**“The Spirit of Antichrist. No. 7” The Signs of the Times, 14, 5.**

E. J. Waggoner

But it is urged that the spirits often do good service, giving valuable advice in business matters, healing the sick, etc., and that those who do such things must be good spirits. Again we recur to our rule: “To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Do they acknowledge the God of the Bible, and accept Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world? Never. Then they are of the devil. Is it strange that the devil should do a little seeming good for a person, in order more completely to entangle that person in his toils, and to lure scores of others into his net? Does not the libertine often profess the utmost piety, in order that he may win his way into the homes of innocence? If *men* will steal the livery of the court of Heaven, to serve the devil, is it any wonder that *Satan* should steal the same livery in order to serve himself? {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 70.1}

Christ says that just before the end “there shall arise false Christ’s, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” Matthew 24:24. And Paul says that just before the coming of Christ, Satan will work “with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.” 2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10. The miracles which Satan works are intended to deceive, and since they almost deceive even the saints of God, it is evident that they have the appearance of good. In order to capture professed Christians, Satan is going to profess to be Christ, and he must therefore counterfeit as far as possible the work of Christ. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 70.2}

Sometimes men wonder why the Lord should allow Satan to deceive people. He doesn’t allow him to deceive anyone who doesn’t want to be deceived. Only those who receive not the love of the truth, will fall under Satan’s wiles. No matter what garb Satan or his angels may assume, they can always be detected by comparing their words with the plain declarations of the Bible. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 70.3}

In previous articles we showed that from the very nature of the case, Spiritualism must tend to immorality; and now we have shown that it denies God, denies Christ, and makes man his own saviour, denies the Bible, and, consequently, the morality of the Bible, makes every man’s desires and natural propensities his own law, and advises men to submit themselves to spirits which it acknowledges are lying spirits. What more is needed to show that Spiritualism is the spirit of antichrist? Yet we give one more quotation. It is from an article in the *Golden Gate* of August 20, 1887, written by Dr. John B. Wolff, of Washington, D. C., who says that he was a Spiritualist years before the Rochester knockings, and a Methodist minister before he was a Spirtualist. Hence he ought to know whereof he speaks. He says:- {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 70.4}

“There have been many attempts to unite Christianity and Spiritualism, but they have all been signal failures, and will continue so to be, because there is not enough in common to make the basis of a solid union.” {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 70.5}

Again he says:- {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 70.6}

“Spiritualism strikes at the root of every cardinal doctrine of Christianity; hence there can be no conciliation or reconciliation between that and genuine Spiritualism, except at the expense of the latter. The churches have control of public opinion, the press, and the machinery of the governments, and are using all these instruments to crush us out. While this state of facts exists, I do not propose to belittle and stultify myself by any concessions or courtships. I am ready to meet them half-way upon the platform of equality. Till then no compromise in mine. With me Spiritualism must stand alone upon its own facts and doctrines, perfectly discreted from any and all system, past or present. Those who are fond of conglomerates, such as Daniel’s model of iron and clay, can mix to suit their tastes and necessities, but I will have one of it.” {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 70.7}

Yet in spite of all this, Spiritualism will erelong profess to be the Christianity of the Bible, and as such will be accepted by a very large majority of the people of the earth. It will not change its character in the least, but will still continue to teach doctrines having the same immoral tendencies that it now does. This could not be done if it were not the fact that it is engineered by Satan, the archdeceiver. W. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 70.8}

**“The Reasonableness of Faith” The Signs of the Times, 14, 5.**

E. J. Waggoner

The Christian’s faith in something that cannot be seen is a source of wonder to the unbeliever, and is often the object of ridicule and contempt. The worldling regards the simple faith of the Christian as an evidence of weakness of mind, and with a complacent smile at the thought of the superiority of his own intellect, he declares that *he* never believes a thing without evidence; *he* never jumps at conclusions, and doesn’t believe anything that he cannot see and understand. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 70.9}

The saying that the man who believes nothing that he cannot understand will have a very short creed, is as true as it is trite. There is not a philosopher living who can understand the one-hundredth part of the simple phenomena that he sees every day. Scientists have found out by observation that certain kinds of soil are specially adapted to certain kinds of produce; but nobody can tell why. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 70.10}

