**“A Few Principles of Interpretation” The Signs of the Times, 13, 1.**

E. J. Waggoner

The SIGNS OF THE TIMES is an expository journal. The main object for which it was established was to present Scripture truth in the simplest and clearest manner possible. During the coming year it will be our endeavor to make it meet this object more fully than ever before, and as a preliminary, we wish to lay down for our readers a few of the principles which we shall invariably follow in our interpretation, and which, if followed, in a prayerful and candid spirit, cannot fail to lead a person to a proper understanding of the sacred word. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 6.1}

1. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” 2 Timothy 3:16, 17. We accept this fully, and apply it to the entire Bible. The Bible does not simply *contain* the truth, but it *is* the truth, and the whole truth. Aside from the Bible there can be no moral or spiritual truth and light. And whatever disagrees with the Bible, whether it be in the realm of morals or of science, must be false. The principle here laid down must underlie all sound Biblical exegesis. If this be not admitted, it can be of no use to any to study the Bible. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 6.2}

2. The Bible is one connected, consistent, harmonious book. It is composed of many books, but these books form only *one Book*. They are not independent one of another. This Book was written by many different persons, yet it has only one author, and that is the Spirit of God. The different parts are inspired by the same Spirit, and have one purpose; there is a vital connection between them. They are characterized by oneness of thought. As Christ prayed that his disciples might be one, so that the world might know that the Father had sent him (John 17:21), so the perfect harmony between the various parts of the Bible is proof that it came from God. If we accept the Bible as the inspired word of God we must expect to find it harmonious throughout, for God cannot deny himself. So whoever wishes to study the word of God with any degree of satisfaction, must first fix in his mind the fact that the Bible cannot contradict itself. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 6.3}

As a corollary to this principle it might be stated that the Bible does not need to be “harmonized.” To attempt that is a thankless task, because the Bible is already harmonized. It is an instrument that was tuned by the Almighty himself, and every string vibrates in harmony with every other. All that the Bible student has to do is to study the harmony that already exists. If two texts *seem* to be contradictory, the student may rest assured that he does not understand one or the other, or perhaps either one. But when the position which he holds on one text is upheld by other texts bearing on the same point, and is not contradicted by any other text; that is, when a position taken in regard to any text is consistent with the entire Bible, that of itself is evidence that that position is correct; for the Bible could not agree with a false position. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 6.4}

3. The Bible must interpret itself. By the Bible man may be “*thoroughly* furnished unto all good works;” hence it cannot need the addition of matter outside of itself. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 6.5}

4. One part of the Bible cannot be fully understood when taken by itself, apart from its connection, or without reference to the remaining portion of the Bible. This might also be called a corollary to the second proposition laid down. If the Bible is one connected whole, then all the parts are necessary to the formation of that whole. There is a mutual dependence between all the parts, and therefore in considering one part, attention must be given to the other parts. True, we *may* not misunderstand one portion of the Bible even though we study it by itself; but it is certain that we cannot have a complete understanding of it until we study it with reference to the Bible as a whole. This principle is as true of an entire book of the Bible as it is of a single text. There is no book of the Bible upon which light is not thrown by every other book in the Bible. To say that any two books in the Bible have no connection, is almost equivalent to saying that the Bible is not all inspired by the same Spirit. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 6.6}

5. Terms used in one place in the Bible, with a certain signification, must have the *same meaning* attached to them *in every other place* where they occur, provided the same subject is under consideration. If this be not true, then we have no certain means of knowing what the Bible teaches. Let us apply this principle. In the eighth chapter of Daniel we find a symbolic prophecy in which certain days are mentioned. Now to say that these days mean literal days of twenty-four hours each, would make nonsense of the prophecy, for we should have several great kingdoms covering a period of only a little more than six years. But in Ezekiel 4:3-6 we find another prophecy, also symbolic, in which a day is expressly declared to stand for a year. So we conclude that in every prophecy where a day is used as a symbol, it signifies a year. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 6.7}

In like manner we find horns used as a symbol in the seventh and eighth chapters of Daniel, in both of which chapters they are plainly declared to symbolize kingdoms. Therefore we justly conclude that whenever in the Bible a horn is used as a symbol, it represents a kingdom or nation. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 6.8}

Let the reader study these principles well, and get them fixed in his mind, and they will help him out of many a difficulty in his study of the Bible. We think these principles are sufficient for present consideration. Next week we shall present a few more that are equally important. W. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 6.9}

**“The Underlying Motive” The Signs of the Times, 13, 1.**

E. J. Waggoner

The New York *Observer* of December 18, 1886, says:- {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 6.10}

“We are glad to find the Central Labor Union of this city taking action on one point in line with the intelligent Christian sentiment of the country. This action is in regard to the enforcement of the Sunday laws. The present movement in favor of Sunday closing was undertaken, it is understood, partly in response to the appeals of labor organizations. These appeals were based, not on religious or moral grounds, but on the necessity to laboring men of one rest-day in seven. The friends of Sabbath observance will be pleased to receive help even up to this point.” {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 6.11}

This is another proof of the fact that all classes of people are getting ready to unite in demanding a rigid observance of Sunday. The churches are, with few exceptions, a unit on this matter; the various temperance societies are pledged to it; Labor Unions and Knights of Labor are calling for it; even anarchists, all of whom are infidels or Spiritualists, are swinging into line. Surely there is need for some one to lift a warning voice against the tyranny that seems about to be imposed on the people. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 6.12}

The *Christian Union* of a late date also says:- {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 6.13}

“It is very clear that if our Sabbath is to be preserved at all-and we are sanguine of its preservation-the non-religious sentiment of the country must be brought in to reinforce the religious demand for Sabbath rest; and it is increasingly evident that this is entirely practicable.” {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 6.14}

Yes, that is very evident. But why should we, or anybody else, be compelled to accept a Sabbath which is not “ours.” Those who claim Sunday as *their* Sabbath, may keep it if they will, but we don’t own any Sabbath, and don’t intend to own any. The Lord has a Sabbath, however, which he expects us to keep, and we intend to keep that, and no other. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 6.15}

But look for a moment at the selfishness of the proposed action in favor of Sunday. Here is a man who would like to keep Sunday, but who thinks that he cannot keep it unless they have a law compelling him to do so. The reason for this is that his neighbors do not keep Sunday, and if he rests on that day they will get ahead of him in business. To be sure there have been men who have been willing to lose everything in maintaining what they believed to be right, but his Sunday religion is not of that kind. And so, in order that he may not lose a cent by doing what his unenlightened conscience tells him he ought to do, he insists that his neighbors must be compelled to do the same thing, even though the enlightened conscience of some of them may tell them that they ought not to do so. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 6.16}

The whole Sunday movement is prompted in large measure, not by love for truth, or what is supposed to be truth, but by love of self. And inasmuch as the Sunday-sabbath is purely a human institution, having its origin in selfishness, this is as high a motive as we ought to expect. W. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 6.17}

**“Manner of Christ’s Coming” The Signs of the Times, 13, 1.**

E. J. Waggoner

The Bible furnishes a sufficient answer to every theological vagary that men can devise. One of the modern ideas is that the Lord has already come, and that Christians, or at least those who call themselves such, are already in the immortal state. This idea is not really new, for Paul had to combat it eighteen hundred years ago. Writing of profane and vain babblings he said: “And their word will eat as doth a canker; of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.” 2 Timothy 2:17, 18. Indeed, if church history be diligently studied it will be seen that all the “new theology” of these days, is only a revamping of the musty ideas of the church “Fathers,” who were really the “fathers” of all heresy. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 6.18}

But there is no dogma of modern spiritualistic theology that is more directly contradicted by the Bible than is the one that Christ either has come the second time, or that he comes as often as a good man dies, or that in some way his second coming is a mysterious affair of which nothing can be known until it has taken place. In the chapter which contains the Sabbath-school lesson upon which comments are made in another column, we find the following plain and emphatic words of our Saviour himself:- {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 6.19}

“Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” Matthew 24:23-27. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 6.20}

This one text is sufficient to enable any one to determine the literalness of Christ’s coming. First, false christs will arise; men will say to us, “Christ is out here in the desert;” the command is, “Go not forth;” others will say, “He has appeared in such and such a meeting;” the command is, “Believe it not.” But why may we not believe some of these tales? Why should we not investigate *all* of them, lest perchance Christ should come and we not know of it? Simply because he will not come in a secret manner. “For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; *so* shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” No one can fail to see the vivid lightning flash that covers the whole sky; even though the eyes be closed, that wonderful glare cannot be wholly shut out. And the coming of Christ will be like the lightning’s flash, for brilliancy, because he “shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels” (Matthew 16:27); or, as Paul says, “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire.” 2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 6.21}

We said that no one can avoid seeing the vivid lightning flash. So no one can avoid seeing the Son of God when he comes. The apostle John says: “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.” Revelation 1:7. Although those who have rejected Christ will be loath to see him; although “they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth” (Isaiah 2:19), and will cry to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb” (Revelation 6:16), they will not be able to escape his piercing gaze, nor to shut out from their eyes his terrible and overwhelming glory. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 6.22}

In that day there will be no need of anybody’s saying, “Lo, here is Christ, or lo, there.” There will be no chance for mistake. “For *the Lord himself* shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God.” 1 Thessalonians 4:16. That trumpet’s mighty sound will shake the earth; the graves will be opened; those who sleep in Jesus shall rise first, clothed in immortality, while the living righteous ones will be changed “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,” and all together will be caught up to be forever with the Lord. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 7.1}

These events are near at hand. The signs in the heavens, which Christ announced as indicating his coming near, have been fulfilled. And now that we are in the time when Satan may be expected to work with “all power and signs and lying wonders;” when as an angel of light he will profess to be Christ, it is needful that we indelibly fix in our minds those truths concerning Christ’s second coming, which alone will keep even the elect from being deceived. If we store our minds with the simple truths of the Bible, we shall have wherewith to unveil the deceptions of Satan; and thus God’s word will be a light to our feet and a lamp to our path. W. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 7.2}

**“A Fulfilling Parable” The Signs of the Times, 13, 1.**

E. J. Waggoner

**The Commentary.  
(Sabbath, January 22.)**

“Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh; so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.” Matthew 24:32-34. This parable occurs in the midst of one of the last discourses given by our Lord. As indicated in the heading of this note, the parable relates to the present time, and therefore claims our earnest attention. In order to appreciate its force, we must briefly glance at the preceding part of the chapter. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 10.1}

The twenty-third chapter of Matthew records the woes which Christ pronounced against the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees, and his prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, because of her rejection of all that was good. When he went out of the temple, his disciples called his attention to the wonderful buildings of the temple, the pride of the Jewish nation. “And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” Verse 2. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 10.2}

“And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” Verse 3. Here we have two distinct questions. The first, “When shall these things be?” That is, When shall the temple be overthrown? The second, “What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” It is possible, and from the close connection of the questions seems quite probable, that the disciples supposed that the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple would be at the coming of Christ and the end of the world. But whether they thought so or not is immaterial. In his answer, Christ most plainly indicated that the two events were to be widely separate. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 10.3}

It is worthy of notice that the disciples did not question as to whether or not Christ would come again. They well knew that he was to come at the end of the world, when the resurrection would take place. See John 11:24. Their question had reference only to the *time* of his coming, and the signs which should indicate its nearness. So in the answer, to which the entire chapter is devoted, Christ does not proceed to teach them that he will come, but, considering that as well understood, he proceeds to tell how it may be known when his coming is near. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 10.4}

But first he utters a caution: “Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.” Verses 4, 5. In verses 23, 24 he repeats this warning. On this point we can do no more at present than to call attention to the fact that Christ did not reprove his disciples for asking, “What shall be the sign of thy coming?” On the contrary, he gave a very full answer. Then surely it must be right to think about the time of Christ’s coming. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 10.5}

The Saviour then presents a brief view of the world between the two advents, and mentions a few facts relative to the condition of the world in the time immediately preceding his second coming. Thus in verses 15, 16 he answers the first question of the disciples, telling them when to expect the destruction of Jerusalem. Compare Luke 21:20. After that, “Then,” said he, “shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.” Matthew 24:21, 22. This can refer to nothing else than the great persecution which the “elect,” the people of God, suffered during the Dark Ages. Under Pagan Rome the saints suffered severely, but the persecution by the heathen was trifling compared with that practiced by professed Christians, after an apostate Christianity had been lifted to the throne of the world. The persecution of true Christians by professed Christians took place within the 1260 years of Papal rule, from 538 to 1798 A.D. At times the persecution was lighter than at other times, but all the time the saints were being *worn out*, until the Reformation had taken sufficient hold of the people to cause it to cease. This took place in the eighteenth century, some years before the expiration of the 1260 years of Papal supremacy. As the Papacy had not arrived at its full strength when it was exalted, so its power gradually waned until it was debased. And thus, those days of persecution were “shortened.” {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 10.6}

