**“The Besetting Sin” The Signs of the Times, 13, 30.**

E. J. Waggoner

“Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us.” The apostle here takes the figure from the running course, where the contestant before starting in the race would lay aside every superfluous thing. Nothing was retained that would in the least hinder his progress. So we must lay aside everything that would hinder our progress in the divine life. These weights are of various kinds; some we have by nature, and others we voluntarily assume. Their number is legion, comprising every sin and evil tendency common to mankind. Barnes well says that “some very light objects, in themselves considered, become material and weighty encumbrances. Even a feather or a ring-such may be the fondness for these toys-may become such a weight that those who wear them will never make much progress toward the prize.” The original signifies something that may be hooked or fasted on. Constant watchfulness, therefore, is required on the part of the runner, lest, after he has laid aside a certain weight, Satan, who is ever on the alert, may fasten it on again. {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 470.1}

In addition to the “weights,” of which different people have different kinds, there is a constantly recurring sin, to which all are liable, and which not only hinders our progress, but effectually stops it. If we trace the connection between Hebrews 12 and the two preceding chapters, we cannot fail to see that the sin to which the apostle here refers is the sin of unbelief. Verses 90 closes with these words: “Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; of them that the leave to the saving of the soul.” The eleventh begins with a definition of faith, and a continues with notable examples of it, showing that without faith it is impossible to please God. Then, the exhortation which we are now considering. Many suppose that by “the sin which doth so easily be beset us,” the apostle means some especial sin to which have differed persons are liable, differing in different cases. So we hear of impatience as the besetting sin of one person, and covetousness as the besetting sin of another. But the apostle speaks of “*the* sin,” and not of the *sin* which so easily besets us. It is a fact that may be demonstrated, that lack of faith is the greatest source of trouble with every person, manifesting itself, of course, in many different ways. Lack of faith keeps back thousands from being Christians, and causes many professed Christians to stumble and fall by the way. {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 470.2}

The word which is rendered “easily beset,” does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It properly means “the surrounding,” and has been defined, “easy to encircle.” Tindal renders it, “the sin that hangeth on us.” Bloomfield supposes that it means “the sin which especially winds around us and hinders our course,” with reference to the longer garment worn by the ancients, which, if not removed or fastened up, would wind around the legs of the runner, and cause him to fall. In harmony with this view is the exhortation given to “gird the loins of your mind,” meaning to have faith. {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 470.3}

How few there are who believe with all their heart. But a belief that admits of a doubt is not faith. True faith is that condition into which not the slightest element of disbelief enters. Who has the faith of Abraham, or Noah, or Moses? We think we have faith because we assent to the most prominent doctrines of the Bible, or to what is known as the “Third Angel’s Message.” A simple belief that Jesus is the Son of God, and that all the ten commandments are still as binding as when they were given, will not save it anybody. “The devil’s believe and tremble,” their belief is not imputed to them for righteousness; they are devils still. Genuine faith in the Third Angel’s Message is evinced by a practical reception and of all the truths brought out by it. Among them may be mentioned the spirit of the prophecy. One who does not believe in this is not a believer in the message, it is one of the main points. Compare Revelation 12:17 with Revelation 19:10, etc. But this also involves a practical believe in true temperance, that is a vital part of the Third Angel’s Message. True temperance, or health reform, as it is termed, has been declared to bear the same relation to the last message that the right arm does to the body. Then if we do not believe and practice it, our faith is a crippled faith. {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 470.4}

We may also show our lack of faith by neglecting to render to God his dues. Among nearly all denominations the tithing system is now recognized as the Bible plan of supporting those who labor in the cause of God. It is founded on the same principle as the Sabbath-the right of property. “The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord;” whoever uses that time for himself takes that to which he has no right. So also “the tithe is the Lord’s,” and whoever does not return it to him is guilty of robbery. Men who would scorn to defraud their neighbors of a dime, will systematically rob God, and think there is no wrong done. The Bible bears no uncertain testimony on this point. In astonishment the prophet says, by direct inspiration from God, “Will a man rob God?” Someone will say, No; a man cannot rob God. But listen: “Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.” Malachi 3:8, 9. Abraham did not do so, for he paid tithes to the Lord’s servant. Noah, in gratitude for his preservation, sacrificed not merely one-tenth, but one-seventh of his property. The neglect to honor the Lord with our substance, and with the first-fruits of all our increase (Proverbs 3:9), is a most flagrant manifestation of unbelief. God makes his care for us both temporal and spiritual, dependent on our remembering him; but if we do not thus honor him, we intimate that we have no faith in his ability or willingness to care for us, or else that we lightly esteemed his protection. W. {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 470.5}

**“Manner of Christ’s Coming” The Signs of the Times, 13, 30.**

E. J. Waggoner

It is most unfortunate that the tendency nowadays is almost entirely against a literal interpretation of the Scriptures. It seems difficult for people to understand that Christ and the apostles ever spoken plain, simple language, such as one person would use in speaking to another. Whenever a passage is read, the first thought with many is, What hidden meaning is there in it? What lesson is conveyed? Any one who reads the popular Sunday-school comments will see this tendency conspicuously displayed. Now it is proper to search the Scriptures; and if there be a difficult text, it is right to find out its meaning, by comparing it with other texts; but there are some things that are so plain that any attempt at explanation only obscures the meaning. And this is the case with by far the greater part of the Bible. {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 470.6}

It is true that there are parables, but these are readily distinguished from the direct, simple statements, and are usually either explained, or in such common use as to need no explanation. When Christ was on earth, one of the proofs of his divine mission was that the poor had the Gospel preached unto them; consequently we should expect his teaching to be such as could be understood by poor people who have not had the advantages of an education. And this is the case. The Bible is a model of simplicity; it uses the language of the common people. {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 470.7}

We have seen how very plain and direct the statements are in the Bible concerning the second coming of Christ. No believer in the Bible pretends to deny these statements, for to do so would be to deny the Bible. But there are very many who evade these statements, and virtually deny them, by claiming that Christ’s second coming is spiritual. Some claim that Christ comes when a good man dies; and others claim that his coming is at conversion; while others still, carrying the latter idea out still further, claim that there will sometime in the future be a temporal millennium, when all men shall have been converted, and that Christ will then come and reign over his people spiritually, and that this is what is meant by the second coming of Christ. {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 470.8}

Now the Bible is just as definite in regard to the manner of Christ’s coming, as it is in regard to the fact of his coming. It plainly says that Christ will come personally and visibly. The texts which prove this will of course furnish additional evidence that Christ will certainly come. {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 470.9}

And first it may be well to notice Hebrews 9:28: “And unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” Christ is to come the *second* time; but if the theory that he comes at death or conversion be correct, he would already have come many thousands of times. {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 470.10}

Again, the time of Christ’s ministry here on earth, of which we have a record in the New Testament, is conceded by all to be his first advent. But men had been converted previously to that time, and for thousands of years good men had been dying. If Christ comes at conversion or at death, he must have come millions of times before his first advent. Anyone can see the absurdity of those theories. {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 470.11}

It is not denied that Christ has, at different times in the world’s history, met and conversed with certain of his devoted followers, or that he is ever present with his people by his Spirit; but nothing of this kind can be referred to in the texts under consideration. {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 470.12}

It would, however, be manifestly inconsistent to refer to any one of these times as the second coming of Christ. One of them has no precedence over another. But there was one time when he was here in person, when he talked with thousands, and was seen by thousands more. At that time there was probably no nation on earth that did not know of him and his mighty works; and there has been no nation since then that has not heard of that wonderful event. Now at that time he said he was coming “*again*,” and Paul speaking of that first advent and its object, said that he would come the “*second* time.” Consistency, therefore, would demand that his second coming be also personal and visible, and no less conspicuous nor less widely known than his first. And this we are positively told shall be the case: “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every *eye shall see him*, and they also which pierced him.” Revelation 1:7. {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 470.13}

Again we read: “For the Son of Man shall, in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.” Matthew 16:27. Those who place the second coming of Christ at death, or at conversion, must have a very faint conception of the glory of the Father. When the Lord came down on Sinai, “the whole mountain quaked greatly” (Exodus 19:18); and when the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, even Moses was not able to enter. See Exodus 40:34, 35. The glory of a single angel, at the resurrection of Jesus, caused the Roman guard to fall as dead men. Matthew 28:4. What then will be the manifestation when he comes in his own glory, and that of the Father, and all the holy angels? This glory which will attend Christ’s coming is thus described: “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. Paul says that when Christ comes he will be “revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire.” 2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8. That this glory will be seen by all is proved by Revelation 1:7 already quoted, and by the words of our Saviour in Matthew 24:27: “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.” Any one who has seen the lightning flash across the sky in the sheets so tensely bright to that even the closed eyelids could not wholly shut out the impression, can appreciate to a faint degree the terror of that day. Of the key facts of that glory, we learn again 2 Thessalonians 2:8: “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.” The fire that David says shall “devour before him,” is the glory of his presence. {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 470.14}

Nothing further is needed to prove that the coming of the Lord will be nothing like the quiet of a death-bed scene, or the hour when an individual gives his heart to God. There are, however, a host of other texts on this point, no less strong than those already quoted. Two only will be given to show how literal and personal that coming is. The first is Acts 1:9-11: “And when he had spoken these things, *while they beheld*, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up in heaven? *this same Jesus*, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” The second is 1 Thessalonians 4:16: “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.” {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 471.1}

These texts speak for themselves. The language is clear and plain, and anyone can understand them. And yet, who can realize the terrible scene which they foretell? The human mind cannot conceive of the awful grandeur of that hour when the Lord of heaven and earth shall be revealed. Let each one ask himself the question:- {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 471.2}

*“How will my heart endure
The terrors of that day,
When the earth and heaven, before the judge,
Astonished, shrink away!” W. {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 471.3}*

**“Back Page” The Signs of the Times, 13, 30.**

E. J. Waggoner

We heartily agree with the following statement by the *Journal* and *The Messenger*:- {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 480.1}

“The Sabbath-school is the church at steady, while the service following is the church worship. Parents and children should unite in both. In the former they may separate into classes according to mental attainments, but in the latter they should be together.” {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 480.2}

The camp-meeting in Eureka, Cal., will be held on the same ground as last year-Cormick’s Grove, between II and I Streets. It is hoped that every Sabbath-keeper in Humboldt County will be present at this meeting, unless unnecessarily detained at home by sickness. Besides the regular religious services, instruction will be given in various parts of the work, which no one can afford to lose. {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 480.3}

There has been much questioning among the brethren in California, whether or not the General Conference would be held in this state this year. We are glad to be able to announce that beyond all doubt the Conference will be held in Oakland this fall. Word has been received from the General Conference Committee to this effect. We are not informed as to the time, as it has not yet been fixed. Work is being pushed forward on the Oakland house of worship, which, according to contract, will be completed by the first of November. {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 480.4}

We are able to announce that at the Eureka camp-meeting special attention will be given to the interests of the Sabbath-school. The State Secretary will be present for the express purpose of giving instruction in the work of keeping records, making of reports, etc., and especially of helping the teachers in the primary departments, so that they may become more efficient workers with the little ones. Every Sabbath-school officer and teacher should be present. All teachers and secretaries are requested to bring their record books to the meeting. {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 480.5}

