**“The Day of the Sabbath” The Signs of the Times, 13, 14.**

E. J. Waggoner

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; ... for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.” {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 214.1}

Language could not be framed so as to express more clearly the fact that the Sabbath of the Lord was permanently fixed upon a definite, specified day. The last charge to be brought against the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is that of indefiniteness. If it is not definite, then language cannot be made to convey ideas. {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 214.2}

But among the “inventions” that men have “sought out” is the theory that the commandment does not prescribe the observance of a certain day recurring at regular intervals, but that it enjoins the observance of one-seventh part of our time. The term “sought out” is fitly applied to this invention, for no trace of this theory appears in the commandment. It was brought to light about two hundred years ago as the only alternative of those who wished to persuade themselves and others that they were keeping the commandment, while at the same time they were observing a day of their own choosing. But this is one of the thinnest disguises ever invented. It is a very easy matter to show its absurdity, as we will demonstrate. Notice carefully the following argument:- {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 214.3}

If God sanctified an indefinite seventh part of time, he must of necessity have left it optional with man to choose which day he would keep; the only thing commanded would be rest; man could suit his own convenience as to time. It would then follow that whatever day man should choose to rest upon, *that* would be the portion of time sanctified; and thus the act of the Creator would be dependent on the fact of the creature. But it is not at all consistent with the dignity of even a human lawgiver to make the meaning of his enactments contingent on the caprice of the people; much less would such a course reflect honor upon the Government of God. {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 214.4}

But this is not the worst result that would naturally follow. If an indefinite seventh part of time were sanctified, then not only would it be left to man to choose the day for rest, but each individual would be at liberty to rest upon the day which might please his fancy. One man might take the seventh day, and another might take the fourth, and then, according to this theory, not one-seventh but two-sevenths of the time would be sanctified. Or, to suppose a case which would be very likely to happen if men should actually try to put their theory into practice, every day in the week might be kept by different individuals, and then it would appear that in the beginning God had sanctified or set apart *all* the time! But in that case what would become of the theory that he sanctified only a seventh? We submit to anyone that this is not a forced conclusion; if the conclusion is absurd, it simply proves that the theory in question is absurd. {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 214.5}

But before men reach this point in their endeavors to evade the law of God, they usually recover their reasoning faculties to some extent, and say that it is necessary for all men to keep one and the same day. The exigencies of business require it. Then we ask, Who shall appoint the day? What man is there whose judgment all will follow? There is no man or class of men whose authority even a majority of persons will acknowledge, so as to defer to it. In a case that is left open, every man is on an equality with every other. There is positively no way out of this dilemma but to admit what the commandment plainly declares,-that God, in the beginning, decided definitely which day of the week should be observed. So we see that the one-seventh-part-of-time theory is an impossibility when reduced to practice. And even if it were possible for all men to agree upon some day of their own choosing, that day would be *their* Sabbath, and not the Sabbath of the Lord, which the commandment enjoins. {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 214.6}

But some will still say, “Granting that a definite day was set apart, how can we tell which one it was?” This must be an easy question to answer, else it were useless to have a definite day appointed. The commandment says, “The seventh day is the Sabbath.” Mark, *the* seventh day, not *a* seventh day. The seventh day of what? Not of the month, for that would not meet the demand for a rest after six days of labor. For the same reason it cannot mean the seventh day of the year. It must mean the seventh day of a period of time of which seven days is the sum. But this is the week; and we therefore are shut up to the conclusion that the commandment enjoins the observance of the seventh day of the week. A really candid, thoughtful person could not decide otherwise. {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 214.7}

For further proof that the seventh day of the week is meant, read Luke 23:54-56; 24:1. The sacred historian after describing the crucifixion and burial of Christ, says: “And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on. And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulcher, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day *according to* *the commandment*.” Now if we can find what day it was on which they rested, we shall know beyond all doubt which day is “the Sabbath-day according to the commandment.” The next verse says: “Now upon *the first day of the week*, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher, bringing the spices which they had prepared.” To avoid any possibility of cavil, we turn to Mark 16:1, and there read that this visit took place “when the Sabbath was past.” Luke, then, has given us in consecutive order the record of three days, as follows: Christ was crucified on “the preparation day;” the day following was the Sabbath, upon which the women rested “according to the commandment;” and the next day was the *first day of the week*. This proves unmistakably that the Sabbath of the commandment is the seventh day of the week. W. {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 214.8}

**“Questions and Answers” The Signs of the Times, 13, 14.**

E. J. Waggoner

“While conversing recently on the subject of Immortality, this idea was presented to me: If Christ, when crucified, died, body and spirit, the world was without a Saviour for three days, and anyone who died during that period could not be saved. {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 214.9}

“Although the idea presents nothing conclusive to my mind, yet I would like to have your idea of it through the SIGNS. J. H. A.” {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 214.10}

It is astonishing to see the ingenuity displayed in inventing objections to the truth. If half as much time as is spent in trying to evade the truth, were spent in studying it, the number of believers would be increased many fold. In the above objection the ingenuity of unbelief is manifested to a marked degree. {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 214.11}

The answer to this cavil is found in John 3:16: “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.” And this: “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8. And this also: “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.” Romans 8:32, 33. {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 214.12}

The objection which was presented to our correspondent was based upon the impious idea that God is a stern, unrelenting Judge, whose only emotion toward the human race is that of hatred, and that he is prevented from spitefully tearing men in pieces only because of the watchfulness and interference of the Son, who is all love and pity. But God himself is love, and the texts just quoted show that the plan of salvation is from the Father as well as from the Son. Christ died for sinners; but God’s love for the world is manifested in giving his only begotten Son to die. We cannot make comparisons, so as to say whether the love of the Father was greater than that of the Son; but we can say this: God is love; he is also infinite; therefore his love is infinite love; consequently his love for the world was infinite love, and the sacrifice which he made for the world, in giving his dear Son to die for them, was an infinite sacrifice. In view of these facts, knowing that the plan of salvation is “the gospel of God” (Romans 1:1), it is the height, or rather the depth, of folly, yea, of unreasoning blasphemy, for anyone to intimate that mankind could not be trusted in the hands of the Father alone, during the brief space in which he, together with the Son, was making the sacrifice for their redemption. God the Father is not only our Judge, but he is also our Saviour. See 1 Timothy 2:3; Jude 25. {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 214.13}

One word more: The objector says that if Christ did actually and entirely die, then the world was for three days without a Saviour. We have shown the falsity of that, and now make a simple counter-statement: If Christ did not actually die, then the world has not now, and never had, a Saviour for all the blessings which God has for men, are secured to us only through the death of Christ. Romans 8:32; 1 Corinthians 15:16-18. {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 214.14}

**CHRIST SOON TO RETURN**

“You would be conferring a great favor on me and many that I know, by explaining how Adventists can believe Christ is soon to return, when none of the signs mentioned in Matthew 24:29; Luke 20:11, 12, 25, and other passages, have to come to pass. “E. A. G.” {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 214.15}

