**“What about the Heathen?” The Signs of the Times, 12, 42.**

E. J. Waggoner

A good many people nowadays are troubled about the heathen. That in itself is all right, if it leads to right action. Paul was troubled about the heathen, so much so that he exclaimed, “Woe is me if I preach not the gospel.” But in the most of this modern worry over the heathen, we have seen no tendency toward a disposition to relieve their needs. In fact, neither the heathen nor the people themselves are benefited by it, and could not be expected to be. The question is, “What is going to become of the heathen who have never heard the gospel.” This is answered in two ways. One answer is that they will all be damned; and in this answer people see the destruction of nearly all the heathen without any chance for salvation, because they imagine that but very few have ever heard the gospel. Another answer, and that which is now the more popular one, is that those who “have not had a chance” in this life will be granted a chance in the future life. {SITI November 4, 1886, p. 662.1}

The tendency of both these views is deadening to all spiritual growth. Try to persuade a man to accept Christ and obey the truth, and he will ask, “What is going to become of all those who never heard this gospel? Are they all lost?” And so much more interested is the man in the dead heathen than he is in his own living soul, that he will pay no attention to present duty till that question is settled. Moreover he usually has already settled it in his own mind according to the first answer given above, and then says, “Well, if God will condemn men without giving them a chance, he doesn’t deal justly, and I will have nothing to do with him.” As for the other view, once let a sinner become indoctrinated into the error that some men will have a future probation, and he will quickly draw the legitimate conclusion that all men may have a second probation; and since in matters spiritual there is a universal tendency to await “a more convenient season,” such an one will make no effort to turn from the error of his ways. {SITI November 4, 1886, p. 662.2}

Now while the most sensible way for each one to do would be to attend to the call of mercy which he knows is extended to him, paying no attention to matters which cannot possibly concern him, it may be well to note how the heathen stand related to God. The matter is not a complicated one, as we find it in the Bible. {SITI November 4, 1886, p. 662.3}

1. Paul says that the heathen are “without excuse,” because ever since the foundation of the world, the invisible things of God, that is, “his eternal power and Godhead,” are “clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.” Romans 1:20. Thus we find that if there are any heathen who do not know, (1) that there is a God; (2) that he is all-powerful, the Creator of all things, and therefore before all things; and (3) that to this Supreme Being his allegiance is rightfully due, it is his own fault. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork.” Psalm 19:1. And so plainly is God revealed in nature that he who says, even in thought, that there is no God, is justly called a fool. Psalm 14:1. {SITI November 4, 1886, p. 662.4}

2. There are none who have not some consciousness of right and wrong. Paul says, “For when the Gentiles, which have not the written law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.” Romans 2:14, 15. It is not possible, by the light of nature alone, to know the fullness of the truth as it is in Jesus, but there is not a man upon earth who does not have enough knowledge of what is right to justly condemn him if he does not profit by that knowledge. It is true that men may “not like to retain God in their knowledge,” and may ignore the good and practice the bad so persistently as to completely deaden all sensibility, and be given over “to a mind void of judgment” (Romans 1:28, margin); but the fact that this is done only proves the truth of the statement that all men have naturally a certain amount of knowledge of right and wrong. {SITI November 4, 1886, p. 662.5}

3. If a man persists in stifling his conscience, and is determined that he will not do even the little good that he knows, he must inevitably go into deeper darkness and degradation. It would be impossible for God to give him greater light, since he resolutely shuts his eyes to that which he has. And it is just as true that if a man has a fixed purpose to practice all the good that he knows, he will not only be aided in his effort, but will be given greater light. “If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.” John 7:17. “Light is sown for the righteous.” Psalm 97:11. And “unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness.” Psalm 112:4. {SITI November 4, 1886, p. 662.6}