Cardinal Gibbons was in Washington Sunday, July 10, and, as the *Catholic Mirror* reports it: “At the special request of President Cleveland his eminence called upon the former at the executive mansion. The cardinal recounted some of the features of his interesting trip abroad, to which the President listened with evident pleasure. Mr. Cleveland expressed his pleasure at the safe return of his eminence in good health, and the distinguished pair parted with cordial manifestations of mutual esteem and respect.” Yes, the influence of the Catholic vote is very respectable, and Rome is very glad to make as many visits as possible to the executive mansion, so the respect is “mutual.” {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 480.6}

For the first time in the history of Iowa the State penitentiary at Fort Madison is so short of convicts as to prevent the fulfillment of the prison contracts. One such fact as this is a stronger argument in favor of Prohibition than are ten thousand utterances against it of the cry that “Prohibition does not prohibit.” When Prohibition so interferes with the business of penitentiaries that they cannot fulfill contracts made on the basis of crimes committed, then that is tangible proof that Prohibition *does* prohibit a large per cent of *crime* at the very least. And in so largely prohibiting crime, it must in the very nature of things prohibit that which leads to the commission of crime, and the connection is perfectly clear that it is liquor-drinking that leads to most of the crime. Let Prohibition succeed everywhere and continue forever. {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 480.7}

**“Intemperance Rampant” The Signs of the Times, 13, 30.**

E. J. Waggoner

Quite recently Mrs. Margaret Parker, of Dundee Scotland, the World’s Organizer of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, was interviewed by a reporter concerning the status of temperance in the world. As Mrs. Parker is one of the foremost temperance women in the world, and is probably possessed of the best information on that subject, the following extract from the interview will be of interest:- {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 480.8}

“Do you find that the temperance movement has been gaining ground in the past few years?” {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 480.9}

“I find that the temperance movement is winning adherents but I also find that the liquor traffic is advancing immeasurably faster. Why, I see since my last visit to America that the liquor business has fairly made leaps and bounds. Saloons and places of iniquity have sprung up by the myriads. No, I am sorry to confess that liquor has far outdistanced temperance of late years. There is a growing temperance feeling, it is true, but the opportunities for indulging in iniquity are increased by the tenfold.” {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 480.10}

“Do you find the same condition of affairs all over the world?” {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 480.11}

“Pretty much so, but more particularly in Great Britain and America. It is difficult to decide which of the two has become the greater victim. But there is one thing I do not observe and that is that liquor has a much less hold on women in America than in Great Britain. I rarely see a woman touch intoxicants here, but it is far too common, I regret to confess, among my countrywomen.” {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 480.12}

One would naturally wonder what comfort those who are expecting the universal triumph of good in this world could gather from the fact that although temperance is growing, intemperance is increasing tenfold. But Mrs. Parker is not at all discouraged, because she expects that the ballot will very soon be given to win, which, she says, will make everything right. {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 480.13}

**“Don’t They Know Better?” The Signs of the Times, 13, 30.**

E. J. Waggoner

On a recent Sunday Paul Boynton, the famous swimmer, gave a public exhibition by floating in a rubber suit (after his usual fashion) from Holyoke to Springfield, in the State of Massachusetts; and, as might have been expected, the thousands of idle and curious people lined the river banks to witness the spectacle, which was attended with considerable noise because of the salutes which everywhere greeted the swimmer. This circumstance a correspondent of the *Congregationalist* takes as a text for a sharp sermon on the sin of violating the “Sabbath,” which title he applies to Sunday. {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 480.14}

Of course Boynton’s exhibitions are not worth seeing; but assuming that they are wrong because given on Sunday, is simply begging the whole question; for we cannot for a moment suppose that either the editor of the *Congregationalist* or the correspondent who wrote the article is so ignorant of divine truth as not to know that Sunday is not the Sabbath; and that, therefore, if such an exhibition is right on any day it is not wrong on Sunday, simply because it takes place upon that day. But the *sang-froid* with which so-called orthodox ministers and editors insist that Sunday is the Sabbath, would be amusing were not for the innate wickedness of the deception which they are thus palming off upon the people. {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 480.15}

All who teach such palpable errors that Sunday is the Sabbath, should consider well the question: “Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken a lying divination, and whereas ye say, the Lord saith it; albeit I have not spoken?” Ezekiel 13:7. And if they are honest with themselves and with God they must answer that they have done this very thing: for “they have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, The Lord saith; and the Lord hath not sent them; and they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word.” Verse 6. {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 480.16}

“They are foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing;” for, as every intelligent Bible student knows, there is not one word in that book to justify any man in calling the first day of the week the Sabbath. The Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments know but one Sabbath, to wit, the seventh day of the week, the day just before the first day of the week, the day upon which the holy women “rested according to the commandment,” before coming to anoint the body of the Saviour. See Luke 23:56; 24:1. {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 480.17}

**“Reckless Statements” The Signs of the Times, 13, 30.**

E. J. Waggoner

Some weeks ago we made the statement that Sunday-keeping and infant baptism rest upon precisely the same ground, namely, human tradition; and that no one can give any good reason for receiving the one rather than the other. For this the *Baptist Flag* takes us to task, and stoutly asserts, but does not at all attempt to prove, that Sunday was “established as the ‘Lord’s day’ by example of Christ and his inspired apostles;” and that “the first day of the week, Sunday, or Sabbath, was observed by the apostolic Church from the time of Christ, for hundreds of years before the rise of Popery”! {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 480.18}

This statement, soberly made in a religious journal, serves to show the utter recklessness of those who, right or wrong, are determined to bolster up an unscriptural practice. Even if the *Flag’s* first proposition were true, its second could not be; for there was no “apostolic church from the time of Christ, for hundreds of years before the rise of Popery.” This idea of stretching the apostolic church over several centuries is certainly original with our Baptist contemporary, but it is scarcely worth copywriting; it is, however, in perfect keeping with the argument (?) that Sunday was “established as the ‘Lord’s day’ by the example of Christ and his inspired apostles.” {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 480.19}

There is scarcely a papal abomination for which the same claim is not made, at least so far as the example of “inspired” men is concerned. This is notably true of the practice of pouring or sprinkling for baptism. The claim that affusion is apostolic is made with the utmost apparent confidence even by learned men in several of the most respectable and influential churches; and yet there is not an intelligent Baptist anywhere who does not *know* that there is not a shadow of truth in it. Anyone reading the Bible without bias or prejudice would certainly conclude that immersion an immersion alone is baptism; and just as surely must the candid reader conclude that the seventh day is the only divinely appointed Sabbath or Lord’s day. And to turn aside from the Scriptures and recognize the authority of tradition, even though it claim to be apostolic, is simply to open the floodgates of error; and they who do it are not really Protestants, even though be Baptists, for the fundamental principle of Protestantism is that the Bible is a sufficient role faith and practice, while Popery asserts that apostolic or church tradition is of equal authority. Sunday-keeping is not taught in the Scripture and is, therefore, not Protestant but Papal. {SITI August 4, 1887, p. 480.20}

**“The Making of the Sabbath” The Signs of the Times, 13, 31.**

E. J. Waggoner

At the Baptist Ministers’ and Layman’s Conference, recently held in Oakland, one of the ministers read a paper on the “Seventh-day Sabbath,” which was, as usual, highly satisfactory to those who have their minds already made up that Sunday is the only Sabbath. We have looked with interest for the publication of the paper, but finding that nothing worthy of an extended review. The writer claims that the seventh-day Sabbath was only a Jewish institution, that it originated at the exode and ended at the cross, and that the Sunday Sabbath is an institution by itself, having no connection whatever with the fourth commandment. In this latter proposition the writer is correct, for the Sunday institution certainly has nothing to do with the fourth commandment, except to be condemned by it; and since all moral duty is contained in the ten commandments, it follows, from this Baptist writer’s admission, that there is no moral obligation attaching to the observance of Sunday. {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 486.1}

That the author of the article in question has no knowledge of the seventh-day argument, will be evident to anyone who reads the following:- {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 486.2}

“The Sabbatarian bases his theory largely upon the following passage:- {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 486.3}

“‘And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day for all his work which yet made. And God bless the seventh day, and sanctified yet; because that in it he had wrested from all his work which God created and made.’ Genesis 2:2, 3. It will be observed that these words contain no precept or command. We have in them a simple historical statement, and that is all. The substance of the statement is this: *God ended his work on the seventh day; on that day he rested, and in so doing he blessed and sanctified it*.” {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 486.4}

It is true that a great deal does rest upon Genesis 2:2, 3. It is also true that that passage contains no precept or command, and that it contains only a simple historical statement. But it is also a fact that it contains a simple historical statement that the commandment was given enforcing the observance of the seventh day. This we shall show, and in so doing we shall also show how the author of the paper referred to has utterly failed to comprehend either the Scripture or the argument based upon it. He says:- {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 486.5}

“The substance of the statement [in Genesis 2:2, 3] is this: God ended his work on the seventh creation day; on that day he rested, and in so doing he blessed and sanctified it.” {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 486.6}

It is possible that there are many others who have read the Scripture thus carelessly. Let such read it again with us, carefully: “And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he *had rested* from all his work which God created and made.” That is very far from saying that God rested on the seventh day, and that “*in so doing* he blessed and sanctified it.” The blessing and the sanctification are entirely distinct from the resting, and were subsequent to it. God blessed and sanctified the seventh day, “because that in it *he had rested*.” {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 486.7}

Three acts went to make the Sabbath a holy day for man’s observance: 1. God rested upon the day. This made it a Sabbath, for Sabbath means rest. It made it the Sabbath, or rest, of the Lord; but if nothing more had been done, men would have been under no obligation to keep it. 2. “God blessed the seventh day.” This was done after his rest upon it, for he blessed it *because he had rested* in it from all his work. 3. God sanctified the seventh day. This also was done after the rest; and in this simple statement that God sanctified the seventh day, we find the evidence that God did, at the close of this rest, command man to keep holy. The following evidence is offered in proof:- {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 486.8}

The word sanctify means, “to make sacred or holy; to set apart wholly or religious use; to consecrate by appropriate rights; to hallow.” Now a thing cannot be set apart for a holy or religious use, unless the ones who are to so use it are informed of each setting apart; in fact, setting it apart must necessarily consistent in the notification to the people, and the commandment to observe the day thus set apart. {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 486.9}

This definition is in harmony with Scripture usage. In Exodus 19:23 we read as follows concerning Mount Sinai, just before the Lord came down upon it: “And Moses said on to the Lord, The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai; for thou of chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mountain, and sanctified it.” In verse 12 we have an inspired comment on the meaning of “sanctify” as used in this first. The Lord said to Moses: “And thou shalt set bounds under the people round about, say, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mouth, or touch the border of it; whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death.” Thus we find that sanctifying the amount consisted in setting it apart by bounds, and forbidding the people to pass over those bounds. In like manner sanctifying the seventh day consisted in setting it apart by the sanctions of God’s word, and in forbidding the people to overstep the bounds and trample upon the Sabbath. {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 486.10}

