**“2 Samuel 7:1-16” The Signs of the Times, 10, 26.**

E. J. Waggoner

**NOTES ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.
JULY 20 - 2 Samuel 7:1-16.**

“And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies.” Verse 1. At what time this was it is impossible to determine; probably not long after the events recorded in the preceding chapter. “That the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.” Verse 2. This is the first mention of Nathan the prophet, who seems to have been David’s constant adviser. He must have been considerably younger than David, for we read (1 Chronicles 29:29) that he wrote a history of the acts of David, and in 2 Chronicles 9:29 that he did the same for Solomon’s reign. It is not certain, however, from this latter passage, that he outlived Solomon, for it may be that the writings of the two writers referred to are supplementary. That he was a true prophet is evident from the plain rebuke which he administered to David, as recorded in the twelfth chapter. {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 406.1}

It may not be amiss to notice, in passing, the statements in 1 Chronicles 29:2 and 2 Chronicles 9:29. None of these records by Nathan, Samuel, and Gad, Ahijah, and Iddo, are now extant. Nothing more is known of them than the brief mention in the above verses. Yet there is not the slightest doubt but that they were just as much inspired as were any of the records that we have. Why they were allowed to be lost, we cannot tell, nor does it concern us. The simple fact is that much has been written by inspiration that has not been given to us. In Jeremiah 36 we have an instance of a message directly from the Lord, which was not preserved for us. Of course these things were not of especial importance to us, else they would have been preserved. God has given us, in his word as committed to us, everything that is necessary to enable us to do his will; until we have put in practice all that we have received, it ill becomes us to find fault with him for not giving us more of the same kind of instruction. {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 406.2}

“And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the Lord is with thee.” Verse 3. Nathan was a true prophet, and one who was intrusted with important messages from the Lord; yet on this occasion he gave advice that was directly contrary to the mind of the Lord. This does not show any evil intention on his part, but simply that prophets were not inspired at all times. David’s plan was a laudable one, and reasoning from a human standpoint no objections to it could be seen. But Nathan did not know the mind of the Lord on this subject. If there was any blame attaching to him; it was simply in giving his own opinion before asking counsel of the Lord. {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 406.3}

At all events we read of no rebuke administered; but that very night “the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying, Go and tell my servant David, thus saith the Lord, Shalt thou build meet an house for me to dwell in?” The words, “Shalt thou build me an house?” are equivalent to “Thou shalt not build me an

house.” Thus in Psalm 95:10, margin, we have the literal rendering “If they shall enter into my rest,” meaning, “they shall not enter into my rest.” {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 406.4}

From 1 Chronicles 22:5-10, it is evident that much more was told to David than is here recorded. David there tells Solomon that the reason why he himself was not allowed to build a house of the Lord was that he had shed blood abundantly, and made great wars. From the further statement that Solomon, to whom would be intrusted the work of building the temple, would be a man of peace, and that there should be rest and quietness in Israel all his days, we may suppose that it was not simply the wars that David had made, but also those which he was yet to make, that made it improper for him to build the Lord’s house. Besides the fact that David had shed much blood, the fact that the kingdom was not yet fully established, was an objection, because he would be liable to interruption in the work by enemies. To him it was given to copnquer the enemies of Israel, and settle the affairs of the kingdom on a solid basis, so that his successor might prosecute the work undisturbed. {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 406.1}

The readiness with which the prophet recalled his first advice, at the command of the Lord, is worthy of note. He did not let a false pride keep him from telling the Lord’s message, even though he was compelled to contradict his previous advice. As we look at the case, we can readily see how much better it was for Nathan to do so than to the demur; for in the latter case he would suffer the additional qualification of having his counsel contradicted by some other prophet, and he himself perhaps degraded from his office. Yet we are not always able to reason so clearly in our own cases. We should ever be thankful to God when he gives us an opportunity to correct our own mistakes, and should esteem it one of his greatest blessings that he points them out to us. E. J. W. {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 406.2}

**“Condemned and Justified” The Signs of the Times, 10, 26.**

E. J. Waggoner

In the two preceeding articles on the law we have considered it simply in the light of Christ’s declaration to the young man: “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” No one who contemplates the breadth of the law, and believes the inspired statement that it is perfect-the righteousness of God-can feel disposed to deny the statement of the wise man, that to fear God and keep his commandments is the whole duty of man. Obedience to a perfect law must produce a perfect character, and perfection is all that can be required of anybody. {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 408.1}

But while we have been making these statements upon the authority of the Bible, some reader has doubtless called to mind the fact that Paul says that “by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified;” and he wants this harmonized with what has been said; or, possibly, he may think that it entirely overthrows our argument. We will examine it. The passage in full reads thus: “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” Romans 3:20. {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 408.2}

To understand this verse we must take it in its connection. But first, to the verse itself. Why can no flesh be justified in the sight of God by the deeds of the law? The last clause of the verse gives the answer: “For by the law is the knowledge of sin.” Well, why does the fact that the law gives the knowledge of sin make it impossible for any one to be justified by it? Read from the ninth verse onward, and you will see. Paul says: “We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.” This he has done in the first and second chapters. “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” Romans 3:10-12. After particularizing somewhat on this point, the apostle says: “Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” Verse 19. Then follows the conclusion, “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.” {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 408.3}

Now we can see the force of Paul’s conclusion. Since the law gives us the knowledge of sin, by pointing it out, it condemns the whole world, for there is no man that has not sinned; all the world are guilty before God. And this is a sufficient reason why no one can be justified by the law. The law that justifies a criminal is a bad law; but the law of God is “holy, and just, and good;” it will not justify a sinner. {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 409.1}

Let us illustrate this by a familiar example. Here is a man who has been taken in the act of robbing a store. He is brought into court for trial. Now will he stand up before the judge, and declare that he wants no counsel; that all he desires is simple justice, and then demand that the law be read, and declare his willingness to rest his case upon that alone? Certainly not, unless he desires to live in prison. He knows that the law does not justify any man in committing robbery; and he will therefore seek in every way possible to evade it. But there is no possibility of evading the law of God, and consequently all the world stands condemned. No one can fail to see that if the law justified sinners, then sin would cease to be sin; theft, murder, and adultery would be legal acts, and anarchy would prevail and be confirmed throughout the land. {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 409.2}

If, however, an innocent man is accused of a crime, he may with all confidence appeal to the law. He does not wish to have anybody turn aside the law from its true meaning. He is anxious that his acts be compared with the plain reading of the law. And when that law is read, it justifies him, because he has done nothing but what it commends. By these two examples we see the working of a good law: it condemns the guilty, and justifies the one who has scrupulously obeyed its requirements. That this is the case with the law of God is seen by our Saviour’s words: “For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.” John 3:20, 21. {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 409.3}

It is plain that under no circumstances can a good law justify crime. The man may say, “This is the first time I ever violated the law.” But the judge would reply, “You ought not to have violated it this time; perfect obedience is what the law requires.” Or if he professes his determination to keep the law strictly forever afterward, that will not justify his sin, for he never can do more than his duty, and thus make up for past neglect. Whichever way he turns, the law stands in his way condemning him. Now shall we say that because the law thus condemns sin it is unworthy of respect, and ought to be abolished? By no means; no one but a confirmed reprobate would desire such a thing. The fact that it condemns the sinner shows it to be a good law, and lovers of the right will rejoice to see it maintained. {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 409.4}

The position, then, thus far, is this: To keep the commandments is the whole duty of man; it is only by keeping them that we can have eternal life. But no man has kept them, neither can any man show a perfect record in this respect. “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23. How, then, it may well be asked, can any one be saved? How can we become justified? The answer comes: “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” Romans 3:24-26. {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 409.5}

Christ was sinless; the law was in his heart. As the Son of God his life was worth more than those of all created beings, whether in Heaven or on earth. He saw the hopeless condition of the world, and came “to seek and to save that which was lost.” Luke 19:10. To do this he took upon himself our nature, Hebrews 2:16, 17; and on him was laid “the iniquity of us all.” Isaiah 53:6. In order to save us, he had to come where we were, or, in other words, he had to take the position of a lost sinner. Thus the apostle says: “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.” 2 Corinthians 5:21. It was this fact that caused him such anguish in the garden. He felt that the sins upon him were shutting him away from God. It was this that caused him, when hanging on the cross, to utter that cry of bitter agony, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” It was not physical pain that crushed the life out of the Saviour of the world, but the load of sin which he bore. “The wages of sin is death.” Romans 6:23. Sin will cause the death of every one who is not freed from it, for “sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” James 1:15. And because Christ was “numbered with the transgressors,” he suffered the penalty of transgression. {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 409.6}

But the suffering of Christ was not on his own account. He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.” 1 Peter 2:22. He was one who could safely appeal to the law to justify him, for he had never violated it. The law had nothing against him. “But he was woudned for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities.” Isaiah 53:5. He alone has done more than his duty-more than was required of him; consequently he has merit to impart to others. This grace is freely given to all who believe in him. Thus: Our past life has been nothing but sin, for whatever good we may have thought to do, it was far from perfect. But we believe implicitly in Christ, and have faith in the efficacy of his sacrifice; and because of this simple faith, Christ will take our load of sins upon himself, and we will be accounted as though we had never committed them. He can take them without fear of any evil consequences to himself, because he has already suffered the extreme penalty of the law for them. And since our sins are taken from us, we are as though we had never broken the law, and therefore it can have nothing against us-it cannot condemn us. So we stand before the court justified. Justified by what? By our works? No; justified by faith in Christ. Our works condemned us; Christ has justified us. And so Paul’s conclusion is true, that “a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” Romans 3:28. {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 409.7}

