**“What the Gospel Teaches” The Signs of the Times, 12, 1.**

E. J. Waggoner

“And he said unto him, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Mark 16:15, 16. These words were spoken by our Saviour after his resurrection, and shortly before his ascension. They are perfectly in harmony with his words recorded in Matthew 24:14, that “this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations.” There is no mistaking the extent of territory in which the gospel must be preached-nothing less than the whole world. And how long must it be preached? Read the whole of Matthew 24:14: “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” Then the gospel is to be preached until the end. The end here referred to is the same that is mentioned in verse 3, “The end of the world.” That this “end of the world” is in connection with the coming of the Lord, is shown by the words of the disciples in the verse last mentioned, and by the words of Christ in Matthew 13:40-43; 24:30, 31. {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 82.1}

The fact that by divine command the gospel is to be preached in all the world until the coming of the Lord and the end of the world, proves conclusively that until the Lord comes, a necessity for its being preached will exist in all the world. This needs no further argument, for it is nowhere disputed. We will therefore turn our attention to a consideration of what the gospel is, and what creates the necessity for its being so long and so extensively preached. {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 82.2}

The word “gospel” means, literally, “a good message;” Webster’s first definition is “glad tidings.” According to its derivation, it might be applied to any good news; but in the Bible it is used with exclusive reference to one thing; what that thing is, we may easily learn from the Bible itself. {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 82.3}

In Luke 2:10 we find these words, addressed by the angel of the Lord to the shepherds in the field: “Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings [a gospel] of great joy, which shall be to all people.” The next verse tells what this gospel is: “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” Then the gospel which is to be preached to all people is the announcement of a Saviour. It is from this that Webster derives his specific definition of the gospel, as, “especially, the good news concerning Christ and his salvation.” {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 82.4}

But the simple heralding of Christ, without stating the nature and object of his work, would not be the preaching of the gospel. The “good news” consists in the fact that Christ the Lord is *a Saviour*. That Christ comes as a Saviour, necessarily implies that there are people to be saved, and something from which they must be saved. Turning to Matthew 1:21, we read the angel’s declaration before the birth of Christ: “And thou shall call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins.” Paul says (1 Timothy 1:15): “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” So it is manifest that the preaching of the gospel consists in the announcement that Christ will save people from sin. {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 82.5}

But while the gospel is the good news that Christ brings salvation from sin, it is evident that that simple announcement would not suffice to produce the desired results, viz., that men should believe and be baptized. For there are millions of people who virtually say that they are “rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing,” not knowing that they are “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” No matter how destitute a man may be, it would be of no use to offer him money if he were ignorant of his necessities, and perfectly satisfied with his condition. So no man can feel any interest in the gospel as a means of salvation from sin, unless he (1) knows what sin is, and (2) is convinced that he is a sinner, and (3) understands the nature and results of sin, so as to realize that it is something to be shunned. Therefore the gospel, with its announcement of salvation from sin, must also make known what sin is. This it does, as we shall see. {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 82.6}

John, the evangelist, so called because it is he who more than anyone else dwells on the love of God and Christ in the salvation of man, defines sin. He says: “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for *sin is the transgression of the law*.” 1 John 3:4. In harmony with this, Paul says that “where no law is, there is no transgression.” Romans 4:15. And “sin is not imputed when there is no law.” Romans 5:12. Volumes could not define sin more clearly than do these three texts. We have found out, then, (1) that “gospel” means good news; (2) that the gospel of the Bible is the good news of a Saviour-Christ the Lord (Luke 2:10, 11); (3) that Jesus saves from sin (Matthew 1:21; 1 Timothy 1:15); and (4) that “sin is the transgression of the law.” 1 John 3:4. {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 82.7}

So that, in short, the gospel announces the way by which man may be saved from the transgression of the law, and from the consequences of such transgression. Sin is the disease; the gospel is the remedy. And since the gospel is to be preached in all the world, until the coming of the Lord, it follows that “all the world,” yea, “every creature,” has sinned. This we read in Romans 3:23: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 83.1}

It must also be true that sin will be in the world till the Lord comes. And this we verify by a comparison of Genesis 6:5 and 13:13 with Luke 17:26-30. But since sin is the transgression of the law, it also necessarily follows that “the law” will be in full force in all the world until the coming of the Lord. In other words, sin is the disease, and it cannot exist where there is no law. Romans 4:15. The disease, sin, does exist in “every creature” in “all the world;” for the remedy, the gospel, is to be thus extensively made known, and the great Physician would not send the remedy where it is not needed. “They that be whole need not a physician; but they that are sick” (Matthew 9:12); and therefore the law, by which alone “is the knowledge of sin”-the disease-is binding upon “every creature” “in all the world.” Now since “the wages of sin”-the transgression of the law-“is death” (Romans 6:23), it is important that all men know just what that law is, the transgression of which brings death, and just what its nature and requirements. These points will therefore next claim our attention. E. J. W. {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 83.2}

**“Encyclical Letter of Pope Leo XIII” The Signs of the Times, 12, 1.**

E. J. Waggoner

The letter from Pope Leo XIII., “Concerning the Christian Constitution of States,” addressed “To All the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, and Bishops of the Catholic World,” has spent the subject of considerable comment by both the secular and the religious press. So far as we of seen, it has met with quite a general commendation. The New York *Observer* is an honorable exception to those who, like the *Independent*, think it is “an excellent and sensible pastoral.” We have delayed making any comments upon it until we could read it has published by authority. We now propose to notice a few points in it, simply to show that the Catholic Church is the same in every particular that was four hundred years ago and that people may see with what insidiousness it is making its way in the world. The first thing that attracts the attention is the following statement in the Introduction:- {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 6.1}