These three things, resting, blessing, and sanctifying, made the Sabbath of the Lord of lasting obligation upon all people. Yet notwithstanding the bounds that were set about the seventh day, men have dared to break through it and trample the holy Sabbath under their unholy feet. And this, although the penalty against breaking through the bounds about Mount Sinai was not more severe or more sure to follow than the penalty against breaking through the bounds set around the Sabbath. But “because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.” Ecclesiastes 8:11. {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 486.11}

And now, to all who have broken through the bounds, and have trampled upon God’s holy Sabbath, the long-suffering and merciful Father says: “If thou turn away by foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and called the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” Isaiah 58:13, 14. W. {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 486.12}

**“When Does the Sabbath Begin?” The Signs of the Times, 13, 31.**

E. J. Waggoner

This has been a puzzling question to very many. They cannot understand why Sabbath-keepers should begin their rest at the setting of the sun, while other people regard the day as beginning at midnight. Some have thought that was an arbitrary distinction more for the purpose of peculiarity than anything else; but a little reference to the Scriptures will suffice to clear the subject of all doubts. {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 488.1}

In the first place, we have evidence that the first day of time began in the evening. That is, the dark portion of the day preceded the light portion. “The evening and morning were the first day.” Genesis 1:5. That this was necessarily the case, can be seen from the order of events in the creation.Time, as distinguished from eternity, commenced with the first creative act of God. The first act was the bringing of the earth into existence. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Genesis 1:1. That this occupied by a brief space of time, and not a long, extended period, is proved by the context, also by Psalm 23:6, 9: “By the word of the Lord for the heavens made; and although most of them by the breadth of his mouth.” “For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.” But at that time there was still light, nothing but intense darkness, for we read that “darkness was upon the face of the deep.” The next half was to create light. “And God said, let there be light, and there was light.” Genesis 1:3. God thus ordained that darkness and light should henceforth succeed each other in continuous round, and a period of darkness and one of light, called respectively night and day, should constitute one entire day. This completed the first day’s work. The first day began with darkness, and ended as darkness began once more to overspread the earth. As though to establish beyond question the fact that this was to be the order of all days, it is stated of the first six days that the “evening and morning” constituted the day. But if the first six days commenced with the evening, and ended with the following evening, it is evident that every succeeding day, the Sabbath with the rest, must begin and end in the same manner. This is further verified by Leviticus 23:32, where the Lord says, “From even unto even, shall ye celebrate your Sabbath.” {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 488.2}

Having settled the fact that the day begins and ends at evening, the only thing necessary to understanding of the main question is to find when it is evening. This is easily settled by the following passages: “But at the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrificed the Passover at even, *at the going down of the sun*.” Deuteronomy 16:6. “And the king of Ai hanged on a tree *until eventide*; and *as soon as the sun was down*, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcass down from the tree.” Joshua 8:29. Also, Joshua 10:26, 27: “Joshua smote the them, and slew them, them on five trees; and they were hanging upon the trees *until the evening*. And it came to pass at the *time of the going down of the sun*, that Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees.” {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 488.3}

These texts plainly the show that the evening and the setting of the sun are identical. In the New Testament we have additional testimony. In the first chapter of Mark we have an account of the events of one Sabbath in the life of Christ. First he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and taught. Verse 21. Here he found a man with an unclean spirit, whom he healed. Verses 23-27. Then he left the synagogue, and went to the house of Simon, whose mother-in-law he healed. Verses 29-31. The rest of the people, however, dared not ask him to heal their sick during the hours of the Sabbath, but waited till its close. We read in verse 32, “And at *even, when the sun did set*, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and then there were possessed with devils.” Thus we see that the people unanimously regarded sunset as the close of the Sabbath, and if sunset was the close of the Sabbath of course sunset twenty-four hours earlier must have been the beginning. This was the divinely appointed order. {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 488.4}

The question then a arises, How does it happen that people nowadays begin and end the day at midnight? The answer is this: When men became idolaters, and did not like to retain God in their knowledge (Romans 1:28), they soon lost all knowledge of the institutions and commandments of God, so that their forms of worship and of daily life differed entirely from those of God’s people. Each nation had gods of its own, and customs peculiar to itself. The Persians and the Syrians woshiped the sun, and began the day at sunrise. That the Jews, during their captivity, did not lose their reckoning, and conformed to that of the Babylonians, is proved by the passage in Mark already quoted. The Romans, for some reason, selected midnight as the time for the beginning and ending of their day. The barbarous tribes that conquered Rome accepted her customs, and transmitted them to their descendants. Thus the Roman method of beginning the day has become the settled custom in Europe and America. Since it is an established custom, it is necessary, in order to be understood, to conform to the usage in speaking with others, also in business, since the custom is fixed by law. But in the observance of the Sabbath, God’s order is unchangeable. Those who accept the Sunday festival, which is a man-made institution emanating from Rome, may be allowed to keep it in such a manner as man decrees; but those who keep God’s rest day-the memorial of his creative power-will take the day just as God gave it, and not offer a substitute by attaching a portion of two days together. W. {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 488.5}

**“Piety Without Display” The Signs of the Times, 13, 31.**

E. J. Waggoner

**The Commentary.
NOTES ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.
(August 28.-Matthew 6:1-15.)**

The best manuscripts have “righteousness” instead of “alms,” in verse 1, and this seems to be the truer meaning of the text, for righteousness includes all right actions, and no good deed of whatever kind should be done for the purpose of winning the applause of men. In the verses following, three divisions of righteousness are considered, namely, almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, none of which should be done with the design of attracting attention. A deed, however right itself, loses all the quality of righteousness when it is done simply for display. This is evident from the statement that those who do thus have no reward from God. Ostentatious piety is not piety and all, but it is simply an exhibition of selfishness. It is a fact that there may be as much of selfishness displayed in the giving of alms as in the withholding of them. {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 490.1}

“Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.” This does not mean, as a careless reader might suppose, that they shall have a reward, or that a certain kind of reward is in store for them, but that they already have their reward.The new version expresses the exact idea in the words, “They have received their reward.” They gave alms to be seen of men; men sought them, and that constitutes their reward; it is all the reward they wanted. {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 490.2}

The command in verse 3 coincides with the exhortation of Paul and in Romans 12:8: “He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity;” and again with his statement in 2 Corinthians 9:7: “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of the necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver.” The man who gives liberally, with a sincere motive, will not seek for the applause of men. On the contrary, he will rather avoid public notice, because, by measuring himself by the true standard, he will realize that what he does is in reality very insignificant. Yet insignificant though a deed may be in itself, and hidden from the eye of everybody, it does not escape the eye of God, and the promise is, “Thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.” {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 490.3}

The same rule applies to praying. True prayer is the desire of the heart made known to God. In it the person appears as a petitioner making known his urgent wants. Such prayer is always heard; but of those who pray simply an order that others may applaud their piety, or their elegant language, the significant statement is made, “Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.” They do not ask with the expectation or with the desire that their petitions shall be granted, and consequently God takes no notice of their prayers. All that they desire from their prayers is to be heard of men, and the fact that men hear them, constitutes the answer to their prayer. Nevertheless, such persons are not mere harmless utterances that passed entirely unnoticed by the Lord; they are violations of the third commandment, which says: “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.” They constitute the worst kind of profanity, since the petitioners use the name of the Lord to exalt themselves. {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 490.4}

“But thou, when thou prayest, enter it into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father, which is in secret; and thy Father which see if in secret shall reward thee openly.” This must be understood as a principle rather than an explicit command for every occasion of prayer. It does not mean that it is wrong to pray in public, but that one should not pray in public for the sake of publicity. We have in the Bible many instances of public prayer: Solomon prayed before the thousands assembled at the dedication of the temple. 2 Chronicles 6:12, 13. The Levites prayed publicly, as recorded in Nehemiah 9:4-38. When Paul separated from the Ephesian brethren he prayed with them all. Acts 20:36. He also gave thanks to God in the presence of all the passengers and crew on his notable sea voyage to Rome. Acts 27:35. And Christ himself prayed with his disciples many times, and at the grave of Lazarus he prayed not only in the presence of his disciples, but of a great company of Jews. Moreover, in the fourteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, we have explicit instructions concerning public prayer. All of these things show that public prayer is not only not forbidden, but is enjoined as a duty. But even in public prayer, if it is sincere prayer, the spirit of privacy is maintained, for the individual is as it were shut in with God, and loses thought, to a certain extent, of those who are present. {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 490.5}

One of the most comforting promises in the Bible is given in this connection to those who pray in secret, namely, “Thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.” This seems to be an unconditional promise; for sincere prayer, asking in the name of Jesus for those things which a person really needs, will always be heard answered, and it is not to be presumed that one would go by himself to engage in prayer with any other than a sincere motive. The prayer is made in secret, but the reward is open. Men may know nothing of the agonizing petitions, but they cannot fail to see the grace which is abundantly bestowed in consequence. It may not be amiss, however, in this connection, to state that prayer is not necessarily secret because the individual prays in a room by himself. We have known people to make a great display of their “secret devotions.” They were careful to let people know when they retired for prayer, and very often if such announcement was unnecessary, because there voice would be raised to such a pitch that everybody in and about the house *must* hear. We can see no difference between such prayer and prayer upon the street corner. Of course there is no wrong attached to the individual if someone chances to over hear his prayer; but he who prays professedly in secret, but with the expectation that others shall notice prayer, comes very far from obeying the injunction of the Saviour, “When thou prayest thou shalt not be as the hypocrites.” {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 490.6}

In the seventh verse our Saviour teaches that mere words do not constitute prayer. God is not moved by the eloquence of man, but by his needs, and a man’s real need may often be expressed better in few words than in many. The heathen, we are told, thought that they should be heard for their much of the speaking. Examples of this are found in 1 Kings 18:26 and Acts 19:34. Some even have carried this matter of vain repetition to such a pitch that they use what is called a prayer-wheel. Writing off the petition, they fasten it to the rim of the wheel, which they cause to revolve for rapidly before their idol, every revolution being a prayer. The difference between this sort of prayer and many prayers of professed Christians is only in degree. In Catholic catechisms and books of religious instruction, we find vain repetitions actually enjoined. The multiplied repetition of *Ave Maria* or the *Pater Noster* is counted as a great virtue, and the one who says the most prayers supposed to be the most pious. But such prayer, not withstanding the fact that the Lord’s Prayer itself is repeated, are destitute of any semblance of real prayer. A parrot might be taught to repeat the Lord’s Prayer, and he might mutter it over a thousand times a day, and yet there would be no prayer in it. The unreasonableness of such vain repetitions is shown by the statement that “Your father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him.” It is not necessary for us to pray in order that the Lord they know what we need, but that we may bring ourselves into a proper condition to receive the things which we need. {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 490.7}