As a matter of fact, faith is one of the commonest things. There is no skeptic who does not have faith to a greater or less degree; and in very many cases they go even farther, and manifest simple credulity. But the element of faith underlies all business transactions, and all the affairs of life. Two men make an appointment to meet at a certain time and place, to transact certain business; each has to trust the other’s word. The merchant has to exercise faith in his employés and his customers. Yea, more, he has to, unconsciously it may be, exercise faith in God; for he will send his ships across the ocean, with confidence that they will return again loaded with merchandise, and yet he must know that their safe return depends on the winds and the waves, which are beyond human control. And even though he never once thinks of the power that controls the elements, he puts confidence in the officers and crew. He will even trust himself on board of one of the ships, whose captain and crew he never saw, and confidently expect that they will bring him to the desired heaven. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 70.11}

One of these men who thinks that it is foolish to trust in a God “whom no man hath seen, neither can see,” will go to a little window and lay down a twenty-dollar gold-piece, and in return will receive from a man whom he never saw before, and whose name he does not know, only a little strip of paper which says that he is entitled to a ride to a distant city. He perhaps has never seen that city, and knows of its existence only by the reports of others, yet he steps aboard the cars, gives his bit of paper to another total stranger, and settles down in comfort. He has never seen the engineer, and does not know but that he may be incapable or malicious; yet he is perfectly unconcerned, and confidently expects to be carried safely to the place, the existence of which he knows only by hearsay. More than this, he holds in his hand a piece of paper prepared by some men whom he never saw, which states that these strangers, to whose care he has intrusted himself, will land him at his destination at a certain hour; and so implicitly does this skeptic believe this statement, that he sends word ahead to some other person whom he has never seen, making arrangements to meet him at that specified time. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 70.12}

Still further, his faith is drawn upon in the sending of the message announcing his coming. He steps into a little room, writes a few words on a slip of paper, which he hands to a stranger sitting by a little machine, pays the man half a dollar, and then goes his way believing that in less than half an hour his unknown friend a thousand miles away will be reading the message which he left in the station behind him. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 70.13}

When he reaches the city, his faith is still further manifested. While on the cars he has written a letter to his family, whom he has left at home. As soon as he reaches the city, he spies a little iron box fastened to a post in the street, and straightway goes and drops his letter into it, and walks off without giving the matter a second thought. He confidently expects that the letter which he has dropped into that box without saying a word to anybody, will reach his wife within two days. And yet this man thinks that it is extremely foolish to talk to God with the expectation that any attention will be paid to the words. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 70.14}

But to all this the skeptic will reply that he does not blindly trust in others, but that he has *reason* to believe that he will be carried safely, that his message will be sent correctly, and that his letter will reach his wife in good season. His faith in these things is based on the following grounds:- {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 70.15}

1. Others have been carried in safety, and thousands of letters and telegrams have been correctly sent and promptly delivered. Whenever a letter has been miscarried, it has almost invariably been the fault of the sender. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 70.16}

2. The men to whom he instrusts himself and his messages, make a business of carrying people and messages; if they should fail to fulfill their agreements, nobody would place any confidence in them, and their business would soon be ruined. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 70.17}

3. He has had the assurance of the Government of the United States. The railroad and telegraph companies receive their charter from the Government, which thereby becomes in a measure responsible for their faithfulness. If they do not do as they agree, the Government can revoke their charter. His confidence in the letter-box was due to the fact that he saw upon it the letters “U.S.M.,” and he knew that they mean that the Government has promised safely to deliver any letter placed in the box, if it is properly addressed and stamped. He believes that the Government will fulfill its promises, because if it does not, its existence must soon come to an end. Its existence depends on its power to fulfill its promises, and its integrity in performing them. It is to the interest of the Government to fulfill its promises, just as much as it is to the interest of the railroad and telegraph companies to fulfill theirs. And all these things form a solid ground for his faith. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 70.18}