“The Church looks essentially, and the very nature of her being, to the salvation of souls and the winning for them of happiness in Heaven; nevertheless, she also secures even in this world advantages so many and so great that she could not do more, even if she had been founded primarily and specially to secure prosperity in this life which is worked out upon earth. In truth, wherever the Church has set her foot, she has at once changed the aspect of affairs, colored the manners of the people as with new virtues and a refinement unknown before-as many people as have accepted this have been distinguished for their gentlest, there justice, and the glory of their deeds.” {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 6.2}

The above sentences *seem* little involved, but the idea is very clearly expressed, compared with the greater portion of the letter. If we have been correctly informed, Leo XIII. is a close student of the Fathers; and it would seem that he has been an apt student, for his composition very closely resembles the dry platitudes and the circumlocution which abound in the “Fathers” of the Catholic church. The above paragraph, however, is clear enough to convince any who will think, that it is groundless assumption. In proof of its falsity, one has only to think of the natives of Mexico, Central America, Spain, and Italy.These countries have been under Catholic rule for centuries, and may be taken as representative instances of the refining and civilizing influence of the Roman Catholic Church. If the statement of the pope be true, those countries ought to lead the world and everything. On the contrary, however, they are at the bottom of the list. Of some of them it may be said that they have even deteriorated under the papal influence. The Italian Government, since Victor Emmanuel rescued it from papal oppression, has taken a leading position, although not much can yet be said for the great mass of poor, deluded Italians themselves. But this only makes more prominent the evils of Catholic rule. It is true that many Catholics have been distinguished, but not as a consequence of their Catholicism. The truth is, as appears further on in the letter, the Catholic Church adapts itself to the people. Among civilized people it has all the learning known to the school; but it is content to leave savage races where it finds them. Provided they will acknowledge its power. {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 6.3}

The following paragraph sounds very well, and, taken by itself, would not be very objectionable:- {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 6.4}

“As it is not lawful for anybody to neglect his duties towards God, and as it is the first duty to embrace, in mind and then conduct, religion-not such as each may choose, but such as God commands-in the same manner States cannot, without a crime, act as though God did not exist, or cast off the care of religion as alien to them or useless, or out of several kinds of religion adopt indifferently which they please; but they are absolutely bound to, in the worship of the Deity, to adopt that use and manner in which God himself shows that he wills to be adored. Therefore among the rulers the name of God must be holy; but it must be reckoned among the first of their duties to favor religion, protect it, and cover it with the authority of the laws, and act to institute or decree anything which is incompatible with its security.” {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 6.5}

Whether there is anything wrong in this statement or not depends upon the source from whence it proceeds, as will hereafter be seen. When the pope speaks of religion, he means the Catholic Church alone. The following paragraph explains the above, and shows what he desires when he says that rulers must cover religion with the authority of the laws. It is entitled, “What the Church has Done for Civilization”:- {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 7.1}

“There was once a time when the philosophy of the gospel governed states; then it was that the power and divine virtue of Christian wisdom had penetrated into the laws, institutions, and manners of the people-indeed, into all the ranks and relations of the State; when the religion instituted by Jesus Christ, firmly established in that degree of dignity which was befitting, flourished everywhere, in the favor of rulers and under the due protection of magistrates; when the priesthood and the government were united by concord and a friendly interchange of offices. And the State composed in that fashion produced, in the opinion of all, more excellent fruits, the memory of which still flourishes, and will flourish, attested by innumerable monuments which can neither be destroyed nor obscured by any art of the adversary. If Christian Europe subdued barbarous peoples, and transferred them from a savage to a civilized state, from superstition to the truth; if she victoriously repelled the invasions of the Muhammedans; if civilization retained the chief power, and accustomed herself to afford others a leader and mistress in everything that adorns humanity; if she has granted to the peoples true and manifold liberty; if she has most established many institutions for the solace of wretchedness, beyond controversy is greatly due to religion, under whose auspices great undertakings were commenced and with whose aid they were perfected. Truly the same excellent state of things would have continued if the agreement of the two powers had continued if greater things might rightfully have been expected if there had been obedience to the authority, the sway, the counsels of the church, characterized by greater faithfulness and perseverance,” etc. {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 7.2}

Who cannot see that this is a long look backward to the time when the pope ruled kings, and when with a word he released subjects from their allegiance to their rightful rulers? The time when the pope forced an emperor in Germany to stand for three days in the snow, awaiting the papal pleasure: when a legate of the pope used as a foot-ball the crown of a king of England; when designing men waxed rich off from the superstitions and vices of the ignorant, by selling them pretended indulgences; when the pope had such control of the people’s consciences that he could keep them in so great a state of degradation that even the ignorant rabble whom he made to be priests, were far above them; the time when thousands of priests had never seen a copy of the Bible, and when, as a consequence, the pure principles of the gospel had almost ceased to be recognized in the world, so that the very name of priest was almost a synonym for libertine; when the few who dared refuse obedience to the vile men who presumed to stand in the place of Christ, were proscribed and hunted from the earth with the most diabolical tortures which demons in human shape could invent; and when the pope publicly gave thanks to God for the massacre of sixty thousand Huguenots, whose only offense was that they believed the Bible;-these are the times for which Leo XIII. longs. These are some of the “excellent fruits” of the union of the Church and the State. And the pope truly says that “greater things might rightfully have been expected,” “if the agreement of the two powers had continued.” Let the so-called “National Reform Party” make a note of this. {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 7.3}