The question often arises in the minds of some, “What is the use of praying at all?” They argue that we cannot change the mind of God, that praying is useless since God knows what we want before we ask, and, further, that the universe is governed by fixed laws, and that therefore praying will not affect matters in the least. To this last it can be answered that there are no laws which are not subject to God. To say that what we call the laws of nature cannot be changed or suspended if necessary to the answer of prayer, is to say that God is restricted by the things which he rules, which is an absurdity. Moreover, there are instances innumerable in which in direct answer to prayer the laws of nature have been suspended. The raising of the dead is a case in point. In answer to the first objection, it is enough to say that although God desires only the welfare of his creatures, and he knows what they need without being told, he does not force upon people what they do not want, even though they really need it. And when a person who recognizes his need, and really wants that which will supply it, and feels that he cannot get along without it, the natural impulse is to ask for it, and then it is that God gives his special blessings. {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 491.1}

Verses 9-13 contained the model prayer. In introducing it the Saviour said, “After this manner therefore pray ye.” This indicates not that the prayer which follows is to be invariably used, although it is very often fitting to use it, but that it should serve as a model for our petitions. Since it is the petition, framed by divine wisdom, it must necessarily and does cover everything which man needs, both temporal and spiritual. It is because of this comprehensiveness that the Lord’s Prayer may be repeated by all classes of people, both young and old, in all time. It never grows old. It is the only prayer ever written which was worthy of being repeated by others than the one who composed it. This is because it is the only prayer ever composed for man by a divine being. Praying in which petitions made by men are used, must necessarily be largely mechanical, and therefore destitute of the real essence of prayer, which is the sincere desire of the individual at that present time. When a man is in extremity he will have no difficulty in forming his own petition, and he would have no use for a petition made by someone else. A prayer-book would have been of very little use to Peter when he was sinking in the Sea of Galilee. {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 491.2}

From this prayer we learn that we are to come to God not as to a judge or a governor who is to be appeased, but as to a Father who is all sympathy and love. Many people have entertained a wrong idea from the parable of the unjust judge, recorded in Luke 18:1-7. The unjust judge at first refused to grant the request of the poor widow, yet he finally granted it because of her importunity. The idea too commonly drawn from this is, that if we persevere in prayer God will relent and answer repetitions; the parable is not designed to compare God with the unjust judge, but to make a contrast. If the unjust judge who neither feared God nor regarded man, would grant the widow’s petition, because of her importunity, then most assuredly God will avenge his own elect who cry earnestly unto him. This parable and the first two words of the Lord’s Prayer are sufficient in themselves to give Christians the most confidence when they pray. Add to this the fact that we have a merciful and faithful high priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and “was tempted in all points like this we are,” and we may “come boldly unto the throne of grace, a that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in times of need.” {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 491.3}

We have seen it stated that the term “Our Father” implies that all men are brethren, because children of the same Father. But this is a mistake. Paul says that we are all by nature the children of wrath “because we are” the children of disobedience. Ephesians 2:2, 3; 5:6. And as the devil is the author of sin, Christ directly charged the disobedient Jews with whom he was talking, of being the children of the devil (John 8:44); and in Matthew 13:38-42 he expressly states that those who do iniquity “are the children of the wicked one.” The apostle John also speaks of those who keep the commandments, and of those who transgressed them, and says, “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil” (John 3:10), thus showing a direct contrast between those who have God for their Father, and those whose father is Satan. Moreover, we learned in Romans 8:14-17 and Galatians 4:4-7 that people become the children of God by adoption, and that the mark or seal of adoption is the Holy Spirit; but if they were by nature the children of God, they would not need to be adopted. Paul also declares that “if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 491.4}

“Thy kingdom come.” This is nothing less than a prayer for Christ’s second coming, for his coming and kingdom are associated together. 2 Timothy 4:1. When he was on earth, Christ told his disciples, who thought that his kingdom should immediately appear, that he was like a nobleman who “went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return” (Luke 19:11, 12), thus indicating his return to Heaven to receive his kingdom, and his second coming to gather the subjects of it. In harmony with this we find in Daniel 7:13, 14 a prophetic description of Christ appearing before the father and receiving “dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him.” And Christ himself said that when he should come in his glory with all his holy angels with him, then would be the time that he should sit upon the throne of his glory, and that he would then say to the righteous, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Matthew 25:31-34. This kingdom is entirely distinct from the kingdom of glory, upon the throne of which God the Father sits, and before which Christ ministers as priest. *That* kingdom has already come, and if that were the kingdom referred to, in the Lord’s Prayer, it would be out of place to use that petition. But the kingdom referred to is the one of which the faithful followers of God are at present only heirs, waiting for the promised possession. {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 491.5}

“Thy will be done in earth, as it is it Heaven.” The will of God is simply the law of God, see Psalm 40:8 and Romans 2:17-20, where we learn that those who know the will of God are they who are instructed of the law. How the will of God is done in Heaven is told in Psalm 103:20: “Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, harkening unto the voice of his word.” When the will of God is done on earth as it is in heaven, it will be when all the works of the devil had been destroyed, and when the new heavens and the new earth have been given, wherein righteousness shall dwell. Then will be fulfilled the words of the prophet: “Thy people also shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.” Isaiah 60:21. Therefore the uttering of this part of the Lord’s Prayer, if the petitioner is sincere, indicates a complete submission to the will of God, and an earnest desire to keep every portion of the ten commandments. {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 491.6}

“And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” In this is implied what is plainly stated in Matthew 6:14, 15: “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” Therefore it is utterly useless for any one to use this prayer, or to expect God to pardon his sins, unless he freely forgives all who have trespassed against him. Paul says (Ephesians 4:32), “Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, for giving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake have forgiven you.” {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 491.7}

This is the merest glance at the Lord’s Prayer, but it is all that we have the space for. To give it any adequate study, not less than an entire lesson should be spent upon each clause of the prayer. But perhaps even with this glance some may see a depth of meaning in the prayer which they have never before realized, and may be led to study it more carefully until they can pray it “with the spirit and with the understanding.” W. {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 491.8}

**“Back Page” The Signs of the Times, 13, 31.**

E. J. Waggoner

The dispatches state that the Pope has sent an autograph letter to the Emperor William in reply to a letter recently received from him. Nor is it forgotten to give the highly interesting information that “both letters are couched in very affecting terms.” “Very affecting” indeed, we have no doubt! Behold how these innocents love one another! {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 496.1}

The rector of one of the Episcopal Churches of San Francisco preached a few Sundays ago on “The Mission of Beauty.” Just what connection this has with the Gospel, we cannot discover, for we read of the Founder of the gospel that “he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.” From the list of pulpit topics which we occasionally see, we should judge that the Bible is almost out of date. Yet there are people who can still find “wondrous things” in the word of God. {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 496.2}

The brethren in California will notice that the time of camp-meeting is changed from September 22 to October 3, to October 6-17. This postponement was made in order that we might be sure of the presence and help of Brother and Sister White, who could give us no assurance of being present earlier. We feel sure that the certainty of their presence will ensure a full attendance from all parts of the State. We do not apprehend any serious inconvenience on account of the lateness of the meeting, for the weather will be no colder then than in September, and the liability of an early rain is not much greater. At any rate, none should be deterred from coming to the meeting, by the possibility of a little physical discomfort. Come expecting nothing but good, and you will not be disappointed. The meeting will be in Oakland, but the site has not yet been decided upon. {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 496.3}

The new meeting-house at Healdsburg was dedicated Sunday, July 31. There was a good attendance of the citizens of the place, also of our own people. The sermon was preached by Elders J. N. Loughborough; the dedicatory prayer was made by Elder J. O. Corliss. Meetings were held beginning Friday evening and continuing day and evening till Sunday night. Good impressions were made in favor of the truth, and arrangements have been made by the church to have preaching regularly on Sunday evening until our State camp-meeting. They have now a most excellent house, the largest of the kind north of San Francisco, a place where it is a comfort and a pleasure to go. There is nothing fancy about the building, and nothing elegant-except its plainness-and we do not think we have ever seen a house more convenient in all its arrangements. Not only will the house be a great help in the work and service of the church, but it is an immense advantage in the college work. For two years the college has been cramped in its energies, and crippled in efficiency, for lack of room. Now the Sabbath-school department of the meeting-house will be used for classes in the school work and will afford ample room for all purposes. We congratulate the California Conference and the Healdsburg Church and College that they have such a comfortable, commodious, and convenient place of worship and for work. {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 496.4}

The Rome correspondent of the *Catholic Mirror*, writing under date of July 12, says:- {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 496.5}

“Monsignor Ruffo and his companions were well received in England, as you know from the reports of the English press. Mgr. Ruffo is convinced that the time is not distant when an amicable arrangement will be made between the English Government and the Papacy and official representatives accredited from both. The Queen was especially kind to the Papal envoy, and assured them that she remembered with great pleasure the visit made by the present Pope to Windsor [before he became Pope] after completing his mission in Belgium.” {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 496.6}

We have no doubt at all that the convictions of Mgr. Ruffo are well founded. {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 496.7}

Not long since at an installation service in one of the Central States, a minister preach or read word for word a sermon which was preached in the first Congregational Church in Chicago, by the Rev. Dr. Noble, and published in the *Homiletic Monthly* for March, 1880. Strangely enough, in that stolen sermon were the following words:- {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 496.8}

“There are the trades and professions-each with its distinctive code. There is a railroad ethic, and there is a tradesmen ethic, and there is a house builders ethic, and there is the newspaper ethic, ... and men are all the time dropping down into the narrow schemes of morals, and estimating conduct, not by the eternal rule of right, God’s will, but by some current custom, or miserable conventionalism, or low cunning expediency. I say to a man, why do you adulterate these goods? Why do you weave shoddy into these clothes? Why do you peg shoddy into those shoes? Why stamp your flour with a false brand, and put a label on the silk and the hat and the coat that you sell? His answer is, they all do it; it is one of the tricks of the trade, and something of this sort has to be done to make a living.” {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 496.9}

This matter of plagiarism is getting so common that it will soon be pertinent to inquire, what is the code of the clerical profession? A man who could steal a sermon which itself condemned stealing, must have very little moral sensibility? And what can be expected of the people whose teachers are so morally obtuse? “Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words everyone from his neighbor.” Jeremiah 23:36. {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 496.10}

The following question and answer we take partly from the New York *Christian Advocate:*- {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 496.11}

“‘*Question*-Do you suppose that Lazarus remembered his experience in the other world after being raised from the dead?’ {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 496.12}

“*Answer*-You ask us what we ‘suppose.’ We suppose, first, that all inquiries on a subject of that kind are useless; we suppose, second, however, that they will be made to the end of time; third, we suppose that Lazarus did not remember his experience in the other world, because we suppose that he was dead in the same sense that a man who is drowned is dead before he is brought to life, and that he never would have come to life without our Lord’s voice or some miraculous power; but that he was dead in the sense that his spirit was permanently and entirely free from the body we don’t suppose, and therefore we suppose he did not know anything during the interval. And, finally, we don’t suppose that you will agree with this view. {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 496.13}

“N. B. The longer we live the less we suppose.” {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 496.14}

