**“Punishment of the Wicked—Review” The Signs of the Times, 11, 6.**

E. J. Waggoner

**LESSON FOR THE PACIFIC COAST—MARCH 7**

Review.

1. How many classes of people does the Bible recognize? {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 86.1}

2. When will the final separation between them take place? {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 86.2}

3. With what will the righteous be rewarded? {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 86.3}

4. What will be done with the wicked? {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 86.4}

5. What can you say of the comparative duration of the reward of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked? {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 86.5}

6. What is to be the punishment of the wicked? {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 86.6}

7. What is the agent in the destruction of the wicked? {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 86.7}

8. How complete will be this destruction? {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 86.8}

9. To what perishable material are the wicked likened? Quote texts. {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 86.9}

10. What will be the effect of the wrath of God abiding on the wicked? {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 86.10}

11. How can you harmonize the theory that you have advanced with Mark 9:43? {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 86.11}

12. What is always accomplished by an unquenchable fire? Matthew 3:12. {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 86.12}

13. Prove that Revelation 20:10 does not contradict the doctrine that the wicked are to become utterly extinct. {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 86.13}

14. Of how many deaths does the Bible speak? {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 86.14}

15. Explain the distinction between the first and the second death. {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 86.15}

16. State the origin and effect of the doctrine that the wicked are not to *die* for their iniquity. {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 86.16}

17. What do you learn from Revelation 5:13? {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 86.17}

Although the lesson this week is a review, which give a few notes for the aid of those who have not had the previous lessons. However much people may imagine that there is provision made in the gospel for people who are “as good as the average,” the fact remains that the Bible recognizes only two of classes,-the good and the bad. “See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil.” Deuteronomy 30:15. To be counted good, a person must keep all of God’s commandments; to be among the bad requires the breaking of no more than one. “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not together with me scattereth abroad.” Matthew 12:30. In the battle of life there is no intermediate or neutral ground. {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 86.18}

This is also evident from the account of the final separation. “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.” Matthew 25:31-33. The succeeding verses plainly tell the character of these two classes. The first class are they who have served the Lord; love for him has sanctified every effort of their lives, and they have obeyed this exhortation of the apostle: “Whatsoever he do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and to the Father by him.” Colossians 3:17. The other class are they who have lived for self; even their deeds of kindness have been prompted by love of applause, and so have been nothing but manifestations of the evil in their hearts. To the first class it is said: “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Matthew 25:34. To the other class it is said: “Depart from me, hy cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” Matthew 25:41. {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 86.19}

The comparative duration of the reward of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked is stated in Matthew 25:46. The Saviour closes his discourse with these words: “And these [the wicked] shall go away into everlasting on [eternal] punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.” If there were no other text relating to this question, we should note that death is to be the final portion of the wicked. If it were not so, then the promise of eternal life to the righteous would not indicate any difference in the state of the two classes. But there is a contrast. The wicked shall go into *punishment*, but the righteous into *life*. No one who regards the Bible will say that both classes see this same award; but it is certain that the righteous are to have *life*. Now anything that is different from life must be death, therefore the wicked receive the sentence of death, which is executed. To show that this conclusion is sound, we have only to quote Paul’s words: “The wages of sin is *death;* but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23. The Saviour said that the punishment of the wicked and the life of the righteous are both to be eternal; therefore we know that eternal life,-death from which there is no resurrection,-is the wages of sin. Paul says (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9) that the wicked shall be punished with “everlasting destruction,” when the Lord Jesus is revealed from Heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire; and both John (Revelation 20:9) and Malachi (Malachi 4:1-3), and many others state this destruction is to be by fire. {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 86.20}

For the completeness of the destruction of the wicked, we can only refer the reader to a few texts, which required no interpretation. See Psalm 1:1-4; 2:8, 9; 37:9, 10, 20, 38; Isaiah 5:24; Obadiah 16; Malachi 4:1-3; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 20:9, etc. David says that if the wrath of God be kindled but a little, its effect will be to cause the wicked to “perish from the way” (Psalm 2:12); when therefore it *abides* on the wicked (John 3:36), they will be, as Obadiah has said, “as though they had not been.” See Webster’s definition of “perish.” {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 86.21}