Well, the Christian has a thousand-fold more ground for his faith in the promises of God. Faith is not blind credulity. Says the apostle: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence [ground, or confidence] of things not seen.” Hebrews 11:1. This is an inspired definition, and therefore we may conclude that the Lord does not expect us to exercise faith except on evidence. Now it can readily be shown that the Christian has the same ground for exercising faith in God, that the skeptic has for his confidence in the railroad and telegraph companies, or in the Government; and a great deal more. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 70.19}

1. Others have trusted the promises of God, and have found them to be sure. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews contains a long list of those who have verified the promises of God; who “through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to fight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again.” And this is not confined to the days of old. Anyone who wishes can find abundance of testimony to the fact that God is “a very present help in trouble.” Thousands can testify of prayers answered in so marked a manner as to leave no more doubt that God answers prayer than there is that the United States Government carries the mails that are intrusted to it. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 70.20}

2. The God whom we trust makes a business of answering prayers, and of protecting and caring for his subjects. “It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.” Lamentations 3:22. And “He delighteth in mercy.” Micah 7:18. “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” Jeremiah 29:11. If he should break one of his promises, men would cease to believe him. This was the ground of David’s confidence. Said he: “Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Thy name; and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for Thy name’s sake. Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God?” Psalm 79:9, 10. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 71.1}

3. The existence of God’s Government depends on the fulfillment of his promises. The Christian has the assurance of the Government of the universe, that every lawful request that he makes will be granted. Government is especially for the protection of the weak. Suppose now that God should fail to fulfill one of his promises to the very weakest and most insignificant persons in the world; that single failure would destroy the entire Government of God. The whole universe would at once be thrown into confusion. If God should break one of his promises, no one in the universe could ever have any confidence, and his rule would be at an end. So the humble Christian *depends* on the word of God, knowing that God has more at stake than he has. If such a thing were possible as that God should break his word, the Christian would lose only his life, but God would lose His character, the stability of his Government, and the control of the universe. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 71.2}

Moreover, those who put their trust in human government, or in any institution of men, are liable to be disappointed. With the best of intentions, mistakes will be made, because men are but fallible. But to the Christian the firm assurance is given: “There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” Deuteronomy 33:26, 27. His power is shown in creation. The things that he has made attest His eternal power and Godhead. The more powerful the Government, the greater the confidence in it. Then what more reasonable than that we should have implicit confidence in the God whom nature and revelation combined declare to be omnipotent, eternal, and unchangeable? {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 71.3}

If I should express to an infidel my doubts as to the integrity of one of his friends, he would say: “That’s because you don’t know him; just try him, and you will find him as true as steel.” This would be a fair reply; and so we say to the infidel who doubts the promises of God. “O taste and see that the Lord is good; ... there is no want to them that fear him.” Psalm 34:8, 9. What right has anybody to doubt the promises or the power of God before he has given them a fair trial? And in that case, what right has anybody to doubt God, since everybody is testing his power and goodness every moment of his life? W. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 71.4}

**“A Lesson on Forgiveness” The Signs of the Times, 14, 5.**

E. J. Waggoner

**The Commentary.
Notes on the International Lesson.
(February 19.-Matthew 18:21-25.)**

The parable which forms the principal part of this lesson is recorded only in Matthew, but the principle which it inculcates is stamped upon every page of the Bible. Peter came to the Lord and asked, “How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?” Doubtless Peter thought that he was stretching the grace of forgiveness to its utmost limit, for he had not then learned so fully of Christ as he afterwards did. Imagine his surprise when Jesus answered, “I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven.” Matthew 18:22. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 73.1}

We cannot understand by this that Jesus intended to limit the number of times that one should forgive another to just four hundred and ninety, but that he intended to express an indefinite, unlimited number. As Schaff aptly says: “It is a symbolical expression for never-ending forgiveness. Love is not to be limited by the multiplication table.” Our Saviour’s words recorded in Luke 17:3, 4, convey the same idea: “If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.” The Christian’s life is to be one constant stream of love; he is never to cease to forgive until offenses cease. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 73.2}