This is a much better answer than we expected to find in the *Advocate*. But the editor of the *Advocate* has evidently not yet live long enough to get over making foolish suppositions. For to suppose that a man who was so dead that nothing less than the voice of Jesus could bring him to life, was simply suffering from suspended animation, as in the case of a person nearly dead from drowning, is extremely foolish; and to suppose that the spirit had not left the body of a man who has been buried four days, and whose body had decomposed till it was offensive, is downright absurdity. More than this, it is directly opposed to the divine revelation, for Christ said plainly, “Lazarus is dead.” This “supposition” that Lazarus was unconscious simply because he was not dead enough to be conscious, is worthy only of the pagan philosophy which it seeks to support. {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 496.15}

It is announced from Rome that the Pope has decided to take part in the coming political elections in France, and that he hopes to secure a strong party in the Chamber of Deputies. Yes, he hopes to secure a strong party and the Chamber of Deputies so as to hold the balance of power and virtually control legislation in France and control it too from Rome. And France dare resent this political interference of a foreign religious power. How long will it be before the Pope will decide to take part in our political elections? Only let the National Reform religio-political party succeed in its design of establishing a constitutional basis for religious legislation, and this question will answer itself. {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 496.16}

**“A Vigorous Statement and Challenge” The Signs of the Times, 13, 31.**

E. J. Waggoner

The *Independent* has been on the fence on the question of probation after death, the editors not seeming to have any fixed opinion of their own; but the publisher, Mr. Henry C. Bowen, has a decided opinion of his own, and he expresses it in a straightforward manner. After giving details of a correspondence between himself and Prof. E. C. Smythe, in which it appears that Professor Smythe could not, in answer to Mr. Bowen’s request, give, without comment, any Scripture texts in support of this theory, Mr. Bowen says:- {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 496.17}

“We cannot forbear saying, in this connection, that in all of our acquaintance with the secret movements and sometimes strange performances of men connected with our various churches, sects, and denominations, and all the excitement and maneuverings of the politicians in our heated presidential campaigns, and the most hard-fought battles of the great thirty-years antislavery conflict, in the desperate and ceaseless efforts of men in all directions in the pursuit of worldly gain, we have never seen a more senseless, uncalled-for agitation than the one started a year ago by the Andover teachers and speculators in regard to future probation.” {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 496.18}

He then called on them to “show any warrant in the Bible for the mischief they have done and are doing, or for the special help and encouragement they are now giving to the teachers and preachers of universalism and other isms, indulging downright infidelity, or for the pernicious hopes given by them directly and indirectly, to the unconverted, the world over.” It is safe to presume that hereafter the editors of the *Independent* will know what position to take concerning the Andover speculations on probation after death. {SITI August 11, 1887, p. 496.19}

**“The World Is Round” The Signs of the Times, 13, 32.**

E. J. Waggoner

We do not design to make an argument to prove this statement, for we think that there are so few who would deny it that we can safely take it for granted. And yet we are occasionally led to believe that there are some people to whom this statement is news. We have but recently received a letter from a gentleman in Iowa, who seems to have but just heard that the world is round, and who has not yet fully waked up to a realizing sense of all that that implies. As his letter is a very fair sample of the trouble in which many people find themselves when the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is brought to their attention, we publish it in full:- {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 502.1}

DEAR EDITOR: I am an occasional reader of your paper. I indorse your position against the worldliness of professing Christians, and temperance reform. I also believe in the near approach of the second coming of Christ. But as yet I cannot accept your views on the fourth commandment. Thus far some physical facts stand in the way of my believing that the seventh day of the week instead of the seventh part of time is intended by that command. As you kindly answer all reasonable questions, giving light to those who sit in darkness, I take the liberty to address you. As the Master did, I will form a parable and state the case, and you will have the goodness to help me out of the difficulty you think I am in. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 502.2}

There are three brothers who live in the same town, Peter, James, and John; they are good Adventists, and keep the seventh day as their Sabbath. Peter and James desire to see the world, so they start out to circumnavigate the globe, while John remains at home. Peter starts east and James west. Each keeps his course, counts his weeks, and observes strictly his seventh-day Sabbath till he gets back to his native town. The three brothers meet and talk over the fourth commandment. They discover to their sorrow and astonishment that each is keeping a different day. Each one accuses his brethren of changing the day. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 502.3}

Peter, who sailed east and carried his time carefully and correctly, is keeping the first day of our week, or Sunday; James, who sailed west and carried his time carefully and correctly, is keeping the sixth day of our week, or Friday; while John alone is keeping the day they all observed before they parted. Now which one is keeping the right day? If we say John, then why haven’t Peter and James, who observed correctly each succeeding seventh-day Sabbath on shipboard, as much right to their days as John, who observed his on land? {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 502.4}

If your Sabbath views are correct, these physical facts can be shown to harmonize with them, for all natural truth is in harmony with revealed truth, because all truth is God’s truth. If this harmony cannot be shown, I shall still feel that my first-day Sabbath is as good as yours. Yours for the truth. A. S. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 502.5}

We cannot think that we mistake when we judge that this brother has but recently heard that the world was round, for although he speaks in the beginning of his letter of the seventh part of time, the closing sentence shows that the seventh part of time which he observes always comes on the first day of the week. We take it, therefore, that he is a professed Christian and a conscientious observer of Sunday. And yet until he read in the SIGNS OF THE TIMES that the fourth commandment requires the observance of the seventh day of the week, or Saturday, he never imagined that the rotundity of the earth would interfere in any way whatever with the keeping of the first day of the week. How is it that people will keep Sunday all their lives, and will send missionaries to the opposite side of the globe to teach the heathen that they must keep Sunday, but as soon as the Sabbath of the Lord is broached they declare that *it* cannot be kept because the world is round? Is the world round only when a person tries to keep the Sabbath, and flat at all other times? Is it not just as wrong for the first-day missionary who goes to China, India, or Africa, as it is for the seventh-day keeper who goes around the world? The simple fact that people do keep the first day of the week in every part of the world, should be a sufficient answer to the objection that people cannot keep the Sabbath on a round world. Indeed, it should prevent such an objection from ever being made. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 502.6}

But since our brother has used a parable, we feel like adopting it and improving upon it a little. The three brothers of whom he speaks were all born on the same day. With this correction we will adopt a parable as he has given it. Peter has just come home from his journey eastward around the world, and having gained one day is one day older than his brother John, who stayed at home. James, who has just returned from his journey westward around the world, has lost a day and is keeping Friday, and so he is one day younger than his brother John, who stayed at home, and two days younger than Peter, who went around the world the other way. Now if our friend will accept this conclusion of the parable, we shall conclude that he is more puzzled over the fact that the world is round than any person whom we ever saw. But we believe that he will say that it is impossible that Peter should have gained a day on his brother John, and James should have lost one, and that their relative ages must be the same as before they started. But if this is so, his supposition concerning the Sabbath must be abandoned. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 502.7}

As a matter of fact, there is no trouble whatever in circumnavigating the globe in any direction. To say that one cannot keep Saturday if he goes to the other side of the globe, is equivalent to saying that they do not have the days of the week over there. But we have evidence from history that people on the other side of the world knew something of the days of the week even before America was discovered. It is true that it is not a given part of the day at the same moment all the world, just as it is true that no man can be all over the world at the same instant. But as the man can only be in one place at a time, all he has to do is keep the Sabbath when it comes to him, wherever he is. If anybody should start out to travel, with the idea that when it is noon in his native town, it is noon at the same instant all over the world, or, in other words, that the sun rises and sets at that same instant all around the globe, he would find out his mistake before he had traveled a thousand miles. He would find that he would have to set his watch ahead a little every day if he were going east, or back if he were going west. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 502.8}

The day is formed by the revolution of the earth. So far as the formation of days is concerned, the sun is fixed; but as a given portion of the earth in its revolution from west to east comes into the light of the sun, the sun is said to rise at that place, and when it comes into the shadow, the sun is said to set. Now if the person is traveling westward, he is going with the sun, and so he will see it above the horizon each day longer than if he remained in one place; while the one who goes east, goes with the motion of the earth, and so earth passes into the shade quicker and has less of the sunshine in the day, than if he remained at home. Therefore the one who goes west must set his watch back a few minutes each day, and the one who goes east must set his forward, so that he will be in harmony with the local time wherever he may be. And when both return home, having kept their time accurately, they find themselves perfectly in harmony with those who have remained there. Each one has kept his Sabbath, when he came to it, from sunset till sunset; and this is all that is required. If the commandment required the seventh part of time, this would not meet the demand, for when a man is traveling westward, it is longer from sunset to sunset than when he is traveling eastward. In short, all that the commandment requires is to keep the seventh day of the week wherever a man may be. This can be done in China as well as in America, and it can be done in any intermediate place between America and China, whether we go east or west. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 502.9}

If this were an age in which a trip of fifty miles from home would be a great wonder, the objection which our brother has made might seem plausible, but when a trip around the world is a thing so common as not to attract any attention, and is accomplished every year by thousands and tens of thousands of people, and yet no individual has found his reckoning out of harmony with the reckoning of those whom he meets in any part of the world, the objection is simply absurd. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 502.10}

To conclude: The Lord made the earth and therefore we cannot doubt that he knew that it is round. He also made man, as the apostle says, “to dwell on all the face of the earth.” Acts 17:26. He also instituted the Sabbath, declaring it to be a fixed, definite day, and commanded men to observe it. Christ says that the Sabbath was made for man (Mark 2:27), meaning all mankind. Therefore we must conclude that God designed the Sabbath to be kept by men on every part of the round world. If God gave mankind such a commandment, knowing all the time that the world was round, it is nothing else but charging God with folly to say that man cannot keep the Sabbath of the Lord on the Lord’s earth. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 502.11}

We trust that our friend will cling to his statement that all truth is God’s truth, and that since the God who made the world also made the Sabbath, there can be no physical facts to interfere with the keeping of the day. W. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 502.12}

**“Punctuation and Inspiration” The Signs of the Times, 13, 32.**

E. J. Waggoner

Not infrequently we find people who seem to think that everything which may be found between the lives of the Bible is inspired. Some people think that the references under the verses are a sort of inspired comment, forgetting that they only serve as a miniature concordance, and were never put into the Bible until A.D. 1611, and the last of them not till 1785. There are others who think that Usher’s Chronology, which is placed in many Bibles, is inspired, and who would think it heresy to teach that Christ was crucified in the year 31, when the date in the margin of the Bible says 33. Indeed, we have seen some who seem to think that the pictures in the large family Bibles are inspired, and who cannot be made to believe that when Jacob fled from home he was an old man nearly eighty years old, because in the family Bible illustration of Jacob’s dream he is represented as a curly-headed little boy sleeping upon a rock. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 504.1}

But the most common error of this sort is in supposing that punctuation of the Bible is inspired. A friend who writes to us from Illinois seems to labor under this misapprehension. He says that he has been reading the SIGNS for some time, and has had the most implicit confidence in it until he read the article in the SIGNS of May 26, entitled, “What and Where Is Paradise?” In that he found that in our quotation of Luke 23:43, we placed, after the comma after the word “to-day,” whereas in the ordinary version it is after the word “thee.” Again he notices that in 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 the Revised Version and King James’s Version each have the text punctuated differently, while the text as we quote it is punctuated differently from both. Consequently, our correspondent says, “Now if you are right, it will be easy for you to explain; if you do not explain, the conclusion will be that you have punctuated it to bring out your own idea regardless of truth.” {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 504.2}