That the above state of things is what the pope desires, is shown by his reference to the Reformation as “that dreadful and deplorable zeal for revolution which was aroused in the sixteenth century, after the Christian religion had been thrown into confusion.” And in spite of all this, there are professed Protestants who think that the letter is “an excellent and sensible pastoral.” Sensible it may be, from the Catholic standpoint, but we deny its excellence from any standpoint whatever. {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 7.4}

Following up the above statements, the pope says of the Reformation and its results:- {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 7.5}

“And since the people is said to contain in itself the fountain of all right and of all power, it will follow that the State deems itself bound by no kind of duty towards God; that no religion should be publicly professed; nor ought there to be any inquiry [by the State], but to each equal rights ought to be assigned with the sole end that the social order incurs no injury from them.” {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 7.6}

The above needs no special comment here. We merely ask the reader to compare it with some of the extracts which follow, and which shows that the Roman Catholic Church holds that no other form of religion ought to be tolerated in the State. {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 7.7}

In the following, the Pope shows still more plainly, the design of the Roman Church:- {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 7.8}

“Those foundations of the State being admitted, which at this time are in such general favor, it easily appears into how unfavorably a position the church is driven. For when the conduct of affairs is in accordance with the doctrines of this kind, to the Catholic name is assigned an equal position with, or even an inferior position to, that of alien societies in the State; no regard is paid to each ecclesiastical laws; and the church, which, by the command and mandate of Jesus Christ, ought to teach all nations, finds itself forbidden in any way to interfere in the instructions of the people.” {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 7.9}

The “Church” finds itself forbidden “to interfere” in the instructions of the people. That is, the Catholic Church has to be content with the same privileges that are granted to other religious bodies. This is truly an “unfavorable position” for a church that has been accustomed to enforce its dogmas by the sword, the rack, and the stake. {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 7.10}

Again we quote:- {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 7.11}

“Concerning the reasons for the separation of Church and State, the same pontiff [Gregory XVI.] speaks thus: and ‘Nor can we hope happier results either for religion or the Government, from the wishes of those who are eagerly desirous that the Church should be separated from a State, and the mutual good understanding of the sovereign secular power and the sacerdotal authority be broken up. It is evident that those lovers of the most shameless liberty dread that concord which has always been fortunate and wholesome, both for sacred and civil interests.’ To like the effect Pius IX., as opportunity offered, noted many false opinions, which had begun to be of great strength, and afterwards ordered them to be collected together, in order that in so great a conflux of errors, Catholics might have something which, without stumbling, they might follow.” {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 7.12}

To a careless reader the above statement might seem to be very innocent; but it can easily be shown that it endorses all of the intolerance which ever disgraced the papacy in the Dark Ages. Read again the reference to Pius IX., and the “false opinions” which he noted and caused to be collected. This refers to the “Syllabus of Errors” which was put forth by Pious IX. This “Syllabus” is a collection of about eighty statements, all of which are declared to be grievous errors. We have space for only a few of these “errors.” Number 21 is as follows:- {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 7.13}

“The Church has not the power of defining dogmatically that the religion of the Catholic Church is the only true religion.” {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 7.14}

Remember that the Catholic Church holds just the opposite of this “error.” According to this, none of the Roman Catholics have any religion at all. The 23rd “error” which the pope unqualifiedly condemns, is that:- {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 7.15}

“The Roman pontiffs and ecumenical councils have exceeded the limits of their power, have usurped the rights of princes, and have even committed errors in defining matters of faith and morals.” {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 7.16}

On no ground can it be held that Roman pontiffs have *not* usurped the rights of princes, except on the ground that princes have no right which popes are bound to recognize; and this is just what the Roman Church holds. And right here we might note that the papacy finds a parallel in the self-styled “National Reform Association,” which, according to its organ, the *Christian Statesman*, holds that “the State and its sphere exists for the sake of, and to serve the interests of the Church.” Human meant nature has not changed a particle in the last three or four hundred years, and every principle of reasoning justifies the statement that such sentiments as the above, whether held by popes or by professed Protestants, will work out the same results in the nineteenth century that they did in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 7.17}

“Errors” number 24 and 27 are as follows:- {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 7.18}

“The Church has not the power of availing herself of force, or any direct or indirect temporal power.” {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 7.19}

“The ministers of the Church and the Roman pontiff, ought to be absolutely excluded from all charge and dominion over temporal affairs.” {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 7.20}

Of course these are errors, if this is true that Roman pontiffs have never exceeded their jurisdiction, nor usurped the rights of princes; and this is what Leo XIII. reiterates in his “excellent and sensible pastoral.” And the “National Reform Association,” and all who favor it, cannot consistently deny the pope’s claim. {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 7.21}

One more quotation from the “Syllabus of Errors” must suffice to show that Leo XIII. holds exactly the same views that were held by his predecessor, Pius IX. and, by the amiable Leo X., who placed Luther under ban, and caused the Christians of his time to be slaughtered. Numbers 77 and 78 of the “errors” noted by Pious IX are the following:- {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 7.22}

“In the present day it is no longer expedient that the Catholic religion shall be held as the only religion of the State, to the exclusion of all other modes of worship.” {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 7.23}

“Whence it has been widely provided by law, in some countries called Catholic, that persons coming to reside therein shall enjoy the public exercise of their own worship.” {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 7.24}

Which means that Leo XIII., in common with Pius IX. and all the popes who ever reigned, holds that the Roman Catholic religion ought to be held as the only religion of the State, “to the exclusion of all other modes of worship,” and that persons coming to reside in countries called Catholic, ought not to be allowed to enjoy the public exercise of their own worship. Let those who will, applaud such sentiments; we will not. E. J. W. {SITI January 7, 1886, p. 7.25}