In Mark 9:43 the Saviour says that the wicked shall be cast into a fire that “never shall be quenched.” This, instead of contradicting the above statements, is the strongest confirmation of them. The effect of an “unquenchable fire” is to “burn up” that which is cast into it (Matthew 3:12); if the wicked were cast into any other kind of fire, their destruction would not be complete. “Everlasting fire” is fire whose effects are everlasting; it is like that which destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Jude 7. This was unquenchable fire, and resulted in the overthrow of those cities; it turned them to ashes. {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 86.22}

We can only refer to the texts that answer question 13. See Exodus 21:1-6, where it is stated that under certain circumstances the Hebrew servant should serve his master “forever.” Of course this meant during his natural life. So, likewise, “forever,” in Revelation 20:10 and similar passages, covers only the space of time that it is possible for persons to exist in “unquenchable fire.” See also Isaiah 34 and 35, where, after the land is described as burning and lying waste, so that none can pass through it “forever and ever,” it is described as blossoming and as the rose, and being inhabited by “the ransomed of the Lord.” {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 86.23}

This death of which we have been speaking is “the second death.” Revelation 21:8. “In Adam all die,” both righteous and wicked, men and little children; and “so Christ shall all be made alive.” 1 Corinthians 15:22. Christ does this for all, because no one is to blame for being the descendant of Adam, and thus mortal. When all have been made alive, it will be seen who are worthy to have life continued to them, and those who have died in their iniquity shall die the second time. Ezekiel 18:26. This is the death to which God had reference when he said to Adam, “In the day that thou eat this thereof, thou shalt surely die.” That penalty has never been executed; through the kindness of God in Christ the execution of the penalty was stayed, in order to give fallen man another chance for his life. Christ tasted death for every man, and those who accept his sacrifice will escape the penalty for sin, but upon those who do not, it will fall grievously. {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 86.24}

The originator of the doctrine of life for the wicked, as we learn from Genesis 3:1-4, was the serpent, “which is the devil and Satan.” Revelation 20:2. His object in teaching it to Eve was to lead her to sin. He made her believe that if she disobeyed God she would not suffer for it, but would be the gainer by it. It was a direct lie, and it had its designed effect. Ever since that time it has been repeated, and with the same result. Thus the Lord through his prophet rebukes those who “with lies” have made the heart of his people sad, and have “strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life.” Ezekiel 13:22. Reader, do you wish to be found on the devil’s side, perpetuating his falsehood? E. J. W. {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 86.25}

**“Vice As an Aid to Virtue” The Signs of the Times, 11, 6.**

E. J. Waggoner

A short time ago it was stated in the daily papers that Dunton C. Ross, a noted athlete and saloon-keeper, have announced his intention of leaving his present business and entering the ministry. To that, of course, no one offers an objection. We shall be pleased to see every saloon-keeper quit the business; even if he did not feel the necessity of disgorging his ill-gotten gains, society would be the better for a diminution in the number of plague spots. And the desire to enter the ministry is certainly a laudable one, provided the aspirant does not seek simply to make gain by his “godliness,” or to gratify unholy ambition. Mr. Ross may be perfectly sincere; doubtless he is as honest in his purpose as he knows how to be, but we have our doubts as to his fitness for the position which he seeks. For a man to decide to enter the ministry, before his heart has been touched sufficiently to make him quit selling beer, looks to us as though he was troubled with moral blindness. It is better for a man to become converted before he decides to enter the ministry, than to make such a decision and then be “converted.” In the former case there would be more hope of the conversion being genuine. {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 88.1}