Right in the little season between the cessation of the great persecution and the close of the 1260 years, in 1798, occurred one of the notable signs of the second coming of Christ-the darkening of the sun and moon. Matthew records this as coming “immediately after the tribulation of those days” (Matthew 24:29); but Mark is more definite, and says that it should take place “in those days, after that tribulation.” Mark 13:24. This was fulfilled in that supernatural darkening of the sun which cause May 19, 1833. True, there have been many light meteoric showers, but this was one the like of which has never been seen, either before or since, and can be fitly described only in the language of the prophet: “And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.” Revelation 6:13. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 10.7}

It was to these things that our Saviour referred in the text quoted at the beginning of these notes. When the fig-tree, “and all the trees,” says Luke 21:29, puts forth leaves “ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.” No one needs to consult an almanac when he sees such signs; every one knows that they are sure precursors of spring. “So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.” Luke 21:31. Matthew (24:33) records it: “Know that it is near, even at the doors.” We are not to guess, nor to imagine, but to *know*. We are commanded to be just as sure of it as we are that summer is near when the buds begin to swell. Who then can say that it is fanaticism to say that we know that the Lord is soon coming? To doubt that his coming is near would be to make Christ a liar. Let us not be found so doing. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 10.8}

“Even at the doors.” This is given as an incentive to watchfulness and right living. Says James, using the same figure: “Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned; behold, the judge standeth before the door.” James 5:9. Who dare indulge in bickering and strife? The Judge standeth before the door, and if he should open it and find us engaged in contention, or nursing selfishness and malice and envy, how deplorable would be our condition! Of such an one Christ says: “The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Matthew 24:50, 51. “Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.” Verse 42. W. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 10.9}

**“Back Page” The Signs of the Times, 13, 1.**

E. J. Waggoner

The evangelist, Dr. Graves, writes thus to the *Herald of Truth*, about his work in Los Angeles: “Brother Dorsey has baptized every Sunday since I closed labors there.” Well, he may keep on baptizing every Sunday as long as time lasts, but he can never make it a Christian institution. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 16.1}

The *Catholic Mirror* says: “Strange as it may seem, counterfeit money, under the existing law, can be passed with impunity on Sunday.” No doubt the law has an eye to the eternal fitness of things. Sunday being a counterfeit Sabbath, has doubtless an affinity for other counterfeits, and the law-makers have taken this into consideration. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 16.2}

In his last report to the *Christian Stateman*, Secretary Wylie tells of a National Reform meeting which he held at Akron, Ind., and says: “The meeting was spiced up with a few questions by a Seventh-day Adventist.” That is all that he says of the matter. Now we now a few of his readers who would like to have a taste of that same spice. We have frequently read in the *Stateman* about questions propounded by Seventh-day Adventist or Seventh-day Baptists, but have never been favored with any of them. Why is it that they never go into the particulars of such cases? Perhaps if the brother who put those questions would send us the details of the affair, we might know why the spice of the meeting was not reported. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 16.3}

We are sorry to begin the new volume with an apology, but we are forced to do so. The type for our new dress was ordered weeks ago, but overland freight trains are uncertain, and the type did not come until long after it was due. Having made all calculations for the new type, we had no option but to wait for it. It did not arrive until after the time when the SIGNS usually goes to press. As soon as it came, we put on more than a double force, and by working without an hour’s intermission, we have succeeded in getting the paper out only two days late. Under the circumstances we think we are to be congratulated for our promptness, rather than blamed for our delay, and we believe that our friends will be considerate with us. We intend after this the paper shall be furnished to our patrons promptly on time. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 16.4}

At the last meeting of the Congregational club of Chicago, the subject under discussion was the relation of evolution to Christianity. Rev. J. L. Scudder said that the influence of science upon theology had been profoundly good. He said it had “forced theology back into its own proper field,” and even there had modified it for good by forcing it to become scientific in its own sphere. It will be noticed in this statement, that science has done all the crowding. Before it theology has meekly retired. It is now in “its own proper field.” Formerly theology presumed to understand the first and second chapters of Genesis, but science taught it not to interfere with matters too deep for it. Other parts of the Bible are also wrested from the feeble grasp of theology, and made “clear” by science. Some parts of the Bible, are still allowed to be within the province of theology, but that theology has become so “scientific” that it has learned better than to believe that the Bible means what it says. Modern theology is getting to be pretty poor stuff; it doesn’t amount to much either as science or as theology. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 16.5}

A correspondent of the *Christian Standard* says: “My conviction is that the Sabbath began at creation. It would be just as reasonable to say that the Lord’s day began two thousand years after Christ’s resurrection as to say the Sabbath began two thousand years after creation.” That man’s conviction is sound, but it should lead him a little farther. Why did the Sabbath begin at creation? The answer must be because it commemorated the finished work of creation. Then why should the Sabbath ever cease? Is it not as necessary for us to remember God’s power and goodness as it was for Adam? It certainly is. “But ought we not to commemorate Christ’s resurrection?” Most certainly; but we should do so in the divinely appointed way-by Christian baptism. That, and that alone, can fitly show our faith in the resurrection of our Lord. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 16.6}

A. G. C.-In the matter of what things are and what things are not allowable on the Sabbath, each one must be conscience for himself, taking the precepts in the Bible as a guide. Caring for domestic animals, feeding horses, milking cows, etc., is, of course, a necessary act, as it is an act of mercy. If a man is employed by a non-professor, we should suppose, under ordinary circumstances, that it would be proper for him to do such necessary chores on the Sabbath, especially if he lived at the home of his employer, and had the regular care of the animals. But these remarks would not apply to a case where there was no work but that of caring for stock. We cannot see how a Sabbath-keeping could consistently engage to work for an unbeliever on a dairy or a stock ranch, and perform his regular daily work on the Sabbath. We do not think that Ephesians 6:5, Colossians 3:22, and 1 Timothy 6:1 apply to such a case as this. But we cannot tell people what their duty is in particular cases, even if we knew all the circumstances. Each one must make the application of principles for himself, being careful not to make too liberal an application when dealing with himself, however lenient he may be with others. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 16.7}

A correspondent asks what Paul has reference to in 1 Timothy 5:23: “Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities.” The reference seems to be very clear. It seems that Timothy was not strong, and Paul advised him to use a little wine. There would be no trouble over this verse, if people had not imbibed the notion that the juice of the grape does not become wine until it ferments. This is a mistaken notion. The expressed juice of the grape is wine; if it has not fermented, it is sweet wine, just as the fresh juice of apples is sweet cider. Sweet wine is non-intoxicating, and is wholesome; it is often an aid to weak digestion. Therefore Paul advised Timothy to use a little of it. But fermented wine is not wholesome, and produces a decidedly bad effect on the stomach, and therefore we know that the text cannot have reference to fermented or alcoholic wine. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 16.8}

The New England Conservatory of Music, at Boston, Mass., conducted by Dr. E. Tourgie, proposes to give free instruction to those who are preparing for foreign work, who come bearing suitable indorsement. The instruction will include vocal and instrumental music, the art of teaching vocal music to children; a general knowledge of piano and reed-organ tuning and adjusting, such as will make it possible for them to meet the practical wants of isolated fields; and a knowledge of the fundamental principles of harmony, sufficient to enable them to arrange native music and write the accompanying parts. We feel sure that this generous offer will meet with a hearty response. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 16.9}

**“The Signs for 1887” The Signs of the Times, 13, 1.**

E. J. Waggoner

With the beginning of the volume we put on our new dress, we have a new type throughout, the general heading is new and enlarged, and the running titles, department heads, etc., are all new. In fact, everything about the paper is new, except the truths which it advocates; they are as old as creation, and yet even they are new. The columns have been slightly increased in length and diminished in width, thus giving the paper a more symmetrical appearance than formerly. The new dress has involved considerable outlay of means, but we have had in view, as at all other times, only a desire to please our patrons, and to make the paper one for which they could work with enthusiasm. We believe that the changes which we have made will materially aid those who are soliciting subscriptions. A canvasser ought to be able about to take subscriptions on the strength of the good looks of the paper alone. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 16.10}

But we do not design that anyone who may take the SIGNS OF THE TIMES because he is favorably impressed with its appearance and make-up, shall have occasion to revise his opinion when he begins to read its contents. We hope to make the SIGNS more readable than ever before, while at the same time Bible truth is presented in as clear and forcible a manner as possible. We think that this hope is not without good foundation, because, (1) satisfactory as the paper has been to his readers in the past, we see where improvements may be made; (2) correspondents who have heretofore helped give character to the paper, will still continue to enrich its columns; and (3) we have the promise from other able writers, that during the coming year they will contribute to the SIGNS. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 16.11}

The departments will be the same as heretofore. Under the head of General Articles, there will be each week an article from Mrs. E. G. White, which alone will be worth price of the paper. Besides this, there will be a good variety of contributed and selected matter. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 16.12}

The editorial department will contain expository articles, answers to questions on Bible subjects, brief comments on texts of Scripture, and notes on current events in the religious and secular world. While the SIGNS is purely a religious journal, the political kaleidoscope will be carefully watched, because in the actions of the nations of the world, divine prophecy is being fulfilled. True to our name, we shall always endeavor to discern and declare the signs of the times. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 16.13}

In the Missionary Department there will be reports from both the home and foreign mission field, with such descriptions of those fields as will make them and the work done in them seem more real to the untraveled reader. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 16.14}

The Commentary is really a branch of the editorial department, and will contain notes on the International lessons, and the comments on the Scripture covered by the lessons in the *Youth’s Instructor*. It is designed to make this department invaluable to Bible students everywhere. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 16.15}

We shall still continue to furnish matter on health and temperance, which will be of practical value to every individual; and the Home Circle will, as ever, be instructive while it amuses the children or beguiles a weary hour for the parents. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 16.16}

In short, it shall be our aim to so conduct the paper that those who read it may be better fitted to discharge the duties which they owe to themselves, to their families, to their neighbors, to their country, and to God, and may be directed into the path of life the eternal. With this aim before us, we have confidence to ask our friends for their assistance in placing the SIGNS OF THE TIMES before many thousand new readers during the year 1887. {SITI January 6, 1887, p. 16.17}

**“The Primary Idea of Sunday Observance” The Signs of the Times, 13, 2.**

E. J. Waggoner

Says the *Christian at Work:*- {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.1}

“As to Sunday itself, there ought to be no question as to the underlying motive for its maintenance by the State; with the religious features of the day the State has nothing whatever to do; the primary idea is Rest, with a very bit R-Rest for man and beast; that was the fundamental idea of its establishment by divine authority.” {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.2}

The editor of the *Christian at Work* should occasionally look over the files of his paper to refresh his mind as to what he has said in time past. No longer ago than February 18, 1886, he said:- {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.3}

“We hear less than we used to about the apostolic origin of the present Sunday observance, and for the reason that... it is now seen, as it is admitted, that we must go to later than apostolic times for the establishment of Sunday observance.” {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.4}

And on January 8, 1885, the *Christian at Work* said editorially:- {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.5}

“We rest the designation of Sunday on the church’s having set it apart of its own authority. The seventh-day rest was commanded in the fourth commandment.... The selection of Sunday, thus changing the particular day designated in the fourth commandment, was brought about by the *gradual* *concurrence* of the early Christian church; and on this basis, and none other, does the Christian Sabbath, the first day of the week, rightly rest.” {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.6}

Yet in the face of these candid admissions of fact, the same paper now speaks of the establishment of Sunday “by divine authority.” We would like to ask a few questions: 1. Is “the church” divine authority for anything? 2. If it is, which part of the church has that exaltation? for it is well known that “the church” has many conflicting divisions, or as it is sometimes expressed, “There are many branches of our Zion.” 3. Does the *Christian at Work* claim that “divine authority” rests in “the church” as a whole, and that, like the infallible Popes of Rome, it can make contradictory opinions equally true? or when it speaks of “the church” does it mean to be understood as referring to the Roman Catholic Church? 4. And if it means this, why does it not adopt all other festivals imposed by the same “divine authority”? {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.7}