(*Concluded next week.*)

**“The Law and the Gospel Co-extensive” The Signs of the Times, 12, 2.**

E. J. Waggoner

In Nehemiah 9:13 we find the following words in the Levites’ confession to God: “Thou camest down also upon Mount Sinai; and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments and true laws, good statutes and commandments.” Here we have reference made to true laws and good statutes. A good and true law would in every case condemn sin; therefore the law here referred to is of the same character as that which, being transgressed, makes it necessary for the gospel to be preached. This law was given upon Mount Sinai; so we examine the law there given to see if it meets the requirements. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 22.1}

In the 19th of Exodus we have a description of the preparation of the people to hear the law from Sinai. We read:- {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 22.2}

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes, and be ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.” Exodus 19:10, 11. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 22.3}

“And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.” Exodus 19:16-18. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 22.4}

This was the condition of Mount Sinai when from it God spoke “true laws, good statutes and commandments.” Chapter 20, verses 3-17, contains the words which God spoke at that time. We quote them in full:- {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 22.5}

1. “Thou shalt have no other gods before me. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 22.6}

2. “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 22.7}

3. “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 22.8}

4. “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 22.9}

5. “Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 22.10}

6. “Thou shalt not kill. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 22.11}

7. “Thou shalt not commit adultery. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 22.12}

8. “Thou shalt not steal. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 22.13}

9. “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 22.14}

10. “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbours house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbours wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbours.” {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 22.15}

These are the words which the Lord spoke in the hearing of all the people, from the midst of the fire and smoke upon Mount Sinai. Soon afterward he spoke to Moses, as follows:- {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 22.16}

“Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.” Exodus 24:12. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 22.17}

Accordingly, we find by reading the remaining verses of the chapter, that Moses went up into the mount, and remained there with God forty days and forty nights. While he was there, the Lord gave him minute directions concerning the building of the sanctuary. Then we read:- {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 22.18}

“And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon Mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.” Exodus 31:18. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 22.19}

“And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand; the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables.” Exodus 32:15, 16. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 22.20}

Then we are told how Moses, as he drew near the camp, saw the golden calf, and the people dancing around it, “and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath [at the foot of] the mount.” But this was not the end of the matter; for very soon we read thus:- {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 22.21}

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest.” Exodus 34:1. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 22.22}

We will now read the words of Moses, as he rehearses the whole matter to the Israelites, just before his death. We begin with the point last quoted:- {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 23.1}

“At that time the Lord said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto me into the mount, and make thee an ark of wood. And I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest, and thou shalt put them in the ark. And I made an ark of shittim wood, and hewed two tables of stone like unto the first, and went up into the mount, having the two tables in mine hand. And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the Lord spake unto you in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, in the day of the assembly; and the Lord gave them unto me. And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the Lord commanded me.” Deuteronomy 10:1-5. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 23.2}

One more quotation on this point. In the course of Moses’ final address to the people, in which he rehearsed all their history in the wilderness, he repeated the substance of the ten commandments, and at the close he said:- {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 23.3}

“These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me.” Deuteronomy 5:22. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 23.4}

The gist of these texts of Scripture may be expressed as follows: The good and true laws which were spoken upon Sinai (Nehemiah 9:13) were the ten commandments, found in Exodus 20:3-17; these ten commandments were written by God himself on two tables of stone; and there was nothing spoken to the people by the Lord, except that which was placed upon the tables of stone (Deuteronomy 5:22). Therefore the words found in Exodus 20:3-17, and no others, form the ten commandments, the perfect law of God. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 23.5}

But what has this to do with the gospel? Just this: We found that the gospel is the remedy for sin, which is the transgression of the law; and that the law must be in force as long and as extensively as the gospel is preached. We were concerned to know what law it is the transgression of which makes it necessary for the gospel to be preached, and we have now found it. One more step completes the identification. It is this:- {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 23.6}

Paul says (Romans 7:7): “What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not know sin, but by the law; for I had not know lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.” The law here referred to must be the same law that is referred to in John 3:4, because it is one that points out sin; it does this because it is “holy, and just, and good.” Therefore it is the law to which the gospel relates. And what law is it?-It is the law which condemns unlawful desire by saying, “Thou shalt not covet.” But this is the last one of the ten commandments. Therefore we have proved to a demonstration that the ten commandments of Exodus 20:3-17,-those commandments which were spoken by Jehovah, in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, of the smoke, and of the thick darkness, and which were written on two tables of stone and deposited in the ark,-form the law which points out sin. They are the law which has been universally trodden underfoot, making it necessary that the gospel should be preached in all the world, to every creature; and, therefore, it is as plain as the Scripture can make it, that they are still binding upon every creature in every part of the world. If it were otherwise, there would be no sin, and, consequently, no need of the gospel. Whoever, therefore, says that he is not under the jurisdiction of those ten commandments, virtually says that he has no sin; and whoever says that he has no sin, places himself outside of the gospel plan; for “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” and no others. His salvation has reference only to those who have transgressed the law of God, the ten commandments. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 23.7}

The above argument is, we think, so conclusive as to make it almost unnecessary to notice the assumption that the gospel of Christ is that which points out sin. If this were true, we should have Christ introducing the gospel into the world in order to save men from the rejection of it! That is, the remedy for the disease creates the disease, the remedy being introduced to cure that which without it would never have existed! Such an absurdity is too puerile to be entertained for a moment. The gospel must relate to something outside of and prior to itself. Since the gospel saves from sin, it is evident that sin existed before the gospel, and that it continues to exist so long as the gospel exists; and since sin is the transgression of the law, it is just as evident that the law existed before there was sin, and, consequently, before there was any gospel, or any need of it, and that it exists as long, at least, as the gospel exists. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 23.8}