We now see that Paul does not contradict himself when he says (Romans 2:13), “For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified,” and when he says (Romans 3:20), that “by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified.” Both are true. The doers of the law are always justified, as we have before shown, and the only reason why there is no one who is justified by the law is because there is no one who has done all the law. {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 409.8}

In this article we have given only a brief outline of the way by which the sinner is justified. In subsequent articles we shall consider his relation to the law after he is justified, and also how, although no one is justified by the law, our Saviour’s words apply with equal force to all, “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” E. J. W. {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 409.9}

**“The Promise of His Coming” The Signs of the Times, 10, 26.**

E. J. Waggoner

That there was once upon this earth a man called Jesus of Nazareth, scarcely anyone will now deny. Whatever conflicting views different ones may hold concerning his nature and office, all agree on this one fact. That he was taken, “and by wicked hands crucified and slain,” is quite generally conceded. All, however, are not aware that the admission of these facts is virtually an admission of the inspiration of the Bible, but so it is. Those very things, which no human wisdom could foresee, were recorded by holy prophets hundreds of years before they occurred. This fact shows that those prophets were inspired, or, as Peter declares, they “spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” 2 Peter 1:21. {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 409.10}

But this much being true, we must admit further that that which they wrote of the mission of Jesus was also true. Paul sums it up in brief when he says that “to him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.” Acts 10:43. Christ is, then, as all Christians agree, the “only begotten Son of God;” he is “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world;” he is the divine Word that, having been with God in the beginning, was made flesh and dwelt upon the earth. John 1. The incidents of his life, his subjection to his parents, his baptism, his temptation in the wilderness, his wonderful teachings, his marvelous miracles showing at once his tenderness and his power, his betrayal and crucifixion, and finally his triumphant resurrection and ascension to Heaven,-these are familiar to hundreds of thousands. {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 409.11}

Aside from his wonderful sacrifice, which demands the unending love of all creatures, the character of Jesus as a man was most lovable. His disciples who had been with him night and day for more than three years, had learned to love him devotedly, both for what he was and what he promised them. On him all their hopes centered. Their feelings were well expressed by Peter, who, when they were asked if they would leave Jesus, said, “Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.” We can imagine, then, to some extent, their grief when Jesus said to them: “Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you.” John 13:33. It was the blasting of all their hopes; their hearts were filled with anguish. Jesus, whom they loved, was to go away, and even though they should lay down their lives for him, he would not take them along. {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 409.12}

But the compassionate Saviour would not leave his children in torturing suspense. Noticing their despondent looks, he said: “Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” John 14:1-3. {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 409.13}

“Ye believe in God, believe also in me.” What can these words mean, but that the words which he was about to utter were the words of God himself, true and unchangeable? Whatever this promise means, then, it will as surely be fulfilled as that God is a God of truth. We can rely upon it implicitly. {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 409.14}

And now as to the meaning of the promise. How could it be made more clear? The gist of it is contained in these simple words: “I will come again.” He was here then, a real being. The word “again,” meaning “once more,” implies a repetition of the same thing. That is, that he would come in the same form in which he then was,-glorified, of course, as we shall see,-but a real, tangible being,-Jesus of Nazareth. There is a great deal contained in the three verses which we have quoted, but at present we are concerned only with the simple fact that Christ has pledged his word to come again. {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 409.15}

The time which Jesus spent on this earth, from his birth in Bethlehem until his ascension from the Mount of Olives, is known as the first advent, or coming of Christ. There is no question but that he had been upon the earth many times before, but that was his first appearance in connection with the great plan of salvation. And so, although he has since been on earth continuously, by his representative, the Holy Spirit, his second coming must be limited to that one mentioned in the promise, “I will come *again*.” This promise cannot be fulfilled by anything except by his personal presence in glory. It will be his second coming in connection with the great plan of salvation-this time to complete the work by taking his people to himself. {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 410.1}

That we are not mistaken in saying that Christ in comforting his disciples, gave promise of a second coming, is proved by the words of Paul, in Hebrews 9:27, 28: “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” This places the matter beyond dispute. {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 410.2}

This text also settles another much mooted question, that of a future probation. “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgment.” How long after death the Judgment takes place must be determined by other texts. The general truth is stated that men die but once, and that after that their future fate is determined by the Judgment. “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” That is, since men have but one life,-one probation,-which ends with their death, so Christ was only once offered. His offering had reference only to men in this present life. If man was to have two or more probations, then it would be necessary for two or more offerings to be made in his behalf; but there was only one offering. At his advent, Christ was offered “to bear the sins of many.” The Lord “laid on him the iniquity of us all.” Isaiah 53:6. “In his own body” he bore our sins on the tree. 1 Peter 2:24. In order to save us from sin, he was made to be sin (2 Corinthians 5:21); the innocent One was counted as guilty in order that the guilty might be accounted innocent. The benefits of this sacrifice are now free to all who will accept it, while Jesus is pleading its merits before the Father. But when he comes “the second time,” he will be “without sin;” he will then no longer act as substitute for sinners; no longer will he assume any responsibility in their behalf. The sins of the righteous will have been blotted out, and those of the impenitent rolled back upon their own heads. There can then be no more probation for them unless Christ should again take upon himself their sins and make another sacrifice; for there is no salvation in any other. Acts 4:12. And since Christ makes but one offering, it follows that their sins remain upon them, to sink them into perdition. {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 410.3}

In the texts already quoted, there is sufficient proof that the promised coming is not at the death of the saints, neither the conversion of sinners. He appears “to them that look for him;” to those who “love his appearing.” And this coming is not death, for it is only the “second” coming; if death were that coming, then there would be many millions of comings, for not an instant of time passes in which men do not die. He said that he would come “again;” now we submit that this can with no propriety be applied to death, unless his first coming was death, and they were all dead when he was speaking for “again” signifies repetition. {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 410.4}

But we have an inspired comment on this point in the last chapter of John. Christ had just signified to Peter by what death he should glorify God, when that disciple, turning about, saw John following, and asked, “What shall this man do?” “Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.” Verse 22. Now if the coming of Christ is at the death of his saints, these words of Christ are equivalent to this: “If I will that he live until he dies, what is that to thee?” But such a substitution makes utter nonsense of the passage. Then when Christ spoke of his coming, he had no reference whatever to death. This will be still more evident as we consider texts that describe the manner of his coming. E. J. W. {SITI July 3, 1884, p. 410.5}

**“The Sabbath-School” The Signs of the Times, 10, 27.**

E. J. Waggoner

**LESSON FOR THE PACIFIC COAST—JULY 16**

1. On what occasion did Christ deliver the discourse recorded in the fourteenth chapter of John? {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.1}

2. What had Jesus said that caused the disciples sorrow? John 13:33. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.2}

3. Where was he going? John 13:1. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.3}

4. Was he going to the Father immediately? {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.4}

5. With what words did he comfort his troubled disciples? John 14:1-3. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.5}

6. What idea is conveyed by the use of the word “again”? {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.6}

7. What testimony does an inspired apostle bear on this point? Hebrews 9:27, 28. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.7}

8. For what purpose does Christ appeared unto them that look for him? {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.8}

9. In what different ways will his coming affect the righteous and the wicked? Isaiah 66:5. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.9}

10. What did Christ’s sake he would do for his disciples at his second coming? John 14:3. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.10}

11. Then since he comes only the “second time,” what must we conclude? {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.11}

12. When, after Christ’s resurrection, Peter asked what John’s work would be, what did Jesus reply? John 21:20-22. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.12}

13. What saying immediately went abroad? Verse 23. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.13}

14. Why did they think he would not die? {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.14}

15. Does the inspired writer made a distinction between death and the coming of Christ? John 21:23. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.15}

16. Can you find in Christ’s promise to his disciples, proof that his coming does not mean the conversion of sinners? {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.16}

17. Will Christ come to earth in person? 1 Thessalonians 4:16. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.17}

18. To what will the manner of his coming be similar? Acts 1:10, 11. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.18}

19. How was he seemed to go into heaven? Acts 1:9. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.19}

20. Is the one who is coming the same one who was crucified and buried here on earth? Ephesians 4:8-10. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.20}

21. As Christ’s went up, what received him? Acts 1:9. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.21}

22. With what will he come? Revelation 1:7. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.22}

23. How many will see him when he returns? {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.23}

24. Is it probable that before Christ comes any one will teach that he has actually come in a secret manner? Matthew 24:26. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.24}

25. Should we believe such teaching? {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.25}

26. How can we prove it to be false? Matthew 26:27. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.26}

27. Who will attend the Saviour when he returns? Matthew 25:31. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.27}

28. What part will the angels have to act? Matthew 24:31. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.28}

**L ESSON FOR A UGUST 2**

1. What doctrine occupies a prominent place in the preaching of the apostle? 2 Peter 1:16. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.29}

2. When had they been eye-witnesses of the glory of Christ’s second coming? Verses 17, 18. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.30}

3. To what occasion does Peter refer? Matthew 17:1-5. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.31}

4. Did they have any strong evidence to present than that of their own senses? 2 Peter 1:19. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.32}

5. How early was Christ’s second coming a subject of prophecy? Jude 14. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.33}