The fact is, and the *Christian at Work* knows it very well, that there is no divine authority for Sunday-keeping. The fourth commandment is the only Sabbath commandment there is in the Bible, and that enjoins the observance of the seventh day of the week, and of no other day. It is also a fact that the Bible is the only “divine authority” in the world, because it is the only revelation of the will of God. Therefore, it is also a fact that Sunday has no divine authority whatever, commanding it as a rest-day of any kind. Moreover, divine commands are never *gradually* given. The ten commandments were given at one time, by the voice of God. But evil has always come in by the “gradual concurrence” of those who thought their own way preferable to the will of God. The fact that the observance of Sunday instead of the Sabbath was “brought about by the gradual concurrence of the early Christian church,” after the days of the apostles, unmistakably stamps that institution as a product of the great apostasy. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.8}

But granting the claim that Sunday was established by authority of some kind, let us notice the statement of the *Christian at Work*, that physical rest is the primary idea of that establishment. If that be the case, then no State has a right to enforce its observance upon those who do not feel like resting. Night is the time for sleep, but no Government has the power to enact that a man shall be forced to sleep, if he is not sleepy. If Sunday is only for physical rest, then the State has no more right to say that a man must rest upon it if he is not tired, than it has to say that a dose of morphine shall be given to every man who does not feel like going to bed at ten o’clock at night. But if the advocates of Sunday shall, in order to avoid this dilemma, claim that there is a religious idea also to the Sunday rest, then we still insist that the State has no right to enforce its observance, for civil Governments have nothing to do with matters of religion. Gallio of old had a just conception of the extent of his power as a civil ruler, when he said to the Jews who wanted him to condemn Paul:- {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.9}

“If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you; but if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters.” Acts 18:14, 15. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.10}

We leave Sunday worshipers to settle the matter among themselves as to the grounds upon which they observe Sunday, if it is possible to fix upon the “primary idea” of an institution that was established without precept. But for the Sabbath we can say that the primary idea in its establishment is worship, and not physical rest. The Sabbath was made for man, in order that he might know and remember God, and not for his personal ease. And here we will say that the man who labors so hard during the week that physical rest becomes of necessity the primary idea in his Sabbath observance, does not remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. If a man feels in need of physical rest and recreation, there is no objection to his taking it on Sunday; but there is a commandment from the Lord himself, for every man to rest on the Sabbath, and that without regard to the wants of his physical nature. W. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.11}

**“The Bible, Commentaries, and Tradition” The Signs of the Times, 13, 2.**

E. J. Waggoner

Last week we gave a few principles of interpretation and promised to add a few more this week. As what we now wish to give is very intimately related with what has already been given, we will first recall those points. We noted first, that the Bible is absolute truth and that anything that disagrees with it in the slightest particular must be false. Second, that the Bible, though composed of many books, is one Book with one Author; that there is perfect harmony in all its parts. Third, that the Bible contains all truth, because that by it a man may be “thoroughly furnished unto all good works;” and that therefore it must be its own interpreter. Fourth, that one part of the Bible cannot be fully understood if taken out of its connection, or without reference to the Bible as a whole. There is no book in the Bible upon which light is not thrown by every other book in the Bible. On this point the following from Dr. P. S. Henson’s introduction to the book, “Christ in the Gospels,” is excellent:- {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.12}

“In what we call the Bible, God has given us many books penned by many writers, each presenting such views of truth as his mental and spiritual nature made him specially adapted to be the vehicle of. Not that anyone of these Scripture writers was left to wander at his ‘own sweet will,’ so that we must largely discount his deliverances on account of his human imperfections and the possibility of his misapprehending what the Lord would have him teach. That were indeed to undermine utterly the authority of the Scriptures, and ‘if the foundations be destroyed what shall the righteous do?’ We do most thoroughly and invincibly believe that ‘holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,’ and that therefore what they spake may be absolutely relied upon. But while we believe that all that each one said was truth, God’s truth, we do not believe it was all the truth. You must have *all* that *all* of them said, in order to be sure that you have all the truth. ‘Which things we speak,’ writes the apostle Paul, ‘not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, *comparing spiritual things with spiritual*.’ And only by such collation and comparison can God’s truth be comprehended in all the breadth and beauty of its meaning. You cannot obtain any accurate representation of a building by taking only a single view. As the photographer is accustomed to take two pictures, from a little different point of view, and when both these are looked at at once, as in a stereopticon, you see not two pictures, but one, and that not a flat surface such as each of the pictures shows, but a solid that stands out in its massiveness before your eyes. And yet even then you do not see the hinder part, but only half the building. To see it all in its completed symmetry, we should be obliged to have four views, and to look at them all at once. But this is, of course, impossible, inasmuch as we have not four eyes, but only two. But the principle applies, though its application be impossible. Singularly enough there are just four Gospels. The metropolis, lieth four square. Four pictures have we here of the matchless Man of Nazareth,-four pictures, and all so much alike that sometimes captious critics have said that there was only one original Gospel and the other three were copied from that. Four pictures, and yet all so different that other skeptical critics have alleged that there are glaring discrepancies in them that are hopelessly irreconcilable. The pictures, of course, must be *alike*, for all of them are pictures of Him. The pictures, of course, must be *unlike*, for each of the portrait painters had his own peculiar point of view. And yet it takes all four to give us the Christ of history in all the completeness of his humanity and divinity.” {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.13}

This is just as true of the whole Bible as it is of the four Gospels. Lastly, we showed that a term used in one place in the Bible must have the same meaning in every other place where it occurs, especially if the same subject is under consideration. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.14}

Under the third proposition, that the Bible must interpret itself, we wish to say a few words on the use of commentaries. Commentaries may be a great help to the Bible student, or they may be a great curse. No matter how good a commentary may be, if a person relies implicitly upon it, taking all its statements as final upon any subject, he might better never see it, for he simply puts it in place of the Bible. Commentaries may be used only as they throw additional light on a point already established, or when the commentator leads to the understanding of a point, by unfolding to us the Bible evidence upon it. Many persons will quote a decision from Barnes, or Scott, or Clark, or Olshausen, or some other person, and rest satisfied with that. Now allowing that their statement of the case is correct, of what use is it to us if they do not show us the steps by which they arrived at such a conclusion; or how can we know that their statement is correct if we do not have those steps? If the commentary does not lead us to the Bible then it is worse than useless. No matter how great a man may be, his opinion on a matter of Bible doctrine is of no account whatever unless it is backed by Bible evidence. And therefore in teaching others we should never quote commentaries for the purpose of biasing the mind or in any way influencing the judgment, before the Scripture has done its work. If a thing is true it may be proved by the Bible; if it cannot be proved by the Bible, it is of no consequence whatever, no matter who may hold it. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.15}

If a man relates to us an item of news, we almost invariably ask, “How do you know?” This does not necessarily indicate that we doubt his statement, but that we want to have the same ground for belief that he has. We should not be less anxious for trustworthy information on Bible subjects than we are on the news of the day. If a commentator makes a statement, he is in duty bound to tell us why he makes it, and we should demand this before we accept it. Otherwise we cannot be “thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” If the statement involves some duty, and we perform that duty, not knowing the full reason therefore, we shall be following some man, and not the Bible. The Bible then is the test of whether or not a man is a good commentator. If he proves every statement by comparing scripture with scripture, so that we can see for ourselves the reasonableness of his propositions, then his work becomes a blessing. If he does not, then, even though his statements be true, his work is of no account. He is like a man who climbs to the top of a building, and pulls up after him the ladder by which he ascended, but still expects others to follow him. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.16}

There is a growing and almost irresistible tendency to depreciate the value of plain Scripture statements. This is seen in the fact that when a direct Bible argument is given on some point that is new to the hearer, the first questions will almost invariably be, “Who believes this? What men have advocated this view?” Those who ask such questions are really exalting the human above the divine. They virtually say that the Bible needs human indorsement. We should have such confidence in the Bible that we will accept what it says no matter who, nor how many persons, may teach to the contrary. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.17}

Another point that should be firmly fixed, is that tradition should be wholly disregarded in interpreting the Bible. No matter how old a tradition may be, it should not be allowed to bias the judgment in the least. We cannot know whether tradition is true or not until we compare it with the Bible; and since we have to first examine the Bible to ascertain the truth of tradition, it is evident that tradition can be of no help to us in interpreting the Bible. We must first understand the Bible, before we can know what credit to give to tradition. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 23.1}

Many people suppose that those who lived nearest to the time when the Bible was written, must have known a great deal more about the Bible than we can. The popular idea of this is expressed by Rev. James Chrystal in his “History of the Modes of Christian Baptism,” chap. 3, where, speaking of the testimony of holy Scripture, he says:- {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 23.2}

“This is the source of doctrine, but it should ever be interpreted by the historical witness of the earliest ages of the church. In other words, in case a doubt should arise regarding the proper interpretation of a passage relating to a certain doctrine or rite, we should not despise the voice of the early successors of the apostles. It is a principle of common sense as well as of sound criticism that the historical witness of the Christians who lived the nearest the apostolic age, is of the greatest importance in determining the meaning of obscure or disputed passages of the New Testament.” {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 23.3}

But it should be remembered that the apostles had no “successors.” There have been a great many men who have lived since they did, but they have not been apostles. If nearness to the apostolic age gives extra light on the Bible, then those who lived at the same time that the apostles did ought to be still better guides than those who lived after they did; but we find that some of the gravest errors were taught by men who were contemporaries of the apostles. For a single example, see 2 Timothy 2:17, 18. In closing this brief statement of principles, we would adopt the words of Dr. Killen, who speaks of the early church Fathers as follows:- {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 23.4}

“It would seem as if the great Head of the church permitted these early writers to commit the grossest mistakes, and to propound the most foolish theories, for the express purpose of teaching us that we are not implicitly to follow their guidance. It might have been thought that authors, who flourished on the borders of apostolic times, knew more of the mind of the Spirit than others who appeared in succeeding ages; but the truths of Scripture, like the phenomena of the visible creation, are equally intelligible to all generations. If we possess spiritual discernment, the trees and the flowers will display the wisdom and the goodness of God as distinctly to us as they did to our first parents; and, if we have the “unction from the Holy One,” we may enter into the meaning of the Scriptures as fully as did Justin Martyr or Irenaeus. To assist us in the interpretation of the New Testament, we have at command a critical apparatus of which they were unable to avail themselves. Jehovah is jealous of the honor of his word, and he has inscribed in letters of light over the labors of the most ancient interpreters, ‘*Cease ye from men*.’ The opening of the Scriptures’ so as to exhibit their beauty, their consistency, their purity, their wisdom, and their power, is the clearest proof that the commentator is possessed of ‘the key of knowledge.’ When tried by this test, Thomas Scott or Matthew Henry is better entitled to confidence than either Origen or Gregory Thaumaturgus. The Bible is its own safest expositor. ‘The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is use, making wise the simple.’”-*The Ancient Church, section 2, chapter 1, last paragraph*. W. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 23.5}

**“Prisoners and Freemen” The Signs of the Times, 13, 2.**

E. J. Waggoner

Being unable to furnish the current Sabbath-school lesson for the Commentary Department this week, we occupy a portion of the space answering the following questions which we have received:- {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 27.1}

“Who is addressed in Isaiah 40:8, 9? Who are the prisoners, and when and from what are they to be freed? P. B.” {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 27.2}

The verses referred to read thus:- {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 27.3}

“Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places.” Isaiah 49:8, 9. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 27.4}

By reading the preceding verses in connection with these, we readily learn who is addressed. “And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him.” Verse 5. “And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.” Verse 6. These passages show unmistakably that Christ is the one addressed. Compare with verse 6 Luke 2:29-32. The eighth verse itself shows that Christ is addressed, in the words, “I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people.” Compare with this Isaiah 55:4, 5. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 27.5}

The “day of salvation” is the entire time during which God’s mercy to man is manifest in the gospel. In this day-this acceptable time-Christ is heard in behalf of the people, and is given for the objects mentioned in verses 8 and 9. One of these objects is the opening of the prison, and saying to the prisoners, Go forth. It might appear to some, from the words that immediately follow (verse 10), that this has reference to the opening of the graves at the last day; but from almost identical language used elsewhere in prophecy, and applied by our Lord himself, we are obliged to place the opening of the prison within the “day of salvation.” We quote Isaiah 61:1, 2: “The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 27.6}

When our Lord went into the synagogue at Nazareth and read this much of the prophecy, he closed the book, and said to the people: “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.” Luke 4:16-21. The fact that he said this, and that he refrained from reading the next clause,-“and the day of vengeance of our God,”-shows that all that he read is fulfilled in the day of grace. But the dead are not raised until the day of mercy is past. Therefore the “opening of the prison to them that are bound” must be during the “day of salvation.” {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 27.7}