The testimony of men can never add to the force of the Bible; but to show that the view taken here is not a peculiar one among Christians, we quote from the two men, both imminent for scholarship and piey:- {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 23.9}

“The ordinary method of God is to convict sinners by the law, and that only. The gospel is not the means by which God hath ordained, or which our Lord himself used, for this end. We have no authority in Scripture for applying it thus, nor any ground to think it will prove effectual. Nor have we any more ground to expect this from the nature of the thing. ‘They that are whole,’ as our Lord himself observed, ‘need not a physician, but they that are sick.’ It is absurd, therefore, to offer a physician to them that are whole, or that at least imagine themselves so to be. You are first to convince them that they are sick; otherwise they will not thank you for your labor. It is equally absurd to offer Christ to those whose heart is whole, having never yet been broken. It is, in the proper sense, casting pearls before swine. Doubtless they will trample them underfoot; and it is no more than you have reason to expect, if they also turn again and rend you.”- *Wesley’s Works, Vol. 1, Sermon 85*. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 23.10}

“The law of God, and its great and solemn injunctions, should be distinctly set forth. Our congregations should be gathered as a round the base of Mount Sinai, while from its summit is heard the voice of God in those commandments which from its summit are heard the voice of God in those commandments which are unalterable and the eternal in their character. The effect of these utterances will be, that conscience will be awakened, and hearts will tremble. Some will say, with Moses, ‘I do exceedingly fear and quake,’ when they behold the majesty of law, the purity of God, and their own impurity. Others may be repelled, and will say, ‘Let not God speaks to us anymore.’ Some will object to the sternness of the law, and will say, ‘Prophesy smooth things;’ but still that law must be preached. It brings the sinner to recognition of his sins in having transgressed God’s holy law, and shows him the fearfulness of the doom which is impending over him. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 23.11}

“The law must be followed by the gospel; the awakened sinner must be pointed to the Saviour, that he may feel that, deep as are the stains of his transgressions, the blood of Christ can wash them all away. There are many preachers who love to dwell on the gospel alone. They talk sweetly and beautifully of the fatherhood of God. This is well. It is more than well. It is essential. But sometimes they go beyond this, and declaim against the preaching of the law-intimate that it belongs to a past age, a less civilized society; that men can best be moved by love alone, and they rely wholly on its attractive power. Such a gospel may rear a beautiful structure, but its foundation is in the sand. No true edifice can be raised without its foundations of being dug deep by repentance toward God, and then shall the rock be reached, and the building shall be strong enough through faith in Jesus Christ. The law without gospel is dark and hopeless; the gospel without law is inefficient and powerless. The one leads to servitude, the other to antinomianism. The two combined to produce ‘charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.’”-*Bishop Simpson in “Lectures on Preaching,” pp. 188, 189*. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 23.12}

The obligations which rests upon all mankind to keep the law of God, will be considered more at length in future articles. E. J. W. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 23.13}

**“Encyclical Letter of Pope Pius XIII. (Concluded.)” The Signs of the Times, 12, 2.**

E. J. Waggoner

**(*Concluded*.)**

But as the pope proceeds, he grows more bold, and speaks out the popish views so plainly that it would seem that even the most blind Protestant might take the alarm. He says:- {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 24.1}

“These, then, are the things taught by the Catholic Church concerning the constitution and government of the State. Concerning these sayings and decrees, if a men will only judge dispassionately, no form of government is, *per se*, condemned if so long as it has nothing repugnant to Catholic doctrine, and is able, if wisely and justly managed, to preserve the State in the best condition. Nor is it, *per se*, to be condemned whether the people have a greater or less share in the government; for at certain times, and with the guarantee of certain laws, such participation may appertain, not only to the usefulness, but even to the duty of the citizens. Moreover, there is no just cause that anyone should condemned the Church as being too restrictive in gentleness, or inimical to that liberty which is natural and legitimate. In truth, the Church judges it not lawful that the various kinds of divine worship should have the same right as the true religion; still it does not condemn those governors of States, who, for the sake of acquiring some great good, or to prevent great ill, patiently bear with manners and customs, so that each kind of religion has its place in the State.” {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 24.2}

Let no one think that “the Church” would lay out a cast-iron rule for the government of States. Let not patriotic Americans be alarmed. The pope does not condemn a Republican form of government, nor indeed any form of government, *per se*, if it will only work for the interests of the papacy. The Catholic Church is just as well satisfied to control a senate or a legislature as it is to control a king. And let no one, says the crafty Leo, condemn the Church for its leniency in tolerating the other forms of worship than the Catholic, because it does not now, any more than it ever did, judge it lawful that the various kinds of divine worship should have the same right as the Catholic religion; but, owing to its present “unfavorable position,” it is not able to “interfere” as much as it would like to. And, moreover, the Roman Church, so great is its kindness, does not condemn those rulers to allow “each kind of religion” to have “its place in the State,” since, on account of the existing circumstances, they cannot help themselves. That is, the pope does not condemn rulers for not persecuting Protestants, when they have not the power to do so! what marvelous gentleness! {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 24.3}

And then, as if to emphasize the fact that the Catholic Church still cherishes, as a precious legacy, the principles (or, rather, the lack of principles), which caused Huss and Jerome and thousands of others to be burned at the stake, the pope says:- {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 24.4}

“Therefore at so critical a juncture of events, Catholic men, if, as it behooves them, they will listen to us, will easily see what are their own and each other’s duties in matters of *opinion* as well as of *action*. And the formation of opinion, whatsoever things the Roman pontiffs have handed down, each and every one is it necessary to hold in firm judgment, well understood, and as often as occasion demands, openly to declare.” {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 24.5}