We are very happy to explain for the benefit of our brother and others who may be similarly troubled. We will consider the last text first. On this he can certainly have no more fault to find with us than with the revisers, for, as he himself says, the punctuation is not the same in the two versions. We will quote the text just as it is in both of the versions and just as it appeared in the SIGNS; for thereby a point may be illustrated. King James’s Version has it as follows: “I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such a one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) how that he was caught up in the Paradise,” etc. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 504.3}

The Revised Version has it thus: “I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not; or whether out of the body, I know not; God knoweth), such a one caught up even to the third heaven. And I know such a man (whether in the body, or apart from the body, I know not; God knoweth), how that he was caught up in the Paradise,” etc. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 504.4}

Although there is some difference in the marks of punctuation used in those two verses, there is no difference in the sense. Punctuation marks are not used so freely as they were formerly, and the colon is seldom used in ordinary sentences. According to modern usage when words are inclosed in parentheses, the necessary marks of punctuation are placed *after* the marks of parentheses, and not *within*, and so the New Version conforms to this usage. All the other difference is that the New Version has a comma, instead of a semicolon, after the parenthesis as in the Old. The text as it appeared in the SIGNS was punctuated the same as in the New Version with the exception of the semicolon being used after the parenthesis instead of the comma. But this change was simply incidental, and it was not known at the time that there was any difference; but the matter is of no consequence anyway, as the meaning is not affected in the least by the difference in the punctuation. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 504.5}

All the readers of the Bible should understand that at the time that the Bible was written, there were no marks of punctuation, and the words in the sentences were not separated by spaces as we now have them. For example, the first verse of the book of John was something like this:- {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 504.6}

INTHEBEGINNINGWASTHEWORDANDTHEWORDWASWITHGODANDTHEWORDWASGODTHESAMEWASINTHEBEGINNINGWITHGOD. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 504.7}

The American Encyclopedia says: “The modern points came into use very gradually after the invention of printing, the comma, parentheses, notes of interrogation, and period, being the earliest introduced, and the note of exclamation last. It was not till sixteen centuries that an approach was made to the regular system by the Manutii of Venice.” {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 504.8}

Modern punctuation has been a thing of growth. The marks have been invented and placed were the sense seemed to require them, to make it easier for the reader, and it follows, therefore, that punctuation which vary in some instances according as those who translated the Bible differed in their ideas of its meaning. In some instances the punctuation has been changed. Hebrews 10:12 was formerly punctuated thus: “And this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God.” This would indicate that after making a sacrifice for sins, Christ sat down at the right hand of God never to leave that place. But this idea is contradicted by the whole tenor of the Scriptures, which teach that Christ is going to stand up and come to this earth again, and finally to reign upon this earth; therefore the punctuation has been changed so as to present the true idea, namely, that when Christ had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, that is, a sacrifice once for all, he sat down at the right hand of God. This change has been made not to conform to anyone’s theory of truth, but to the plainly expressed truth of the Bible. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 504.9}

Again, Matthew 19:28 was once in some Bibles punctuated thus: “Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” This punctuation would make the text mean that the disciples had followed Christ in the regeneration, that is, that they had followed Christ in being born again; but such an idea is monstrous, as it would indicate that Christ, like the disciples, had been a sinner and had been obliged to be born again, and so in our version the comma is placed after the word “me” instead of after “regeneration,” so that the text expresses what Christ meant, that those who followed him, should in the regeneration, when Christ comes, that is, when all things are made new, sit upon twelve thrones. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 504.10}

So in quoting Luke 23:43, we placed the comma after the word “to-day,” not to bring out our own idea regardless of truth, but to make the text express what is evidently the truth, and make it consistent with the plain declarations of Scripture. As it stands in the Authorized Version, it seems to indicate that Christ told the penitent thief that he should be with him in Paradise that very day on which they were hanging on the cross. But this would be to make Christ contradict himself, because three days later he said (John 20:17) that he had not yet ascended to God, and he would not receive the adoration of Mary until he had ascended; but God’s throne is in Paradise, therefore, when Christ said that he had not ascended to the Father, it was equivalent to saying that he had not ascended to Paradise. But since he had not ascended the Paradise, it is very evident that he could not have told the thief that he would meet him there three days before, because he could not tell an untruth. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 505.1}

Perhaps it will be less objectionable if, instead of saying that we changed the punctuation of the verse, we imagine ourselves living before the art of punctuation was invented. Let us strike out all punctuation from the verse, and then we shall have it just as it was written in the inspired historian. Literally thus:- {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 505.2}

” VERILYISAYTOTHEETODAYWITHMETHOUSHALTBEINTHEPARADISE.” {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 505.3}

Now we read it through, and, being acquainted with the teaching of the Bible, namely, that Christ did not ascend to Paradise until three days after the crucifixion, and, moreover, that he could not have ascended until the third day, when he rose from the dead, because the dead know not anything and have no power of locomotion, we know better than to place the comma after the word thee. We therefore consider the circumstances under which the words were uttered. We consider that Christ was hanging upon the cross, condemned as a malefactor, despised by almost everybody, and his teachings doubted even by his own disciples, with no earthly prospect that any of his predictions could ever be verified, and we see how natural that Christ in making the promise to the thief should put emphasis upon the word “to-day,” Verily I say unto thee *to-day*, notwithstanding these untoward circumstances, and that all my hopes and predictions seem to have come to naught, even *to-day*, I say unto you, that ye shall be with me in Paradise. But this, the only natural and consistent view of the text, would force us, in punctuating it, to place the comma after the word “to-day,” because the voice, following the obvious meaning of the passage, makes a pause there whether one is indicated or not. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 505.4}

It is unfortunate that the translators of the Bible did not have a perfect and consistent view of its teachings. And yet we do not know but that it was providential, for there are but only a few passages where the meaning is in any way obscured by the translation or by the punctuation, and the meaning of those few can be easily determined from parallel passages; and the fact that the nature of man, the sleep of the dead, the seventh-day Sabbath, and similar unpopular truths, stand forth in bold relief in a Bible translated by those who believed none of those truths, makes it far more evident that they are unquestioned Bible truths, than if the Bible had been translated by men predisposed in favor of them. W. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 505.5}

**“Back Page” The Signs of the Times, 13, 32.**

E. J. Waggoner

Elder E. J. Waggoner, and Mrs. Jessie F. Waggoner, the Secretary of the State Sabbath school association, left Oakland August 10, for Eureka, Cal., to attend the Humboldt County camp-meeting. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 512.1}

Prussia’s hobnobbing with the Papacy has begun already to bear the unfailing fruit of a legal recognition of Romanism. A Lutheran minister in Prussia was recently sentenced to nine months’ imprisonment for “insulting” the Romish Church. The insult consisted in publishing a pamphlet in which he remarked that the Romish apostasy is “built upon superstition and idolatry.” And for such “insulting” remarks as this, to prison for nine months their author had to go. And this in the land of Luther! Let Prussia be called no more a Protestant country. She has been surrendered bodily to the Papacy, and Rome rules there, and that in Rome’s own wicked way. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 512.2}

We sometimes hear the expression used that “good may come out of evil.” This is very true, if we see the word “evil” in the sense of trouble, and not in the sense of sin. Affliction and trouble are often called evil, and in this sense good may come out of evil, “for our light of affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” Again we read that “tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope;” and that chastisement which at the time is very grievous, afterwards yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them who are exercised thereby. And again, that “all things work together for good to them that love God.” But from evil which is sin no good can possibly come. Sin has no manner of connection with good. From sin only sin can come. So none need console themselves with the thought, if they have done wrong, that good may come out of it. There is a mercy for the sinner, and where sin of bounds, grace does much more abound, and so good may come after evil, if the sinner exercises repentance towards God, and faith in his Son Jesus Christ. But the good can come only after the sin has been put away, and it comes not because of the evil, but in spite of it. “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid.” {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 512.3}

An exchange says:- {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 512.4}

“The law cannot make a man moral, but it can make him dreadfully uncomfortable when he is immoral.” {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 512.5}

Well, that depends. It is true that the law cannot make a man moral; but if it is the law of the land that is referred to, as we suppose it is, then we know that a man may be terribly immoral without suffering the least inconvenience from the law. The trouble is, people have a very low standard of morality. If a man does no open violence, or cause any serious inconvenience to his neighbor, he is called a moral man; whereas, a man may do nothing for which the law could molest him, and still be as corrupt as the grave. It should be understood that civil laws cannot make men moral, and are not for the purpose of punishing immortality, but simply for the purpose of protecting the rights of people; in short, to deter men from acting in an uncivil matter. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 512.6}

Remarking on the late train robbery on the Southern Pacific Railroad, the San Francisco *Chronicle* says the robbers were successful “mainly, it would seem, because of the lack of resistance on the part of the engineer.” So far as the *Chronicle’s* own report in the same paragraph, that the robbers had turned the switch which threw the engine off the track, turned it over, and threw the engineer and fireman down an embankment fifty feet, we are rather inclined to think the engineers “lack of resistance” to the robbers was identifiable, and that the *Chronicle* was extravagant in its demands. If the editor of the *Chronicle* was in charge of an engine which should be upset by robbers and be thrown fifty feet down a bank, we have an idea that just at that particular moment even his resistance to the attacking robbers would not be particularly vigorous nor exceptionally gallant. “It would seem” so at least. The *Chronicle* went a long way to find something to find fault with. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 512.7}

About the middle of July, Mrs. Logan, the widow of General John A. Logan, was thrown from a buggy. The first dispatches stated that she was not seriously hurt, but a late report from her physician shows it to have been a very painful accident. He says: “Mrs. Logan’s injuries are very serious. On the 25th ult., for the first time since the injury, she was turned upon her right side, with soft pads under her injured left arm. Her left shoulder was crushed by the wheel of the buggy running over it. The whole arm to the elbow is blackened from bruises, and the forearm to the wrest is slightly injured. Her head was stepped upon on its top and left side, the horse’s shod foot tearing the scalp loose in a concentric shape, making a wound three and a half inches in length to the skull. The skull is uninjured. She has suffered exceeding pain at the shoulder and along the course of the arm. We rejoice to say she is improving in every respect.” {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 512.8}

Nearly every Protestant paper in the country, whether religious or secular, has confessed it to have been the duty of Dr. McGlynn to go to Rome when he was commanded by the Pope to do so, to answer for his opinions that were already condemned. The truth is, that if he had gone to Rome, he could, and no doubt would, have been kept there forever, and that too in a dungeon, just as likely as not, unless he should have recanted. And even had he recanted he would never have been allowed to return to a free America. The chances are ten to one that had Dr. McGlynn gone to Rome he would never have been directly heard of more. The *Christian Advocate* (N.Y.) has come nearer to the truth in the matter than any other paper we have seen. It says:- {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 512.9}