Then we have to inquire, Who are bound, and what is their bondage? The following verses will set us in the way of the correction answer: “They [the wicked Jews] answered him, We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man; how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house forever; but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” John 8:33-36. From these words we learn that sin is a bondage, and that it is from this bondage that Christ sets men free. To further show that sin is a bondage we need only to refer to Romans 7:14 and 2 Peter 2:19, out of a multitude that might be quoted. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 27.8}

Again, we know that Christ’s special work is to save people from sin. See Matthew 1:21. “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” 1 Timothy 1:15. “Looking for ... our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Titus 2:13, 14. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 27.9}

Both these points, namely, that sin brings men into bondage, and that Christ releases them from this prison, are brought out in the following passage:- {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 27.10}

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit; by which [*i.e*, by the Spirit] also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing.” Christ, by the Spirit, went and preached unto the spirits in prison; this was in the days of Noah, while the long-suffering of God waited. God’s long-suffering waited one hundred and twenty years, and during this time his Spirit was striving with the wicked antediluvians. See Genesis 6:3. Those wicked men were in the bondage of sin; Christ was ready and anxious to give them freedom,-the same freedom that Noah had, namely, the righteousness which is by faith,-but they refused to be made free, and were therefore destroyed. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 27.11}

Still further: We have seen that men are bound in prison because of sin. Said Paul, “The law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin.” Romans 7:14. Now “sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4), and therefore it is the transgressed law that shuts men up in prison. David said, “I will walk at liberty; for I seek thy precepts.” Psalm 119:45. But when he turned aside from the commandments he was at once bound as a criminal. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 27.12}

This bondage in which the transgressed law holds its victims until they accept freedom in Christ, is most forcibly indicated by Paul in the following words: “But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.” Galatians 3:22, 23. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 27.13}

It is well known that human law casts its violators into prison. The sheriff who arrests the criminal, the judge who sentences him, and the jailer who locks him up, are only the agents of the law. The massive bolts and prison walls simply represent the outraged law. Now notice the parallel in the case of a transgressor of divine law. Having willfully sinned, he is justly accounted guilty of a violation of the whole law. James 2:10. For a time he is unconscious of his bondage. aid Paul, “I was alive without the law once.” The office of the Spirit is to make men conscious of this bondage. See John 16:8. It does this by bringing the word home to their hearts, for the Bible is the Spirit’s sword. Some, it is true, resist the influence of the Spirit, and never become conscious of their need until it is too late. But we will consider the case of one upon whom the Spirit works effectually. As the truth is impressed upon his heart, his prison walls seem to contract about him. Whereas before he thought he had unlimited freedom, he now finds that he is in a narrow cell, the walls of which are the ten commandments. He resolves that he will be free, and starts out in one direction. But he has taken the name of the Lord in vain, and the third commandment says, You can’t get out here. He turns in another direction, but he has borne false witness, and the ninth commandment presents an effectual barrier to his escape in that direction. Whichever way he turns, a commandment, stronger than any earthly prison wall, drives him back. He is shut in on every side. But Christ is the door that ever stands open. Toward this door the inclosing walls seem to drive him, and he is shut up to it as the only avenue of escape. At last he escapes through this door, and becomes in Christ a free man. In Christ he is as though he had never sinned, and in him he is, “made the righteousness of God.” That is, he becomes a commandment-keeper, and therefore continually walks at liberty. He has now only to stand fast in the liberty wherewith God has made him free. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 27.14}

One more point. Christ is the tower of the flock, “the *stronghold* of the daughter of Zion.” Micah 4:8. Now turn to the exhortation of the prophet: “Turn you to the *stronghold*, ye prisoners of hope; even to-day do I declare that I will render double unto you.” Zechariah 9:12. The blood of the covenant (verse 11) is still offered before the throne of God, and is powerful enough to set every prisoner free. Therefore we are all prisoners of hope. We may all be free if we will. No matter how high our sins may seem to be piled up against us, backed by the law of God, we need not despair, for the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin; and where sin abounds, grace doth much more abound.” W. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 27.15}

**“Back Page” The Signs of the Times, 13, 2.**

E. J. Waggoner

On the morning of the 8th inst., Brother and Sister W. C. Sisley and child arrived in Oakland on the steamer from Portland, Oregon, where they had spent a few days on their way from Battle Creek, Mich. They would have arrived the day before, but for the fact that the steamer was delayed by fogs. Sister Sisley comes to take charge of the missionary instruction in the Healdsburg College, in which work she has had long experience, and Brother Sisley will devote a little season to the recovery of his health, which is very much impaired. We heartily welcome this addition to our force of laborers on the coast. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 32.1}

Now that the holidays are over, we may expect to find something in our religious exchanges besides stories of feasting and gormandizing. One would almost suppose that the majority of the people of the United States had been kept on a starvation diet for several months before Christmas, and could think of nothing during the holiday season but something to eat. And this also is a sign of the last days; “for as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, .... and knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 32.2}

Quite recently three lodges of the Knights of Pythias, at Little Rock, Arkansas, united in a service of sorrow and season of prayer for the dead of their order. This was in accordance with a law of the Grand Lodge, enacted in 1884, making it obligatory to hold such a season of prayer for the dead once a year. At the service referred to, the hall was crowded, and the service was said to have been solemn, yet, “resplendent with beauty and pure thought for those who have gone, and for those who have yet to cross the dark river.” It is said also that “the deep strains of the organ seem to tell those who heard it that there was a great beyond.” We can heartily endorse the following comment by the *Christian Standard:—* {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 32.3}

“How can any enlightened Christian have fellowship with such superstition and mockery? If we are to trust what we have seen with our own eyes, these Knights of Pythias had better bestow their sympathies on the parents of *the living* of their order, that they may be kept from patronizing saloons and drinking freely of beer on their gala days.” {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 32.4}

On the evening of November 28, while the General Conference was in session at Battle Creek, Mich., Dr. J. H. Kellogg, superintendent of the Sanitarium, delivered an address on “Social Purity,” to an audience of over one thousand persons in the tabernacle. The substance of that address we have before us in a neat pamphlet of forty pages, which was published in accordance with the unanimous request of those who listened to it. That the subject of social purity is one which urgently demands attention must be acknowledged by anyone who reads even the head lines of the daily papers, or who knows anything of human nature. In this pamphlet the subject is presented in an earnest and faithful manner. The dangers existing at the present time are vividly set forth, and the means of escaping these dangers is clearly indicated; yet nothing is said that could shock the most fastidious, or in any way tend to awaken an impure thought. The address should be in the hands of everybody who reads anything. Single copy, ten cents; liberal discount on large orders. Address, Health Publishing Co., Battle Creek, Mich. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 32.5}

It is claimed by Sunday observers that Sunday should be kept in honor of Christ’s resurrection. Then the same people will urge that laws ought to be made compelling all classes of people to rest on Sunday. This would, of course, include infidels and atheists. That is, they would have Christ’s resurrection commemorated by those who do not believe in Christ. What else would that be but enforced hypocrisy? But some will say that by enforcing the memorial, as they claim, belief would eventually follow. That is to say, that if all the merchants in town should hang out signs advertising hardware for sale, their stores would in time fill themselves with hardware. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 32.6}

Says the Oakland *Tribune:*- {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 32.7}

“The year 1886 will long be remembered for its labor troubles and strikes. But, notwithstanding the universal strikes over the country, we have yet to learn of anything being gained by the strikers. We cannot recall a single instance where any advantage has been gained by a strike which might not have been obtained by negotiation.” {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 32.8}

There is truth in this. A little consideration will show any thinking man that strikes and boycotts are not only violation of the golden rule, but they are disastrous to the parties engaging in them. Even when men succeed in getting an increase of wages by a strike, it will almost invariably be found that the increase does not compensate for the loss sustained in getting it. The grasping individual, as well as the grasping monopoly, usually overreaches to his own detriment. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 32.9}

In speaking of the main argument in favor of the “new theology,” namely, that it is demanded by “the spirit of the age,” the New York *Christian Advocate*, under the heading of “a cause for alarm,” states the following fact, which is worth noting as a sign of the times:- {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 32.10}

“Nevertheless, the stubborn fact stands out too boldly to be denied-the church of Christ is so deeply infected by the peculiarity of the times as to be made weak thereby. Hence, instead of being able to authoritatively oppose, to successfully counteract, to effectually neutralize it, she is in danger of being shorn of her strength and robbed of her spiritual beauty by its subtle and continuous working.” {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 32.11}

As was to be expected, the Andover professors who have been teaching the “new theology,” that the probation of man does not cease at death, have the sympathy of all Spiritualists. The “new theology” is, in fact, only one form of Spiritualism, and its advocates will surely find it that ism ample scope for the exercise of their talents. It should be understood that the Andover professors are not being *persecuted* for their “advanced” ideas. The simple fact is that they have agreed, as a condition of having a position in the college, to teach in harmony with certain doctrines, and have violated their agreement. Probably some of the theories which they agreed to teach our as unscriptural as is their new departure, still that does not alter the fact that they have broken their pledge. But not withstanding the strictness of Andover rules, we venture the prediction that both accusers and accused will erelong be standing together again in the fold of Spiritualism. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 32.12}

“Sunday or no Sunday?” Is the way the advocates of a rigid Sunday law put the case. It is a very common thing to hear that “we have no Sabbath in California,” since the Sunday law was repealed. Such expressions are simply admissions of the fact that the Sunday institution derives its support solely from human enactments, and that without such support there would be no Sunday sabbath. It is indeed a truth that those who ignore the Sabbath of the Lord, as enjoined in the fourth commandment, have now no sabbath in California, for the only thing which gave Sunday its religious character in this State has been withdrawn. But we have never heard any complaints from those who keep the seventh day of the week, “according to the commandment.” Such ones find no difficulty in keeping the Sabbath, although there has been no civil law whatever enforcing the observance of that day; the law of God is found to be all-sufficient. If Sunday-keepers had so good a law in support of *their* institution, they would never clamor for an inferior one made by man. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 32.13}

**“Unreliable” The Signs of the Times, 13, 2.**

E. J. Waggoner

To the editor of the *Golden Gate* (Spiritualist) says:- {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 32.14}

“Whoever surrenders his individual judgment, and places his trust implicitly upon the communications of spirits, as given through promiscuous mediumship, is almost certain to be deceived. It matters not how confiding his trusts, or implicit his faith, nor how sincere or honest he may be in his intentions, he will find the average spiritual message a broken reed, if he attempts to lean upon it to the exclusion of the staff of his own reason.” {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 32.15}

This is just what students of the Bible could tell any Spiritualist. The spirits which they consult are lying spirits, because “they are the spirits of devils.” There must be to Spiritualists great comfort in listening to what they know to be lies. We prefer to listen to what we know to be truth. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 32.16}

**“Salvation Army Methods” The Signs of the Times, 13, 2.**

E. J. Waggoner

The Boston correspondent of the *Christian Union*, in reporting the visit of General Booth to that city, makes the following criticism upon the methods of the army. We think the criticism is entirely just. And as the National Reform party is now courting the Salvation Army, it can very readily be seen what a worthy accession the National Reform will gain when it shall have won the army. But the accession will be entirely worthy of the cause:- {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 32.17}

“The criticism which I make is not against his methods so much as against the positive way he asserts the salvation of those who go to his anxious seat to be prayed for. All the force of the meeting is directed to get sinners forward to be converted on the spot, even if they are half intoxicated. If they feel right, and submit, they are called ‘saved.’ They sing ‘I am saved, I am saved.’ The soldiers are taught to proclaim their own salvation. If they were called new recruits and the Salvation Army, and the process of beginning were called enlisting, it might not be offensive, but the positive assumption that one has been saved during the five or ten minutes of a special prayer, the scene having much that is *outre* and intensely exciting, is an exercise of the knowledge that only Omniscience has the right to assume. I am not criticising the fact that God can save men instantly when they turn to him in penitence and love, but only the great danger there is in the positive declaration that this peculiar process, which seems to me to have large admixtures of the mechanical, transplants men into assured salvation. After listening to General Booth, I almost regretted that I remained to witness the closing scene. The army is always demonstrative whenever the preacher alludes to those who have just been saved. To break new converts on a public platform with banners and march them through the streets as those who are ‘saved’ seems to me an arrogance that the Salvation Army should not encumber itself with. I recognize the power there is in their methods of appeal to the low and degraded, but the gospel inculcates modesty and humility, and converts ought not to be inflated by supercilious ideas concerning themselves, made boastful and left in danger of rushing headlong into spiritual pride, which is the most insidious foe to the Christian life.” {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 32.18}