6. How long after the creation did Enoch live? {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.34}

7. How long before the birth of Christ? {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.35}

8. Who are the “saints” referred to in Enoch’s prophecy? Jude 14 (Revised Version); Matthew 25:31. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.36}

9. What other patriarch of ancient times prophesied of the Lord second coming? Job 19:25-27. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.37}

10. What testimony did David bear on this subject? Psalm 50:3-5; 96:11-13. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.38}

11. For what purpose did he say the Lord would come? Psalm 50:5. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.39}

12. With what words of Christ is this agreed? John 14:3. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.40}

13. What did the apostle John say at the thought of Christ in coming? Revelation 22:20. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.41}

14. Why did he say this? {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.42}

15. In the day of the Lord’s coming what will be said? Isaiah 25:9. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.43}

16. Why will the Lord saved these persons? {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.44}

18. Who are the ones that will be rewarded when the Lord comes? 2 Timothy 4:8. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.45}

19. If we do not love to hear of or think about the Lord’s coming, of what may we be assured? {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.46}

20. Would we not naturally expect some revelation to be made concerning the time of so important and event? Amos 3:7. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.47}

21. What does Paul say to the brethren? 1 Thessalonians 5:1. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.48}

22. Of what “times and seasons” is he speaking? 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.49}

23. If there was no need for Paul to write concerning the time, what must we conclude? {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.50}

24. Why are the brethren not ignorant of the time? 1 Thessalonians 5:4, 5. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.51}

25. What makes them children of the light? Psalm 119:105. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.52}

26. Upon whom will the day of the Lord, as a thief? 1 Thessalonians 4:2, 3; Luke 21:35. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.53}

27. What will cause men to be blind to the near coming of Christ? Luke 21:34, 35. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.54}

28. Can the people of God be called “dwellers” upon this earth? Hebrews 11:13; 1 Peter 2:11. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.55}

29. Where is there home? Hebrews 11:16; Philippians 3:20 (Revised Version). {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.56}

The words of Christ in John 14:1-3 are very significant when we consider them carefully, in the light of his previous words. The last Passover supper, Jesus had told his disciples once more that he was about to leave them. He had previously told the unbelieving Jews that they would die in their sins, and that whither he went they could not come (John 8:21). And now to his loved disciples he said: “As I said to the Jews, whither I go ye cannot come; so now I say to you.” John 13:30. Peter, ever zealous, declared himself ready to die for his Master, but even that would not give him the desired privilege of being with the one whom he loved. In this time of sadness and gloom the Saviour spoke the comforting words found in John 14:1-3 and onward. He assured them that the separation would not be final, but that he would return to take them to the mansions prepared for them. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.57}

What the Saviour promised must be considered in the light of what the disciples wanted. They desired his personal presence with them. Now if Jesus promised them something else, his words could contain no comfort for them. We would therefore expect him to promise a literal return for them. And this is just what he did. “I will come again.” This can mean nothing but that he would once more be as really present with them as he was then. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.58}

How can we know that Christ is not already come? and if he has not come, how can we tell when that event takes place? These questions have been answered in advance. When he comes it is to execute judgment upon all that are ungodly (Jude 15); his people will be taken to be with him forever (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17); but they are yet separated from him. Many will teach that Christ is come, but we need not be deceived. “For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” Matthew 24:27. He will come in the same manner in which he ascended to heaven (Acts 1:11), a real, personal being, “the same Jesus,” and “every I shall see him.” Revelation 1:7. There will then be no need for one to tell another that the Lord is come, for none can be ignorant of the fact. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.59}

Why do we have some much to say about the coming of the Lord? Simply because we find so much about it in the Bible. There is no other subject which occupies so much space. Peter says (2 Peter 1:16) that the apostles had made known the power and the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that they had evidence of that which they declared. Besides their personal testimony, we have, as he says, the “more sure word of prophecy,” which speaks with no uncertain sound on the subject of Christ’s coming. Indeed that is the principal object for which they were given. They all point to the one event. Peter, after speaking in the third chapter of his second epistle with great positiveness concerning the coming of the Lord, says that Paul in his epistles speaks of these things (verses 15, 16); this statement we can easily verified by an examination of the writings of Paul. In them the coming of the Lord is spoken of familiarly as a thing well understood. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.60}

And why should it not be so? What more natural than that the event which is to be the consummation of all things should be often spoken of? Christ had comforted the hearts of his sorrowing disciples with the promise that he would come to receive them to himself. Now if they had never said anything about that promise, we would say that their love for their Lord, and their desire to be with him was not very ardent. We would measure their love for their Master by the earnestness of their longing for his return. They did love the Saviour with intense devotion, and consequently his return was their constant theme. Does any one say that they were too sanguine, or that they were mistaken? Such a statement is nothing less than charging the Lord himself with deception, for they said nothing but what he had taught them. If they were mistaken in this, we have no warrant that they were not mistaken in everything, and in that case what becomes of our Bible? No, they were not deceived, and we can depend upon what the Holy Spirit has preserved for our instruction. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.61}

Only those who love his appearing will receive the crown when the Lord comes. 2 Timothy 4:8. It is only to those who look for him that he appears unto salvation. The mere fact that we talk about the coming of the Lord does not prove that we love his appearing but it is certain that we do not love his appearing if we do not love to think and talk about it. If we love the Lord we shall certainly love his appearing. How may we know that we really love him, and are preparing for his coming? He says, “If ye love me keep my commandments.” If we are walking in his footsteps, obeying his voice, we show our love for him. E. J. W. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 422.62}

**“A New Creature in Christ” The Signs of the Times, 10, 27.**

E. J. Waggoner

We have shown from the Scriptures that the whole duty of man is to keep the commandments, and that only by so doing can we gain eternal life. We have also found that the law, being perfect and holy, condemns the whole world, and that we can be freed from this condemnation only by faith in Christ. The law condemns; Christ has opened the way for pardon. When the sinner has acknowledged his guilt, and has accepted Christ as his Saviour, he can say, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 5:1. We now inquire, What is his relation to the law from this time on? and, Does this condition of things make any less true the statement that to fear God and keep his commandments is the whole duty of man? {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 424.1}

In 2 Corinthians 5:17 Paul describes a man in this justified state: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.” We have heard this text quoted to prove that a man in Christ has no more use for the law, that such old things as that are done away. The absurdity of such a claim is manifest on its very face; for if that supposition were true, it would amount to saying that the law is abolished only for Christians, but that it is in full force until a man becomes a Christian; and since Christians and sinners live side by side in this world, we would have the anomaly of the law being both abolished and in full force at the same time! {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 424.2}

But the eighteenth verse tells what the new things are: “And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.” If a man in Christ does all things that are of God, he certainly will not violate God’s law. The statement of what Christ did for us, proves this: “Who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” Verse 19. The act of reconciliation implies that certain parties have been estranged from each other-have been enemies. So Paul, in Romans 5:8-10, shows that while we were sinners-transgressing the law-we were the enemies of God, and that we are reconciled by the death of his Son. The prophet Isaiah (ch. 30:9) shows very clearly in what rebellion against God consists, where he says that “this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord.” And Paul also states that the carnal mind is enmity against God, simply because “it is not subject to the law of God.” Romans 8:7. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 424.3}

Since, then, our enmity to God while we were sinners consisted simply in disobedience to his law, it must necessarily follow that when we are reconciled we will keep the law. Indeed, the very act of reconciliation implies submission on our part to the requirements of God. Paul goes on to say (2 Corinthians 5:20) that having received the commission from God, “we [that is, the ministers of Christ] are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 424.4}

This means simply that the work of the gospel is to persuade men to keep the law of God. The thing is stated in plain words by the apostle Peter, when he says, “The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of God endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” 1 Peter 1:24, 25. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 424.5}

The point, however, is established beyond all controversy by the closing words of 2 Corinthians 5: “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” The turn which some give to the first part of this verse, viz., that Christ was made a sin-offering for us, robs the text of all its force. It is true that Christ was our sin-offering, but that is not what the apostle here states. God made Christ (the sinless one) to be sin for us. He was made in all things “like unto his brethren;” and that means not simply as to the outward, physical frame, but that he bore sin, just as we do. The sins that he bore were not his own, but ours. He “knew no sin,” yet “the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” Isaiah 53:6. Although the sins that he bore were ours, they were counted as his own, and so caused his death. “He was wounded for our transgression, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.” Isaiah 53:5. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 424.6}

And why was this done? Why was the spotless Lamb of God made to be sin for us? Paul answers: “That we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” What is the righteousness of God? We have already shown from Isaiah 51:6, 7 that it is nothing else but the law of God. Then Paul’s words mean that Christ was made to be sin for us in order that, in him, we might be conformed to the law of God. This, then, is what it is to be a new creature in Christ; it is to put away the old life of sin, and to become reconciled to God by keeping his law. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 424.7}

In the second chapter of Ephesians Paul briefly states the change from being dead in trespasses and sins to being quickened, and made to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. This is done because God is rich in mercy. We read: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast.” Verses 8, 9. The term “saved” is sometimes used in an accommodated sense. We are really saved only when we are given the victory over death, and are made immortal in the kingdom of God. This salvation is brought to us “at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 1:13. But since this everlasting salvation is given only to those who overcome their sins (Revelation 3:21), we are said to be saved when we are freed from our past sins through the pardoning mercy of God. If we continue in this condition, we will receive our full salvation. In this place the word may be taken in both senses. “Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Simply a repetition of Romans 3:28. God was not under obligation to save us, and we could not atone for past sins, and thus earn salvation. Our salvation is wholly due to the infinite mercy of God through the merits of Christ and consequently we have nothing whereof to boast. Shall we conclude from this, then, that Christ does everything for us, that is, in our stead, and that we have no call to work for ourselves? Paul does not so teach. “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:20. By being “created in Christ Jesus,” we are made new creatures in Christ; and for what? That we might be able to perform good works, for that is what God from the beginning designed that we should do, and this is our whole duty. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 424.8}