But that to which we wish to call special attention is the statement made by Mr. Ross, that he has learned many things in his career as a saloon-keeper and “sporting man,” which will be of material value to him in his work as a preacher. He thinks that, with his past experience, all he needs is a short course in theology, to prepare him for successful work. It is a deplorable fact that this idea obtains quite generally in the world. If a man has been a “rough,” people will flock to hear him were people by his “sad experience” as he tells how degraded he used to be; while the man who has from his earliest childhood endeavored to walk in the path of virtue, is thought to be deficient. It is no exaggeration to say that a large majority of people think that a career of vice is almost absolutely essential to fix one to be a teacher of morals. They did not formulate their ideas in words, but the thought is there. When they compare a teacher who has been brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, with one who has assiduously served the devil nearly all his life, there is a decision in favor of the latter. They almost wish that the first one could have had the advantage of at least a short course in crime, “would it have been such a benefit to him.” {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 88.2}

Now the secret of this is found in the love which the natural human heart has for sin. Each heart has a natural tendency toward that which is evil. “Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.” Matthew 15:19. There is a charm about the man who has distinguished himself among his vicious associates, which leads some to almost deify him; and this fascination is felt to a greater or lesser extent by every unrenewed individual. Let us examine this matter, and see if a man is really benefited as a teacher by having been familiar with all the details of vice. {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 88.3}

Take, for instance, the teacher of youth in the high school or the college. Of two candidates for such a position, one of whom never learned to read until he was forty years of age, while the other has been a close student from his early years, and has always associated with the educated and refined, which would be chosen? Every committee would choose the latter, without hesitation. In so doing they would show wisdom. It is not denied that the first man might take a good teacher, but the question is, Can he teach as well as he could if in his youth he had trained his mind to think? Is his previous ignorance a recommendation? There can be no difference of opinion as to the answer. {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 88.4}

Suppose I am to make a trip into the mountains, and was to secure a competent guide. Shall I accept a man whose principal recommendation is that he is thoroughly familiar with all the streets and alleys of the city, and who has never been in the country? Not by any means. The hardy mountaineer is the one whom I will choose. I care not if he knows nothing about the city where I live. What I want is that he shall be familiar with the place to which I am going. He cannot guide me if he has not been there himself. {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 88.5}

The same rule will apply to religious teachers. A man may know all about the paths of vice, and the steps that takes hold on hell, but that is not the kind of instruction that people need. They know enough in that direction; and many will go that way fast enough without any instruction. What they do need is to be led into wisdom’s way, to learn the ways of peace, and to know the love of that passeth knowledge. Who shall lead them there? Shall it not be the man who has walked in those ways himself, and who has been with Jesus? Reason would answer, Yes. No amount of argument can convince us that Ahab could ever have developed into a teacher that would compare with Enoch, who walked with God all his life. The best man that ever lived has enough of human nature to contend with to enable him to sympathize with the struggles of poor, frail sinners. We do not say that a good man is *best* fitted for a religious teacher, but that he is the *only* one for such a position. If he has at some time in his life followed vicious practices, the grace of God through Christ must remove the stains before he can render acceptable service to God. But he can never be the man that he would have been had he always lived an upright life. {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 88.6}

This is a matter that should receive serious thought by our young men who are designing to work in the cause of God. You want to lead men to God; but you can never lead others there till you have been there yourself. You must *know Christ* before you can reveal him to others. This is *the essential* qualification. While you are striving for intellectual culture, do not neglect culture of the heart. It is right and necessary to improve the talent of intellect that God has given you; but at the same time let it be your chief aim to reach “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Remember that men who were ignorant of books have done noble service in the cause of God, but never one who was ignorant of Christ. Let these words of one who had fallen low in sin, be pondered by all:- {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 89.1}

“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit. *Then* shall I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.” E. J. W. {SITI February 5, 1885, p. 89.2}

**“The Inheritance of the Saints” The Signs of the Times, 11, 7.**

E. J. Waggoner

**THE SABBATH-SCHOOL.**

**LESSON FOR TH PACIFIC COAST—MARCH 14**

1. What is the meaning of the word “meek”? {SITI February 12, 1885, p. 102.1}

2. Mention two individuals who possessed this grace in a remarkable degree. Numbers 12:3; 1 Peter 2:21-23. {SITI February 12, 1885, p. 102.2}

