he was worshiped. The reign of the “man of sin,” would be *as if* he should sit there. In the Christian Church he would usurp the place which God had occupied in the temple. He would claim divine attributes and homage. He would give laws and responses as God did there. He would be regarded as the head of all ecclesiastical power; the source from which all authority emanated; the same in the Christian Church which God himself was in the temple. This does not then refer primarily to the Pope is sitting in any particular Church on any particular occasion, but to his claiming *in* the Church of Christ the authority and homage which God had in the temple at Jerusalem. And whatever place, whether in a cathedral or elsewhere, this authority should be exercised, all that the language here conveys would be fulfilled. No one can fail to see that the authority claimed by the Pope of Rome meets the full force of the language used here by the apostle. {SITI October 25, 1883, p. 473.10}

*Showing himself that he is God*. This does not necessarily mean that he actually, in so many words, claimed *to be God;* but that he usurped the place of God, and claimed the prerogatives of God. If the names of God are given to him, or are claimed by him; if he receives the honors due to God; if he asserts a dominion like that of God, then all that the language fairly implies will be fulfilled. The following expressions, applied to the Pope of Rome by Catholic writers without any rebuke from the Papacy, will show how entirely applicable this is to the pretended head of the church. He has been styled “Our Lord God the Pope; another God upon earth; King of kings, and Lord of lords. The same is the dominion of God and the Pope. To believe that our Lord God the Pope might not decree as he decreed, is heresy. The power of the Pope is greater than all creative power, and extends itself to things celestial, terrestial, and infernal. The Pope doeth whatsoever he listeth, even things unlawful, and is more than God.” See the authority of these extraordinary declarations in Bishop Newton, *On the Prophecies,* diss. xxii. How can it be doubted that the reference here is to the Papacy? Language could not be plainer, and is not possible to conceive that anything can ever occur which would furnish a more manifest fulfillment of this prophecy. Indeed, interpreted by the claims of the Papacy, it stands among the very clearest of all the predictions in the sacred Scriptures. E. J. W. {SITI October 25, 1883, p. 473.11}