And now we are able to understand fully Christ’s reply to the young ruler who asked the way of life. Matthew 19:18-21. While he said, “if thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments,” you will notice that he did not leave him with that. Christ well knew that the man, in spite of his self-righteousness was a sinner. By a simple test he showed that the young man was not only covetous, but that he did not love his neighbor as well as he did himself, and that he did not love God with all his heart. He was selfish, and loved himself and his property more than he did God and his neighbors; and so he was a violator of all the commandments, for he broke the two great precepts upon which they hang. (Matthew 22:36-40.) Christ well knew that the young man could not justify himself, nor even keep the commandments as they should be kept, in his own strength, and so he added the words, “Come, and follow me.” What for? That in Christ he might be a new creature; that, whereas by himself he had utterly failed of fulfilling the righteousness of God, in Chist, he might attain to that; in short, that he might be enabled to keep the commandments. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 424.9}

And so it still remains a fact that to fear God and keep his commandments is the whole duty of man and Christ has simply come to our aid, to help us to do our duty. While he assumes the responsibility of the sins which the believer has committed in the past and thus sets him once more in the right way, justified before God, he tells him that “without me you can do nothing.” We are “created in Christ Jesus unto good works,” but it is only while we abide in him that we can bear any fruit. Without Christ our efforts to obey God are vain struggles; with the strength which he gives we can do all things, and at last stand “complete in him.” And this opens the way for us to understand how it is that Christ is the end of the law, which will next be considered. E. J. W. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 424.10}

**“Manner of Christ’s Coming” The Signs of the Times, 10, 27.**

E. J. Waggoner

Last week we gave two texts (John 14:1-3; Hebrews 9:27, 28) which contain a direct promise of Christ’s second coming. If the subject were mentioned nowhere else in the Bible, these two texts would be sufficient. They are unequivocal statements of a fact, and the promises of God are not yea and nay. From those texts we concluded that the second coming of Christ must be as real and literal as his first. We shall now produce positive testimony to that effect. We would first, however, remind the reader that every text that speaks of the manner or object of Christ’s coming, is additional proof of the fact that he will come again. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 425.1}

In his first letter to the Thessalonians, the apostle Paul warns the brethren against indulging in hopeless sorrow for their dead friends, as though they were lost. He assures them, “by the word of the Lord,” that those who live until the Lord comes will have no precedence over those who fall asleep in Jesus. We will not be with Christ any sooner than they are. And then he proceeds to tell how this can be. “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 425.2}

We shall have occasion to use this text again, and we pass it for the present. Turning to the first chapter of Acts, we read the account of Christ’s ascension. In his gospel, Luke had previously written, “And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.” Luke 24:50, 51. In Luke’s second narrative we have this account: “And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” Acts 1:9-11. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 425.3}

There is no mistaking these words. Christ was there in person. In bodily form, while in the act of blessing his disciples, he ascended to heaven. And the angels declared that “the same Jesus”-“the Lord himself,” 1 Thessalonians 4:16-should come in exactly the same manner as had left the earth. Now, as showing the perfect harmony of the Bible narrative, we quote right here the words of John: “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.” Revelation 1:7. The one who claims that the coming of Christ is death, or conversion, or anything else than a literal return to earth, squarely contradicts these plain texts. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 425.4}

Our Saviour foresaw that before his return many would be engaged in this very work. In order to draw the attention of man away from the real advent of Christ, as described in the Bible, Satan and his angels will transform themselves, not merely into angels of light, but into the appearance of Christ himself, and will “show great signs and wonders; insomuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” Matthew 24:24. They will claim that Christ is already come, and will work miracles to support the claim. How, then, can we be sure that they are not the Christ; here is the sure guide: “Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth; behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” Matthew 24:26, 27. The reason why it will be impossible to deceive the elect, is because they will remember and implicitly believe the plain declarations of the Bible. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 425.5}

These texts prove not only that the coming of the Lord is a literal event, but that it is yet future. Do you still say that it took place on the day of Pentecost? We answer that Paul’s words in Hebrews 9:28 were written many years after that time. None of the apostles had written a line at that time, and, since the resurrection of Christ, had engaged in no public work whatever. Is it claimed that the destruction of Jerusalem answers to the coming of the Lord, we remind you that the book of Revelation was written more than a score of years after Jerusalem was conquered by Titus; and in that book, besides the description already quoted (Revelation 1:7), almost the closing words are these: “And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” Revelation 22:12. “He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly.” Verse 20. These forbid the application of the promise to any event before the close of the first century. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 425.6}

Again, no event has ever yet occurred comparable to the coming of the Lord as described in the Bible. Peter, in answer to those who, professing to be able to see no signs of such an event, derisively asked, “Where is the promise of his coming?” says: “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” 2 Peter 3:10. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 426.1}

The psalmist says: “Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.” Psalm 50:3-5. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 426.2}

The heavens have not departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; not yet as the glorious appearing of the Son of man in those opening heavens dazzled every eye as does the vivid lightning flash. Not yet have “the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.” Revelation 6:15, 16. The time is still future when the voice of the Archangel and the trump of God shall call the dead in Christ from their graves, and when the living righteous, with glad accord, shall unite in the exclamation: “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.” Isaiah 25:9. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 426.3}

That they will not pass and leave saints and sinners alike unconscious of its arrival. The Lord comes, not as an intercessor, but as a king, “without sin.” There is thenceforward no more mercy for sinners-they receive according to their deeds; no more trials for saints-he appears to them unto salvation. This being so, it is manifestly fool-hardy in any one to say, “We shall know more about it when it comes than we do now.” Yes, we will; but those who put off their knowledge of it until it comes, will learn to their sorrow. While the signs that show that coming near are fulfilling all around us, let us search the Scriptures that we may be children of the light, and, having our lamps trimmed and burning, be able to hail our Lord with joy when he returns. E. J. W. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 426.4}

**“Some Modern Criticism” The Signs of the Times, 10, 27.**

E. J. Waggoner

The apostle Paul wrote that “whatsoever things were written aforetime [referring to the Old Testament Scriptures] were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” Romans 15:4. It would seem that the modern expositor reads it, “Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our *criticism*.” And in his case the word “criticism” means to pull to pieces, and not simply to wait and judge. In the great struggle to make the Bible harmonize with “science,” the subject of miracles has of course been much discussed. Now it happens that “science” has no place in its domain for miracles, and it has therefore occurred as a necessary consequence of the intense desire that the Bible shall not be regarded as being behind the age, that its avowed friends have quite generally set themselves to work to explain all supposed miracles in accordance with “known natural laws.” The latest effort disposes of the miracle of the sun’s standing still at the command of Joshua in the following manner:- {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 434.1}

“A writer in the *Church Quarterly Review* maintains that what the Israelitish leader prayed for was not that the sun and moon might ‘stand still,’ but that they might ‘be silent,’ that is to say, ‘ceased to shine’-*dom shemesh*, as the Hebrew text has it. A storm of hail-stones was the principal cause of the defeat of the allied kings. Joshua, finding that the storm and darkness by which it was accomplished did more toward the overthrow of the enemy than his own troops, naturally prayed that the darkness might continue until the utter ruin of the foe was accomplished. The formidable astronomical objections to the miracle are thus removed by a simple philological discovery, which the reader may accept or not, at his pleasure.” {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 434.2}

We are glad that the *Christian at Work*, from which we clip the above, gives us the privilege of accepting it or not, as we choose. We choose to give such nonsense a wide berth. We are greatly surprised that that journal, and others which lay claim to great Biblical knowledge, should quote with approval a theory which is so directly contradictory to the plain Scripture narrative. It is simply a proof that there is a wide-spread desire to strip the Bible of everything which stands in the way of its acceptance by a self-sufficient, unbelieving world,-in other words to make the way of life so broad that all will find themselves in it without making any effort. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 434.3}

How does this explanation agree with the Bible? Let us see. Our critic says that the sun was simply darkening during the day; the Bible says, “So the sons stood still in the midst of heaven and *hasted not to go down about a whole day*.” We have seen many stormy days when the sun did not shine, but the sun always set at the appointed time. In this instance the sun did not go down, according to Joshua’s command; but if darkness for were what he wished, he would with more propriety have prayed that the sun might hasten its going down, instead of that its course should be stayed. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 434.4}

Again, the sacred historian declares: “And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man.” Joshua 10:14. If the answer to Joshua’s prayer consisted simply in the Lord sending a storm and darkness, we cannot understand this statement, for there have been many stormy days since then; but we can well believe that never since that time has there been so extraordinary an occurrence as the sun’s standing still for a whole day. It will be clearly seen that if a critic had read the entire narrative carefully, his criticism could not have been made. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 434.5}

“But,” says one, “how do *you* explain that miracle?” We don’t explain it; it is entirely beyond our capacity, and that is why we call it a miracle. There are some wonderful things that we *can* account for, but we do not call them miracles. We believe in a God, and therefore we believe in miracles-things entirely beyond the comprehension of human minds. The desire to find an explanation for all recorded miracles and the Bible, arises from a growing unbelief that such things really occur; and to deny the occurrence of miracles is really the same as denying the existence of God. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 434.6}