3. How was the meekness of Christ manifested? 1 Peter 2:23. {SITI February 12, 1885, p. 102.3}

4. In thus meekly suffering injury, what did he leave us? Verse 21. {SITI February 12, 1885, p. 102.4}

5. What should we do? *Ib*. {SITI February 12, 1885, p. 102.5}

6. What will be done by all who abide in Christ, or, in other words, by all Christians? 1 John 2:6. {SITI February 12, 1885, p. 102.6}

7. Then what grace must characterize all Christians? {SITI February 12, 1885, p. 102.7}

8. What is promised to the meek? Matthew 5:5. {SITI February 12, 1885, p. 102.8}

9. By what other term are the meek referred to in this chapter? Verse 3. {SITI February 12, 1885, p. 102.9}

10. What is promised to the “poor in spirit”? {SITI February 12, 1885, p. 102.10}

11. What testimony does the apostle James bear on this point? James 2:5. {SITI February 12, 1885, p. 102.11}

12. What is an heir? {SITI February 12, 1885, p. 102.12}

13. Then if the meek are “heirs,” what can you say as to the time of their receiving their inheritance? {SITI February 12, 1885, p. 102.13}

14. What must the heirs pass through before they can receive the promised inheritance? Acts 14:22. {SITI February 12, 1885, p. 102.14}

15. What class of people in this world are in the best condition? Psalm 73:3-7. {SITI February 12, 1885, p. 102.15}

16. On further consideration, what did David see would be their end? Psalm 73:17-19. {SITI February 12, 1885, p. 102.16}

17. How complete will be their destruction? Psalm 37:10. {SITI February 12, 1885, p. 102.17}

18. What will then take place? Verse 11. {SITI February 12, 1885, p. 102.18}

19. Then what must take place before the fulfillment of the promise in Matthew 5:5? {SITI February 12, 1885, p. 102.19}

A meek man, according to Webster, is one who is “mild of temper; not easily provoked or irritated; given to forbearance under injuries; soft; a gentle; yielding.” The term is especially used of one who is submissive to the divine will; patient and gentle for religious motives. In Numbers 12:3 it is plainly stated that “the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.” It is the prevailing impression that meekness is akin to effeminacy, and is worthy only of scorn; but if we recall the history of Moses, we shall see that such an idea is entirely erroneous. He was a great general, and the leader of mighty armies composed of fierce warriors. An effeminate man could have done nothing in the position of Moses, yet while Moses was leading the host of Israel, he was very meek. By reference to Exodus 2:11-17, it will be seen that Moses was naturally of a quick, impetuousness disposition, and given to the resenting of injuries.His gentleness and forbearance were the result of communion with God. {SITI February 12, 1885, p. 102.20}

No one could think of charging Christ with weakness in any particular, yet he was the embodiment of meekness. Peter describes the meekness that is acceptable to God: “For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.” 1 Peter 2:19, 20. This grace is one of the most difficult to acquire, for it is most foreign to our nature. But Christ has set us an example, that we should follow in his steps, and he, the sinless one, “when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened to not.” 1 Peter 2:23. As the prophet said, “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” Isaiah 53:7. We cannot be Christians unless we are Christ-like; and if we are like Christ, we shall be meek. Therefore meekness is the characteristic of the Christian. {SITI February 12, 1885, p. 102.21}

“Blessed are the meek, they shall inherit the earth.” Matthew 5:5. Since all Christians, and none but Christians, are truly meek, this promise must apply to all Christians. In Matthew 5:3 we read, “Blessed are the poor in Spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” To be poor in Spirit is to be just the opposite of haughty, or, in other words, it is to be meek. So this promise is also to the meek. Now by comparing these two verses with James 2:5, we shall see that the same thing is promised both in the third and fifth verses of Matthew 5. The text referred to says: “Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath prepared to them that love him.” {SITI February 12, 1885, p. 102.22}

In this last text we find that those who are lovers of God, humble disciples of Christ, are *heirs* of a kingdom. Matthew 5:5 shows that such shall inherit the earth, or, in other words, they are heirs the earth. The inevitable conclusion, then, is that the earth is “the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him.” {SITI February 12, 1885, p. 102.23}