Our questioner makes a very broad assumption. It is possible that he is unaware of the fulfillment of any of the signs referred to, but he is not warranted in saying that they have never come to pass, simply because he has not heard of them. For his benefit, and that of others who are in the same condition, we will briefly note the fulfillment of these signs. This we are always glad to do. Matthew 24:29 reads thus:- {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 214.16}

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.” Verse 30 continues: “And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 214.17}

The “days” referred to in the first part of verse 29, and the days of tribulation referred to in verses 21 and 22. We do not think it necessary to take space here to prove that “the elect” have never suffered tribulation greater than that suffered by them in the dark ages of Papal persecution. This one period ended with the captivity of the Pope, in A.D. 1798, a few years after the violence of the persecution ceased, and serves as a guide in our search for the signs; for the first of these signs was to take place “immediately after the tribulation of those days,” or, as Mark still more definitely records, “in those days, after that tribulation.” Concerning the first sign, the darkening of the sun, we need to do more than quote what is said in “Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary,” in the explanatory and pronouncing vocabulary of noted names of fiction, events, etc.:- {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 214.18}

“DARK DAY, THE, May 19, 1780;-so called on account of a remarkable darkness on that day, extending over all New England. In some places persons could not see to read common print in the open air for several hours together. Birds sang their evening song, disappeared, and became silent; fowls went to roost; cattle sought the barn-yard; and candles were lighted in the houses. The obscuration began about ten o’clock in the morning, and continued till the middle of the next night, but with differences of degree and duration in different places. For several days previous the wind had been variable but chiefly from the southwest and the northeast. The true cause of this remarkable phenomenon is now known.” {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 214.19}

It would not make a particle of difference if the true cause of the phenomenon were known. Its value as a sign consists in the fact that it was just what our Saviour said should take place, and that it occurred in the exact time specified,-just before the close of the period of Papal supremacy, and just after the great tribulation. There is one sign fulfilled. {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 215.1}

The next sign is the falling of the stars. On this it will be sufficient to quote the following statement by Professor Olmstead, of Yale College:- {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 215.2}

“Those who were so fortunate as to witness the exhibition of shooting stars on the morning of Nov. 13, 1833, probably saw the greatest display of celestial fireworks that has ever been since the creation of the world, or at least within the annals covered by the pages of history.” {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 215.3}

Those who witnessed this remarkable event, say that it was a literal fulfillment of Revelation 6:13: “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.” The stars appeared as if violently hurled in every direction, just as would be the case with unripe fruit, if it were forced from the limbs by a strong wind. And it was not simply a few shooting stars, but the flying meteors could be likened only to flakes of snow in a furious snowstorm. So much for the fulfillment of the second sign. {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 215.4}

“And upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity,” is the next thing recorded by Luke. He who says that this is not even now fulfilled and fulfilling, must have studiously refrained from reading any of the newspapers. Organized bands of Socialists and Anarchists are not only caused by poverty and oppression, but are themselves, in turn, causes of still greater distress and perplexity. The nations of Europe are spending all their capital and credit in arming themselves against possible attacks from one another, yet, as in the case of Russia, are so fearful of the enemy within their own borders, that they often contemplate even the dreaded war with foreign powers, as a possible means of uniting their subjects, and averting the still more dreaded disruption. These things literally cause men’s hearts to fail them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth. {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 215.5}

Only one of the signs which are Saviour mentioned yet remains to be fulfilled, and that is the shaking of the powers of the heavens. But this takes place immediately in connection with the coming of the Lord, so that when it is seen, it will be too late to warn people to prepare for the coming of the Lord. The shaking of the powers of the heavens accomplished by the voice of God (Hebrews 12:26), when he shall “roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem” (Joel 3:16); when the heavens shall depart as a scroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island shall be moved out of their places; when “the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man” shall hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and shall say to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” Revelation 6:14-17. {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 215.6}

Let no one, then, comfort himself with the thought that the Lord’s coming is not near, because the powers of the heavens have not been shaken. Rather let him discern the signs of the times, and make haste to be ready to greet our soon-coming Lord with the words, “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.” Isaiah 25:9. W. {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 215.7}

**“Union for the Sake of Peace” The Signs of the Times, 13, 14.**

E. J. Waggoner

We are urged to cease our opposition to Sunday, and to the securing of Sunday laws, for the sake of peace. Christ prayed that his disciples might all be one, and so we are admonished that we ought to unite with those Christians who keep Sunday, that the world may have an example of Christian unity. But why should we join with them rather than they with us? Oh, because they are in the majority, and they say that the majority ought to rule. But when it is well known that it is a matter of conscience with the minority, to say that the majority should rule is simply to say that the minority have no business to have a conscience of their own; that they must allow the majority to be conscience for them. We are fond of peace and harmony, but we do not believe in peace and harmony which is gained by compromising truth. Luther was a man who loved peace and deprecated strife; but if he had not loved truth still more, he could not have been the leader in the Reformation. Truth and error must ever be antagonistic, and as long as there is error in the world, there cannot be peace. {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 216.1}

**“Back Page” The Signs of the Times, 13, 14.**

E. J. Waggoner

The *Chronicle* says: “By and by the criminal lawyer will rank, in the public esteem, about on a par with the criminal.” But why say “by and by”? Within a week we have had the spectacle presented to us of a “criminal” lawyer making a pathetic plea for a brutal murderer on the ground that the culprit “could not control his impulses,” and was “morally insane.” That is to say, he pleaded for acquittal on the ground that the prisoner was a vile reprobate! Can “criminal” practice to send to any Lord depth of infamy? {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 224.1}

We have before us the Year Book of the California Y.M.C.A. In it we find the report of an address delivered at the last day convention, on “how to awaken a greater interest in Bible study among our active members.” It was by Rev. W. J. Chichester, who said, among other things: “Don’t confine yourself too much to favorite passages. The Old Testament as well as the New is the word of God. All is not equally given by inspiration, but all is worthy of consideration.” Perhaps we ought to feel thankful for the reverend gentleman’s admission that all of the Bible is “worthy of consideration.” {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 224.2}

The *Occident*, of San Francisco, has a notice of the “Address to Thinking People,” on the Sunday Law, and finds that the entire argument is fallacious, because a little quotation from the *Christian at Work* was, by a typographical error, redited to Jan. 3, 1885, instead of Jan. 8, 1885. The argument would not be affected in the least if the entire quotation were omitted be officially as it appeared in the *Christian at Work*. It is worthy of note that the only flaw which the *Occident* could find in the entire argument was in the accidental substitution of 3 for 8. {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 224.3}

By the way, now that we have referred to the *Occident*, we wish to say that it is doing some good work in the matter of unfermented wine at communion. Its correspondent, “Rusticus,” has thoroughly exploded the idea that there is no such thing as unfermented wine, and that our Saviour used intoxicating wine at the institution of the Lord’s Supper. We are glad to see that there is quite a general movement, “among the churches to return to the scriptural method of celebrating this ordinance. {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 224.4}