Numerous examples of this are given in the Bible. Abraham was brought up among idolaters. Joshua 24:2. But he loved to retain God in his knowledge, and so resolutely did that which he knew to be right. And because of this integrity of purpose, God called him out from his heathen associates, and revealed his truth to him in an especial manner. The centurion Cornelius is another example. He had risen above his heathen education, and feared the true God, living up to all the light that he had. To him Peter was sent by divine command, to give him the full light of the gospel. So it will ever be. No matter how remote from civilization a heathen may be, if he sincerely desires to do right, God will enlighten him. A minister may not be sent to him, as Peter was to Cornelius, but God’s word will be in some manner conveyed to him, and the entrance of that always gives light. That, without man’s interpretation, is able to make any man “wise unto salvation.” {SITI November 4, 1886, p. 662.7}

4. Moreover, in Paul’s day all the heathen had heard the word of life. He says, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.” Romans 10:17, 18. These words were spoken, by David, of the heavenly bodies, but Paul applies them to the gospel. And that this is so is proved by his words to the Colossians: “And you... hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight; if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven.” Colossians 1:21-23. {SITI November 4, 1886, p. 662.8}

“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” Hebrews 9:27, 28. “There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,” except the name of Jesus. Christ was once offered for the sins of men on probation in this life. At the close of this probation, he will come the second time “without sin,” for the salvation of those who look for him. When he comes, he no longer bears the sins of any. Now a probation for sinners without any means outside of themselves whereby to be saved from sin, would be no probation at all. But Christ bears no sins except for men on probation in this life, before his coming; and outside of Christ there is no salvation; therefore there can be no probation after this life. Just before Christ comes it will be said: “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.” Revelation 22:11. After that there will be no more “chance” for anybody. {SITI November 4, 1886, p. 662.9}

But this fact, together with the fact that the Judge of all the earth will do right, is further evidence that every man on earth will in this life have ample opportunity to “lay hold on eternal life.” Indeed, why should it be otherwise? God “hath wrought us for this self-same thing;” that is, he has placed us on this earth in order that we may fit ourselves by his grace for an immortal life; and to say that, when God has placed man on this earth for one definite purpose, he will deprive any of an opportunity to learn what that purpose is, is to charge God with folly. The truth of the matter is that the very fact that man exists on this earth is an evidence that he is having a “chance” for a better existence. {SITI November 4, 1886, p. 662.10}

None of these things release us from obligation to do all in our power to spread the gospel, for God usually works through human agencies. He has in mercy to us allowed us to become “workers together with him,” that thus we may finally enter into the joy of the Lord. But let no one charge God with folly and injustice, by saying that the heathen or any other people do not have a chance, nor foolishly neglect the word of truth, in the vain expectation of a “more convenient season.” “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” W. {SITI November 4, 1886, p. 662.11}

**“The Spirit as Guide” The Signs of the Times, 12, 43.**

E. J. Waggoner

When Christ told his disciples that he was about to go away, and that they could not follow him, their hearts were filled with sorrow and anxiety. They dreaded to face an unfriendly world alone. He had been their guide and instructor, and they had learned much from his teachings. They knew of no one who could fill his place. Peter had echoed the sentiments of all the disciples when, in answer to Christ’s inquiry if they also would go away, he said, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” They knew that no one else could do for them what Jesus had done; and the thought of being separated from him was a sad one. {SITI November 11, 1886, p. 678.1}

To comfort them, Christ gave them the assurance that he would come again and receive them unto himself, and that by this means they could again be with him. But even this promise was not sufficient, for there would still intervene a long period during which they would be left alone. How could they do without the presence and counsel of their Lord? {SITI November 11, 1886, p. 678.2}

Again Jesus meets the difficulty by promising that whatsoever they should ask in his name should be done for them; and he added, “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth.” John 14:16, 17. This Spirit was to be sent in his name, and was to take his place until his return. Said Christ, “I will not leave you comfortless [orphans]; I will come to you.” This coming does not refer to his personal, visible coming, when he will receive his people to himself, but to the Spirit who should come in his name. The Spirit was to be their guide, to prepare them for his coming at the last day. {SITI November 11, 1886, p. 678.3}

The offices of the Spirit are many; but there is a special one pointed out in this discourse of our Lord. Said he: “These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” John 14:25, 26. It is as a teacher that the Spirit is here brought to view. {SITI November 11, 1886, p. 678.4}