“Once in Rome he could have been kept there indefinitely. He could be assigned to duty in any part of the world; could be cut loose from his life-work, and removed from all his association and centers of influence, and be compelled to begin a new career under a ban.” {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 512.10}

But Mr. McGlynn knows Rome’s methods too well to be caught in the toils of the Romish Inquisition, and he still breathes the free air of yet free America. But how long America shall remain free from Rome’s pernicious power is a question. With the National Reform Party and its allies endeavoring to create a constitutional basis for religious legislation in national affairs, and bidding for Rome’s influence to help secure it; and with the press of the country siding with Rome in a controversy involving the right of free thought and free speech of an American citizen; the prospect is not very reassuring. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 512.11}

The Inquiry columns of the religious papers furnish some rather queer matter occasionally. Here is a question and answer that appeared in the *Christian Advocate* of August 4-J. M. Buckley, D. D. editor:- {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 512.12}

*Q. 2435.*-Can the dead perceive what is going on upon the earth? {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 512.13}

*A.*-If we knew, we should hasten to publish the information, for we should be the only possessor of it on earth. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 512.14}

P.S. The Bible says that there is joy in the presence of the angels in heaven over the conversion of sinners, but no details are given as to how the information reaches them. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 512.15}

“If we knew.” But why is it that he does not know? The Bible says as plainly as language can be expressed, “The dead know not anything... Neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun.” And again, “his sons, to honor and he knoweth it not; they are brought low and they perceiveth it not of them.” Here then is this correspondent’s question directly and plainly answered, but the *Advocate* can only answer, “If we knew.” Again we say, why is it that the editor does not know? Is it because he does not know that these verses are in the Bible? or is it because he does not believe these words even though they be the word of God? We are inclined to think it is the latter, because the doctrine of the immortality of the soul does not allow a consistent belief of the words of the Bible. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 512.16}

So much for the *Advocate’s* “answer;” but what is meant by the “P.S.”? A correspondent asks, “Can *the dead* perceive what is going on upon the earth?” And he is informed that “there is joy in the presence of *the angels in Heaven* over the conversion of sinners.” Does the *Advocate* mean to convey the idea that dead people are angels? or that the company of the angels is made up of dead people? What a queer idea that questioner must have had, in the first place, to ask, “Can the *dead* perceive?” If a person can perceive at all, it seems to us that that would be pretty good evidence that he is *not dead*. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 512.17}

A religious exchange says: “Unless the churches in the United States gain as much as ten million members during the year 1887, there will be more unconverted people among us January, 1888, than there are now.” There probably will be anyway; for unconverted people are coming to this country, as well as growing up in this country, continually, and, unfortunately, the making of church members is not necessarily equivalent to the making of converts. {SITI August 18, 1887, p. 512.18}

**“Not ‘A Daniel Come to Judgment’” The Signs of the Times, 13, 33.**

E. J. Waggoner

The state of Louisiana has, in common with many other States, been doctoring its Sunday laws, and now has a law requiring that, with certain exceptions, all places of business shall be closed from 12 o’clock on Saturday night until 12 o’clock on Sunday night. A case recently came before the Supreme Court of Louisiana in which the law was claimed to be unconstitutional. The court held the law to be valid, and the following is a portion of the opinion delivered by the Judge:- {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 518.1}

“We take occasion promptly to say that if the object of law were to compel the observance of Sunday as a religious institution, we would not hesitate to declare it to be violative of the above constitutional prohibition. It would violate equally the religious liberty of the Christian, the Jew, and the infidel, none of whom can be compelled by law to comply with any merely religious observance whether it accords with his faith and conscience or not. With rare exceptions, the American authorities concur in this view.... The statute is to be judged of precisely as if it had selected for the day of rest any day of the week, other than Sunday; and its validity is not to be question, because in the exercise of a wide discretion, it has chosen that day of rest any day of the week, other than Sunday; and its validity is not to be questioned, because in the exercise of a wide discretion, it was chosen that day which a majority of the inhabitants of this state, under the sanctions of their religious faith, already voluntarily observed as a day of rest.” {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 518.2}

The New York *Independent* quotes this, and adds the following words of approval:- {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 518.3}

“This is an exceedingly lucid statement of the theory which underlies all legislation that requires the suspension of ordinary labor on Sunday. The object is not to enforce religious observances of any kind, but simply to establish a uniform day of rest for the general good of the whole people; and this is no interference with the religious rights of anybody.” {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 518.4}

It may seem very presumptuous for a non-professional man to criticize the opinion of so great a person as a judge of the Supreme Court, but nevertheless we have no hesitation in saying that the opinion quoted is nothing but sophistry, and such sophistry as could be dealt out only by an adept in the art. This we think can easily be made apparent; and it is the more necessary that they should be done, because the Sunday-law mania has now become quite prevalent, and just such sophistical arguments as those quoted above will be relied on in securing the enactment of those laws. These arguments will be used for the reason that they are the best that can be offered in favor of an unjust law, and also simply because they have been used before. Even the Louisiana judge himself did not pretend to originate them, but contented himself with giving the view in which nearly all “American authorities concur.” If American legal business were not becoming more a matter of precedent than of common sense, Sunday laws could never be enacted; but the idea seems to be that whatever has been done ought to be done, and precedents for oppressing people under the guise of charity are not wanting. {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 518.5}

The claim is made that the Sunday law does not compel the observance of Sunday as a religious institution, and that therefore it cannot be contrary to a constitution which forbids religious tests for office or citizenship. But the fact is, Sunday *is primarily a religious institution*, and its observance cannot be enforced except as such. It cannot be separated from its religious (not *sacred*) character for the purpose of special legislation concerning it. It matters not what such legislation is called, whether a police regulation, or a law in the interests of the workingman, it is legislation concerning an institution of the church. {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 518.6}

To make it evident that Sunday laws are laws in behalf of religion, three things only need to be borne in mind: 1. Sunday rest originated in the church. Catholics universally claim the church as the sole authority for Sunday observance, and many Protestants agree with them in this. The *Christian at Work* says: “We rest the designation of Sunday solely on the church having set it apart of its own authorities.” But if the claims of those who say that Christ and the apostles set the day apart as a day of rest, were true, that would make it emphatically a church institution. 2. The observance of Sunday is generally considered by church people as the essence of religion. In the Sunday law contest in California five years ago, the *Christian Advocate* spoke of Sunday as “the foundation of our holy religion.” Regarding Sunday rest as the memorial of the resurrection of Christ, they think that without it there would be no evidence of the truth of the gospel. 3. The churches and the churches alone are at the bottom of all Sunday legislation. No one ever heard of such a thing as a Sunday law being proposed by anybody except a zealous churchman or a deputation of ministers. It is true that, by pretending that Sunday laws are in the interests of labor, they are inducing labor and socialistic organizations to clamor for such laws, but these organizations come in only as allies to the church. Everyone who knows anything of the history of Sunday legislation, knows that it is *always* instigated by the churches. {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 519.1}

Now in the face of these things, to say that Sunday laws do not compel men to observe Sunday as a religious institution, is not only sophistry, but it is positively untruth. Since the day as a day of rest is nothing else but a religious institution, how can it be enforced as anything else but a religious institution? It cannot be enforced as something which it is not. True, it is said that when the State enforces the observance of Sunday, it makes it a civil institution, merely a legal holiday. Well, nobody contends that the State law makes Sunday a religious institution; it is that already. We freely admit that the State law in its behalf is only a civil ordinance, for the State could make nothing else but a civil ordinance; but, mark it well, what we do claim, and what all candid minds must admit to be the truth, is that a State Sunday law is a *civil ordinance* enforcing the observance of a *religious institution*. {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 519.2}

Some years ago the city of San Francisco had a notorious mayor, who engaged in certain transactions that were inconsistent with his official position. His defense was that he did those things as an ordinary citizen, and not as mayor. It requires no argument to show the absurdity of such a statement. The man was mayor, and he could not separate himself from his office within the time to which he was elected. But this is just on a par with the argument that Sunday legislation is not the enforcement of a religious institution. If the friends of so-called National Reform admit such a plea, they must be prepared to see it carried out to its legitimate conclusion. They must expect to see the vilest rakes elected to office in their model government, under the plea that they are not bad citizens, but are simply bad men. {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 519.3}

If anything further were needed to show the flimsy character of the arguments by which Sunday-law advocates attempt to make it appear that they are not working for an ecclesiastical establishment, it may be found in the last sentence of the judicial opinion first quoted. Said the judge:- {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 519.4}

“The statute is to be judged of precisely as if it had selected for the day of rest any day of the week, other than Sunday; and its validity is not to be questioned because, in the exercise of a wise discretion, it has chosen that day which a majority of the inhabitants of this State, under the sanctions of their religious faith, already voluntarily observed as a day of rest.” {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 519.5}

“A wise discretion,” indeed! The State has chosen the day which a large majority of its inhabitants, under the sanctions of their religious faith, who voluntarily observe as a day of rest, and, at the instigation of that majority, has undertaken to enforce its observance as a day of rest, and yet this is no more in the interest of religion than if Monday or Thursday had been chosen! Such a monstrous assertion needs but to be quoted to be refuted. A man must be sadly blinded to put such a statement forth as a sober legal argument, and men must be pre-determined to have Sunday laws or they could not be deceived by it. Suppose that the State had, in the exercise of its “wise discretion,” chosen Saturday instead of Sunday; would their not have been protests without number? Indeed there would. People would call it a law in the interest of the Jews and other Sabbatarians, and no argument could convince them to the contrary. “But,” says one, “such a law would really be unjust to the great majority who observe Sunday as a day of religious rest.” Indeed! Then by the same token a law enforcing Sunday observance is unjust to those who observe Saturday, or who do not choose to observe any set day. The discriminating reader can see that it is the word “majority” which catches the judicial fancy. It seems to be the idea that Sunday legislation cannot be wrong, because the majority favor it. As much as if to say that a thing is necessarily right if it is proposed by a majority of the people. But no majorities can ever make a wrong right, and State laws in behalf of an establishment of religion are always wrong. The question whether or not Sunday ought to be observed as a day of rest, does not enter into the case at all. We believe in the God of the Bible, as the majority of people in this country profess to do, but we should emphatically protest against a State law to compel all people to recognize him as such. {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 519.6}

Here is a point that should not be lost sight of: If Sunday laws are not for the purpose of compelling the observance of Sunday as a religious institution, for what purpose are they? The claim is that they are in the interest of humanity, so that laboring men may have the rest which their physical nature imperatively demands. Very well, thus we suppose it will be admitted that is within the province of the State to compel men to observe the laws of there being. Now it is just as certain that man’s physical nature requires that he should take a definite amount of sleep every twenty-four hours, far more imperatively than it demands that he shall rest one day in seven. Will our Sunday-law friends admit that the State has any right to decide how many hours a man ought to sleep, and to enact a law compelling every man to sleep at least seven hours out of every twenty-four? Unless they are ready to advocate such a measure as this, let them say nothing more about enforcing Sunday rest on the basis of the necessity of man’s physical nature. We have presented this view of the case before, but we do not expect ever to see Sunday-law advocates attempt to meet it. {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 519.7}