**“Chart of the Week” The Signs of the Times, 13, 14.**

E. J. Waggoner

The “Chart of the Week,” which we noticed when we received a specimen section of it some months ago, is now completed, and is ready for those who have long awaited for it. For the benefit of those who may not have read the previous notice, we will say that the chart shows “the unchanged order of the days, and the true position of the Sabbath, as proved by the combined testimony of ancient and modern languages.” The names of the week and of each day in the week are given in one hundred and sixty languages and dialects, presenting most overwhelming proof that the division of the week has remained unchanged in all ages and in all lands. The chart has nine columns. The first gives the language and the extent of territory where it is, or was, “spoken, read, or otherwise used.” The second column gives the word for week, in the original characters of the language named in the preceding column, together with the transmitter, showing the pronunciation, and the corresponding English word. The seven remaining columns to the same for each of the days of the week. {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 224.5}

The chart is a most interesting object for study, and shows how universal was the knowledge, in ancient times, of the memorial of creation, thus emphasizing Paul’s declaration that they who forgot God are without excuse. As a single instance, we note the very ancient Arabic. The name for week signifies “seven;” the first day of the week is “business day;” the fourth day of the week, Wednesday, is “turning day, or mid-week;” the sixth day, Friday, is “Eve Sabbath),” while the seventh day is “Chief or Rejoicing day.” Many similar instances might be noted. The chart is thus in itself a strong argument for the universality and perpetuity of the seventh-day Sabbath, and should be in the hands of every lover of the Lord’s own day. {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 224.6}

Rev. W. M. Jones, 56 Mildmay Park, London, N., author of this chart, and he has put upon it untold amount of conscientious, painstaking labor. The section of the chart showing the days of the week and all the European languages (fifty-three in number) was prepared by Prince Louis Lucien Bonaparte. {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 224.7}

Considering the importance of the chart, and the immense amount of labor devoted to its preparation, we think the price $.75 for the paper, and $1.25 when mounted on lmen, with roller, is very reasonable. Orders may be sent to the Pacific Press. If the chart is ordered from the author, post-office orders should be made payable at Newington, Green Road, N., London. {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 224.8}

**“Signs of the Times” The Signs of the Times, 13, 14.**

E. J. Waggoner

Though late reports from Europe tell us that peace is assured, at least for a few months, the conviction is irresistible that the condition of affairs there resembles more nearly a smothered volcano than anything else to which it can be compared. It is true that there is now no immediate prospect of war between France and Germany, but the Eastern question remains practically unchanged. There is no sign that Russia has any intention on Constantinople; and the Bulgarian difficulty is no nearer a settlement than it was three months ago. {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 224.9}

Weather unfavorable to military operations has temporarily checked Russian aggression; but Russian intrigue and diplomacy are as active as ever; and he who does not recognise the fact the erelong the Turk is to be driven from Europe to “plant his tabernacle between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain” (Jerusalem), is alike deaf to the language of prophecy, and blind to the signs of the times. {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 224.10}

But the Eastern question is not the only menace to the peace of Europe; there is not a nation in the Old World, if indeed there be one anywhere, that does not contain within itself elements which imperil its very existence. Within a month three attempts have been made upon the life of the Czar; and there cannot be a doubt that the whole social, religious, and political fabric of the empire is rotten to the core, being completely honeybombed with Nihilism. Though the absolute ruler of millions of people, Alexander III. is a fugitive from the wrath of his own subjects, and dare not enter his own capital, or, as the Nihilists say, “The Czar has been banished to Gatschina, which is now his prison, and a prison so large that he cannot escape.” {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 224.11}

England, too, is convulsed with internal feuds, and there is every prospect that a new era of dynamite outrages is about to be inaugurated there by Irish agitators, who despair of ever getting justice for their country by parliamentary methods; and who believe that it is only by blowing up public buildings in English cities and making it costly to continue governing Ireland, that their demands will ever be listened to and home rule granted. Should the Coercion Act now before Parliament be passed, we may expect a reign of terror and bloodshed in England unequaled in any country since the French Revolution. {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 224.12}

The same spirit of lawlessness and unrest that prevails in Russia and England, characterizes, though possibly in a less degree, the rest of the world. Only a few days since, Mayor Harrison, of Chicago, in declining a re-nomination said that he feared serious trouble in that city within the next two years; and that if he were mayor he should not dare to leave the city more than half a day’s journey. And Chicago is not in very much worse case than the rest of our great cities. Altogether the outlook is far form reassuring, and instead of the much-talked-of temporal millennium being about to be ushered in, the earth is filled with violence, and in many quarters we see “men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth.” {SITI April 7, 1887, p. 224.13}

**“The Unpardonable Sin” The Signs of the Times, 13, 15.**

E. J. Waggoner

“Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.” Matthew 12:31, 32. {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 230.1}

Probably no other text in the Bible has been the subject of more speculation, or has been more misunderstood, than this one. Many honest, conscientious people have gone well-nigh into despair over the thought that they were guilty of the sin here mentioned, and that simply because they had received erroneous ideas as to what that sin is. Although there is so much misunderstanding in regard to it, we think that an understanding of it may be gained quite readily by a consideration of the connection and of parallel texts. Every word which our Saviour uttered was timely, and applied to the circumstances then present; it is this feature which makes them practical in all ages. Therefore if we would get a full understanding of any of his words, we must consider the occasion which called them out. {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 230.2}

If we notice the context, we shall find that the words which we have quoted were called out by the position which the Pharisees took concerning a notable miracle which Jesus had performed. He had healed a demoniac who was both blind and dumb, so that the man was not only in his right mind, but “both spake and saw.” The people were amazed, but the Pharisees contemptuously and blasphemously said: “This fellow does not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.” Matthew 12:24. Instead of glorifying God, by whose Spirit this wonderful thing was done, they accused Christ of having a devil, by whose aid he performed miracles. {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 230.3}

That this accusation constituted, in that instance, the unpardonable sin, is evident from the parallel text in Mark. This evangelist gives our Saviour’s words concerning the unpardonable nature of the sin against the Holy Spirit, and adds, “Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.” Mark 3:30. Thus we find, without any further investigation, that this sin consists in attributing the work of the Holy Spirit to the devil. {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 230.4}

But it is not by words alone that men may commit this, any more than any other sin. Paul speaks of some who “profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.” Titus 1:16. A reprobate is one who is rejected, who has sinned beyond recovery; one who has rejected the Spirit of God by sinning until he is so corrupt that there is no good thing in him for the Spirit to work upon. This is indicated in the preceding verse, which says of those who are “unto every good work reprobate,” that “even their mind and conscience is defiled.” So Paul writes to Timothy concerning men in the last days, who are “men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.” 2 Timothy 3:8. {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 230.5}

This was the condition of the antediluvian world. The record says: “And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.” “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” Genesis 6:3, 5. There was a time when the antediluvians were not wholly bad; there was some trace of the law in their hearts (Romans 2:15), and therefore there was something in them upon which the Spirit could work to convince them of sin; for the Spirit’s sword is the word of God, and it can produce an impression upon men only when they possess some knowledge of truth and right. But the antediluvians resisted the strivings of the Spirit. The tendency of sin is to multiply itself and to choke out any sense of good; and so by repeated stiflings of every good impulse, those people become so corrupt that they had not a single good thought. They were cumberers of the ground; there was no possibility of their reformation, and so they were cut off. {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 230.6}