An “heir” is one who is entitled, either by birth, adoption, or special promise, to succeed to the possession of some property. But the heir is not in possession; when he comes into possession of his property, he ceases to be an heir. So if we speak of any one as being heir to a certain estate, it is understood that the time of his inheritance is still in the future. So the kingdom spoken of in James 2:5 cannot be the gospel and its privileges, or the church, because those to whom the apostle speaks our brethren in the church, and already enjoying the blessings of the gospel. The kingdom which they are to receive is not yet in their possession, because, by virtue of their Christianity, they are *heirs* of it. Before they can inherit it, they must pass through great tribulation. Acts 14:22. {SITI February 12, 1885, p. 102.24}

It scarcely needs any argument to show that the followers of God are by no means the possessors of this world. Christ says, “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” John 16:33. By the “world” is meant here, this present world; not the world in its redeemed state. And it often means wicked people. For proof of this, see John 15:18, 19; 1 John 3:1. Then Christ’s statement in John 16:33 would imply that the wicked now have the ascendancy. It was the contemplation of this fact that caused David to almost lose faith in God. Said he, “I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death; but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish.” Psalm 73:3-7. In the twelfth verse he says, “Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.” These things well-nigh caused David’s steps to slip. {SITI February 12, 1885, p. 102.25}

But when he went into the sanctuary of the Lord, then he understood the end of these prosperous ones. He saw that although they seemed so secure, their feet were set in slippery places. “Thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.” Psalm 73:18-20. Here is brought to view the utter destruction of the wicked, concerning which we have learned in past lessons. The completeness of their destruction is thus stated by the psalmist: “For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.” Psalm 37:10. And when this destruction shall have been accomplished what will take place? “But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.” Verse 11. So we learn that this earth, the kingdom which is promised to them that love God, is not to be inherited until the wicked are consumed from off the face of it. Until that time, the meek are only heirs. E. J. W. {SITI February 12, 1885, p. 102.26}

**“Inheritance of the Saints.—Continued” The Signs of the Times, 11, 9.**

E. J. Waggoner

**THE SABBATH-SCHOOL.**

**LESSON FOR THE PACIFIC COAST—MARCH 28**

**THE FIRST DOMINION FORFEITED**

1. When the earth was created, to whom was given the dominion over it? {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.1}

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” Genesis 1:26-28. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.2}

2. What was its condition at that time? {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.3}

“And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.” Genesis 1:31. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.4}

3. Did man also share in this perfection? {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.5}

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” Genesis 1:27. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.6}

“Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.” Ecclesiastes 7:29. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.7}

2. What further shows that the dominion which God instructs to man must be preserved spotless? {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.8}

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven.” Matthew 6:10. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.9}

“And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.” Daniel 7:27. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.10}

5. Then until what time only, could Adam hope to retain the dominion given to him? {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.11}

6. When the dominion was given to Adam, what prohibition was put upon him? {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.12}

“But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Genesis 2:17. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.13}

7. Did he heed this prohibition? {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.14}

“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.” Genesis 3:6. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.15}

8. Since the dominion given to Adam was a perfect one, what was the necessary result of his sin? {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.16}

9. By what agency was Adam’s fall accomplished? {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.17}

“And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.” Genesis 3:12, 13. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.18}

10. Who is the serpent? {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.19}

“And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.” Revelation 20:2. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.20}

11. Is a man is overcome by another, what is the result? {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.21}

“While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.” 2 Peter 2:19. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.22}

12. By whom was Adam overcome? {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.23}

13. Then to whom did he become subject? {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.24}

14. What becomes of a man’s possessions, if he himself is overcome by another? {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.25}

“How can one enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.” Matthew 12:29. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.26}

15. Then when Adam was overcome by Satan, what must have become of the dominion which he held? {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.27}

16. What *title* does Paul apply to the one who blinds men concerning the gospel? {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.28}

“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” 2 Corinthians 4:3, 4. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.29}

17. What is the *name* of the one who performs this work of deception? {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.30}

“Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” 2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.31}

18. Then who is “god of the world”? {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.32}

19. What other title does Paul apply to the one who works in the children of disobedience.” {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.33}

“Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” Ephesians 2:2. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.34}

20. Although Satan usurped the dominion from Adam, did he become absolute ruler? {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.35}

“That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.” Daniel 4:25. E. J. W. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 134.36}

**“Mercy and Justice” The Signs of the Times, 11, 9.**

E. J. Waggoner

It is quite generally held that and what is termed the old, or what is termed the Jewish, dispensation, God ruled according to a stern and justice, holding men to a strict account for everything; but that in the “Christian dispensation” mercy has predominated in his dealings with men; that justice has now stepped down from the throne, and that mercy has taken its place. This idea has taken almost universal hold on the minds of people. Let each reader examine his own mind, and he will find that some time in this life he has entertained this idea. We have before us a statement to this effect, made by a Doctor of Divinity, in the Sunday-school lesson notes of a prominent religious journal. The statement is as follows:- {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 137.1}

“Since the days of Christ’s assumption of the mediatorial power, ‘old things are passed away, and all things are become new;’ and souls are now saved only through the grace of Him to be in whom is to be a new creature.” {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 137.2}

This statement may be taken as a fair representation of the prevailing opinion. Let us examine the theory, and see how well it represents the God of the universe. On general grounds we should condemn it, because it is derogatory to the character of God. It represents him as a changeable being, one who is swayed at different times by different impulses; but we know that with him there is “no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” The Lord says (Ezekiel 18:25) that his ways are equal; but this theory makes them decidedly unequal. As it is commonly held, it actually charges God with injustice; for the opposite of justice is *in*justice, and if at any time God should relax his justice, to that extent he would be unjust. No Christian would think of openly charging God with being unjust, yet this is exactly what is done by everyone who says that at the present time God dispenses mercy at the expense of justice. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 137.3}

This evidently erroneous position is taken as a consequence of the mistaken notion that strict justice and tender mercy are incompatible. It is because men have so perverted truth that justice is hated. In short, men regard justice as injustice. This idea carried out to its extreme, makes anarchists and nihilists,-men who regard justice as tyranny. We shall endeavor to show not only that justice and mercy are compatible, but that they must exist together if they exist at all. That which would be mercy in a just man, is simply weakness and imbecility in an unjust man. God has always possessed both these attributes to exactly the same extent that he does now, and will possess them the same to all eternity. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 137.4}

When God had created the earth, beautiful and in every way perfect, he gave it to man. “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 137.5}

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” Genesis 1:26-28. Adam was given dominion over the earth and all that it contained. That is, he was made its lord or ruler. The earth was to be his kingdom, he, of course, to be subject to the great Creator. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 137.6}

Since Adam was to be subject to God, there must of necessity be something to test his loyalty, and his fitness to be confirmed in the dominion that had been given to him in trust for the Lord. God created him for immortality (2 Corinthians 5:4, 5), but before he could be made immortal his worthiness for that inestimable boon must be proved. It never would have done to make man immortal, incapable of death, before his character was tested. That would have been taking the risk of perpetuating sin, the very existence of which God abhors. Should man prove unworthy, he would necessarily lose the dominion which had been intrusted to him; and since this great gift,-an eternal inheritance,-was to be the reward of his faithfulness, it was but fitting that a corresponding penalty should be administered if he should prove disloyal. Accordingly we find that God laid on him the following injunction, with the penalty attached:- {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 137.7}

“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 137.8}

How long the man remained obedient, we have no means of knowing; but in the next chapter we find the record of his disobedience. And now, according to the previous declaration of God, in spite of Satan’s lie (Genesis 3:4), Adam must die. He must “pass from an animate to a lifeless state;” he must “cease to live;” he must “suffer a total and irreparable loss of action of the vital functions;” for that is what is signified by the word “die.” But “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not *perish*, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. Here the infinite mercy of God was displayed in the very beginning. Men had basically and ungratefully betrayed the trust given him; he had rebelled against God. He had surrendered to God’s enemy, and had thus become the enemy of God. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 137.9}