But how shall these wise and humane recommendations be carried into effect? The pope provides for this as follows:- {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 24.6}

“But generally, as we have said, to wish to take no part in public affairs would be in that degree vicious, in which it brought to the common weal neither care nor work; and on this account the more so, because Catholic men are bound by the admonition of the doctrine which they profess, to do what has to be done with integrity and with faith. If, on the contrary, they are idle, those whose opinions do not in truth give any great hope of safety, would easily get possession of the reins of government. This also would be attended with danger to the Christian name, because they would become most powerful who are badly disposed to the Church, and those least powerful who are well disposed. Wherefore it is evident that there is just cause for Catholics to undertake the conduct of public affairs; for they do not assume those responsibilities to approve of what is not lawful and the methods of government at this time; but in order that they may turn these very methods, as far as may be, to the unmixed and true public good, holding this purpose in their minds, to infuse into all the veins of the commonwealth the wisdom and virtue of the Catholic religion.” {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 24.7}

Is there any one who cannot see the meaning of this? Is it an innocent and harmless recommendation? Read it again carefully. Catholic men ought to take active part in public affairs. Well, is there any reason why they should not? No; a Catholic has as good a right to vote as anybody else has; but we would have professed Protestants alive to the object for which they vote, so that it may be defeated. Why should Catholic men not be idle in public affairs? Because if they are, those were not favorable to popish assumptions will get the reins of government. This must not be allowed. No one need think that a Catholic, but becoming active in the politics of a Government that is non-Catholic, does so because he approves of that form of Government, but because the design is to turn “these very methods” to the support of the “public good.” In other words, the pope is anxious to use even this Republican Government for the support of papal pretensions. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 24.8}

In connection with the last quotation, read the following:- {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 24.9}

“The means to seek these ends can scarcely be laid down upon one uniformed plan, since they must suit places and times different from each other. Nevertheless, in the first place, let concord of wills be preserved, and a likeness of things to be done be sought for. And each will be attained to the best, if all shall consider the admonitions of the apostolic see a law of conduct, and shall obey the bishops.” {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 24.10}

What does this mean? It means that whatever methods varying circumstances demand should be employed. Only one object is in view, and that is to secure the advancement of the Roman Catholic religion, to the exclusion of all other forms of worship. It means that whether in Europe or in the United States, the Roman Catholic who engages in politics is to “consider the admonitions of the apostolic see a law of conduct,” and to “obey the bishops.” It means that a steady and untiring effort is being made to bring the United States, as well as all other Governments, under the dictation of a foreign, ecclesiastical ruler, the representative of that “man of sin,” “who oppose and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped.” We claim that these conclusions are legitimately drawn from the letter of Pope Leo XIII., and not only so, but these things are plainly stated in that letter. Every candid person must testify that we have not wrested the pope’s meaning in the slightest degree. His words speak for themselves. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 24.11}

And now someone will ask: Do you really imagine that the pope will ever gain such control as he desires? Not in this country; but the danger is none the less, not withstanding. When Protestants can see nothing but what is perfectly allowable in such a letter as that of the pope’s, and can even commended, it shows that the principles of what is nowadays termed Protestantism are not very different from those of Catholicism. The angel of Revelation, who announced the judgment of the great harlot, Babylon, declared that “all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” Revelation 18:3. Fornication, when applied to the church, means connection with the world, which, on the part of the church, is always unlawful; and the position which the majority of professed Protestants take concerning the pope’s views on “the Christian Constitution of States,” shows that people are fast becoming intoxicated with the pleasing idea that the church, instead of depending alone on the pure words of the gospel, ought to unite with the world, that it may secure support from it. So intoxicated are they that their vision is affected, so that they cannot see anything wrong in the demands of the papacy. Surely it cannot be long before the likeness to the beast will be complete it. And when this unholy union has been consummated, then we may be sure that all the wrath of offend supreme power will be visited upon those who will maintain their allegiance to God alone. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 25.1}

We are willing to be called alarmists, for we are commanded to “sound an alarm.” Joel 2:1. God grant that many may heed the alarm, and in keeping “the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus,” may find a safe refuge from the unmingled wrath of God, infinitely greater and more terrible than that of all the nations of earth, which is sure to be visited upon all who worship either the beast or his image. E. J. W. {SITI January 14, 1886, p. 25.2}

**“Nature of the Law” The Signs of the Times, 12, 3.**

E. J. Waggoner

**Nature of the Law**

Having found that the law must be in force wherever the gospel is preached, it is very proper that we learn something in regard to its nature. What we have already learned would teach us that it is just the opposite of sin, for “sin is the transgression of the law.” But we will see what the Bible has to say further on this subject. {SITI January 21, 1886, p. 39.1}

We first quote the words of the psalmist, in Psalm 19:7, 8, 10, 11:- {SITI January 21, 1886, p. 39.2}

“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.” “More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward.” {SITI January 21, 1886, p. 39.3}

This comprises all that may be said of the law; for nothing can be more than perfect. Nothing can be added to that which is perfect, neither can anything be taken away, without leaving it imperfect. Therefore the testimony of David teaches us that when God spoke his law it was in just the form that he wanted it, and that he never designed that any change should be made in it. {SITI January 21, 1886, p. 39.4}

In perfect accord with the above testimony, the apostle Paul says: “Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, and just, and good.” Romans 7:12. This being so, we would naturally expect that the keeping of the commandments would make the keeper thereof perfect and holy. This we find is the case. Moses said to the Israelites:- {SITI January 21, 1886, p. 39.5}