**“The Sure Word (Concluded.)” The Signs of the Times, 13, 2.**

E. J. Waggoner

*(Concluded.)*

The third chapter of the second epistle of Peter contains some positive evidence concerning the sure word of prophecy, which, as we have seen, points out the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The chapter opens with the statement that the epistle is written for the purpose of stirring the brethren up to take heed to “the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets.” There is special reason for this admonition, because just before the end, the darkness will be more intense, as the apostle Paul says, “Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.” 2 Timothy 3:13. And these evil men will scoff, saying, “Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” 2 Peter 3:4. That this is a falsehood, and that they ought to know better if they do not, Peter declares in the next two verses, saying:- {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.1}

“For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water; whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.” {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.2}

The phrase “the earth standing out of the water and in the water,” does not at all express the idea of the original. The Greek word which in the Authorized Version is rendered “standing,” should, as the margin indicates, be rendered “consisting.” Robinson’s “Lexicon of the New Testament,” says of the word: “To *place together* parts into a whole, *i.e.*, to constitute, to create, to bring into existence. Hence, in the N.T., intransitive, *to be constituted, created; to exist*,” as in Colossians 1:17, “by him all things *consist*.” Wakefield translates the passage thus: “A heaven and earth formed out of water and by means of water.” Bloomfield says: “The earth... being formed out of water, and consisting by means of water.” Murdock’s translation of the Syriac has it: “The earth rose up from the waters, and by means of water, by the word of God.” The meaning is that the earth in its chaotic state was simply a watery mass, as indicated by Genesis 1:2: “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the *deep*. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the *waters*.” {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.3}

“Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.” When God gathered the waters together into one place, and made the dry land appear, he evidently stored large quantities of water in the interior of the earth. This is indicated in the second commandment, by the phrase, “the waters which are under the earth,” and by Psalm 136:6: “To him that stretched out the earth above the waters,” and also by Psalm 24:1, 2. In the flood which destroyed the earth in the days of Noah, the waters in the interior of the earth united with the rain from heaven, as the record says: “The same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.” Genesis 7:11. The idea of the passage in Peter’s epistle is that the very element from which the earth was formed, was made to contribute to its destruction. Having disproved the assertion that all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation, the apostle draws a parallel, thus:- {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.4}

“But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.” 2 Peter 3:7. Instead of “are kept in store reserved unto fire against the day of Judgment,” a better translation would be “stored with fire, reserved unto the day of Judgment.” Now the comparison is at once apparent. By the word of God, the earth, in the beginning, was formed from the watery mass which God had spoken into existence. Part of this water was stored up in the earth, and by the word of God was afterward caused to overflow the earth and contribute to its destruction. And the same word of God, which performed this, has stored the interior of this present earth with fire, and is keeping it till the day of Judgment, when, as in the case of the waters of the flood, the fire within the earth, uniting with that which comes down from God out of Heaven (Revelation 20:9), will destroy it. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.5}

Particular attention should be given to the word “kept.” Instead of all things continuing as they were from the beginning of the creation, the earth has within it the elements of its destruction, and it is only the power of God that stays the catastrophe. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.6}

Some have fancied that this chapter teaches that the earth will be annihilated at the Judgment-day. This is a mistake. This earth will be destroyed in the same sense that the original earth “perished” by the waters of the earth. It was all broken up, and the face of it was changed, so that the earth after the flood had no resemblance to the earth before the flood. This was the last and greatest curse caused by sin, and completed the desolation of the earth. But the matter which composed the earth was not destroyed. So by the fires of the last day “the elements shall melt with fervent heat,” but they will not be annihilated. From those melted elements, “new heavens and a new earth” will be formed, which will have no more resemblance to this sin-cursed earth than this earth does to Eden, the garden of God. The people that shall dwell in it will all be righteous (Isaiah 60:21); and “The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.” Isaiah 35:1, 2. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.7}

The “sure word of prophecy” tells us again and again that this earth shall be destroyed by fire, and that in that fire the ungodly shall be burned up. Scoffers say that they see no evidence that any such event will ever take place; but the apostle Peter assures us that the instrument of the earth’s destruction is already prepared, and is stored within it. Just as surely as the earth was once destroyed by water, so surely will it again be destroyed by fire. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.8}

“But these prophecies were spoken hundreds, and some of them thousands, of years ago, and there is no more evidence of their fulfillment now than there was when they were uttered.” Thus argues the scoffer; but it is a vain argument; (1) because it is not true, and (2) because of the following statement:- {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.9}

“But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” 2 Peter 3:8. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.10}

God “inhabiteth eternity.” The flight of time makes no difference with his plans. Compared with his eternity, the entire 6,000 years of earth’s existence are but a span. Says the psalmist, “For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.” Psalm 90:4. Therefore the apostle concludes that “the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness.” That which seems to men forgetfulness of the promise, is only a kindly delay to allow dilatory men to secure the promise. In God’s reckoning, it is only as the three days grace which men allow for the payment of a promissory note. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.11}

It should not be forgotten that while a thousand years is with the Lord as one day, one day is as a thousand years. This is too often overlooked. While he may take a thousand years for the fulfillment of a promise, and then it will be the same as though performed the next day, he can do in one day the work of a thousand years. Therefore there is no warrant for settling down to carnal ease, thinking that it will necessarily be a long time yet before the work of God on earth can be accomplished. “For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness; because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.” Romans 9:28. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.12}

Having now examined some of the prophecies concerning “the power and coming” of the Lord, we will next turn our attention to some of the prophecies that mark the progress toward the fulfillment of the promise. W. {SITI January 13, 1887, p. 22.13}

**“Safety in the Time of Trouble” The Signs of the Times, 13, 3.**

E. J. Waggoner

Some time ago, in an article on the punishment of the wicked, we quoted Isaiah 33:14 as a text which is to some a stumbling-block in the way of their believing that the wicked are to be eternally destroyed. The text reads thus: “The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” The difficulty arises from the supposition that the prophet means, Who of us shall suffer from the devouring fire, or in other words, Who of us shall in the last day be found sinners? But that is not the idea of the text. The true meaning is found when we read the answer to these questions, which is found in verse 15: “He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.” From this we learn that the prophet does not mean to ask who among us shall be sinners; but who among us shall be righteous. And, therefore, when he says, “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” he does not mean to ask who shall be punished with this fire, but who shall escape it. Thus the text has no reference whatever to eternal torment. {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 38.1}

But the question will be asked, How can it be said that the righteous shall dwell with devouring fire and with everlasting burnings? This will be understood after we have quoted a few texts. The psalmist, speaking of the coming of the Lord, says: “Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.” Psalm 50:3. And again: “A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about.” Psalm 97:3. In Habakkuk 3:3-6, we find the following: “God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran.Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand; and there was the hiding of his power. Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet. He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow; his ways are everlasting.” From the sixteenth verse of this chapter we learn that this is the description of the time of trouble that shall just precede the coming of the Lord. It is the same that is referred to in the ninety-first psalm, where we read of the “terror by night,” the “pestilence that walketh in darkness,” the “destruction that wasteth at noonday,” and the plagues which the wicked shall suffer, and which the righteous will see although they shall be unharmed by them. {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 38.2}

Now if with these texts we read Joel 1:15-20, which also describes the time of trouble, we shall understand about the devouring fire and the everlasting burnings. That text reads thus:- {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 38.3}

“Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come. Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God? The seed is rotten under their clods, the garners are laid desolate, the barns are broken down; for the corn is withered. How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate. O Lord, to thee will I cry; for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field. The beasts of the field cry also unto thee; for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness.” Read also Joel 2:1-3. {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 38.4}

We find from this text that just before the coming of the Lord, there is a time of trouble for the wicked, in which there is pestilence, and plagues, and devouring fire; and that the righteous witness these plagues that are poured out upon the wicked, but are protected. The enemies of the Lord will be consumed by the devouring fire, but those who are described in Isaiah 33:16, will be able to dwell with everlasting burnings. Of such a one Isaiah says: “He shall dwell on high;” David says, “He shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” While the meat is cut off because the corn is withered, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, “Bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure.” And while the wicked behold only a desolate wilderness he “shall behold the land that is very far off.” This last reference also shows that the time of the everlasting burnings is before the coming of the Lord. {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 38.5}

The thirty-fourth chapter of Isaiah gives the result of this time of trouble. There it is said of the earth that “The streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch” (verse 9); and to show that it is the same everlasting burnings that accomplishes this, verse ten says: “It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever; from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.” Now, to show that even this is limited in duration, and that the fire ceases to burn when that upon which it feeds is consumed, read the next chapter, especially the first two verses: “The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.” {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 38.6}

Happy indeed will be the lot of the man who in that awful time of trouble can say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress; my God; in him will I trust.” They who in this day of salvation wash their robes of character, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb, can say in that day when God stands and measures the earth, scattering the everlasting hills, and causing the perpetual hills to bow: “God is our God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.” Psalm 46:1-3. Who would not wish for such confidence in a time when fearfulness surprises the hypocrites? W. {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 38.7}

**“Sunday the First Day” The Signs of the Times, 13, 3.**

E. J. Waggoner

A new subscriber asks how we know that Sunday is the first day of the week. We would reply that we know it in just the same way that we know that the day called Saturday is the seventh day of the week. It should be remembered that the names of the days of the week are of comparatively modern origin. Anciently the days were known only by their numbers, First, Second, etc., and this numbering is still adhered to and is universally understood, although it is more common now to speak of the days by the names that have been given to them, instead of by the numbers. The Sabbath is that which marks the week. God created the heavens and the earth in six days and rested on the seventh, and he commanded man to rest on every succeeding seventh day, giving him permission to work the six intervening days. These periods of seven days are called weeks. Ever since the creation, there have been some who have kept the Sabbath according to the commandment, but for our purpose it is not necessary to go back further than the time of Christ. Christ and those who followed him kept the Sabbath according to the commandment. See Luke 4:16; 23:56. This was of course the seventh day. It was the same day which the Jews kept. The Jews have kept the same day from that time to this. We find them in all parts of the world, yet they are all agreed as to the observance of the Sabbath. This shows that the day which is now called Saturday is the true seventh day, the day which was observed by Christ and which is enjoined in the fourth commandment. The day which follows the seventh day is now called Sunday. Now if we turn to Matthew 28:1, we shall find that the day which immediately follows the seventh day Sabbath, is the first day of the week. {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 38.8}

As further proof that there has been no change in the reckoning of the days of the week, we have the fact that Jesus rose on the first day of the week, and that, from within two or three centuries after his resurrection up to the present time, the day of Christ’s resurrection has been quite generally observed in the Christian church. If you ask people why they keep Sunday, they will always tell you it is in honor of Christ’s resurrection on the first day of the week. And thus the keeping of Sunday is in itself evidence that those who observe Saturday are observing the true seventh day, and are therefore obeying the commandment of the Lord. {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 38.9}

**“Churchly Iniquity” The Signs of the Times, 13, 3.**

E. J. Waggoner

“And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.” Matthew 24:12. These words were spoken by our Lord concerning a time just before, and reaching to, his second coming. It should serve as a complete refutation of the idea that the world will be converted, and that there will be a millennium of Christian joy and peace before the coming of the Lord. This verse not only teaches that iniquity will abound, but, with the next verse, shows that the iniquity will continue even until the end. “And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” Whoever is saved when the end comes, will have “endured” something; his path will not have been one of ease, but he will have “come out of great tribulation.” {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 38.10}

The same thing is taught by the apostle in 2 Timothy 3:1-5: “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 38.11}

This shows that the reason why those who shall be saved when the Lord comes, will have been called upon to “endure,” is because they will have passed through perilous times; and the reason why the times will be “perilous,” is “because iniquity shall abound.” It also shows that this abounding iniquity will be in the professed church, for it is committed by those who have “a form of godliness.” {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 38.12}

Now, if we read carefully Matthew 24:12, we shall see that the iniquity there referred to is iniquity practiced under the garb of religion. “Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.” The iniquity is committed by those who have love, and causes that love to decline. Surely, then, we shall have just the opposite of Christian joy and love in the world before the Lord comes; for not only is iniquity to abound, and perilous times to exist as a consequence, but this state of things is to be right in the church. {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 38.13}