In every case where the judgments of God have been brought upon people, it was because there was no possibility of their reformation; they had, in short, committed the unpardonable sin. This was the case with the antediluvians, the Sodomites, the wicked inhabitants of Canaan (see Genesis 15:16), who were destroyed to make room for the Israelites, and finally with many of the people of Israel. Says the sacred historian:- {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 230.7}

“Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the Lord which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place; but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till *there was no remedy*.” 2 Chronicles 36:14-16. {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 230.8}

“There was no remedy;” that is, their sin was unpardonable. Now since God’s object in giving men this existence is solely that they may prepare for a better, and an eternal existence, it follows that when they utterly refuse to accept of God’s plan for them, and devote themselves wholly to evil, there is no use to continue their existence longer. They are of no use to themselves or to anybody else. Like trees that bear only thorns instead of fruit, they are cut off as cumberers of the ground. Their continued existence would be only detrimental to the soil which might be yielding something useful. Here then is another way in which men may commit the unpardonable sin. {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 230.9}

Still another way is brought to view by Paul to the Hebrews. This pertains especially to those who have once made a profession. Says the apostle:- {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 230.10}

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” Hebrews 6:4-6. {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 230.11}

We have not space to enter into details, and to specify just how men crucify Christ afresh; but it is sufficient to know that the unpardonable sin is here brought to view, for it is a sin which cannot be repented of. We say “*the* unpardonable sin,” for we understand that there is but one such although there may be many different ways of committing it. John says: “If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and God shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he shall pray for it.” 1 John 5:16. All sin, if not repented of, brings death; but there is one sin which cannot be repented of, and therefore there is no necessity to pray about it as about other sins. {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 230.12}

Now we may understand what the apostle means when he says to the Hebrews that it is impossible if certain ones fall away, to renew them unto repentance. What does he mean by, “If they fall away”? Does he mean that if a Christian shall fall into sin he cannot be forgiven? No; for the verse just quoted from John teaches us that if a brother sins a sin not unto death we must pray for him. 1 John 2:1, 2; Galatians 6:1; Revelation 2:5, and scores of other texts show that men are not necessarily beyond hope, even though they be overtaken in faults after they have accepted Christ and have been pardoned. We must understand, then, that the “falling away” here brought to view means not simply the commission of a wrong act, or even a backslidden state, but a turning away from the gospel of Christ,-a rejection of Christ. Since the name of Christ is the only one under Heaven whereby men may be saved, it follows that if a man deliberately rejects that there is no hope for him. It was this fact which led Paul to use such vehement language in his epistle to the Galatians. See Galatians 1:8, 9. Any man who should preach a gospel which led the hearers to trust in something else besides Christ, would be deliberately leading them to eternal ruin, and so would be worthy of a curse. There is but one way of salvation; if a man deliberately rejects that, he cannot by any possibility be saved. W. {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 230.13}

(*Concluded next week.*)

**“‘The Old Is Better’” The Signs of the Times, 13, 15.**

E. J. Waggoner

1. “Please explain how you harmonize the 14th verse of Revelation 22, and the comments upon it, found in SIGNS, March 24, p. 186, with the same verse as given in the New Version, which reads, ‘Blessed are they that wash their robes,’ etc.” {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 230.14}

There are some things that we don’t try to harmonize; we try to follow the simple truth, and if anything differs from it, that is not a matter that troubles us. In this case we accept the reading of the Authorized Version as preferable to that of the New, and let the matter rest there. {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 230.15}

It may seem strange, however, that the two versions, each the work of men skilled in the languages, should have such widely different renderings of the same text. A little explanation will make the matter clear. The Greek of the text as rendered in the Authorized Version is, *poiountes tas entolas autou*. As given in the Revised Version it is, *pluoutes, tas stolas auton*. It will be seen that the difference in the words is very slight, so that a copyist might easily make the substitution of one for the other. If the reader has ever seen *fac similes* of some of the ancient manuscripts, he will the more readily understand how such a change might have taken place. As the result, some of the ancient manuscripts have it one way, and some another. The similar expression in Revelation 7:14 may have been in the mind of the ancient copyist, thus causing him unconsciously and mechanically to make the substitution. Griesbach regards the reading followed by the New Version as “not to be despised,” but worthy of further examination, “though inferior to the received text.” {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 230.16}

But while following the Authorized Version, we do not find, in this instance, the slightest lack of harmony between the two renderings. It is a fact that only those who keep the commandments of God, will be permitted to partake of the tree of life. Matthew 7:21; 19:17, and may other texts, settle this matter positively. It is also true that none will be saved, except those who wash their robes of character in the blood of the Lamb; for “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7); and Christ “was manifested to take away our sin.” Now (1) no one can keep the commandments without the help of Christ, whose blood cleanses from sin; and (2) no one can stand, having his robes white, without being a doer of the commandments; for it is sin that defiles, and if one should break the commandments his robes would not be white. Thus they who have kept the commandments of God, and they whose robes are made white, are the same. A blessing pronounced upon those who have kept the commandments of God, is at the same time a blessing pronounced upon those who have washed their robes white. So there is harmony in the two renderings, after all. {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 230.17}

2. “Also please state whether the New Version is correct in giving the word ‘probation’ where the Old Version has ‘experience,’ in Romans 5:4.” {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 230.18}

We think it is not, for the following reasons: The Greek word signifies both a test, a trial, and also that which results from such a test. Therefore “experience” is an allowable rendering. Now to render it “experience,” as in the Authorized Version, makes good sense, for it comports with the facts in the case: patient endurance of tribulation does work out rich experience. But “patience” indicates that the individual is undergoing a testing, a probation and therefore it does not seem consistent to say that this tribulation and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.” {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 230.19}

The revisers have given us a good commentary, but they seem often to have been more intent on getting something new than on retaining the simplicity and directness of the sacred text. W. {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 231.1}

**“Back Page” The Signs of the Times, 13, 15.**

E. J. Waggoner

A large attendance is expected at the meetings to be held in Oakland, April 22-27. This will be a very important meeting, the most important, in some respects, of any annual meeting that has been held here, and we hope that those who come will come with the determination of staying to the close. The church in Oakland extends a hearty invitation to the friends of the cause in the State, to be present. {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 240.1}

Bishop Warren of the M. E. church says that many preachers are so gentle of the feelings of sinners, especially if the sinners are rich, that they preach the gospel something after this style: “Brethren, you must repent, as it were; and be converted, in a measure; or you will be damned, to some extent.” It is too true that modern preachers very seldom repeat Christ’s unequivocal and emphatic statements, that “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 240.2}

The reports from the prohibition amendment contest in Michigan are very conflicting. Some say that the amendment is carried, and others that it has been defeated by a majority of 1,500 to 4,000. We understand that Kentucky distillers sent many thousands of dollars into Michigan before the election; and if the fraudulent vices which this money created as counted out, there is little doubt but that the amendment will stand by a handsome majority. If prohibition is a failure, it is passing strange that whisky men should spend so much money in trying to defeat it. {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 240.3}