“And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us.” Deuteronomy 6:25. {SITI January 21, 1886, p. 39.6}

Observe how perfectly this agrees with what we find in the New Testament: Moses said that to keep the law is righteousness. Of course the opposite of righteousness is unrighteousness, and John tells us that “all unrighteousness is sin.” 1 John 5:17. Then we must conclude that sin is just the opposite of obedience to the law; and that brings us to the original definition: “Sin is the transgression of the law.” 1 John 3:4. Unrighteousness means any deviation from that which is right; and since all unrighteousness is sin, we know that the slightest deviation from right is a transgression of the law. To show that this reasoning has solid scriptural foundation, we quote Psalm 119:96: {SITI January 21, 1886, p. 39.7}

“I have seen an end of all perfection; but thy commandment is exceeding broad.” And to show how broad and far-reaching it is, we have only to read Hebrews 4:12:- {SITI January 21, 1886, p. 40.1}

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” {SITI January 21, 1886, p. 40.2}

Thus we learn that the law is so broad that it takes cognizance of the very thoughts of the heart, and not alone the outward acts. As illustrating this, we have our Saviour’s words in the sermon on the mount:- {SITI January 21, 1886, p. 40.3}

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment; but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.” Matthew 5:21, 22. {SITI January 21, 1886, p. 40.4}

Again we quote verses 27 and 28 of the same chapter:- {SITI January 21, 1886, p. 40.5}

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery; but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” {SITI January 21, 1886, p. 40.6}

Other instances might be given; but these are sufficient to show the breadth of the commandments of God. The sixth commandment may be broken by a single angry thought that may never be expressed; and the seventh may be as effectually broken by a single wrong desire as by the overt act. Surely the law of God is broad; and since in all its prohibitions and requirements it is perfect, we can readily and naturally accept the words of the wise man, in Ecclesiastes 12:13:- {SITI January 21, 1886, p. 40.7}

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.” {SITI January 21, 1886, p. 40.8}

This statement, we repeat, is a natural consequence of what has preceded; for the keeping of a perfect law will make a man perfect, and nothing more than perfection can be required. There is no sin conceivable that is not forbidden by the ten commandments, and no righteous act or thought that is not commended and enjoined by them. Of course it would be impossible to go through the whole list of possible thoughts and deeds, in order to demonstrate this; but it will be found true in every case. Things may be mentioned which at first sight may seem to many persons to be outside of the ten commandments; but a little careful thought will show that nothing can be done that is beyond or outside of the perfect law of God. We have not the slightest fear of being brought to confusion because of this statement. We repeat, Nothing more than the duties enjoined in the ten commandments can be required of any man. {SITI January 21, 1886, p. 40.9}

In this connection it will be well to notice Matthew 5:20, which some may think opposed to the statement last made, but which strongly supports it. We quote: “For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven.” This text would be opposed to the statement made in the preceding paragraph if it could be shown that the scribes and Pharisees kept the law perfectly, but not otherwise. Indeed, this verse could not teach that it is a man’s duty to do more than the ten commandments, without contradicting the 19th verse, which says that “whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven.” It must be, then, that the scribes and Pharisees, while professing to keep the commandments, did not do all that the law requires. This we shall find was the case, if we read Matthew 23:25-28:- {SITI January 21, 1886, p. 40.10}

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.” {SITI January 21, 1886, p. 40.11}

The scribes and Pharisees pretended to keep the law, and so far as their outward acts were concerned, they did keep it; but Christ, who “knew what was in man,” saw that in their hearts they despised the law, and that they grievously transgressed it, but yet in such a way that men could not know their wickedness. Such obedience, Christ taught, will not suffice to gain an entrance into Heaven. Unless your obedience to the law is more thorough than that, you can in no case enter the kingdom of Heaven. {SITI January 21, 1886, p. 40.12}

Here we see the difference between obedience only to the letter and obedience to the spirit of the law. The law is spiritual, and therefore the spirit of it must be obeyed; but some people think on this ground to excuse themselves for disobeying the law. Say they, “The Lord reproved the scribes and Pharisees for their obedience to the letter of the law, therefore we should not think ourselves bound by the letter; if we keep the spirit, that is sufficient.” But mark, the Saviour did not say that our righteousness must be entirely different from that of the scribes and Pharisees, but that it must exceed it. To exceed means, “to pass or go beyond;” and by using that word the Saviour showed that we must keep the law as well as the scribes and Pharisees did, and a great deal better. Not only must the law be kept outwardly, but it must be obeyed from the heart. He did not reprove the Pharisees for refraining from open adultery; but he reproved them for the lust with which their hearts were filled, and which nothing but their love for the applause of men kept them from manifesting openly. Christ did not reprove them because they refrained from actual murder, but because they cherished envy, hatred, and enmity, thus as effectually breaking the sixth commandment as though they had actually taken human life. E. J. W. {SITI January 21, 1886, p. 40.13}

*(To be contined.)*

**“Nature of the Law (Concluded.)” The Signs of the Times, 12, 4.**

E. J. Waggoner

*(Concluded.)*

A moment’s thought will show any one the folly of supposing that the law may be kept in spirit and not in letter. Can a man worship gods of gold, or stone, or brass, and yet have a proper regard for the God that made heaven and earth? Can a man blaspheme the name of God, and at the same time have perfect love and reverence in his heart? Is it possible to wantonly violate the letter of the sixth commandment, by taking human life, and yet have no trace of enmity, but only perfect love in the heart? Will a man deliberately and persistently take the goods of others, if he has no covetous desires in his heart? And does not everybody know that the committing of adultery is only the outward manifestation of the lust that burns within? There can be but one answer to these questions. Even so there can be no spiritual obedience without obedience to the letter as well. {SITI January 28, 1886, p. 55.1}