But how can it be that such crimes as those mentioned in 2 Timothy 3:1-5 can exist in the church, when they are the very ones that now characterize men of the world? Easily enough, for the church and the world will be one. All the world will belong to the church. This will not be brought about in the good old way known to Paul and Luther and the Wesleys, namely, by conversion, but by Constitutional Amendment, a plan very similar to that adopted by Constantine and Charlemagne, who brought people into “the church” by thousands. Citizenship and church membership will be one and the same thing; and this will result in bringing into “the church” all the political hacks, ward politicians, “Boodle ringers,” and whoever has an itching pain for Government coin and influence, and his name is legion. The “love of many” will necessarily “wax cold” before they can lower the standard sufficiently to receive such ones into church fellowship; and contact with the same class will by no means tend to restore that which they have lost. {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 38.14}

But before this state of things can be fully brought about, men must reject the truth of God, especially that which relates to the Sabbath. And because of their rejection of the truth, strong delusion will be sent upon them that they should believe a lie. 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12. This blindness will cause them to call evil good and darkness light, so that although iniquity will be abounding, they will say that all is well, the world is converted, and the temporal millennium has come. Then, as prophesied by Isaiah, they will say, “Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” And *then*, “when they shall say, Peace and safety,” then sudden destruction shall come upon them,” and they shall not escape.” 1 Thessalonians 5:3. Then the Lord shall arise to shake terribly the earth, and those who have exalted themselves shall be humbled, “and they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty.” May the Lord grant us grace to humble ourselves now, that in that day we may be exalted to a place at his right hand. W. {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 39.1}

**“A ‘Non Sequitur’” The Signs of the Times, 13, 3.**

E. J. Waggoner

The *Congregationalist* of December 23 gives a brief notice of the Bible-class which is regularly held by Dr. Meredith, in Tremont Temple, Boston, noting especially the teaching of the last International lesson of the year. In this notice we find the following:- {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 40.1}

“In teaching this lesson, as well as one or two others lately, Dr. Meredith has expressed the opinion that we are not living in the last days of the world, but says he expects it to continue for centuries and ages, adducing as evidence of this the immense quantity of coal and minerals of various kinds stored up in the bowels of the earth apparently for the use of mankind.” {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 40.2}

It is astonishing that Bible students will call such statements as this “evidence” that we are not in the last days. While we would not call Dr. Meredith a scoffer, he certainly is in the line of the fulfillment of Peter’s prophecy that in the last days men shall say, “Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation” (2 Peter 3:2), and thus himself furnishes evidence that we are in the last days. {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 40.3}

The argument, for such we will call it by courtesy, is this: Because there is an abundance of fuel in the earth, therefore it must be consumed. It would be just as reasonable to say that because a man has enough wheat in his barn to last him ten years therefore he must of necessity live until he has consumed it all. The Doctor forgets that sometimes those things which are designed for the use of man are made the instruments of his destruction. {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 40.4}

When the word was created it was a watery mass. Peter says it was “standing out of the water and in the water.” 2 Peter 3:5. By the word of the Lord the waters were gathered together unto one place and the dry land appeared. Much of this water was stored in the bowels of the earth. It was doubtless there for man’s use, just as now we draw from the earth water to supply our needs. Now suppose we imagine Noah preaching that in a few years the Lord would destroy the earth. Up speaks some wise philosopher and says: “That cannot be, for there are vast quantities of water stored up in the earth for man’s use, and the earth cannot be destroyed until all that water has been consumed. But the water supply can never be exhausted, and therefore the world can never be destroyed.” No doubt he would have been applauded by the people for his wisdom. Nevertheless, “the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.” 2 Peter 3:6. And the water which was stored within the earth, together with that which came from heaven, was the means by which the earth was destroyed. {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 40.5}

The apostle says that those who deny the Lord’s soon coming are willingly ignorant of the facts which we have just related. He says: “But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.” 2 Peter 3:7. In this we cannot fail to see that the apostle draws a comparison between the future destruction of the earth by fire, and its former destruction by water. Just as the water out of which the earth was formed, and which was stored within the earth, caused its destruction, even so now the combustible material stored within the earth, will, together with the fire that comes down from God out of heaven, cause the earth to be dissolved. {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 40.6}

It is a very unsafe thing to draw conclusions from nature, contrary to the statements made in the Bible. It is true that God has abundant provision for the support of mankind on this earth for ages to come. But he has never pledged himself to support a people who are unworthy of support. When the people of the earth have forgotten him, or while professing to know him deny him by their works, he will count them as chaff fit only for the flames, and by the very things wherein they trust, he will destroy the world and them that dwell therein, and will create a new heavens and a new earth, wherein the righteous shall dwell. W. {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 40.7}

**“Lot’s Choice” The Signs of the Times, 13, 3.**

E. J. Waggoner

**The Commentary.  
NOTES ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.  
(February 6.-Genesis 13:1-12.)**

Though the place of Sodom and Gomorrah was as beautiful “as the garden of the Lord,” the people were so corrupt that neither earth nor Heaven could endure them but a little while longer. “The men of Sodom were wicked and sinners exceedingly before the Lord.” And “pride, fullness of bread, and

abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination.” Ezekiel 16:49, 50. This was the iniquity of Sodom. {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 43.1}

And though Lot found the place beautiful, he found the people abominable; and his righteous soul was “vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked; for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.” 2 Peter 2:7, 8. But “evil communications corrupt good manners.” And although Lot is given by the word of God the title of “just” and “righteous,” yet his family was so far influenced by the “evil communications” of those wicked people, that his wife did not escape destruction, and is daughters, though they escaped, showed themselves more thoroughly familiar with the wicked ways of Sodom than with the righteous ways of their father. “Lot’s choice” was a miserable choice. Worldly prosperity is no evidence of the fear of God, but rather tends to make the naturally corrupt heart still more corrupt. Let it be the aim of all to “walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, that we may all be partakers with him of the same promise in view of which he ever lived and walked. {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 43.1}

**“Good and Bad Angels” The Signs of the Times, 13, 3.**

E. J. Waggoner

Those who accept the teachings of Spiritualism, seem to think that we are inconsistent when we say that the spirits with whom they communicate are spirits of devils. For, say they, we read of men who appeared to Abraham and to Lot, and that angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation, and such beings certainly cannot be spirits of devils. Of course they are not; but the angels who came to Abraham and Lot did not claim to be the spirits of their dead friends. The angels whom our heavenly Father sends to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation, and who were sent to minister to Christ in the wilderness of temptation and in the garden, do not contradict God’s word, by saying that they are the spirits of men who died, when the Bible says that the dead know not anything. They are angels of light, and angels of darkness; angels who are pure and holy as when God created them, and angels who sinned, and thus lost their first estate. But none of these angels were ever men. They were created angels, and were never of the same nature as men. How may we know the difference between the good and the bad angels? Try them by the word of God. “If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8:20. If they contradict the Bible, or in any way throw discredit upon it, know that they are of the devil, who is a liar and the father of it. {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 43.2}

**“Men Never Become Angels” The Signs of the Times, 13, 3.**

E. J. Waggoner

Little children used to be taught to sing, “I want to be an angel.” It was a vain wish, but they didn’t know any better. Man was made “a little lower than the angels.” Those who are counted worthy of a part in the first resurrection, will be made “equal unto the angels.” Luke 20:35, 36. They will be equal unto the angels only in that they cannot die any more. But equality does not mean identity, but the contrary. If we say that one thing is equal to another, we indicate that there are two distinct things. So when the Lord said the righteous will in the resurrection be equal unto the angels, he indicated most emphatically that they would not be angels. {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 43.3}

“But,” says an objector, “Moses and Elias were seen on the mount; how do you account for their presence there if the dead are unconscious and do not become ministering angels?” Easily enough. Elias never died but was translated without seeing death. Moses died and was buried by the Lord, by whom he was afterwards raised from the dead. That he was raised is proved by two things: 1. Christ and Satan disputed about the body of Moses. Jude 9. Satan has the power of death (Hebrews 2:14), and therefore claims all the dead as his lawful prey. Christ has been through the grave, bringing with him its keys (Revelation 1:18), and therefore he has the power to divide the spoil with Satan. See Isaiah 53:12. That is, he will take from Satan those servants of Christ whom Satan has claimed as his own. So Christ took his faithful servant Moses, referring Satan to the Father, as the vindication of his right to do so. 2. The Bible plainly declares that the dead know not anything, and that their thoughts perish as soon as the breath goes forth. It further expressly states that the dead cannot converse with the living unless they are first raised from the dead. Therefore we know that when Moses appeared on the mount of transfiguration, it was not as an angel, nor as the spirit of a dead man, but as a man who had been dead and had been raised to life. {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 43.4}

**“Back Page” The Signs of the Times, 13, 3.**

E. J. Waggoner

Last Sabbath, January 15, the Oakland Church had the pleasure of listening to a sermon by Elder W. P. Curtis, lately from Kansas. The discourse was based on Matthew 16:19, and was an outline of the fundamental principles of the doctrine of the true church of Christ, with a statement of the danger to which the church has been and is exposed, and a description of the final triumph of the faithful. On Sunday, January 16, Brother Curtis and family sailed for Australia on the steamer *Alameda*. He will stop at Honolulu a month or two, to help along the work there. {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 48.1}

Not long ago several of the clergy of Chicago, yielding to the argument (?) that “to the pure all things are pure,” and to an invitation to of the National Opera Company, attended the performance of certain ballets that they might, as the invitation ran, “give a fair opinion as to whether the dance, as present with artistic refinement in the American Opera ballet, is not an attractive, artistic, and morally innocuous adjunct to the opera.” It is almost needless to say that no sooner had these men yielded to this operatic sophistry than they were told by the friends of the ballet that they “went there to satisfy their curiosity and see what it looked like;” that “the excuse that they desired to inform themselves that they might more forcibly condemn it, is too thin;” that they knew very well before they went what they would see, “for it is a matter of conceited, undisputed, universal knowledge. Yet they went there to see whether it was better not!” and finally, that having gone themselves they could not well object to their parishioners going. All of which should be a lesson to the clergy of Chicago. {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 48.2}

The *Christian Standard* says of the request of the thief on the cross, “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom” (Luke 23:42):- {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 48.3}

“He had no doubt reference to the kingdom as it will be manifested at the second coming of Christ-the kingdom of the glorified, though he had no clear conception of its nature.” {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 48.4}

Nobody can tell how clear a conception he may have had of the kingdom of Christ, but it is certain that in his request he had reference to the second coming of Christ. This truth is more clearly marked by Griesbach’s text, which reads, “Remember me in the day of thy coming.” And since Christ’s coming in his kingdom is at his second coming (Matthew 25:31) we see that the thief made his request intelligently. What Christ promised was simply that his desire should be fulfilled. An emphatic declaration was made to the effect that when Christ should come the second time the thief should then be with him; he should be remembered. The word “to-day” simply makes the declaration the more emphatic. {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 48.5}

In the trial of Professor Smythe, of Andover, for heresy, Professor Baldwin, of Yale College, one of the counsel for the defense, is reported by the *Independent* as follows:- {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 48.6}

“The doctrine of probation after death, Professor Baldwin maintained, has already done much, and was destined to do more, to overcome agnosticism, the most hurtful error which prevails at the present day among men.” {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 48.7}

An “agnostic” is one who does not believe anything, and doesn’t *profess* to know anything although he really thinks that he knows more than all the world beside. Professor Baldwin says that the doctrine of probation after death has converted men from agnosticism. That is, they believe it, and therefore they can no longer be called agnostics. How convenient it is to be able to invent doctrines that will take infidelity away from men whether they will or not. Thus, the doctrine of probation after death tells the sinner that if he doesn’t repent in this life, he will be all right, because another “chance” will be given him after death. This, being in accordance with his desires, is of course readily accepted. In this way the “larger hope” converts men. We submit that it is better to be an agnostic than to believe a lie; for the man who believes a lie rests satisfied with his condition and cannot be moved. {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 48.8}