Perhaps this last statement may not be self-evident to all; we think it can easily be made to appear. God is greater than man; if he were not, he would be simply a man, and therefore not an object of worship. But he is infinite. “Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty and the perfection?” Job 11:7. This question can be answered only in the negative. God is incomprehensible. Then of course his acts must be above the comprehension of man. Paul had thought much on heavenly things, and had been admitted into close communion with the Lord, and he exclaimed, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his waist past finding out.” Romans 11:33. This is only in keeping with what we should expect. Finite minds cannot grasp infinitely. Then of course there must be miracles. And when many things are recorded, all of which are beyond our comprehension, who shall say that some of these are possible and others impossible? Who will dare to limit the power of an infinite God? {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 434.7}

“But,” says another, do you believe that God violates laws of nature, in performing miracles? Again we reply, We do not know; it is impossible to tell. We are very certain that he has often done things that directly conflict with any laws known to man. But then there are many things that even scientific men do not know. So long as we cannot understand God, we cannot understand the laws of nature, for they are his laws. Things that seem impossible to us, may be in perfect harmony with laws of which we know nothing. When the Dutch ambassador told the king of Siam that in his country water sometimes assumed such a condition that man could walk upon it, the king said, “I often thought that you were untruthful, but now I know you lie. It is impossible for man to walk upon water.” Doubtless the king’s scientific men would have said the same thing, and *proved* it by science. It is contrary to the nature of a clock for the hands to move backward, and yet a man can move them backward. The child gazes with wonder upon the steam engine, and cannot comprehend how the engineer can start, stop, or back it at pleasure; but it would be foolishness in him to assert that those things cannot be done. Well, this universe is the great machine which God has made, and which he controls. Between the mind of man and that of the great Architect, there is no more comparison than there is between the ant beside the track, and the man who drives the engine. And so, instead of denying the existence of miracles, we are lost in wonder and admiration of the power that is as infinitely beyond us. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 434.8}

And now a few words by way of application. Some will say, “We did not need this article, for we believed in the miracles of the Bible just as they are recorded.” We are glad of that. But would not such an article as the one from which we have quoted shake your faith? “No.” Why not? Because it directly contradicts the Bible. “But do you profess to know more about the Bible than a learned D. D., who has spent a life-time in its study, and who understands the Hebrew and Greek? You reply, “I can understand the English language, and I know when a man is contradicting the plain statement of the Bible.” Then you are willing to admit that “great men are not always wise,” and that even learned men may be led by their prejudices into grievous and palpable errors? “Certainly.” Well this is just what we wish to have you bear in mind. And now whenever you hear some wise men say that God did not bless and sanctify the seventh day, but only the Sabbath institution, and that he now requires men to observe the first day intead of the seventh, don’t be overawed into acquiescence by the immensity of his learning, but simply ask him for his authority. “To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8:20. E. J. W. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 434.9}

**“The Sabbath-School” The Signs of the Times, 10, 27.**

E. J. Waggoner

**LESSON FOR THE PACIFIC COAST.—AUG. 9**

1. What did Jesus say to this disciples as they were at one time pointing out the splendor of the temple? Matthew 24:1, 2. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.1}

2. What questions they ask him? Verse 3. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.2}

3. Did he rebuke them for making such an inquiry? Verse 4. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.3}

4. Why were they to be so careful? Verse 5. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.4}

5. Did the Lord and courage his disciples to expect his coming immediately? Verse 6. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.5}

6. What terrible things did he say must first come? Verse 7. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.6}

7. With those calamities indicate that the end was at hand? Verse 8. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.7}

8. What else did he say must be done before the end would come? Verse 14. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.8}

9. When did he say that those which were in Judea should flee to the mountains? Verses 15, 16, 10. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.9}

10. What is meant by the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place? Luke 21:20, 21. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.10}

11. When they sought Jerusalem surrounded with armies, what were they to know? *Ib*. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.11}

12. Then to what did Jesus have reference in Matthew 24:15? {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.12}

13. What had Jesus, on a previous occasion, said should take place at the end of the world? Matthew 13:40-43. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.13}

14. At the destruction of Jerusalem to the angels cast all that did even iniquity into a furnace of fire? {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.14}

15. Rather righteous made to shine as the sun in the kingdom of God? {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.15}

16. Then can it be that the destruction of Jerusalem was the “end” to which Christ and the apostles referred? {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.16}

17. To what did he say his coming would be similar? Matthew 24:27. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.17}

18. Following the destruction of Jerusalem, what did he say there would be? Verse 21. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.18}

19. How great would the tribulation be? {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.19}

20. What would be the result, if those days were not shortened? Verse 22. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.20}

21. For whose sake were they to be shortened? *Ib*. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.21}

22. If some of the elect would be saved in consequence of the shortening of those days of trouble, who were they that were to suffer that great tribulation? {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.22}

23. Who were meant by “the elect”? Acts 10:35. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.23}

24. What were the people of God commanded to do when they saw that the destruction of Jerusalem was near? Luke 21:20, 21. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.24}

25. If all the Christians left Jerusalem before it was destroyed, could any of them have suffered in the siege? {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.25}

26. Then can the tribulation of Matthew 24:21, 22 be limited to that at the destruction of Jerusalem? {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.26}

27. Was a time of trouble for the saints of God foretold in prophecy? Daniel 7:25. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.27}

In the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew two subjects are considered-the destruction of Jerusalem, and the coming of the Lord. Concerning these two events only one point is considered, namely, time. There was no question as to whether those things would occur, for Christ had already assured them of that fact; but the question is, “When shall these things be?” It is this question that our Saviour answers in the discourse that follows. Incidentally, it is true, he imparts additional information concerning those events; but the main point in the chapter is to settle the time of their occurrence. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.28}

Although the discourse relates to time, no attempt is made to fix the exact date of either event. Concerning the destruction of Jerusalem he says (we quote the parallel passage in Luke 21:20): “And when ye shall see Jerusalem contest with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.” This is as definitely as that event is located. The disciples are informed as to the events that will show it to be imminent, so that they can escape before the ruin comes. So likewise concerning the coming of the Lord. After relating certain signs, to be considered in detail hereafter, he says: “So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.” Matthew 24:33. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.29}

It is popularly supposed that if all men are not ultimately converted, the gospel will have proved to be a failure. This would indeed be the case if it were anywhere stated that the gospel was designed to accomplish the conversion of all men. The trouble is that men make the mistake of expecting more of the gospel than the Lord ever said it would do. He said (Matthew 24:14) that it should be preached in all the world for a *witness*. Now witness may testify *against* a man as well as for him. The work of a true witness is not to favor any one, but to tell the exact truth and let that justify or condemn according to circumstances. James said that God visited the Gentiles to take *out of them* a people for his name. Acts 15:14. God was perfectly willing and anxious that all should be converted, at the same time he knew that many would remain stubborn and rebellious. If all men are permitted to hear the gospel in its purity, then the gospel will have accomplished its work. It is a witness to all men; to some it will prove a savor of life unto life; to others, a savor of death unto death. 2 Corinthians 2:14-16. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.30}

“This gospel of the kingdom.” In these words the gospel in its entirety is brought to view. The Lord was speaking about his coming, and when he said, “this gospel of the kingdom,” he evidently meant the gospel which proclaims his coming to set up his kingdom. And this is the gospel itself; for the gospel is the good news of salvation; it brings to view the plan by which condemned rebels may be saved from death, and converted into loyal subjects of the kingdom of heaven. But, as we have already seen, the final salvation of man depends upon the coming of Christ. None are saved until the Lord comes for them. To leave the coming of the Lord out of the preaching of the gospel would be to deprive it of all its force. So we say that the preaching of the gospel includes the announcement that the Lord is coming. The gospel is not complete without this. And therefore it is not enough that all nations have heard of Christ; they must also hear of his second coming in glory to save his people, and must have an opportunity to learn of the special preparation necessary to fit them for the event. When this shall have been done, then the end will come, as stated in Matthew 24:14. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.31}

Whatever idea may have been in the minds of the disciples when they asked the question recorded in Matthew 24:3, it is certain that Jesus made a wide distinction between his coming and the destruction of Jerusalem. Christ had previously said (Matthew 13:36-43), that in the end of the world he would send forth his angels to gather up the wicked and cast them into a furnace of fire, and that the righteous should then shine forth as the sun. This did not occur at the destruction of Jerusalem. Again, we have learned (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17) that the Lord himself shall descend, and that the righteous dead shall be raised. This was not the case at the destruction of Jerusalem. More than all, in the Revelation, which was written more than twenty years after the destruction of Jerusalem, and in John’s Gospel, which was written still later, the coming of the Lord is spoken of as an event then in the future. And, finally, Christians are taught, both by Christ and by his apostles, to look for the coming of the Lord as the consummation of all their hopes; they are taught that they cannot be with him unless he comes again. Now if Christ’s coming is in the past, Christians at the present they have nothing to look forward to. But our faith is not in vain, for our King is yet to come with his reward. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.32}