The statement of the wise man, that to keep the commandments is the whole duty of man, and of Christ, that whosoever shall do and teach them shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven, prepares us for the truth stated by the apostle, in Romans 2:13- {SITI January 28, 1886, p. 55.2}

“For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.” {SITI January 28, 1886, p. 55.3}

Since to keep the commandments of God is the whole duty of man, of course the one who keeps the law will be justified; a man can never be justly condemned, when he does his whole duty. We will not, at this time, inquire just how comprehensive the term “the doers of the law” is, nor whether or not there are any such. For the present we shall be content with the truth, which allows of no exception, namely, that “the doers of the law shall be justified.” {SITI January 28, 1886, p. 55.4}

In Romans 6:23 we read that “the wages of sin is death.” But if a man never sins, he will never receive the wages therefor, consequently the doer of the law will live. And this, again, is no more than we find plainly stated in Romans 10:5: “For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law. That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.” The man whom the law justifies-the one who is really a doer of all its requirements-will certainly live. Now it is a self-evident fact that when God made a perfect, holy, and just law, he designed that all his subjects should obey it. And since the law, when it is kept, gives life, we can see the force of the apostle’s statement, that the law “was ordained to life.” Romans 7:10. As we shall hereafter see more fully, the law was given that man might ever keep in harmony with God’s will, in which condition he must necessarily have life. {SITI January 28, 1886, p. 55.5}

There is just one more point which we wish to bring out concerning the nature of the law. Let the reader mark it closely; for in the future consideration of this subject it will often be referred to, as it really covers the whole ground; upon it everything else depends. David says (Psalm 119:172), “My tongue shall speak of thy word; for all thy commandments are righteousness.” This is really nothing more than is brought out in Psalm 19:7, and other texts; but it leads to another text which materially widens the range of our view of the law of God. In Isaiah 51:6, we read:- {SITI January 28, 1886, p. 55.6}

“Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but my salvation shall be forever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.” {SITI January 28, 1886, p. 55.7}

Abolish the righteousness of God? of course not; but what is the righteousness of God? The very next verse tells us of what the Lord, through his prophet, is here speaking. We proceed: “Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law.” The conclusion to be drawn is very evident. The people who know righteousness are they in whose hearts God’s law is enshrined; they know righteousness, because the law is itself righteousness (Psalm 119:172); and not only is it righteousness in the abstract, but it is the righteousness of God. This is an expression which the apostle Paul often uses in referring to the law. {SITI January 28, 1886, p. 55.8}

What an exalted idea of the law of God does this give us! To say that it is perfect may convey various ideas to different persons, for many would be apt to measure the law by their own standard of perfection; but when we learn that it is “the righteousness of God,” we know that it must be infinite in its breadth. The law is a transcript of God’s character, a photograph of character which is infinite in its perfection. It is his nature represented in words, for the benefit of his creatures, so that they may know what is required of them if they would be partakers of the divine nature. God says to man, “Be ye holy, for I am holy.” 1 Peter 1:16. But without some description of the holiness of God, it would be impossible for man to know how he should order his life; for “the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” Jeremiah 10:23. {SITI January 28, 1886, p. 55.9}

Since the law is “the righteousness of God”-a brief yet comprehensive description of his character-it may properly be termed the way of the Lord. And so in Isaiah 55:8, 9, we have an additional evidence of the exceeding greatness of that law: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” The holiness of God’s law is just as much superior to any goodness that man possesses as God is greater than man. The law of God, then, is very justly called his way, and since those who become acquainted with God by walking in the way with him, are at peace (Job 22:21), it follows that a proper term for the law is, “the way of peace.” It is the ten commandments, then, to which Paul refers, when, speaking of the universal wickedness of mankind, he says: “Destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes.” Romans 3:16-18. This idea is still further proved by Isaiah 48:18: “O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandment! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.” {SITI January 28, 1886, p. 55.10}

The law of God is also called the truth. “Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth.” Psalm 119:142. It is the very perfection of truth, since it is the expression of God’s character. This point is brought out in Romans 2:17-20. Paul there says:- {SITI January 28, 1886, p. 55.11}

“Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.” {SITI January 28, 1886, p. 55.12}

In that justly celebrated work, “The Life and Epistles of the Apostle Paul,” by Conybeare and Howson, the last clause of the above text is thus rendered: “Possessing in the law the perfect pattern of knowledge and of truth.” This accurately describes the law, which is such a perfect pattern of truth that whosoever follows it will live a life of perfect truth. It is because it is perfect truth that it enables the one who is instructed in it to “try the things which differ” (see margin of verse 18), or, as Conybeare and Howson render it, to “give judgment upon good or evil.” {SITI January 28, 1886, p. 55.13}

It is impossible for mortal tongue ever to express, or even for mortal intellect to comprehend the breadth, the beauty, and the perfection of God’s law. There is in it abundant food for meditation both day and night; and the more we learn of it, the more we can appreciate the paslmist’s glowing descriptions of it, and his exhortations to continually study it. But as man, by searching, can never find out God, so that he can fully comprehend all his attributes, so no man, even when glorified and made immortal, can ever exhaust the law of God. On earth, as we meditate in the law, we can only exclaim, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” and in Heaven, even to the countless ages of eternity, as in the glory of his presence we are permitted to look with unvailed eyes upon Him whose character is portrayed in the ten commandments, our wonder will not cease, and we can only join with the angelic beings that support his throne, in saying, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.” E. J. W. {SITI January 28, 1886, p. 55.14}