**“The ‘Larger Hope’” The Signs of the Times, 13, 3.**

E. J. Waggoner

The “larger hope” is being much talked about now. This “larger hope” is that if men do not accept Christ in this life, they will have a chance to repent after death. It is no new thing. Satan set before Eve a “larger hope” than the Lord did. He persuaded her to believe that she would be much better off if she went outside of God’s command. She soon found out her mistake. The antediluvians cherished a “larger hope” than Noah did. He, poor credulous soul, thought that if he did get into the ark he wouldn’t be drowned. Their hope was not so circumscribed. Their free minds took a much wider range, and they thought that they would be saved enough if they ignored the ark. But “the flood came, and destroyed them all.” The men of Sodom were not so narrow in their beliefs as Lot was. He believed that his only hope lay in flight from the city. They had a “larger hope,” and therefore would not put themselves to the trouble to flee. “But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.” “Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.” Those who cherish this “larger hope” will then find out their mistake. “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” This hope is large enough to take in the whole creation; “for God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” This hope is limited to this life, for when Christ comes the second time it is “without sin, unto salvation.” Nevertheless, the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and whosoever will may take the water of life as a gift. Who could ask for any larger hope than this? Well might the apostle exclaim: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!” {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 48.9}

*“How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your hope in his excellent work!  
What more could he say than to you he hath said,  
Who unto the Saviour for a refuge have fled?” {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 48.10}*

**“Bible Justice Vindicated” The Signs of the Times, 13, 3.**

E. J. Waggoner

In a Spiritualist paper we find the following quotation from Pascal:- {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 48.11}

“Nothing appears so revolting to reason as to say that the first man should impart guilt to those who, from their extreme distance from the source of evil, seem incapable of such a participation. This transmission seems to us not only unnatural, but unjust. For what can be more repugnant to the rules of our despicable justice than to condemn eternally an infant, yet irresponsible, for an offense in which he appears to have so little share, that was committed 6,000 years before he came into existence?” {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 48.12}

Doubtless many besides Spiritualists will adopt that language as their own, and will fancy that in so doing they are bringing an unanswerable argument against the doctrines of Christianity. But everybody who has read the Bible to any purpose knows full well that it does not teach that either infants or adults are condemned for an offense committed either 6,000 years or half as many minutes before they were born. Neither is one person condemned for the offense of another, no matter when that offense is committed. The Bible plainly declares:- {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 48.13}

“The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.” Ezekiel 18:20. And the same thing was taught to the Jews in their earliest history. Thus: “The father shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers; every man shall be put to death for his own sin.” Deuteronomy 24:16. {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 48.14}

The Bible nowhere countenances the idea that one person shall suffer for the offense of another. But it does recognize the fact that a stream cannot rise higher than its source. If Adam had retained his purity, he would have begotten children with tendencies to right doing; but having fallen, his posterity must necessarily be born with tendencies to evil. This evil nature with which all men are born, is strengthened by evil practices, so that although “by one man sin came into the world,” death justly passed upon all men, “for that *all have sinned*.” To those who charge the Bible with partiality and injustice it may always be said: “Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures.” {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 48.15}

**“‘The Gospel Manual’” The Signs of the Times, 13, 3.**

E. J. Waggoner

Such is the title of an excellent little book, a copy of which we received some days ago from the author, Rev. Samuel Slocombe. As described by the title page, the book is “an arrangment of the four Gospels into one continuous record of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, with notes and appendix.” Unlike some other works of the same nature, this book does not give *all* the four Gospels; that is, where two or more of the evangelists have recorded the same thing, only the fullest account is given. But while this may be an objection to a critical student, there are no doubt many who will be pleased with the simplicity of the work. {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 48.16}

The appendix contains some interesting thoughts on the “characteristics of the Gospels,” besides “brief notes, mostly chronological,” which are explanatory rather than a controversial, and are “indicative,” the author says, “of the reason for adopting a particular course in the presence of conflicting views.” {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 48.17}

The convenient size of the book, 192 pp., five and one-half by six and one-half inches, and the price, from fifty cents to one dollar and twenty-five cents, according to binding, together with some of the features before mentioned, will no doubt make it quite popular. It can be obtained of George C. McConnell, 757 Market St., San Francisco. {SITI January 20, 1887, p. 48.18}

**“Things We Should Know.—No. 1” The Signs of the Times, 13, 4.**

E. J. Waggoner

As finite beings, our knowledge is necessarily limited. There are many things that it is impossible for us to know. In fact, that which we know is a very small amount in comparison with that which we do not know; and much of that which we think we know is only conjecture. People sometimes think they know a great deal about nature, but such ones only think so because of their ignorance of the vastness of God’s works. Sir Isaac Newton, after a lifetime of contemplation of the works of nature, and investigation of physical phenomena, said that he was like a child playing with pebbles on the shore of the ocean, while the vast expanse was still before him unexplored. And when we come to things supernatural, our knowledge is still more limited. We can know nothing of them, except they are revealed in God’s word. It is idle for us to conjecture concerning the size of the throne of God, the height of the tree of life, the width of the streets of the New Jerusalem, or of the river of water of life. These things have not been revealed to us, and hence it is not necessary that we should know them. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 54.1}

But there are some things which are very plainly made known, and these things it is our duty to know. If we remain ignorant of them, it is a sin. In a few articles we shall consider some of the things that we may and should *know* without any mixture of doubt. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 54.2}

In Deuteronomy 4:30 Moses says: “Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord he is God in Heaven above, and upon the earth beneath; thee is none else.” {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 54.3}

This may be called the first element of knowledge, because whoever says “There is no God,” is a fool. Psalm 14:1. A man may be ignorant of a great many things and yet not be a fool; but one who is ignorant of things existing around him, who is unconscious of the existence of the sun, the air, the blue sky, the towering mountains, or any of the works of creation, and who looks upon all with indifferent eye,-such an one we say is a fool. But that is virtually the condition one must be in if he denies the existence of God, for God is known by his works. Says the psalmist, “For all the gods of the nations are idols; but the Lord made the heavens.” Psalm 96:5. Again, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork.” Psalm 19:1. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 54.4}

A knowledge of God is inseparably connected with a knowledge of his creative power. The psalmist says again: “Know ye that the Lord he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.” Psalm 100:3. This is shown still farther by the fact that the heathen lost their knowledge of God through failure to recognize his creative power. Thus Paul says that the heathen who know nothing of God are without excuse, because ever since the creation of the world the eternal power and godhead of God may be seen from the things that are made. And then he says that darkness came upon them “because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful.” What would it be to glorify him as God? Evidently to properly recognize him as creator, for it is that which distinguishes him as the one true God. Thus the psalmist, after declaring the power of God above all gods, says: “Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name.” Psalm 90:8. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 54.5}

But if we acknowledge God as creator, and consider it in our heart, to what will that lead? It will lead to the perfect doing of his will. Obedience is due only to superiors by inferiors. It is a principle of law that one who is dependent on another is in duty bound to obey the will of that other just to the extent that he is dependent on him. Man is dependent upon God for *everything*-“in him we live, and move, and have our being,”-and therefore he is in duty bound to yield obedience to the will of God in every particular. And if a man recognize this supremacy of God, and his own dependence, he will do the will of God. That obedience to God is a necessary consequence of a recognition of his supremacy, or, rather, is the only way in which his supremacy can be recognized, is shown by the following verses, one of which has already been quoted:- {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 54.6}

“Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath; there is none else. Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments.” Deuteronomy 4:39, 40. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 54.7}

The same thing is still further seen by the fact that ignorance of divine truth springs directly from disobedience. Paul says that strong delusion shall come upon men, so that they shall believe a lie, for the reason that they receive not the love of the truth. 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12. And again he warns the people to watch lest they be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Hebrews 3:13. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 54.8}

It will not be denied that a knowledge of God is of the utmost importance, and that it is a primary duty; and since we can retain our knowledge of God only by doing his will, how important it is that we keep his commandments. In obeying any precept of God we recognize his authority, and increase our knowledge of him; but there is one duty, the performance of which leads especially to the knowledge of God. In Exodus 31:13, 17, we read these words of the Lord:- {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 54.9}

“Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep; for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.” “It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.” {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 54.10}

Here the reason is given why the keeping of the Sabbath leads to a more perfect knowledge of God. The Sabbath commemorates the completed creation. The Sabbath is given for this very purpose. It can be properly kept only when we consider the wonderful power and goodness of God. In the ninety-second psalm, which is for the Sabbath day, the psalmist speaks of the necessity of praise to God, and says: “For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work; I will triumph in the works of thy hands.” Verse 4. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 54.11}

The same thing that is stated in Exodus is repeated by the Lord through the prophet Ezekiel: “Moreover also I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them.” “And hallow my Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God.” Ezekiel 20:12, 20. In these words the Lord expressly declares that the Sabbath is the only means that he has given whereby men may preserve a knowledge of him. And so when we read the command, “Know ye that the Lord he is God,” it is equivalent to a command to keep the Sabbath. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 54.12}

“The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.” This is the day which commemorates creation. No other day calls attention to the power of God. Changing the day of rest is the first step toward complete loss of knowledge of God. When we read that the heathen became what they are because “when they knew God they glorified him not as God,” and remember that the glory of God is his creative power, and that keeping the Sabbath is the means by which we recognize that power, we do not see how the conclusion can be avoided, that the first step toward the degradation revealed in Romans 1:23-31 was the refusal to keep the Sabbath which God had sanctified. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 54.13}

The “man of sin” became such by thinking to change the times and the laws of God. The attempted change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week, is the boast of the Catholic Church. To this she points as the badge of her authority. And this fact marks the Papacy as essentially heathen. Thus: By the act of changing the Sabbath it claimed the place and authority of God. Paul says of the Papacy: “Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” 2 Thessalonians 2:4. One power can usurp the place of another only by changing, or attempting to change its laws. But if the Papacy puts itself in the place of God, showing itself to be God, it must necessarily ignore the existence of the only true God; and thus it is that by changing the Sabbath the Papacy becomes essentially heathen. It matters not that the Papacy counts for nothing unless the action corresponds. Paul says of certain ones: “They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him.” Titus 1:16. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 54.14}

It is the rejection of the truth that is going to land the mass of the people of the last days in the worst kind of infidelity. See 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12. The Sabbath of Jehovah was, so far as we have any record, the first truth revealed to man (see Genesis 2:1-3), and it is the primary and most essential truth, since it pre-eminently teaches the existence and power of God. It is this truth which the Papacy has sought to overthrow, thus putting itself in the place of God; it is against this truth that Satan, the arch-enemy of God, exerts all his hellish arts, that he may lure men from allegiance to God; and it is the rejection of this truth which will make men an easy prey to Satan’s strong delusion, and bring them under the wrath of God. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 54.15}

Let us then keep the Sabbath of the Lord in spirit and in truth. Let us not substitute a way of our own choosing, thus exalting ourselves to the place of God. If by the faith of Christ we earnestly strive to keep the commandments of God, we shall “follow on to know the Lord;” and in the earth made new, where all shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest, we shall be permitted every Sabbath (Isaiah 66:23) to see God and to worship before his throne, acknowledging his goodness and power, in that he hath made all things new. W. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 54.16}

**“Laborers in the Vineyard” The Signs of the Times, 13, 4.**

E. J. Waggoner

A friend asks us to give an explanation of the parable of Matthew 20:1-16. It is the parable of the vineyard, in which the householder went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard, agreeing with them for a penny a day. Afterward he went out at the third hour, the sixth, the ninth, and the eleventh, each time finding some unemployed persons whom he set to work, agreeing to give them what was right. When the evening came he told his steward to give the laborers their hire, beginning with the last and ending with the first. To the last he gave a penny each. The others who had worked the entire day, seeing this, supposed that they should receive more, but they received just what they had been promised,-a penny each. When they murmured at this, the householder said to one of them: “Friend, I do thee no wrong; didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way; I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?” {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 54.17}

In explaining this parable all difficulty will be removed if we remember that those who were hired at the sixth, the ninth, and the eleventh hour came as soon as they were called. When the householder found men standing idle at the eleventh hour, and asked them, “Why stand ye here all the day idle?” they answered, “Because no man hath hired us.” The parable, therefore, gives no countenance to the idea that men may delay the acceptance of the gospel until the last hour of their lives, and then fare as well as those who have served the Lord all of their lives. It has no reference whatever to men who have had a knowledge of the gospel but who have put off accepting it. It refers to those who have not received the light of truth until late, but who accept it as soon as they receive it. As Jesus spoke the parable, it no doubt had its specific application to the Gentiles, who had not enjoyed equal advantages with the Jews. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 54.18}

Now as to the payment. The householder made a fair bargain with those whom he had hired first, giving them good pay, as wages went then; therefore when they received a penny apiece they received all that was their due, and had no reason to complain. If the master wished to give others the same amount for half an hour’s labor, he had a right to do so. Indeed, if he had wished to give money to those who had not labored at all, it would have been doing no injustice to those who had received all that they had been promised. Applying the parable to those who are called to labor for the Lord, we learn that it is not so much the amount of labor that men do as it is the readiness with which they labor, that is taken into account. God promises eternal life to all the faithful, and those who labor faithfully from the time they are called, even though they are not called until the eleventh hour, will receive the same reward as those who have labored a longer time, but with no more faithfulness. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 55.1}