By a private letter from Elder E. E. Marvin, of Tennessee, we learn that the effort to secure the passage of a bill granting humanity from the penalties of the Sunday law, to those who conscientiously observe the seventh day of the week, resulted in failure. We are very sorry to be obliged to chronicle this fact. We had strong hope that Tennessee would follow the example of Arkansas, and put a stop to persecution for conscience’ sake. Next week we shall give our readers some of the arguments which were used to defeat the bill; they did not come in time for publication this week. {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 240.4}

We have received several hypothetical questions in regard to certain acts performed on the Sabbath, the questioners desiring us to state positively whether or not such acts would be a violation of the Sabbath. We cannot answer them. When anyone wants to know the principles which the Bible lays down to govern our actions, we will give a Bible answer, so far as our knowledge extends; but we have not enough conscience to supply ourselves and other people too. The Lord gives plain commandments and designs that every person shall be conscience for himself. The only safe rule that we can give is this: If you are in doubt about the correctness of any act, abstain from it. {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 240.5}

Someone asks us to tell him which is the longest verse in the Bible. We don’t know. More than that, we haven’t any special curiosity in the matter. There are some lottery schemes gotten up in different parts of the country, usually connected with some so called literary journal whose proprietors offer prizes to the ones who will send correct answers to certain simple questions concerning the Bible. Thus they make a pretense of stimulating Bible investigation. We suspect that our questioner has got hold of one of their offers. We would therefore say here (1) that all such schemes are unmitigated swindles, and (2) that hunting for the longest or the shortest verse in the Bible is not studying the Bible at all. It is no more profitable than it would be to hunt for the largest or the smallest Bible in the world. The way to study the Bible is to *study* it, and any part of it, even the shortest verse, will be found to contain abundant matter for *thought*, without which there can be no study. {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 240.6}

The following utterance is ascribed to Prince Bismarck:- {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 240.7}

“I regard peace with the Pope as important as peace with any other foreign power. How long this peace may last-if, indeed, peace is attained with the Roman Church-none can foresee. For its continuance I assume no responsibility.” {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 240.8}

In commenting upon this statement, the *Christian Standard* lays bare the real state of affairs as follows:- {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 240.9}

“He ‘assumes no responsibility,’ and would find any pretext to break the unpleasant alliance, and again banish the hated Orders and Jesuitical Seminaries, at any time when he saw it was safe to do it. Nor does Leo like the Protestant Bismarck with unfeigned love, but simply has an ax to grind-and it is the blood-rusted ax which has always found service in hewing down every plant of liberty it could get a stroke at. There is no good faith on either side of this compact, but only an interested conspiracy against human rights.” {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 240.10}

We learn from an Eastern paper that “Michigan has a law which provides that no sign, picture, painting, or other representation of murder, assassination, stabbing, fighting, or any personal violenc,e or of the commission of any crime, shall be posted, under penalty of fine or imprisonment.” If California had a similar law the occupation of a considerable number of sensational artists and bill-posters would be gone; and theaters would have to resort to some other means of corrupting the morals of the young and inexperienced, than with their demoralizing pictures and worse plays. The advertising of legitimate business is all right, but when theaters, houses of ill repute and saloons flaunt in the faces of the public pictures which can but bring a blush to the check of modesty, public policy demands that their greed be restrained by law. {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 240.11}

**“Spiritualism a Delusion” The Signs of the Times, 13, 15.**

E. J. Waggoner

The Bible plainly teaches the existence of good and bad angels, and that they have a great deal of influence upon our lives; so much so, indeed, that if we are not ministered unto in spiritual things by good angels, we are by evil ones. Of the good angels we read: “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Hebrews 1:14) while the fallen angels are, we are told, “the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.” Revelation 16:14. {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 240.12}

This last scripture we understand refers to the delusion of Spiritualism, which to-day numbers its votaries by millions both in this country and in Europe. Kings and queens have become its devotees, and multitudes are everywhere being led captive by Satan at his will. And why? Simply because the professed church of Christ, both Protestant and Catholic, is almost a unit in teaching those twin errors, the immortality of the soul and the conscious state of the dead. Faith in these errors makes it well nigh impossible for people even now to resist the delusions of Spiritualism, and the time will come when Satan works “with *all* power, and signs, and lying wonders,” that all who are not rooted and grounded on Bible truth will be swept into the whirlpool of this monster delusion. {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 240.13}

When good angels have appeared to men and have communicated with them as spiritual beings, they have declared themselves to be angels: Said the angel that appeared to Zacharias, “I am Gabriel that stand in the presence of God,” but when the spirits of devils come they come professing to be the spirits of the dead. And it is to this fact that the prophet alludes when he says:- {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 240.14}

“And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter; should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8:19, 20. {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 240.15}

Let us heed the admonition, that we “may be accounted worthy to escape all these things, and to stand before the Son of man.” {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 240.16}

**“A Critical Period” The Signs of the Times, 13, 15.**

E. J. Waggoner

President Washburn, of Robert College, Constantinople, in a letter to the New York *Independent*, says of the European outlook: “On the whole, there are at least *six* chances out of *ten* that we shall have an outbreak of war within two months.” “Bismarck was undoubtedly right when he asserted in his great speech before the Germany Parliament that another war between France and Germany was inevitable. France has never accepted the loss of her provinces, and the one thing that the Republic has steadily adhered to has been the policy of developing the army. It is now larger than that of Germany, and is rapidly reducing the Government to bankruptcy.” He continues:- {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 240.17}

Russia will have to decide within a few weeks whether to strike now or to compromise with the Bulgarians and postpone her advance to a more favorable opportunity. It is hard to see how she can hope for amore promising chance than the present one. Germany and France are engaged in their own conflict. Austria is totally unprepared for war, and cannot possibly complete her preparations this spring. Turkey is bankrupt. England is absorbed in the Irish question, and her now democracy cares no more for Constantinople than for the man in the moon. Her Government is liable to be overturned any day, and cannot act with vigor on its own convictions. Italy is in the midst of a great political crisis. If war really breaks out between France and Germany, or if the present state of expectation of war continues, it would seem probable that the Czar will either attack Austria directly or occupy Bulgaria and put Montenegro forward to raise an insurrection in Bosnia and Herzegovina. {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 240.18}

It is undoubtedly the most critical moment that Europe has seen since 1815. It is not simply the fate of empires or the liberty of the Balkan Peninsular which is involved, but the civilization of the world. It is the crisis of that struggle to which Napoleon looked forward when he predicted that Europe would one day be either Cossack or Republican. Russia to-day makes no secret of her determination to overthrow “the rotten civilization of Western Europe” and to replace it by a new civilization of her own. {SITI April 14, 1887, p. 240.19}

**“Sunday Laws in Tennessee” The Signs of the Times, 13, 16.**

E. J. Waggoner

As some of our readers may wish to know more about the defeat in the Tennessee Legislature, of the bill exempting conscientious observers of the seventh day, from certain provisions of the Sunday law, we submit a few facts gleaned from a recent letter from one of our brethren in that State:- {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 245.1}

Senator Green, who only a few days before had made a speech against a bill which provided that railroad trains should not be allowed to run after 8 o’clock A.M. on Sunday, was asked to support the exemption bill, but refused, saying:- {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 245.2}