“For there shall be tribulation.” When? Following the destruction of Jerusalem. To whom was the trouble to come? Upon the people. This is proved by verse 22: “For the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.” The elect are the beloved of the Lord, those who serve him. But if the elect were saved from utter extermination only by the shortening of the trouble, then it follows that the trouble was upon the people of God. And this is proof that the destruction of Jerusalem is not referred to in the passage, for before that city was destroyed, the disciples, in accordance with the Lord’s instruction in Matthew 24:15, 16, had fled. When the final siege came, there were none of the disciples of Christ in the city. The tribulation referred to in verses 21, 22, must therefore refer to something besides the destruction of Jerusalem. “It is a fact that the early Christians did suffer very much from pagan persecution; but these cannot be all the tribulations referred to, for the promise that certain days should be shortened, indicates that the Saviour had in mind a definite period, during the greater part of which his followers should suffer grievous persecution. This fact is plainly stated in Mark’s account, where he says: “But in those days, after that tribulation.” Mark 13:24. The question then arises, To what period of persecution did Christ refer? {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.33}

In the book of Daniel we have two times of trouble brought to view. One is mentioned in chap. 12:1, but that trouble must be for the wicked, for God’s people are to be delivered from it. In Daniel 7:25, however, we read of a certain power that “he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws.” The term “wear out” is very forcible, indicating slow but sure extermination by torture. The time allotted to this work was “a time and times, and the dividing of time,” a definite period. This, then, must be the tribulation to which the Saviour referred as coming upon his people,-a tribulation that failed to entirely “wear out” or exterminate its victims only because it was cut short. E. J. W. {SITI July 17, 1884, p. 438.34}

**“Object of Christ’s Coming” The Signs of the Times, 10, 28.**

E. J. Waggoner

We have now established two points beyond controversy. First, that Christ will come again (John 14:1-3; Hebrews 9:28); and second, that his second coming will be as literal as the first (Acts 1:9-11; Revelation 1:7), the only point of difference being that it will be more glorious (Matthew 24:27; 25:31). We say that these points have been established beyond controversy, because we have read them directly from the Bible, in words so plain that a child could not misunderstand them. They need no interpretation to make them plainer. {SITI July 24, 1884, p. 441.1}

But if the Lord is indeed coming again, it must be for some purpose; he must have some object in view. And if he was so particular to tell us of his coming, and to urge us to prepare for that great event, it must be that he has not left us in ignorance as to its object. We shall find that the Scriptures are very clear upon this point also. {SITI July 24, 1884, p. 441.2}

The words of Christ himself demand our first attention. We have quoted the promise of Christ’s coming found in John 14:1-3. That promise also contains the reason: “If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; *that where I am there ye may be also*.” He is coming, then, to take all his followers to himself. Those who mourned at the thought of having him apart from them, will then once more enjoy his presence. {SITI July 24, 1884, p. 441.3}

Besides this, there is something else. Paul comforted the Thessalonian brethren in their tribulation with the thought that God himself could give them rest, and this rest he said they would receive “when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, and flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8. With those two texts agree the words of Christ: “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.” Matthew 16:27; and these: “And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me to give every man according as his work shall be.” Revelation 22:12. {SITI July 24, 1884, p. 441.4}

These texts show plainly enough the object of Christ’s second coming. It is to take his people to himself, and to take vengeance on the wicked. This latter part we will pass by for the present, and consider the promise to the disciples. From the words of Christ we would naturally conclude that there is no other way for his people to be with him except by his coming. “I will come again, and receive you unto myself, *that* where I am, there ye may be also.” The conjunction ‘that” denotes purpose, and is equivalent to “in order that.” When we read, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, *that* whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16), we understand that belief in Christ is the only way by which we can avoid perishing. And so when we read the promise of Christ to his disciples, we understand that if Christ were not to come, his disciples could not be with him. Indeed, if it were otherwise,-if the disciples could be with Christ without his coming for them,-what force or comfort would there be in his promise? For the only words of comfort that he had for them were that he would come to take them to himself. Moreover, we cannot imagine Jesus making an unnecessary promise; but if the disciples could be with him without his coming, he, of course, knew it, and therefore made a promise which was entirely useless. From this text, then, we must conclude that Christ’s disciples are not yet with him, for his coming is still in the future. We call the reader’s attention to other texts which confirm this conclusion. {SITI July 24, 1884, p. 441.5}

Paul exhorts us to set our affection on things above and says: “When Christ, who is our life, *shall appear, then* shall ye also appear with him in glory.” Colossians 3:4. Note the adverb “then.” It specifies the time when the saints will appear in glory; it is when Christ appears. {SITI July 24, 1884, p. 441.6}

The apostle Peter gives instructions to the elders of the churches, exhorting them to labor faithfully, and says for their encouragement: “And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.” 1 Peter 5:4. The report is sure, but they are not expected before Christ comes. {SITI July 24, 1884, p. 441.7}

Again he says: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” 1 Peter 1:3-5. The saints are kept by the power of God unto salvation; but the salvation is not to be given until the last time. Or, as Peter expresses it still more plainly in the 13th verse of the same chapter: “Be sober, and hope to the hand for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” {SITI July 24, 1884, p. 441.8}

In the third chapter of his second epistle to Timothy, the apostle Paul speaks of the prevailing degeneracy of the last days, and recommends the Bible as the only thing that will thoroughly furnished man to good works. He then continues: “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.” 2 Timothy 4:1, 2. Here, then, we find when the Judgment is to take place; in connection with the coming of Christ. But if the dead are not judged until Christ comes, it necessarily follows that they do not receive any reward until that time. And this is exactly what the Saviour said, as quoted from Matthew 16:27; Revelation 22:12. {SITI July 24, 1884, p. 441.9}

The apostle continues his exhortation to Timothy, and says, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.” 2 Timothy 4:7, 8. The Judge is to give crowns at that day, says Paul. At what day? Why, at the day when he judges the living and dead, “at his appearing and his kingdom.” Peter told the elders that they should receive their crown at the appearing of the chief Shepherd, and Paul says that all who love his appearing shall receive their crowns at the same time. {SITI July 24, 1884, p. 441.10}

Paul says, “*Henceforth* there is *laid up* for me a crown of righteousness.” He had reached the close of his life, and was about to be “offered” as a sacrifice to the truth. He felt that his life-work had been faithfully done. Did he therefore expect to immediately enter upon his reward? No; he was sure of a crown, but he knew that it would not be given until the appearing of Christ. {SITI July 24, 1884, p. 441.11}

We have seen that when Christ comes he will be accompanied by all the holy angels. Matthew 25:31. The work which the angels have to do is described in Matthew 24:31: “And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” And this agrees with the words of the psalmist: “He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.” Psalm 50:4, 5. By what means the saints are gathered to be with Christ, will be considered in another article. E. J. W. {SITI July 24, 1884, p. 441.12}

**“Christ the End of the Law” The Signs of the Times, 10, 28.**

E. J. Waggoner

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” Romans 10:4. This is supposed by antinomians to teach the abolition of the law. The text is not usually quoted in full, the objector contenting himself with the statement that “Christ is the end of the law,” meaning that Christ abolished the law. This text is so generally quoted in favor of the abolition of the law, that before we consider its real application, we will briefly show the absurdity of the popular interpretation. {SITI July 24, 1884, p. 442.1}

1. If Christ abolished the law, then there can be no sin now, for “sin is the transgression of the law,” 1 John 3:4, and “is not imputed when there is no law.” Romans 5:13. And if there is no sin, there can be no punishment impending, and all men will be saved. Those texts, therefore, which speak of the “wrath of God,” and the “indignation,” “torment,” and “destruction,” to be visited upon sinners, are made of no effect. There is no one so much of a Universalist as he who claims that the law of God is abolished. {SITI July 24, 1884, p. 442.2}

2. The text says that Christ is the end of the law “to every one that believeth.” The necessary inference is that he is not the end of the law to unbelievers. Those, therefore, who claim that the apostle by the expression “end of the law” means abolition of the law, must teach that the law is abolished only for Christians; that is that the law binds worldlings, but that Christians are under no obligation to it. And so it would follow that while an act performed by an unbeliever might be in violation of the law, and therefore a sin, the same act performed by a believer would be perfectly justifiable. We trust that there is no one who would hold to so monstrous a theory as this, yet that is a legitimate deduction from antinomian claims. {SITI July 24, 1884, p. 442.3}

3. If Paul, in Romans 10:4 means that the law is abolished for believers, it would follow that it has been abolished as many times as there are Christians, being done away every time a man is converted; and further, that whenever any believer falls away, and loses his faith, the law is for him re-enacted! The absurdity of this just conclusion must convince every one of the absurdity of the premise. {SITI July 24, 1884, p. 442.4}

4. Again: From the parables of the wheat and the tares (Matthew 13), we learn that both righteous and wicked are to remain together on the earth until the end of the world. We know also that both classes have existed since the fall. It follows, therefore, from antinomian interpretation of Romans 10:4, that the law of God always has been, and will be until the end of time, both abolished and in full force at the same time! This is the climax of absurdity, and shows conclusively that whatever may be the meaning of Romans 10:4, it certainly does not teach that any part of God’s Law is, or ever will be, abolished, either for Christians or unbelievers. {SITI July 24, 1884, p. 442.5}

And now as to what the text really does mean. The word “end” is often used in the sense of “object” or design. Thus in James 5:11 we read, “Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord.” No one supposes that this means the end of the Lord’s existence, but the object of the Lord in allowing Job to suffer affliction. In like manner we understand Romans 10:4 to teach that Christ meets the design of the law to those who believe. In order to understand how he does this, we must consider the end or design of the law. {SITI July 24, 1884, p. 442.6}