Many persons entertain very erroneous views as to the manner in which the Spirit operates. They imagine that it will teach them something which the Bible does not contain. When certain Bible truths are presented to them for their observance, they excuse themselves from all responsibility in the matter by saying that they are led by the Spirit of God, and do not feel it their duty to do that particular thing. They say the Spirit was given to guide into all truth; and, consequently, if it was necessary to obey that portion of the Scripture, it would have been brought to their notice. The fact that they do not feel impressed to obey is proof to their minds that there is no necessity for obedience. To such persons the Bible is of no account; they make its truth depend entirely upon their own feelings. And they actually charge God with the inconsistency of authorizing his Spirit to speak in contradiction of his revealed word. The fact that God cannot lie should convince anyone that his Spirit and his word must always be in harmony. {SITI November 11, 1886, p. 678.5}

Christ prayed for his disciples, “Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.” The psalmist David said, “Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth.” From these passages we learn that when Christ said, “When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth,” he meant that the Spirit would lead them into a proper understanding of that which had already been revealed. He plainly stated this when he said, “He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” Many things that Christ said were not understood at the time; but they were made plain by the Spirit, after Christ had ascended to heaven. And it is thus that the Spirit teaches us now; it leads those who are humble and teachable into a proper understanding of the written word of God. {SITI November 11, 1886, p. 678.6}

Paul gives testimony on this point which is not uncertain. In Ephesians 6:13-17, he describes the Christian’s armor. The following is the concluding portion: “Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, *which is the word of God.*” Christ said that when the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, should come, he would “reprove [convince] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” Paul says that “by the law is the knowledge of sin.” Both these passages are harmonized by the one quoted from Paul to the Ephesians. The Spirit does indeed convince of sin, but it is by impressing on the minds and hearts of men the claims of God’s word. The Bible is the sword, the instrument by which the Spirit pierces the heart and lays bare its wickedness. The Spirit is the active agent, but the word of God is that through which it works. The two always act in unison. {SITI November 11, 1886, p. 678.7}

We should look with suspicion upon any spirit that counsels opposition to the word of God. John tells us that there are many spirits, and that we are to try them. In Isaiah we are told by what we are to try them: “To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8:20. It is the spirit of darkness that leads men to act contrary to the word of God. W. {SITI November 11, 1886, p. 678.8}

**“At the Seat of Mormondom” The Signs of the Times, 12, 44.**

E. J. Waggoner

Having time on our way East to spend two days at Salt Lake City, we improved the opportunity, and made the most of our time in viewing the city and learning the peculiarities of its peculiar people. We are not of the class who can generalize with the air of authority about a place after two days’ stay in it, and shall therefore confine ourselves to what we saw and heard, especially the latter, for as an old Mormon official said, “It isn’t what ye see, but what ye hear, that’s going to benefit ye.” {SITI November 18, 1886, p. 694.1}

As one of the days of our stay was Sunday, we attended the general service at the tabernacle. Here we may remark that only one service a week is held in the tabernacle,-at 2 P.M. Sunday afternoons. The city is divided into twenty-one wards, each presided over by a bishop and in each of which there is a meeting-house. On Sunday mornings there is a Sunday-school and perhaps a short service in each of these ward meeting-houses, and another short service at 6 o’clock each Sunday evening. Once a week, as before stated, there is a general meeting in the tabernacle. {SITI November 18, 1886, p. 694.2}

Of this tabernacle, as well as of the other noted places in the city, but little need be said, simply because they are noted. The structure is exceedingly plain both within and without. If is oval in shape, being 200 feet long, 150 feet wide, and 70 feet high. The dome rests on low but massive brick columns, which, with the intervening windows, form the wall of the building. Besides these are columns, the roof has no support. The building has the appearance of this huge dish-cover resting upon blocks. But although it is ungainly, its acoustic properties are wonderful. The dropping of a pin at one extremity can be heard at the other extremity as distinctly as though it were a nail dropped close by. And there is no echo. When the building is filled to its utmost capacity,-13,000,-a person in any part of it can hear the speaker without difficulty, provided the remainder of the people keep still; we doubt if they ever do. The organ in the tabernacle is said to be the second largest in the world, and the music and singing were really fine. The singing was done by a large choir of trained singers, and the congregation did not join. {SITI November 18, 1886, p. 694.3}