“I think the majority should rule in regard to the Sabbath.” He also said of the bill pending in the Senate: “Should it pass, it would be a prolific and continual source of disturbance, for there would be in the same towns or neighborhoods some assembled on Sunday worshiping God, while just outside in the fields others would be plowing or doing other labor, and it could not but greatly disturb the consciences of the worships.” {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 245.3}

Mr. Green was then reminded of his speech of a few days previous, and he was asked to reconcile his opposition to the bill exempting Sabbath-keepers from the provisions of the Sunday law with his plea in favor of Sunday railroading. To this he replied:- {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 245.4}

“I am a stock-dealer, and know that should a train load of cattle be side-tracked all day Sunday the stock would suffer for food and water.” {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 245.5}

The brethren then appealed to him in behalf of their families, stating that their conscientious convictions compelled them to keep the seventh day, and that if they were compelled by law to keep Sunday also, their families must suffer, for they could not support them properly on the proceeds of five days labor. “Now,” said they to the Senator, “is it more important that your cattle have relief, than that our families should have similar relief? All we ask is that we be allowed to work on Sunday for the support of our families, just as you allow the railroads to work for the relief of the cattle.” But their appeal fell on ears deaf to everything but self-interest, and the only reply was, “You can labor six days now if you will do it when other Christians do;” adding that he was in favor of the rights of conscience! Which evidently meant that he was in favor of very man enjoying liberty of conscience, always provided, however, that his conscience was just like the Senator’s conscience-a little elastic when powerful corporations and rich stock-dealers are concerned, but very rigid when only the just and natural rights of a conscientious Sabbath-keepers are at stake. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 245.6}

The chaplain of the Senate, Rev. Dr. Barbee, used his influence against the bill, urging that everybody ought to keep Sunday, because it is the law of the land, and the custom of the church. He thought that no one should set up his conscience against the law and custom. Such were some of the sophistries which were potent for the defeat of a bill granting religious liberty in Tennessee. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 245.7}

**“The Unpardonable Sin. (Concluded.)” The Signs of the Times, 13, 16.**

E. J. Waggoner

The same thing is brought to view in Hebrews 10:26-29: “For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 246.1}

Here we have presumptuous sin. The case recorded in Numbers 15 is in point. The Lord had said that the soul which should do aught presumptuously, should be cut off, because he had “despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken his commandment.” Verse 30, 31. Then follows an instance of such a sin. A man went out to gather sticks on the Sabbath-day. He was not driven to do this by want, but he did it in willful violation of the commandment of the Lord, that everyone should abide in his place. He presumed on the mercy of the Lord. He knew the commandment, yet he deliberately tried the Lord, to see if he meant what he said. He found out to his cost that the Lord meant just what he said. He found out that the Lord cannot be trifled with. That was a case of willful sin, after having received the knowledge of the truth. It was not simply the fact that the man violated a commandment, for every error is a violation of some commandment, but the man violated the commandment deliberately and intentionally, knowing that his act was a violation of the commandment. In other words, he “despised the word of the Lord.” {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 246.2}

Now, says Paul, if a man who deliberately violated a commandment had to die without mercy, and could have no atonement made for his sin, how much worse off must the man be who not only violates the commandments (for all have sinned), but who deliberately rejects the only means by which an atonement for sins can be made. Certainly his case is doubly hopeless. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 246.3}

Sinning against light always brings darkness. This is a self-evident truth. If a man rejects light, nothing but darkness remains. So our Saviour says to us, as ... to the Jews: “Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you; for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.” John 12:35. And in like manner Paul says that Satan will, just before the coming of the Lord, work “with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12. It will be just as it was with the heathen. Because when they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, therefore God gave them up to uncleanness; and “even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, and God gave them over to a mind void of judgment.” See Romans 1:27-28, margin. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 246.4}

Thus when one knows what is right, and deliberately chooses error, he soon loses the knowledge of what is right; it soon becomes impossible for sacred things to make any impression upon him; and if he does not know the right way, of course he cannot follow it. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 246.5}

The same idea that we have found in the two passages quoted from the book of Hebrews, is carried out in Hebrews 12:15-17, which reads thus: “Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.” {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 246.6}

In Genesis 25:29-34 we find an account of the transaction to which the apostle refers. Esau bartered away his birthright for a mess of pottage. It was a deliberate transaction, and when the bargain was concluded it could not be altered. If a man makes a deliberate bargain, and sells a piece of property, he cannot back out. Esau sold his birthright for a paltry meal of victuals, thus showing that he despised, or did not appreciate, his birthright. Afterward he would have inherited a blessing, but he had sold it, and could not. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 246.7}

Thousands of men have repeated Esau’s course. Paul says of one of his co-laborers: “Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.” 2 Timothy 4:10. Here we have the case of Esau repeated. Esau sold his birthright, to satisfy a present need; Demas sold his interest in the cause of God and in eternal life, for this present world. Thousands of people acknowledge their duty to keep the Sabbath of the Lord, yet say, “If I should keep the Sabbath I couldn’t make a living,” and so for a mess of pottage,-a few meals of victuals,-they sell their heavenly inheritance. We have known people who felt that they couldn’t make a living if they kept the Sabbath, and who made up their minds that when they had secured a competency they would obey; but they never obeyed; they never afterwards could find a convenient time, and although they gained a competency, they never again could feel any special interest in the Sabbath. They had disbelieved God, and showed that they thought more of present enjoyment than of the enduring riches, and God gave them that which they prized most. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 246.8}

It is not necessary to pursue this subject further. Let the reader note that we have found at least four ways in which men may commit the unpardonable sin: 1. By deliberately attributing the work of the Spirit of God to the devil. 2. By refusing to yield to the strivings of the Spirit, until by continual sinning the heart becomes so hard that the Spirit can make no impression upon it, and a sense of sin is lost. Then it is said, “Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone.” 3. By falling from the grace of God, and deliberately rejecting Christ’s sacrifice. 4. By presuming upon God’s mercy, and deliberately transgressing his commandments, with our eyes open to the consequences, and a determination to see if God will bring them upon us. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 246.9}

Many people who have thought themselves guilty of the unpardonable sin, were not. For the encouragement of such we write. The man whose heart is broken at the thought of his sin against God, and who is tender and repentant, may find pardon, for “the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;” a broken and a contrite heart the Lord will not despise. Psalm 51:17. Although a man’s sense of his sins may be so great that they seem to him unpardonable, he may rest assured that where sin abounds (that is, a sense of sin), grace does much more abound. Romans 5:20. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 246.10}

But it is also true that thousands are in danger of the unpardonable sin, who think themselves secure, and for the warning of such we also write. The man who thinks that he may indulge *just once more* in some known sin which is very dear to him, may find that that was just once too often for pardon. No one can tell how weary the Spirit may be of striving with him, or how near he may be to the close of probation. Many men who were “going to reform,” never did reform, because death came before they had gotten ready to reform. So there will doubtless be many well-intentioned persons lost, because they will weary the Spirit with their lukewarm dilatoriness, and probation will close before they have made up their minds to be wholly on the Lord’s side. When it is too late, they will arouse, and will seek for the word of the Lord, but will not able to find it. Amos 8:11, 12. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 246.11}