But God had no enmity in his heart toward man. He has no pleasure in the death of him that dieth (Ezekiel 18:32), and so he provided a way for man’s escape. In the statement that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head (Genesis 3:15), there was the promise of the Messiah, by whose death men might become reconciled to God. Romans 5:8-10. The penalty was not revoked, but the execution of it was stayed, in order to allow all to lay hold on the means to become reconciled to God, if they chose to do so. That penalty still hangs over the human race; and since the Son of God was given so that those and only those who believe in him should not perish, it follows that the penalty will be allowed to fall upon those who do not believe in him. In proof of this Paul states that those who know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, “shall be punished with *everlasting destruction*.” 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 137.10}

The Bible reveals to us the sad fact that the number of the saved will be small in comparison with the number of those who will be lost. Matthew 7:13, 14. The vast majority of mankind have chosen to remain in rebellion against God, yet there will be among the saved some of from “every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” There will not be one, however in all that vast throng, who has been saved in any other way than by belief in the only begotten Son of God, for he is the only way. “Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Acts 4:12. From the depths of his anguish Job exclaimed, “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.” Job 19:25. And Isaiah proclaims the glad truth that “he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.” Isaiah 53:5. Although Isaiah wrote more than seven hundred years before the sacrifice was actually made, he could justly use the past tense, since the lamb was “slain from the foundation of the world.” Revelation 13:8. A promise from God, who cannot lie, is the same as though the thing were already performed. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 138.1}

Thus far God’s mercy. From the fall to the day of redemption it is the same. It was no less six thousand years ago than it is now, for it was then that Christ was given for man’s redemption. It was no light thing for God, who loves with an infinite love, to consent to deliver up his only Son to be insulted and murdered. But he made the sacrifice, and did it at a time when it was needed, when destruction to man was imminent. Now since there is in the universe no greater gift than the Son of a God, it follows that God gave at the first all that he had to give, and consequently it was simply impossible for any greater manifestation of his mercy ever to be made. And so the present dispensation contains no more mercy than there was in the patriarchal age. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 138.2}

No one can dispute these propositions. But some may say that God’s mercy will be suspended when, according to his word, he destroys the wicked. Few can see any mercy in the punishment of sinners, and many deny that there is in it any justice. We believe that there is both; that God’s justice, as well as his mercy, “endurerth for ever.” {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 138.3}

1. “Can God justly punish the wicked?” Certainly; because he has said that he will, and said it before any sin had been committed. Then the question is really this: “Has God the right to attach a penalty to his laws?” The answer must be, He has such a right, if he has a right to make laws, for a law without a penalty attached is a nullity. A law, for the violation of which no penalty is provided, has no force, and is worth no more than the material on which it is written. Blackstone, the eminent jurist, whose “Commentaries” are standard authority in both hemispheres, says:- {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 138.4}

“Of all the parts of the law, the most effectual is the *vindicatory*. For it is but lost labor to say, ‘Do this for that,’ unless we also declare, ‘This shall be the consequence of your non-compliance.’ We must therefore observe that the main strength and force of a law consists in the penalty attached to it.”-*Cooley’s Blackstone*, *Vol. p. 55*. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 138.5}

That God has a right to make laws for his creatures, follows from the very fact that he is the Creator of all things. Any individual has a right to make laws for another just to the extent that that other is dependent on him. Now since in God “we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28), and are entirely dependent on him, it follows that he has, by right, the supreme control of us. Not only has he the right to make laws for his creatures, but he is bound to do so; for no intelligent creature can exist unless they have respect to some common standard. There must be something to regulate their actions, otherwise they would encroach upon each other’s rights, even if they had no malice in their hearts, and confusion if not extermination would be the result. This standard is called law. God is indeed the only one who can really make laws. Human laws derive their force from the fact that they are in harmony with the law of God. Blackstone says that we are in duty bound to violate any human law that runs counter to the law of God. The Bible teaches the same thing. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 138.6}