The services themselves struck us as being exceedingly formal. Everything was done in a sort of matter-of-course way, much as a railroad employe performs his routine labor. There was nothing in any of the services that would tend to impress one with a sense of sacredness,-at least so it seemed to us; and we noticed that but few of the congregation acted as though they had come to worship. There was a great lack of interest on the part of the people. Women and girls played with the babies, to which there were many more present than we ever before saw in any assembly, and there was a constant moving about. We are sorry to be obliged to say that this spirit of inattention is not confined to the Mormons; but we never before saw a congregation that was not quiet a part of the time. {SITI November 18, 1886, p. 694.4}

For this lack of interest on the part of the people, we think we can see ample reason. Mormonism is, on a small scale, is a State religion. Church membership is a necessary qualification for public office. Church officers are *ex officio* government officers, because the church *is* the government. Under such circumstances, church services must soon become a matter of form, just as the routine duties of a State official are performed mechanically. And when the services are performed mechanically the people will listen mechanically, when they listen at all. Mormonism is a perfect model (except, of course, as to belief) of what the whole country will be when the National Reformers shall have accomplished their design. In time past, when the fear of the United States Government did not stand before the eyes of the Mormons, and the guns of the United States fort did not command the town, a non-Mormon did not have any rights in Salt Lake City, and it was at the risk of this life that one ventured there, especially if he dropped a word against Mormonism; and when the proposed religious amendment to the Constitution is adopted, no one who does not profess the State religion will have any rights in the United States, and one who ventures to talk, and especially to act, contrary to the established religion, will do so at his own peril. Church officers will then be Government officers as well, and the gospel will, so far as “the church” is concerned, be dead. Then Revelation 18:2 will meet its complete fulfillment: “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.” No National Reformer has any right to cast a stone at the Mormons. {SITI November 18, 1886, p. 694.5}

On the day that we were at the tabernacle, there was a short address by a “converted Jew,” and a sermon by Bishop Whitney. The Jew applied all the prophecies to literal Israel, predicting a return of all the Jews to Jerusalem, there to rule over their enemies, with Christ as their king. One peculiar thing in the services was that the sacrament was administered while the other services were going on. After the Jew’s address, one of the elders asked a blessing on the bread, which was then carried around through the congregation by several men, while the bishop began his discourse. After the bishop had spoken about twenty minutes, he stopped very abruptly, and sat down. Then the same elder as before asked a blessing on the *water*, that being used instead of the fruit of vine. The men then began to pass the water, and the bishop resumed his discourse. {SITI November 18, 1886, p. 694.6}

The sermon was a history of Mormonism and a representation of its doctrines. Probably this subject was taken because there were many strangers present. It interested us only because it was a summary of Mormonism, by the best authority, and because it contains some egregious errors of which we had never heard before. Otherwise it was somewhat tedious; if we had been as familiar with the subject as a greater part of his auditors doubtless were, we should probably have been about as much bored as they seemed to be. {SITI November 18, 1886, p. 694.7}

Following are some of the points of the discourse: Referring to the Jew’s address, he said that as the Jews were building up Jerusalem, so the Mormons were building up Zion. Isaiah 2:2-5 was applied to the Mormons. “Because we believe in the literal fulfillment of this prophecy, and look for the literal return of Christ to reign over us,” said the speaker, “we are stigmatized as traitors.” He did not deny that they are in opposition to the Government; the only ground on which they could deny that they are essentially traitors to this Government, is that they do not acknowledge its authority in any particular. Joseph Smith is declared to be the “stick of Ephraim” (Ezekiel 37:16), and later the Book of Mormon was declared to be the “stick of Judah.” He said that the Mormons do not deny the divinity of the Bible; they hold it as equal to the Book of Mormon. But as the Mormons are all Ephraimites, and the Book of Mormon is the “stick of the Ephraim,” while the Bible is the “stick of Judah,” the inferences seem to be that even though they joined the two sticks together, the Ephraimites would regard their own stick with the greater favor. {SITI November 18, 1886, p. 694.8}