Now one word concerning the *Independent’s* statement that Sunday legislation “is no interference with the religious rights of anybody.” We say that it is a positive and unjust interference with the religious rights of everybody who conscientiously observes any day other than Sunday. Here are laboring men who believe that when the fourth commandment says, “The *seventh day* is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work,” means just what it says. They are conscientious in their observance of the seventh day of the week; and the needs of their families demand that they should spend the other six days in labor, as the commandment allows. According to the fourth commandment, it is their religious *privilege* to labor six days of the week, just as much as it is their religious *duty* to rest on the seventh. Therefore if the State steps in and *compels* them to rest on another day also, no matter on what grounds the rest is enforced, their religious rights are interfered with. And if these men shall be punished for continuing to make Sunday one of their six working days, their punishment will be an act of religious persecution. No assertions to the contrary can change the truth of this. {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 519.8}

From the very nature of the case, Sunday legislation must interfere with the religious rights of some. For, Sunday as a day of rest is beyond dispute a religious institution; legislation enforcing its observance is legislation enforcing an establishment of religion; and when any religious tenet is enforced, the religious rights of all who do not hold that tenet must be interfered with, and oppression must result. {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 519.9}

We hope that the people in those States that still allow full liberty of conscience, will take the time and trouble now to become well informed concerning the arguments used in behalf of Sunday laws, and will learn how to expose their fallacy, so that when the Sunday-law mania shall seize their State, as it surely will, they will not allow their liberty to be taken away without making a well-directed, intelligent protest. W. {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 519.10}

**“British and Foreign Bible Society” The Signs of the Times, 13, 33.**

E. J. Waggoner

A retrospect of the British and Foreign Bible Society for the last half century discloses some very encouraging facts. Fifty years ago the annual issues of the Bible, and of portions of it, amounted to 600,000 copies; they now amount to 4,000,000. Half a century ago the cheapest Bible cost 48 cents; now it can be had for 12 cents. Then the cheapest New Testament cost 20 cents; now it can be had for 2 cents. Fifty years ago the Scriptures were published and circulated in 136 languages; that number has been increased to 280, in fact there is only one great language, the Japanese, which has not a complete translation of the Scriptures, and that one will have such a translation before the close of the current year. Altogether these statistics form a perfect fulfillment of the prophecy found in Daniel 12:4, that in the time of the end, “many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.” {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 520.1}

**“Back Page” The Signs of the Times, 13, 33.**

E. J. Waggoner

Sisters E. G. White and M. K. White, Elders O. A. Olsen and D. T. Bourdeau, and others from Europe arrived safely at New York, August 11. Elder W. C. White will leave Europe for home about Sept. 1. {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 528.1}

The Pope says that “not alone Italy,” but “all other nations” “principally owe to the Papacy the civilization they enjoy.” Yes, England and the United States, for instance, with Spain and Mexico, or the North of Ireland with the south, bear unmistakable evidence in the case. On a par with this is the statement in the same letter, that justice can never be done “if the Pope is not restored to his incontestable rights indeed temporal sovereignty-*rights founded upon the most legitimate and sacred of titles*.” The right founded upon the “Donation of Constantine” above all in legitimacy and sacredness, of course. {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 528.2}

In the *Christian Advocate* of July 21, a certain Rev. J. W. Simpson says:- {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 528.3}

“We admit immersion to be one mode of baptism, and yet can recall at present only four examples of it in the Scriptures. The first is the deluge; the second, that of Pharaoh’s army; the third the case of a man, the leper who was so exceedingly foul that we are not surprised that it took old Jordan to cleanse him; and the fourth was that of a herd of swine which ran violently down a steep place into the sea and perished in the waters.” {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 528.4}

As a display of downright egotistical ignorance we have never seen that surpassed. Nor is that all. His reference to the swine as an example of a baptism is contemptible, and his reference to the case of Naaman is basely irreverent. {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 528.5}

A correspondent, apparently editorial, of the *Christian Union*, says that “Professor Harris is the philosopher of the Concord School *par excellence*... and the opinion is frequently heard that we may yet have an American system of philosophy.” It seems that this “American system of philosophy” is embodied in the idea of probation after death. And Professor Harris in his *par excellence* “makes the idea of the cessation of probation annihilate both” Heaven and hell. Then says this admirer of the “philosopher *par excellence*;” “This view of Dr. Harris is fully elaborated in his essay on ‘The Philosophic Structure of Dante’s Davina Commedia.’ I am not sure that this paper will not prove itself to be one of the most inspiring missionary tracks of the time.” Well an American philosophy extracted from Dante’s “Davina Commedia” may be a very inspiring thing, but it is absolutely certain that such inspiration will never lead men to God or accomplish anything for Christ. Yet this wild nonsense is becoming very popular in the theological circle of which the *Christian Union* forms a part. {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 528.6}

In the *Forum* for July Mr. Grant Allen says:- {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 528.7}

“Life is merely some particular set of correlated movements, occurring, under the influence of the solar radiation, in a certain group of material bodies on the surface of one small and unimportant planet, in a minor solar system, hidden away on the skirts of a galaxy in some lost quarter of a boundless universe.” {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 528.8}

That is very exact. It is most satisfactorily definite. The *corner* of anything boundless is good, but when it is the corner of a boundless cosmos, and that, too, a lost quarter, and the thing hidden away there beside, then the thought becomes grand. Now with that definition of *life* put the following definition of *death*, by the much admired Professor Drummond-he who was brought all the way from England to help Moody in his missionary training-school:- {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 528.9}

“Death is lack of correspondence with the environment.” {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 528.10}

These two definitions match very well, each is the complement of the other. And both answer very well to the demands of the Spiritualistic sentimentalism that now passes for the Christian religion. {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 528.11}

I had rather speak five words with my understanding, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 528.12}

**“Bogus Piety” The Signs of the Times, 13, 33.**

E. J. Waggoner

A recent dispatch giving an account of a series of post-office robberies in a town in this State, by a man named Weston, whose evil deeds had just come to light, closed with these words: “Weston was a church member, and very pious.” Now this is not true, and is never true in any similar case. The man was indeed a church member, but he was not pious. He may have had the *appearance* of piety, he had not the real article. Pious do not do such things. Moreover, the man who wrote that dispatch knew that the post-office thief was not pious, and every worldling knows that bank-defaulters, embezzlers, etc. are not pious men. They know that piety is not that kind of stuff, that Christianity calls for something better, and that Christians should act differently. And it is because they know this, that they never fail to mention that an erring man was a professed Christian. Such mention is always an unconscious and unintended tribute to the excellent character of true Christianity, because it shows that even the haters of Christianity know that evil and right are inconsistent with it. {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 528.13}

But someone may ask how we explained the sudden falls from piety and integrity that we so often see or hear about. We answer that such sudden falls are not so common as is supposed. But when they do occur, we can explain them just as we would explain the sudden fall of a building. If a building falls suddenly and without warning, and apparently without sufficient cause, we say at once that there was a defect in its construction; it never was sound. It stood for a time, and was apparently sound, but continued pressure made itself fall in the place that was a weak. So a man who “suddenly falls” from piety, simply gives way under strong pressure upon some weak point. And as no building is any stronger than its weakest support, so no Christian character, however sound it may appear, is in any stronger than the spot that has never been built up. So in reality even this was not a sudden fall from true piety, but from the semblance thereof. {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 528.14}

In general, therefore, it may be set down as a fact that men do not fall suddenly into great sins. Solomon says that “the beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water;” the tiny stream soon makes for itself a larger opening, which gradually increases until a mighty torrent rushes through. So a little sin, covered up, a little defect cherished, brings condemnation to the individual at first, but the voice of conscience being repressed, he becomes hardened, possibly at last really unconscious of the fact that he is living a lie, and then detection is the only thing necessary to make the world safe in derision, there is a specimen of a pious man, and others mourn over the “sudden fall” of one who was highly esteemed. They simply compound the detection with the fall, whereas the *fall* may have taken place years before. Then the cause of Christ has to suffer reproach, since people forget that it is really to the credit of Christianity that dishonest men put it on as a cloak for their ungodly deeds. They know that people do not look there for such things, and so they expect to escape without detection. {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 528.15}

**“Not ‘Inferred’ But Believed” The Signs of the Times, 13, 33.**

E. J. Waggoner

The *Christian Standard*, in, an attempted, reasoning on the immortality of the soul, says:- {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 528.16}

“When it is said that we do not read of the ‘immortality of the soul,’ in the Scriptures, the truth is spoken; but when it is inferred from this that there is nothing in man that remains in possession of conscious existence after death, the conclusion is not well drawn. The immortality of the angels is something not named in the Scriptures. Yet it would be most unsafe to infer that they are not to continue in this possession of conscious existence for ever. That which is mortal is subject to death, as the human body as it now is; that which is immortal is not subject to death, as the immortal bodies of the redeemed, as they shall be.” {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 528.17}

But the unconscious of men in the death is not “inferred” from the silence of Scripture on the subject of the “immortality of the soul.” In fact it is not “inferred” from anything. It is the plain declaration of Scripture, and therefore, on the part of men who accept it, it is not an inference at all but is *belief* of the word of God. The Scriptures plainly state that “the dead know not if anything,” also “their love and their hatred and their envy” is “perished” (Ecclesiastes 9:5); that when his breath goeth forth, “in that very day his thoughts perish” (Psalm 146:4); that “in death there is no remembrance of God” (Psalm 115:17); all these, and many more, Scriptures show that at death men go to the place of silence and forgetfulness, and to accept such a view as the truth, is not inference but perfectly-founded *faith*. {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 528.18}

“The immortality of the angels is something not named in the Scriptures,” says the *Standard*. Now the Scriptures say of those who shall be made immortal, that “Neither can they die any more, for [because] they are equal to the angels.” To be equal unto the angels exempts from death for ever, and that is immortality. Therefore the immortality of the angels *is* named in the Scriptures. This is proved by the *Standard* itself. It says, “That which is immortal *is not subject to death*.” And the Scriptures do certainly say that the angels cannot die, in that it is said that the redeemed cannot die anymore because they are equal to the angels. Therefore upon the *Standard’s* following proposition the immortality of the angels is named in the Scriptures. Yet upon the supposition that the Scriptures do not name the immortality of the angels, the *Standard* says, “It would be most unsafe to infer that they are not to continue in the possession of conscious being forever.” But if the word of God should say of the angels, as it says of men, that while they live “they know not that they shall die,” but when dead they “know not anything,” that their “thoughts” would then “perish,” and they would remember not God, and “praise not the Lord,” but would remain in silence and in the land of forgetfulness,-if the word of God should say all this of the angels, and much more to the same effect, it would *not* be unsafe to *believe* that they were not to continue in the possession of conscious being forever. And to believe so of men of whom all these things are said by the word of the Lord, is not only not unsafe, but is the *only real safe* thing to believe on that subject. This conclusion *is* well drawn. {SITI August 25, 1887, p. 528.19}