It is dangerous to sin at all. Our only hope of safety from falling into the unpardonable sin is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and to “walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.” {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 246.12}

“To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” W. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 246.13}

**“Present and Future Probation” The Signs of the Times, 13, 16.**

E. J. Waggoner

In our comment on Matthew 12:31, 32 in last week’s SIGNS, we had designed to make a few remarks upon the last clause of the passage, but we could not do so without too much of a diversion from the subject under consideration. The part referred to reads thus: “But whosoever speaketh against against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.” This especially of late years has been perverted to the support of a rapidly-growing theory which is subversive of the very foundation principles of the gospel of Christ. We refer to the theory of a probation after death. It is claimed that the clause, “it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come,” teaches a probation after death; “for,” say the advocates of this theory, “Christ would not say that a certain sin shall not be forgiven in the world to come, unless it is possible for some sins to be then forgiven.” {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 246.14}

So far as the passage in question is concerned, this matter may quickly be settled. The same thing is recorded by two other evangelists, and these parallel passages must determine the meaning of the expression in Matthew. Mark recorded it thus: “But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost *hath never forgiveness*, but is in danger of eternal damnation.” Mark 3:29. The words “hath never forgiveness,” express the meaning exactly. Someone may say that this does not disprove the theory of future probation; but the clause, “is in danger of eternal damnation,” when rightly understood, shows that no thought of future probation is connected with the text. For all sin there is condemnation; whoever sins is condemned already. But this condemnation may not be lasting; if the guilty one accepts Christ, his condemnation may come to an end; for there is “no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” If, however, the sinner has committed the sin against the Holy Spirit, his condemnation is eternal; from it there is no possibility of escape. This is all that can be found in the text. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 246.15}

In further proof of this, we have the simple statement made by Luke. He says, “But unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost *it shall not be forgiven* him.” Luke 12:10. This is just what the Saviour meant and all that he meant. He made an emphatic statement that the sin against the Holy Ghost should have no forgiveness; any attempt to make more out of his words is adding to the words of Inspiration. “Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.” Proverbs 30:6. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 246.16}

There are just two other texts in the Bible, which are quoted to uphold the future probation theory. These are 1 Peter 3:18-20; 4:6. These texts should receive careful consideration, especially the first, for, as perverted, it is made the foundation of many unscriptural theories. We will quote the text in full:- {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 246.17}

“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 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, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.” {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 246.18}

The simplest way to show what the text does not mean, is to show what it does mean. This we may do by a series of questions which will enable the reader himself to explain its meaning. Thus:- {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.1}

1. Who once suffered? *Answer*—“Christ also hath once suffered.” {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.2}

2. For what did Christ suffer? *Ans*-“For sins.” {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.3}

3. Why did he thus suffer? *Ans*.-“That he might bring us to God.” {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.4}

4. How did he suffer? *Ans*.-“Being put to death in the flesh.” {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.5}

5. By what was he quickened, or made alive? *Ans*.-“Quickened [made alive] by the Spirit.” {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.6}

6. What else did he do by the Spirit? *Ans*.-“He went and preached unto the spirits in prison.” {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.7}

7. Why were they in prison? *Ans*.-They “sometime [once] were disobedient.” {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.8}

8. When were they disobedient and in prison? *Ans*.-“When once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah.” {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.9}

There is the whole matter stated in the words of Scripture, so plainly that the most obtuse could not fail to see it. These disobedient spirits were in prison in the days of Noah, and therefore it was at that time that the preaching was done to them. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.10}

Note the harmony between this text and Genesis 6:3. This text says, that Christ, by the Spirit, went and preached to the spirits in prison, “When once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah.” This would imply that in the days of Noah, God had waited a long time for something. Now read Genesis 6:3: “And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.” Here we find that God’s longsuffering waited one hundred and twenty years, to give those wicked people a chance to repent. All that time Christ, by the Spirit, was preaching to them. Noah was the visible agent, but he was simply the mouthpiece, just as Paul says of all true preachers, they are “ambassadors for Christ,” saying to sinners, “We pay you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” 2 Corinthians 5:20. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.11}

Here we might leave this subject, but someone will probably be questioning about the prison, and we may as well forestall the queries. By gross perversion of Scripture, it is assumed that this prison was *hades*, and that the preaching was done there. Indeed, many would-be expositors write as though this were expressly stated in the text. In the next number we shall show clearly why such an assumption is absurd, and how it would have been impossible for Christ, or anybody else, to preach in *hades*, for that subject is worthy of an article by itself. We shall now be content to show what the imprisonment was, which is mentioned in the text. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.12}

The reader will bear in mind that these “spirits in prison” were disobedient. Now disobedience brings condemnation to death (Romans 6:23), and a man under sentence of death is always kept in prison. This is the idea conveyed by the psalmist when he says: “From Heaven did the Lord behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoners; to loose those that are appointed to death.” Psalm 102, 19, 20. And the idea is still more forcibly expressed by the apostle, when he says that Christ took part of flesh and blood, “that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who *through fear of death* were all their lifetime *subject to bondage*.” Hebrews 2:14, 15. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.13}

Nothing but sin causes fear of death; hence the text teaches emphatically that sin makes men “subject to bondage.” It is the especial mission of Christ to save people from sin (Matthew 1:21), and consequently to release them from prison. For proof of this read the following texts:- {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.14}

Isaiah 61:1: “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.” {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.15}

Isaiah 42:1-7: “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him; ... to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison.” {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.16}

Notice that Christ proclaims the opening of the prison to them that are bound, and brings out the prisoners from the prison, because the Spirit is upon him. This agrees with Peter’s statement that Christ, by the Spirit, went and preached to the spirits in prison. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.17}

Psalm 116:16: “O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid; thou hast loosed my bonds.” {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.18}

Psalm 142:7: “Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name.” {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.19}

Psalm 79:11: “Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die.” Compare Psalm 102:19, 20; Hebrews 2:16. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.20}

To this might be added our Saviour’s talk to the Jews, recorded in the eighth of John. He told them how they might be made free. Verse 32. They denied that they were in bondage. Verse 33. He told them that “whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin” (verse 34), and therefore in bondage. Compare Romans 6:16-18; 7:14; 2 Peter 2:19. He then told them that the Son alone could make them free indeed. Verse 36. Yet although Christ was there, filled with the same Spirit by which he preached to the wicked antediluvians, these Jews, like them, refused to be set free, and died in their sins. Verse 21. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.21}

With this we leave the text, 1 Peter 3:18-20, believing that anyone with whom simple Bible statements are all-sufficient evidence, will have no difficulty in seeing that it teaches this; that by the same Spirit by which Christ was raised from the dead, he went in the days of Noah, and through him, preached unto the antediluvians, who were in the bondage of sin; and that in so doing he was simply doing what he is doing to-day, and has been doing ever since the fall. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.22}

This work of Christ, of preaching deliverance to the captives, is limited to this present life, for when he comes the second time he comes “without sin unto salvation,” to take the released prisoners home. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.23}

Therefore, “To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts;” for, “behold now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” W. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.24}