The speaker said that when the plates of the Book of Mormon were given to Smith by the angel he (Smith) was able to interpret and translate them because he had the Urim and the Thummim. Then followed a long account of the Nephites (the aborigines of this country) and their wars with the Lamanites. This country is considered to be the land of promise to Joseph, and the Rocky Mountains are “the everlasting hills.” Genesis 49:26. Jacob’s blessing was not fulfilled to Joseph in Palestine, since that tribe was not a very powerful in that land; hence it must be fulfilled here. The Nephites came to this country ages ago. When Christ ascended from the disciples upon the Mount of Olives he was wafted across the ocean to this country, where he chose twelve apostles. These were the “other sheep not of this fold” (John 10:16), and to them he spoke the many things which the disciples could not bear. John 16:12. The “lost tribes” of Israel are now somewhere in the frozen North, whence they will someday be led to “Zion” (Salt Lake City) by a prophet who will smite the icebergs so that they will melt before them. In bringing these lost tribes to “Zion” a miracle will be wrought, “beside which the passage of the Red Sea will pale into insignificance.” The prophet who is to conduct these tribes is John, who remains “superior to death” until the Lord shall come to reign over “Zion.” In the meantime he is probably up North among the “lost tribes.” Their claim is that John the Baptist came to anoint Joe Smith to the Aaronic priesthood, and that Peter, James, and John came to bestow upon him the apostleship, and to anoint him to the Melchizedek priesthood. Thus it will be seen that they have every office that the Jews ever had, and many that they never had, and all in a greater abundance; for they have many “high places.” {SITI November 18, 1886, p. 694.9}

But time would fail us to recount all the absurdities that were dealt out with all seriousness. The next morning, while viewing the tabernacle, and the Assembly Hall, the old Mormon who thought we could be benefited only by what we might hear, gave us many additional ideas. In obedience, no doubt, to the command to “be instant in a season, out of season,” he preached us a sermon nearly an hour in length, interrupted only by an occasional question for us. The main thing of interest to us in this discourse was that part which related to polygamy. Many very specious arguments were adduced in its favor, but they all seemed to be summed up in the one statement that is “according to nature.” We mentally agreed that it might be compatible with a depraved human nature, but utterly inconsistent with the divine nature of which true saints must be partakers. But the most fanatical Mormon will hardly assert that polygamy is in accordance with the nature of women. To be sure the women talk in favor of it, and many no doubt think that it is of divine appointment; but we are inclined to think that most of them are at heart like the one whom we met, who thought it all right for a man to have more than one wife, but upon been pressed, admitted that she wouldn’t like to have *her* husband do so. {SITI November 18, 1886, p. 694.10}

Before we heard the particulars of Mormonism from the mouths of its advocates, we thought that Spiritualism was the only form of religion which has not *some* truth in it, but we shall have to make another exception for Mormonism. It is true that they professedly accept the Bible, as do the Spiritualists, and they have “baptism for the remission of sins,” and profess to believe some other Bible doctrines; but everything is so distorted as to bear scarcely any semblance to Bible truth. Like Spiritualism, it is a gigantic delusion, wholly of the devil. It is admirably calculated to catch those who are ignorant of the Bible, and are in a condition to be imposed upon by the hierarchy, and also those who are sensually inclined. It will eventually culminate in Spiritualism pure and simple. Those with whom we talked seem to be really sincere, and we believe they were. The one who discoursed to our benefit had been a Mormon for over thirty years, as a “high priest,” and has shown his faith in polygamy by taking four wives. He is doubtless as sincere in his belief as the Hindoo is in his. The originators of Mormonism were beyond question intentional deceivers, but in process of time no doubt came to believe their own lies. {SITI November 18, 1886, p. 694.11}

The Mormons exhibit every evidence of temporal prosperity, and, like the ancient Pharisees, they accept this as evidence of the favor of God. If numbers or temporal prosperity, however, are evidence of the favor of God, the Catholic Church would have to be accepted as the true church. But there is just one standard of truth, and that is the Bible, and the Bible alone. Tried by this standard, Mormonism is seen to be a fatal delusion. Yet we doubt not but that there are many deceived ones even among Mormons, to whom God will yet grant repentance, “to the acknowledging of the truth.” {SITI November 18, 1886, p. 695.1}