In Romans 7:10 the apostle says that the commandment (meaning the whole law) “was ordained to life.” That is, if man had never violated the law, it would insure his eternal life. This is what the Saviour said to the young man in Matthew 19:17, as previously noticed. In the next verse to the one under consideration (Romans 10:5) we read the same thing: “For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them.” But while this is true, the fact presents itself that no man has kept the law (Romans 3:9, 19, 23), and that in his natural condition no man can keep the law, because “the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Romans 8:7. How, then, can any one obtain eternal life, which the law was designed to bestow? The answer is, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. “The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23. The law was “ordained to life;” Christ is our life (Colossians 3:4), and is therefore the end of the law. {SITI July 24, 1884, p. 442.7}

But this is only the result. It might be asked, “Does Christ accomplish this result for us, by freeing us from obligation to keep the law?” We answer, No; for since only those who do the commandments shall live by them (Matthew 19:17; Romans 10:7), it follows that no one can receive eternal life if he continues to violate them. Therefore since the object of the law was to give life, it must follow that it was also the design that it must be kept. So we read in 1 Timothy 1:5 that “the end of the commandment is charity,” etc. “Charity” is but another name for “love,” and this rendering is given in the Revised Version. But “love is the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13:10), or, as John says, “This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.” 1 John 5:3. We might therefore paraphrase 1 Timothy 1:5 thus: “Now the object or design of the commandment [or law, see verse 9] is that it should be fulfilled, or scrupulously kept.” This is self-evident; for whenever any law is given, it is certainly the design of the maker that it shall be kept. {SITI July 24, 1884, p. 442.8}

We have already seen that no man has attained this end. “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” From past sins we are “justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Romans 3:21. But being justified through faith in Christ, we are still dependent on him, for without him we can do nothing.” John 15:4, 5. It is only by abiding in him that we are able to bear fruit. And this is why the apostle says of the Jews that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. “For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.” Romans 10:3. The righteousness of God is his law (Isaiah 51:6, 7), and the apostle means that the Jews, being zealous toward God, and desiring to serve him by keeping his commandments, had sought to do so in their own strength, and had failed. Their zeal was good, but their knowledge was deficient, in that they did not perceive that only in Christ could they hope to attain perfection. {SITI July 24, 1884, p. 442.9}

To all believers, Christ is made “wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” 1 Corinthians 1:30. Not by freeing them from obligation to keep the law, for then he would be to them, not righteousness, but unrighteousness, or, in other words, would become the minister of sin. Without him our best efforts are failures; with him to strengthen us, we can do all things; and when at last we stand before God holy and without blemish, “not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing,” it will be because we have been made “complete in him.” {SITI July 24, 1884, p. 442.10}

We think it must be evident to all that Romans 10:4 can be pressed into antinomian service only by mutilating to the extent of leaving out the statement that Christ is the end of the law to believers only, and to them for nothing except righteousness, or obedience to it. This subject will be considered still further in the light of other scriptures, in another article. E. J. W. {SITI July 24, 1884, p. 442.11}

**“The Sabbath-School” The Signs of the Times, 10, 29.**

E. J. Waggoner

**LESSON FOR THE PACIFIC COAST—AUG. 16**

1. In our last lesson, what Scripture was quoted concerning a time of tribulation? {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.1}

2. What was this time of trouble to follow? {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.2}

3. Show that the time of trouble referred to does not mean the destruction of Jerusalem. {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.3}

4. Prove that the predicted tribulation was to come upon the people of God alone. {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.4}

5. Repeat the words of prophecy that foretell such a period of tribulation. Daniel 7:25. {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.5}

6. What power is here referred to as “wearing out” the saints of God? {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.6}

7. How long were the saints and laws to be given into is hand? {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.7}

8. To how many days is the sequel? Revelation 12:6, 14. {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.8}

9. In symbolic prophecy what does a day represent? Ezekiel 4:5, 6. {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.9}

10. Then how many days of papal supremacy and persecution were predicted? {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.10}

11. From what date are they to be reckoned? {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.11}

12. Then when would they end? {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.12}

13. How was the papal power broken in 1798? {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.13}

14. What did Christ say would be done to those days for the elect’s sake? Matthew 24:22. {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.14}

15. What must be meant by this? {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.15}

16. What great movement produced a sentiment against persecution for conscience’ sake? {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.16}

17. What did the Lord say would immediately follow the tribulation of those days? Matthew 24:29. {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.17}

18. How definitely is the beginning of the signs located? Mark 13:24. {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.18}

19. When did the darkening of the sun and moon take place? {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.19}

20. When was the prophecy concerning the falling of the stars fulfilled? {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.20}

21. Is the shaking of the powers of the heavens a sign of the coming of the Lord, or something that occurs in connection with it? 2 Peter 3:10. {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.21}

22. Are there to be any signs besides those in the heavens? Luke 21:25. {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.22}

23. When the signs begin to come to pass, what is near? Luke 21:28. {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.23}

24. How can we tell when summer is approaching? Luke 21:29, 30. {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.24}

25. Do the signs here considered just as surely prove that Christ’s coming is near? Verse 31; Matthew 24:32, 33. {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.25}

26. Are we to admit of any doubt concerning it? {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.26}

27. If the Lord commands us to *know*, is it not a sin to remain ignorant? {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.27}

In our last lesson we identified the time of tribulation, of Matthew 24:21, 22, with the period of wearing out the saints of the Most High, mentioned in Daniel 7:25. The power that was then to “wear out the saints,” is admitted by all commentators to be the papacy. The period of time during which they were to be given into its hand is stated as “a time and times, and the dividing of time.” Without entering into any discussion as to the length of a “time,” we can very easily determined how long this period of Daniel 7:25 was. In Revelation 12:14 we find the same period given as the length of time during which the “woman” (the Christian church) was nourished in the wilderness. In the sixth verse of the same chapter the same event is brought to view, and the time is said to be “a thousand two hundred and three-score [1260] days.” We may therefore read Daniel 7:25 thus: “And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until [or during] a time and times and the dividing of time.” {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.28}

But twelve hundred and sixty days, only three years and a half, would be rather an insignificant persecution; the time would be entirely too short to accomplish the wearing out of the saints; and besides we know that the persecution of the church by the papacy lasted much longer than that. We remember, therefore, that the prophecy in which this prediction occurs, is symbolic, and that the time brought to view is figurative. If we turn to Ezekiel 4:4-6, we shall find that in prophetic symbols a day represents a year. Substituting this, we are warranted in reading Daniel 7:25 thus: And he shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into this hand for twelve hundred and sixty years. {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.29}

This period of papal rule began in 538 A.D., when, by the overthrow of the Ostrogoths Justinian’s decree that the bishop of Rome should be head of all the churches, went into effect. Twelve hundred and sixty years from that date would bring us to A.D. 1798, for the close of papal supremacy; and just at that time it was that Pope Pius VI. was taken prisoner by the French, and the temporal dimension of the papacy was destroyed, never again to be restored to its former glory. That the years intervening between these two dates were filled with persecutions which literally “wore out” the people of God, is fully attested by history. The “tribulation” may doubtless be considered as beginning before 538 A.D., for under pagan rule the Christians suffered terrible persecutions; but pagan persecution did not begin to compare in fiendish malignity with those waged by the apostate Christian church against the true followers of Christ. {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.30}

“But for the elect’s sake, those days shall be shortened.” What days? Not the days of papal supremacy, for the time of its continuance had been definitely fixed years before. Our Lord must refer to the days of persecution by the papal power. Had that persecution been pushed to the close of the 1260 years with all the relentless rigor that characterized it in its height, none of the people of God (no flesh), as the Bible says, would have escaped. But in the providence of God the Reformation arose. God did not design that his truth and people should be utterly exterminated, so that he could have no witnesses upon earth. So he moved on the hearts of devout men like Luther, to preach the word, showing that man must be justified by faith, and not by penances, pilgrimages, or the payment of coin. Their preaching was accompanied with such power that thousands were constrained to believe the glad message of salvation through Christ alone; and when the rulers of various European States espoused the new light, and refused to yield abject obedience to the commands of the pope of Rome, the persecution was gradually diminished, until about the middle of the eighteenth century, it virtually ceased. So for the elect’s sake the days were shortened. {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.31}

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened,” etc. As recorded by Mark (chap. 13:24) our Saviour was still more explicit in his prediction. After speaking of the affliction above noted, he said: “But *in those days, after that tribulation*, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light.” We must therefore look for the fulfillment of the sign somewhere between the middle of the eighteenth century and the year 1798. Do we find it? The dark day of May 19, 1780, is one of the notable events of history. A brief description may be found in “Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary,” the list of “Noted Names,” etc. The darkness extended over the entire day, after ten o’clock in the morning, and through the greater part of the night falling. Although the moon was then full, not a ray of light was to be seen. Even in the day-time the darkness was so great that no work could be done out of doors, and persons who were out were actually unable to find their way home. Fowls went to roost in the forenoon, as though it were night. History contains no parallel to this wonderful event. {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.32}

Many have sought to find an explanation for the darkness of May 19, 1780 thinking thereby to destroy its value as a sign of the Lord’s coming. None of these efforts have been successful, and so good authority is that quoted above (Webster) says: “The true cause of this remarkable phenomenon is unknown.” However, even if it were possible for anyone to explain it on scientific grounds, that would not in the least invalidate the claim that it is a true sign of the Lord’s coming. Mark the fact that Jesus did not say that a darkening of the sun should occur, which nobody could account for. What he did say was that at a certain time such an event should occur; its occurrence at the exact time specified establishes it beyond all controversy as a valid sign of the end. {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.33}