**“‘Christian Science’” The Signs of the Times, 13, 16.**

E. J. Waggoner

This is a very innocent name, and one well calculated to impress many people favorably. The word “science” is in itself sufficient to overawe the multitude, for so great is the reverence for science that a bundle of the veriest nonsense will pass current, if it is only labeled “scientific;” and when to this is prefixed the word “Christian,” to say anything derogatory would be thought sacrilegious. The term is used to designate “the greatest remedial system ever employed to eradicate pain and disease.” As a matter of fact, it is the name of the most unchristian and antichristian nonsense that has lately been invented to deceive people. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.25}

According to one of its most intelligent advocates, “It is very necessary to impress upon the novice in the science that we are created spiritually as well as physically, and that the body is not the real self.” After this Spiritualistic utterance, we are prepared to learn that, “There is no death. You are created as a spiritual being, and you cannot get away. What we call death is merely a cessation of the action of the mind on the body. The body is now dead, and it is merely animated by the action of the mind.” {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.26}

Of course if there is no death, there is no disease, and this “Christian Science” consists in deluding people with this idea. If a man has a broken leg, these “Scientists” will not heal it, but will argue something like this: “Your body is no part of yourself. You are a spiritual being, and a spiritual leg cannot be broken, consequently you leg is not broken. That which you call your leg, and which is broken, has nothing more to do with you than though it was a stick that was broken.” But with all this “reasoning,” they would not be able to induce the man to so ignore his real broken leg as to walk upon his spiritual leg. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.27}

As an evidence of the anti-Christian character of this so-called “science,” we need only state that the president of a “Christian Science College” in Chicago, says that the works of Christ and his disciples “were not supernatural, nor miracles, as is generally supposed, but could be performed by anyone whose knowledge and faith in Christian Science would enable him to do it.” {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.28}

This “Christian Science,” or Mind Cure, is simply a phase of Spiritualism. That it will erelong have many followers, there can be no question, for it is based solely on the pagan notion of the immortality of the soul, and that the body is no part of the real man; and a belief of this is nowadays quite generally considered as evidence that one is a Christian. And it is for this reason that Spiritualism is arrogating to itself the name Christian, with good prospects that it will not be long before its claims are recognized by the remainder of the “Christian world.” {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 247.29}

**“Where Are They?” The Signs of the Times, 13, 16.**

E. J. Waggoner

“Where are the saints that rose from the dead at the time of Christ’s resurrection? Did they return to their graves, or are they in Heaven? Where are Enoch and Elijah? O. B. H.” {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 248.1}

The Bible tells us that “Elijah went up by a whirlwind into Heaven.” 2 Kings 2:11. Of Enoch it says that he “was translated that he should not see death” (Hebrews 11:5), and that “God took him.” Genesis 5:24. So there can be no question but that he too is in Heaven. We are not told positively what became of those whose graves were opened at the death of Christ, and who came out of the graves after his resurrection (Matthew 27:50-53), but the evidence seems to indicate quite clearly that they, too, are now in Heaven. Thus Paul says of Christ (Ephesians 4:8, margin) that “when he ascended upon high, he led a multitude of captives, and gave gifts unto men.” Since Christ himself is in Heaven (1 Peter 3:22), it is evident that those whom he led with him from captivity are there too. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 248.2}

If we turn to Revelation 5:9, 10 we shall find a company brought to view who have been redeemed from among men, by the blood of Christ, who are around the throne of God. That this is not a prophetic view of what shall take place after the coming of the Lord, is proved by the fact that at the same time there stood in the midst the “Lamb as it had been slain.” Now since men can get to Heaven before the coming of the Lord only by a special resurrection or translation, we are warranted in concluding that these saints who were raised at the resurrection of Christ, are identical with those whom John saw in Heaven. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 248.3}

**“Back Page” The Signs of the Times, 13, 16.**

E. J. Waggoner

The steamer *Mariposa*, which arrived April 16, from Australia, brought Elder J. O. Corliss and family. Elder Corliss is quite feeble in health, and was obliged to cease labor in the midst of the best interest there has been in that field. He will go to the health retreat at St. Helena for treatment. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 256.1}

Since fifty numbers of the SIGNS constitutes a volume, there are necessarily two weeks in the year in which no paper is printed, and our custom has always been to have one of these weeks the week of the annual meetings. Accordingly, the next number of the SIGNS-No. 17-will be issued May 5, instead of April 28. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 256.2}

The article on this page, entitled “Sunday Legislation in Massachusetts,” although none too long, is no longer than we usually put on this page; but it arrived after the body of the paper had been made up, and we could not let matter of so great interest and importance, lay over for two weeks. We expect that our correspondent will give us, in our next issue, the outcome of the matter in the Senate. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 256.3}

A man in Kansas takes exceptions to our teaching that the Sabbath should still be kept holy, and says: “How a man lives is the only possible criterion to judge by. Right conduct is the only orthodoxy.” We agree, and would inform our critic that whether or not a man keeps the Sabbath, has a good deal to do with his life. It is quite essential to right conduct that he keep the Sabbath, for so the Lord commands. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 256.4}

One of our exchanges remarks that in view of the political influence which recent events in Germany have demonstrated that the Pope can exercise the question of who will be the next Pope is invested with an additional interest. That may be; but as a matter of fact, it makes very little difference who is Pope; for whoever he may be he represents the Papacy; and as has been said: “It often happens that the man who goes into the Vatican with progressive ideas, falls under the almost irresistible traditions of the place, and becomes the exponent of Catholic ideas of the irreconcilable type.” The Papacy always has meddled and always will meddle in politics; and the influence of the Pope, whoever he may be, will always be exerted in the interests of Romanism first, last, and all the time. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 256.5}

The *Christian Nation*, one of the organs of the National Reform Association, whose chief aim is to have the United States Constitution so amended that Sunday observance can be enforced upon all people, regardless of their position or religious belief, quotes with approval from Dr. Talmage’s recent discourse on the “Abolition of the Sabbath,” in which he says:- {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 256.6}

“Oh! say some, ‘haven’t you any regard for the people’s rights?’ I believe in the people having their rights; but has not the Lord any rights? You govern your family, and the Governor rules the State, and the President rules the United States. Do you really think the Lord Almighty, who made the heavens and the earth, has a right to rule the universe?” {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 256.7}

Indeed we do; but we don’t believe that any man or any body of men has that right. What we object to in the National Reform Association is that it proposes, in reality to take the reins of Government out of the Lord’s hands. We prefer to fall into the hands of the Lord than into the hands of man. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 256.8}

A man in Kansas has written a pamphlet of 104 pages, expressly for the purpose of proving that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment should not be kept. Having exhausted all the arguments that he could think of, against the Sabbath, he turns his attention to those who keep the day, affirming that everything that none are induced to keep it, except those who grasp everything that is new, and who “will change that for something else as soon as the tide shall run some other way.” He says that “they are white clouds having no rain, and are, therefore, carried about with every wind of doctrine.” The query with us is why he should spend so much time and strength arguing against a practice which is adopted only by those who he says cannot be influenced by argument. {SITI April 21, 1887, p. 256.9}