**“The Day of Salvation” The Signs of the Times, 13, 4.**

E. J. Waggoner

A subscriber asks, “What day is the psalmist speaking of in the twenty-fourth verse of the 118th psalm?” The text is easily answered if we consider the context, which is as follows:- {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 56.1}

“Open to me the gates of righteousness’ I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord; this gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter. I will praise thee; for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.” Verses 19-24. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 56.2}

The subject under consideration is salvation, for which the psalmist is praising the Lord. This appears still more clearly when we read the entire chapter. He recognizes the fact that salvation comes through Christ, by saying: “The stone which the builders refused is become the head-stone of the corner.” The fact that the subject of salvation is under consideration, and that he says, “Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord,” is evidence that the psalmist is not speaking of any special literal day, but that he uses the word “day” in the sense of a period of time, as in Proverbs 24:10; Ecclesiastes 7:14, and other places. Just as there is no special day of the week when men may have prosperity or adversity, so there is no special day when men may enter the gates of righteousness or may seek salvation. Ever since the fall, men could enter the gates of righteousness at any time they chose. Thus it will be until probation ends. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 56.3}

And so the day spoken of here by the psalmist, is the day of salvation of which Paul speaks in 2 Corinthians 6:2, for he says: “For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee; behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” That this is not limited to any particular day, nor even to what is called the Christian dispensation, may be seen from the fact that these words were written seven hundred years before Christ, and are quoted by Paul. See Isaiah 49:8. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 56.4}

Again, the day spoken of is the day in which the stone which the builders rejected becomes the headstone of the corner. It is the day of salvation, that is, the whole period of time in which God’s grace is manifest toward sinners, that Christ is the head of the corner, because the entire plan of salvation centers in him. Paul says to the Ephesians: “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.” Ephesians 2:19, 20. This shows that Christ was the corner-stone in the days of the apostles and prophets, and this is only in harmony with what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:11: “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 57.1}

Again Christ refers to the same day to which David does, in John 8:56, where he said of the Jews: “You father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad.” Abraham saw the day of salvation, and entered into the gates of righteousness. The gospel was preached unto him (Galatians 3:8) and he rejoiced in it as did David. To say that John 8:56 refers to a certain day of the week, would make nonsense of the text; but no more than it would to limit Psalm 118:24 in like manner. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 57.2}

With the above explanation it is unnecessary to enter into an argument to show that the day to which David refers is not the first day of the week. Indeed, that has been shown already. It is not on Sunday or upon any other special day of the week alone that men can enter into the gates of righteousness and rejoice because of salvation. But “now”-that is, the present time, this period of probation-“now is the accepted time;” “now is the day of salvation;” therefore Paul says: “Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice.” W. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 57.3}

**“Christ the Archangel” The Signs of the Times, 13, 4.**

E. J. Waggoner

In hymns and prayers and exhortations we often hear of “angels and archangels.” In the Bible we find no such expression for it is not an admissible one. Archangel means the chief or head of angels. Now while there must necessarily be among the armies of Heaven many angels who are high in authority, there can be but one who is chief of all. The same people who use the term “archangels,” often use the term “arch-enemy” or “arch-deceiver.” In this case they have reference to Satan, the chief enemy of God and men. Knowing that Satan is the prime instigator of all evil, they do not think it necessary to specify who is meant when they say “arch-enemy.” There could be but one. So there could be but one archangel. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 59.1}

The Scriptures enable us to tell with exactness who the archangel is. In 1 Thessalonians 4:16 Paul says: “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.” In John 5:26-29 we read the words of Christ. “For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth.” Here we learn that it is the voice of the Son of God that calls the dead from their graves. The previous text says that it is the voice of the archangel; therefore, the archangel is the Son of God. Then certainly there can be but one archangel; for in all things Christ has the preeminence. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 59.2}

Again we come to the same conclusion by a comparison of Jude 9 and Daniel 10:21. Jude says: “Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation.” In the book of Daniel (chap. 8:16; 9:21) we find that the angel Gabriel was commissioned to interpret the visions of the prophet. In chapter 10:21, before he begins a most important revelation, he says: “There is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.” Here the expression, “Michael your prince,” has undoubted reference to Christ, but we have already learned (Jude 9) that Michael is the archangel. Daniel 10:13 strengthens the position that Michael, the archangel, is Christ, for we there read (margin) of “Michael, the first of the chief princes.” This is in harmony with what was said before, that although the armies of Heaven must have many leaders, there could be but one head over all, and that is Christ. W. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 59.3}

**“Christ, Angels, and Men” The Signs of the Times, 13, 4.**

E. J. Waggoner

Last week we noted that angels and men are two different orders of beings. Man was made “a little lower than the angels.” Psalm 8:4, 5. Paul says of Christ that “he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.” Hebrews 2:16. This shows a difference between the nature of angels and the nature of men. But it shows also a difference between the nature of Christ and that of angels. Christ did not take the nature of angels; that statement would be uncalled for, if he already had the nature of angels. He was higher than the angels, and when he humbled himself, he came down, not to the nature of the angels, but was made a little lower than the angels, even to the level of man. Hebrews 2:9. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 59.4}

That Christ is higher than the angels, is plainly stated in Hebrews 1:4, where, speaking of the exalted position which the Son occupies, at “the right hand of the Majesty on high,” Paul says: “Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.” “For unto which of the angels said he [God, the Father] at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?” Verse 5. The angels are sons of God by creation; Adam was also, but now that the race is fallen, we can become sons of God only by adoption (Romans 8:14-16; Colossians 4:4-6); but Christ is the Son of God by birth. He is the only begotten Son of God. He is the archangel, not because he is the highest angel, but because he, as Son of God, is head over all the angels. Jesus is the first of the creation of God (Revelation 3:14), not that he is the first of created beings, but in the sense that he is the head of all created things. “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” Colossians 1:16, 17. W. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 59.5}

**“Back Page” The Signs of the Times, 13, 4.**

E. J. Waggoner

The *Independent* says: “It is curious that the Westminster Confession of Faith knows nothing whatever of the millennium, and provides no place for it.” There is something curious in that, because it happens to be exactly the Bible position. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 64.1}

A lady, evidently a Spiritualist, writes in an exchange as follows, about Christianity and Buddhism: “*I see* nothing to prevent fusion, conciliation, and unification of the two faiths, if rightly understood.” One who has that idea may be very well informed concerning Buddhism, but certainly knows nothing about Christianity. And it is altogether a mistake to call Buddhism a “faith.” It is really the absence of faith. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 64.2}

“Much reading of German metaphysics and theology has opened windows for many a soul; but it has also opened cellar doors leading to unfathomable depths of darkness.” So says the *Christian Union*. But we remember that the same fountain cannot yield both sweet water and bitter, and therefore we believe that the so-called windows of German metaphysics and theology are cellar doors leading to unfathomable depths of darkness. The simple Bible truth never leads men to darkness. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 64.3}

A Methodist minister in Pennsylvania caused a sensation a few days since by declaring that he did not believe in the divinity of the Bible and did not know anything about immortality or whether there is a God, and that he had finally concluded not to preach what he did not believe. It would be a good thing for the cause of genuine Christianity if all the ministers who are in the same state of doubt would be equally candid. Infidelity in the pulpit, though concealed, makes infidelity in the pew. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 64.4}

In the trial of the Andover professors, Professor Churchill, “in allusion to the slight connection of his chair of elocution to the theological instruction, remarked in pleasantry that he never allowed his pupils to pronounce *sheol* with a circumflex. It must always be with the *downward* and *grave* accent.” There are many ministers who would have people believe that *sheol* means a place of torment, when it means simply the grave, the place of the dead. Such would do well to learn from Professor Churchill. When he gives *sheol* a *grave* accent, he is certainly orthodox. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 64.5}

Elder Jones writes from the College: “The present term may fairly be counted as the most prosperous in the history of Healdsburg College. There are now about one hundred and fifty students in attendance. The family at the Students’ Home now numbers ninety-two. There are two Bible classes, one numbering sixty-six, and the other fifteen. There are also two missionary classes numbering together about the same as the largest Bible class. All in the Bible and missionary study seem to enter into it with a will. The spiritual condition of the school is quite good-in the family at the Home it is very good. The teachers and managers are all of good courage, and are thankful to the Lord for the favor which he has bestowed upon the institution.” {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 64.6}

Said Christ: “I am come that they might have life.” John 10:10. To the Jews he sorrowfully said, “Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.” John 5:40. These texts prove that if Christ had not come, men could not have had life; for he would not come to give men what they already had. And it proves that although Christ has come to give life those who do not come to him cannot have life. Christ said: “All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers.” That is the truth to-day. All who come between men and Christ, who teach men that they may have life without accepting Christ, are thieves of the worst sort. They steal from their deluded victims their only hope of life. If the man who takes from his neighbor that upon which he depends to sustain his life shall receive sevenfold, surely the one who takes from his neighbor that upon which he depends to sustain his life shall receive sevenfold, surely the one who takes from his neighbor the Bread of eternal life shall receive seventy and seven fold. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 64.7}

Let is be understood that life and death are exactly opposite terms. Life means existence. So long as a man has breath, he has life, no matter what his circumstances may be. He may be in poverty, or suffering the utmost agony, yet he is alive. Eternal life is simply eternal existence. The statement that the righteous are to have eternal life does not necessarily imply that they will be happy. That they will have perfect happiness is true, but it could not be learned from the simple statement that they shall have eternal life. When we are told that they shall dwell eternally in the presence of God, we know that they will have fullness of joy. But we are told by men, not by the Bible, that the wicked are to suffer eternal torment. If that were true, they also would have eternal life; for man cannot be in torment unless he is alive. The Bible tells us, however, that “he that believeth not the Son shall not see life” (John 3:36); and further that they “shall be punished with everlasting destruction.” 2 Thessalonians 1:9. So then he who rejects Christ does not simply reject happiness, but dooms himself to everlasting destruction,-death from which there is no resurrection,-“the blackness of darkness forever.” {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 64.8}

Sunday before last the South Street Presbyterian church, Morristown, N. J., received eight persons by letter, as follows: One from the High church “House of Prayer,” Newark; one from St. Thomas Episcopal Church, New York City; one from a close communion Baptist Church; one from a Lutheran Church; two from the Church of England; and two from Congregational Churches. The *Independent* sees in this “an indication of the great advance of the lay masses who compose the Christian churches of this country, toward the obliteration of denominational lines, and a practical church union.” True; and when there is this church union, and the State by its laws upholds religion, what will we have but union of Church and State? {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 64.9}

**“Driving to Church on Sabbath” The Signs of the Times, 13, 4.**

E. J. Waggoner

The old question of riding to meeting on the Sabbath is up again. A good sister who thinks that people ought not to drive their horses to meeting on the Sabbath, quotes a part of Exodus 20:10: “Thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle;” and says, “I would ask why one part of the fourth commandment is taken up, and the other part is left out, by Seventh-day Adventists?” {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 64.10}

We would reply that such is not the case, except by here and there an individual. The sister who asks the question has herself done this very thing, for she quotes the commandment as though it entirely prohibited work of any kind, both for man and beast; but this is not the case. The clause preceding the one which she quoted reads: “Six days shalt thou labor and do all *thy* work.” Now in view of this part of the commandment, it is evident that when the Lord says, “But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt not do any work,” he means that we shall not do any of our own work, but does not mean that we shall not do his work; for the commandment teaches that the Lord’s work is to be done on that day. Christ said: “It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath day,” thus showing that to do something is in accordance with the law of the Sabbath; only that which we do must not be our own work. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 64.11}

If, as is very evident, the commandment, “thou shalt not do any work,” means simply that we shall not do any of our own work, then the same thing follows in regard to our son, or daughter, or cattle. They must not do any work of a purely secular nature. Now to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together for exhortation, is a divine command. But it is absolutely impossible for people to assemble together on the Sabbath day without doing some work, for it is often a good deal of work to walk two or three miles. The work necessarily involved in walking to meeting, is, therefore, allowable, for it is not for worldly profit; and, therefore, by the same rule, it is allowable for a man to drive his team to church, if he or his family are not able to walk. The Lord does not require that cattle shall keep the Sabbath more strictly than their masters. {SITI January 27, 1887, p. 64.12}