“And the stars shall fall from heaven.” This was fulfilled in the memorable meteoric shower of Nov. 13, 1833. It accurately fulfilled Revelation 6:13, which likens the falling of the stars to the falling of unripe figs, when the tree is shaken by a mighty wind. Prof. Olmstead, of Yale College, said:- {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.34}

“Those who were so fortunate as to witness the exhibition of shooting stars on the morning of Nov. 13, 1833, probably saw the greatest display of celestial fire-works that has ever been seen since the creation of the world, or, at least, within the annals covered by the pages of history.” {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.35}

“When these things begin to come to pass then look up, and lift up your head; for your redemption draweth night.” Luke 21:28. That is, the signs show that the Lord’s coming is near. Says one, “I don’t believe in frightening people with talk about the Lord’s coming.” Well, the Lord didn’t say anything about getting frightened. He was speaking to his disciples (not simply to those chosen twelve, but to all who should believe on him through their word); and he tells them to rejoice. Why should they not? Their best friend is coming to redeem them, and to take them to himself. Does the prisoner tremble at the coming of the one whom he knows will open its prison doors and let him walk at liberty? Does the bondman, toiling in weariness and pain, writhing under the lash of the taskmaster, become frightened at the thought that the time of this cruel bondage is nearly over, and that one is coming who will make him a free man? Then certainly the Christian will only rejoice at the thought that his Saviour is coming to end all his trials and temptations, and to give him an everlasting home in the mansions of light. The Lord saves those who love his appearing, and those who love his appearing will not shrink from it with alarm. {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.36}

How do we know when summer is approaching? By certain infallible signs. We see the buds begin to swell, the leaves begin to appear, and the tiny blades of grass shoot forth from the ground. When those things begin to take place, we know that summer is not far distant. No one could make us believe differently. “So likewise ye,” says the Saviour, “when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.” Luke 21:31. This is a direct command. We are not to disbelieve, nor to be in doubt, nor to guess that he is near, but to *know*. To disregard this command is certainly a sin, as well as to disobey any other injunction. If we study his words carefully, how can we help knowing? How near is it? “Even *at the doors*.” The day and hour are not given, nor is it necessary that they should be. When we are informed that a friend is at our door, we do not require a message telling us when to prepare to receive him. If we are not then ready, we know that we have no time to lose. No expression could more strongly convey the fact that Christ’s coming is close upon us. {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.37}

And how shall we prepare for that momentous event? “Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 7:21. If we would be enter into Christ’s kingdom, we must obey the laws of that kingdom. There will be none but loyal subjects there. Treason will not be found. Let us then, by the aid of Christ and his Holy Spirit, have the law of God so written in our hearts that we may be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. E. J. W. {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 454.38}

**“The Reason Why” The Signs of the Times, 10, 29.**

E. J. Waggoner

For years people were content to keep the first day of the week as the Sabbath because they were taught from childhood that this was right. No one felt called upon to give a special reason for doing that which no one questioned. We say that no one questioned the correctness of their action, not because there were none who condemned first-day observance both by word and act, but because those who kept the seventh day were so few in number as to be practically unknown. And so people kept Sunday because their parents did, and were content. Whenever the good people wished to reason with a worldling who would persist in finding his own pleasure on the first day of the week, they would quote, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy,” taking it as a matter of course that “Sabbath” meant Sunday, and that the fourth commandment was gotten up for the express purpose of protecting the first day from worldly toil and pleasure. {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 457.1}

But the time came when their quiet was disturbed. Those who read the commandment far enough to find out that “the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord,” and had the courage to obey the commandment as it reads, preached the “new” doctrine with such vigor as to attract general attention. To the surprise of all the people who were quietly following custom, and to the disgust of many of them, it was found that the seventh day really is the Sabbath of the Bible, that it was that day that received the divine blessing and sanctification in the beginning, and that unfortunately the Bible writers had omitted to say anything about a change of the day of weekly rest. Some persons very sensibly concluded that if the Lord had wanted men to observe the first day of the week instead of the seventh he would have said something about it, and immediately adopted God’s original plan. The reason that God was abundantly able to make known his will, that he had done so very clearly in times past, even concerning matters of seemingly little importance, and that when he had not spoken it was very presumptuous in man to speak for him. See Ezekiel 13:7. {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 457.2}

Others, however, acted on the principle that Sunday-keeping *must* be right because, (1) It has been kept by nearly all the world for many centuries; (2) The leaders of the church do not accept the seventh-day Sabbath (see John 7:47, 48), and they certainly ought to know what is right; (3) It would be very inconvenient to make a change; and therefore (4) They were determined not to change. Having come to this conclusion, they felt that it was incumbent on them to give some reason for their course of action, especially since they were very strongly urged to do so by those who kept the Sabbath “according to the commandment.” Accordingly they promptly gave, substantially, the following “reasons:”- {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 457.3}

1. “The Sabbath was changed from the seventh to the first day of the week, because Christ rose from the dead on that day.” {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 457.4}

2. “The first day of the week is the one that was originally sanctified. The Jews were too wicked to be allowed to keep it, so the Lord let them keep Saturday for a while; but there has really been no change at all in the Sabbath day.” {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 457.5}

3. “We keep Sunday because the world is round, and it is impossible to keep any one day.” {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 457.6}

4. “The seventh day is indeed the Sabbath, and all men ought to keep it, for it is plainly commanded; but we can’t tell which day of the week is the seventh, and therefore we keep the first.” {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 457.7}

5. “The seventh day was the Sabbath from the beginning, but the Jews lost their reckoning while in Egypt, and since that time nobody has had the correct reckoning of the time.” {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 457.8}

6. “The Jews lost the correct reckoning during the Babylonian captivity, and consequently no one can tell whether or not the day that they now keep is the true seventh day.” {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 457.9}

7. “Christ kept the seventh-day Sabbath, and so did his disciples, “according to the commandment;” but during the dark ages of papal supremacy much time was lost; indeed, no reckoning whatever was kept for a long time, and so it is absolutely impossible to tell whether our Saturday is the seventh or the fourth day of the week, or even to tell in what year of the Christian era we are now living.” {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 457.10}

8. “We keep the first day of the week because, after the resurrection of Christ, the apostles kept it, and from their time to the present we have an uninterrupted record of Sunday observance.” {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 457.11}

9. “The commandment enjoins the observance of the only a seventh part of time; there is nowhere in the Bible a command to keep a definite day, so we keep Sunday.” {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 457.12}

10. “The ten commandments are now abolished, and the New Testament is the Christians only guide; but it is not a book of laws, and we don’t find in it the express command for Sabbath observance, and we therefore observe the first day of the week.” {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 457.13}

These are only a few of the many “reasons” given for keeping Sunday rather than the seventh day. As will be readily surmised, they were not developed in council, but were “sought out” by different individuals as occasion required. We but state the simple truth, however, when we say we have heard every one of the above “reasons” given in a single discourse, and that by a minister who was held in high repute as a man of learning. Whenever the above-mentioned “reasons” seemed unsatisfactory, others were given that were equally conclusive! {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 457.14}

In spite of all this, people would wonder why the Bible contains no command for Sunday observance. The “new” Sunday-keeping was right, but felt hurt that the Lord had not vouchsafed them one word of encouragement. If only one text could be found, what a relief it would be. Such ones may set their minds at rest. The Rev. J. M. Bailey, D. D., has found out just the reason why the Bible is silent on the subject of first-day observance; and he has given his discovery to the world through the columns of the *Morning Star*, a Free-Will Baptist journal published in Dover, N. H. He says:- {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 457.15}

“It appears that the convocation was changed from the seventh to the first on the very day of the resurrection of Christ. *What he said* to the disciples about it to convince them, *we have no means of knowing*. [Italics ours.] He met some of them several times that day, and then appeared in their assembly where they met with closed doors for fear of the Jews, and sanctioned their meeting by breathing on them the Holy Spirit, and sending them forth as the Father had sent him. Probably *for fear of the Jews, what he said* against Judaism, or *in favor of the Christian Sabbath, was not published*.” {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 457.16}

Do not smile, dear reader. This was written in sober earnest, by a learned D. D., for the express purpose of combating the *errors* of seventh-day keepers. We do not know how he regards his work, but it is our opinion that he leaves nothing more to be said. Before closing we wish to ask, Who was it that was so fearful? Was it Christ, who denounced the Jews to their face, calling them hypocrites? Of course he did not fear personal violence to himself. Was it Peter who feared to tell what Christ did say against the Sabbath and in favor of Sunday?-he who faced the Jewish Sanhedrim, and, charging that body with the murder of Jesus, only declared that “we ought to obey God rather than man.” Paul was not present on that night, but he was “not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles” (2 Corinthians 11:5), being taught by the Lord Jesus himself. Galatians 1:11, 12. No one can accuse him of fearing to preach the word, and he himself declared that he had not shunned to declare “all the counsel of God.” Acts 20:26, 27; but he has left nothing on record concerning Sunday-keeping. {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 457.17}

We need not pursue the subject further. We will simply say that we too believe that fear operated to a certain extent to prevent the disciples from preaching that the Sabbath was changed. Not the fear of the Jews, but fear of disobeying Christ’s instruction in Matthew 28:19, 20; fear of being found false witnesses of God, and bringing upon themselves the curse recorded in Galatians 1:8, 9. E. J. W. {SITI July 31, 1884, p. 457.18}