2. Since God has the right to make laws and to affix penalties, mercy as well as justice demands that those penalties be executed if the laws are violated. If God has brought subjects into existence, and has given laws for their mutual good, and for the maintenance of the rights of each, he is bound to support and protect those subjects in the enjoyment of their rights. But if any one breaks the law, he destroys this evenly-balanced condition of things, and infringes directly on the rights of others. And now some of God’s subject are being oppressed by the rebels. Shall he let them suffer? If he does, he will justly incur the charge of being unmerciful. He must punish the guilty, in order to assure the loyal ones of his power and his willingness to protect them. Should he allow the laws to be transgressed with impunity in one part of his Government, his subjects in another part would be in constant fear lest rebellion should spring up in the midst of them, and their lives thereby be endangered. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 138.7}

Take human laws for an example. Every civilized country has a law prohibiting murder. Now suppose there is a country which never punishes the murderer, what will be the result? The people will either take the laws into their own hands, or else they will flock to a country where their lives will be protected. People instinctively recognize the fact that there is no safety except in the enforcement of the laws, and the punishment of evil-doer; and a Government which does not do this, receives nothing but contempt, and soon ceases to exist. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 138.8}

This enables us to understand Psalm 136. The psalmist says: “O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.... To him that smote Egypt in their firstborn; for his mercy endureth for ever; and brought out Israel from among them; for his mercy endureth for ever,” etc. The Egyptians were fearfully wicked. They were in rebellion against God, and were wickedly oppressing his people. They had received warning after warning, but to no purpose. For God to leave Israel in that hard bondage, would have been cruel. But the Egyptians would not let them go until they were forced to do so by the severe judgments of God. The Egyptians had, by their obstinate and insolent rebellion, forfeited all claim upon God, and his mercy was displayed in a remarkable manner in the deliverance of his people. And so God’s mercy will be shown even in the final destruction of sin and sinners. By that act he will show his loyal subjects in all of his dominion that he has a care for their welfare, and will protect them. His mercy endures just the same, even while he is punishing the guilty; they, however, have voluntarily rejected it. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 138.9}

One more question will arise in the minds of some. It is this: “Why did not God destroy the wicked ones in the beginning, when the first sin was committed, and then create a new race?” That would have been allowing Satan to triumph, and besides, the new race would also have been obliged to stand a probation, and would have been as liable to fall as was the first. But the great reason is found in God’s love to the creatures of his hand. “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. They who ask why God did not at once destroy the sinner, have a very limited idea of the love which God has for his creatures. That millions will finally be destroyed, is not the fault of God, but of man. God has done all that infinite love could do. There was no necessity for any to perish, for such was not God’s will. 2 Peter 3:9. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 138.10}

It must also be remembered that this earth is not the whole of God’s dominion. We must not be so thoughtless as to suppose that this little world takes up all of God’s attention. More than one world (Hebrews 1:2) owes its allegiance to the Maker of all. “The Lord hath prepared his throne in the Heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.” Psalm 103:19. The telescope reveals worlds many thousand times as large as ours. And here, in this little speck of the universe, puny man has dared to lift up the standard of rebellion against God’s Government! A wonderful and a horrible thing! Think of it; rebellion against God! Shall he put it down? Most certainly; the integrity of his Government demands it. In mercy and justice to his loyal subjects in other portions of the universe, he must show that he can and will maintain order. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 138.11}

But first he must let all see the terrible consequence of rebelling against his just decrees. Says Paul (1 Corinthians 4:9): “We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.” This is as true of all the world as it is of the apostles. While all the creatures in the universe behold the wonderful spectacle of one province (so to speak) in rebellion, they learn “that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;” and that God will “by no means clear the guilty;” and thus, while they learn to trust more fully in his protecting arm, and praise him for his mercy, they are effectually deterred from ever presuming to rise up against him. As God permits the rebellion to fully develop itself, they see the terrible hideousness of sin, and the justice of God in finally blotting it from his universe. And when this shall have been accomplished, “every creature which is in Heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them,” will with glad accord join in ascribing “blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.” E. J. W. {SITI February 26, 1885, p. 138.12}