As we passed by the magnificent structures built for “worship,” for business, or as residences for members of the hierarchy, and saw the evidences of the sagacity of the founders of that city, and then thought of the murderous “Danites,” the Mountain Meadow massacre, and the “blood atonement” which is a thing of the past only because of the fear of the hated United States laws, one text continually forced itself upon our mind. It was this:- {SITI November 18, 1886, p. 695.2}

“Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil! Thou hast consulted shame to thy house by cutting off many people, and hast sinned against thy soul. For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it. Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and stablisheth a city by iniquity!” Habakkuk 2:9-12. W. {SITI November 18, 1886, p. 695.3}

**“The Origin of Sunday” The Signs of the Times, 12, 45.**

E. J. Waggoner

Following is a part of an article by the Rev. A. H. Lewis, D. D., which first appeared under the above heading in the *Popular Science Monthly*, and was copied into the Chicago *Tribune* of October 30, 1886. It contains nothing new, for it would be difficult to find anything new on this subject; but it is a very clear and concise statement of the origin of Sunday observance, and is worthy of a careful perusal. We are very glad to see articles of this class given a place in popular magazines and newspapers. It shows that the Sabbath question is rapidly coming to the front. W. {SITI November 25, 1886, p. 710.1}

**“‘Who Is My Neighbor?’” The Signs of the Times, 12, 45.**

E. J. Waggoner

The following question has been asked:- {SITI November 25, 1886, p. 710.2}

“According to the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37), who is our neighbor? Do verses 36 and 37 teach that they only are our neighbors who show themselves to be neighborly, and that it is only such that we are to love as our *neighbor* while we are to love others as *enemies*?” {SITI November 25, 1886, p. 710.3}

We are not able to find in the Bible any distinction between the treatment of “neighbors” and “enemies.” If there were such a distinction, the parable referred to would certainly read differently from what it does. Between the Jews and the Samaritans there was bitterness amounting to almost deadly hatred. See John 4:9; Luke 9:51-54. For this enmity it seems that the Jews were chiefly responsible, as they considered themselves far superior to the Samaritans, whom they regarded with contempt, treating them as dogs. The worst thing the unbelieving Jews could say in reproach of Christ was, “Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil?” John 8:4. To call him a Samaritan was to brand him with him with infamy. {SITI November 25, 1886, p. 710.4}

In the parable we have a man, presumably a Jew, since he was going down to Jericho from Jerusalem, who was maltreated by robbers, and left for dead. Some of his own countrymen, a priest and a Levite, passed by, and left him to his fate. But a Samaritan, one of the despised and hated race, came by, and did to the wounded man as is described. He could not have done more for him if he had been his brother. Now the question is, Who was my neighbor to him that fell among thieves? The answer is, “He that showed mercy upon him,” and this answer is accepted. The good Samaritan was neighbor to the disabled Jew, whom he treated as his own neighbor. And yet, the Jew was the enemy of the Samaritan. The only inference is, that when the law says, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,” we are to hold ourselves ready to serve anybody who needs our assistance, and are not stop to inquire whether the needy person is a “neighbor” or “enemy” and have two standards of action. In other words, our *enemies* are to be treated as our *neighbors*; or, better still, we are to act as though we had no enemies. In our dealings with our fellow-men we are not to consider if any man is our enemy, but are to treat all with kindly consideration. {SITI November 25, 1886, p. 711.1}

This is in harmony with our Saviour’s words in the sermon on the mount: “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” Matthew 5:43-45. God dispenses the favors of his Providence impartially on the good and the bad. Blasphemers, as well as those who praise, are the objects of God’s kind of care. If we would be his children, we must do likewise. It is not in accordance with human nature so to do. This can be done only when we are fully imbued with the Spirit of him who on the cross prayed for his relentless persecutors, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” W. {SITI November 25, 1886, p. 711.2}