Although the matter of rebuking is not directly in the lesson, it is so closely connected with it that it ought not to be passed without a notice. From the text last quoted, some have supposed that they were not required to exercise forgiveness unless the trespasser expressly asked for it, and that they were warranted in severely censuring anyone who offended them. They do not understand the spirit with which they are to rebuke the offender. Paul explained it when he said to Timothy: “Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.” 2 Timothy 4:2. Still more it is explained in Galatians 6:1: “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” And our Lord himself makes it still more plain: “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.” Matthew 18:15. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 73.3}

These texts show that the object of the “rebuke” is not to irritate the trespasser, and make him feel bitter, but to win him from his evil way. The one trespassed against is to go with a spirit of forgiveness in his heart, utterly forgetful of the fact that he has been injured, but mindful only of the fact that the one before him has by the course which he has taken, wronged his own soul. His object must not be to make the brother feel that he has injured *him*; self must not appear. He must simply try to win the erring one to the right path. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.1}

The parable which followed our Saviour’s answer to Peter, shows not only the duty of forgiveness, but also the danger of not forgiving. Following is a summary of this familiar parable. A certain man owed the king whom he served, ten thousand talents, about fifteen million dollars. The debtor had nothing with which to meet that debt, so, according to custom, he was commanded to be sold, together with his wife and children, and all that he had. Then the unfortunate man fell down and prayed, “Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.” His lord well knew that he could not pay, but was moved with compassion, and forgave him the debt. Then that same servant went out and found a fellow-servant who owed him a hundred pence, about fifteen dollars. Forgetful of the favor that he had just received, he took his fellow-servant by the throat, and demanded immediate payment of the paltry sum. The poor man made the same plea that the first servant had made to his lord, but the hard-hearted servant, who had been forgiven so much, would not listen to the cry for mercy, and cast his fellow-servant into prison. When the master heard what had been done he said: “O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me; shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.” {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.2}

The first lesson to be drawn from this is the lesson which our Saviour himself emphasized. “So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses.” What an awful thought for those who cherish resentment in their hearts, over any real or fancied wrong. It matters not if our sins have been once forgiven; if we so far forget that fact, and lose the influence of it to such a degree, as to refuse to forgive our brother, it will be as though we had never been forgiven. When we pray, we are to say, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” If we do not fully and freely forgive every injury that is done to us, when we repeat the Lord’s prayer we ask the Lord to remember our sins against us. If we refrain from praying the Lord’s prayer, or its equivalent, we cannot have any favor or pardon from God, for “he that asketh receiveth.” So if we do not forgive, there is no hope for us. Jesus himself said, “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.” Matthew 6:14, 15. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.3}

This is not an arbitrary decree, that is, a decree depending solely on the will of the maker, but is fixed by the very nature of things. It is like all of God’s decrees, a part of his eternal justice. It would be simply impossible for God to forgive an unforgiving man. Because when God forgives, it is not a mere form, but a cleansing from sin. But God does not cleanse anyone from sin who does not repent of it and desire freedom from it. He does not force forgiveness upon anybody; that would be an impossibility. And the man who will not forgive, cherishes sin, and shows that he does not want forgiveness. He is proud, and would dispute for his “rights” with the Almighty himself. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.4}

But what of the man who has once received pardon from God? He certain must be willing to forgive everybody. If not, he shows that he has no appreciation of the love of God. He shows an utterly selfish disposition, and indicates that he feels that he has received only his just due, in the pardoning love of God. He acts as though everything belonged to him by right. Take the case of the man in the parable. When his debt was forgiven, he virtually received from his master a gift of fifteen million dollars. Now what can we think of a man who has just received fifteen million dollars as a free and unmerited gift, who will refuse to give a needy fellow-creature the paltry sum of fifteen dollars? Language is inadequate to express the meanness of such a man. Surely he is not worthy of the slightest consideration. Well, that which God bestows in forgiving our sins is infinitely greater than anything we can bestow upon our fellows in forgiving their trespasses. If we have really felt the pardoning love of God, the little trespasses of our fellow-men against us will appear as nothing. When we have received so freely of the boundless love of God, it is but a small matter for us to let a little of that love overflow to our fellow-men. And this is what the apostle had in mind, when he wrote: “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” 1 Peter 4:10. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.5}

The parable shows that God forgives upon conditions. His pardon is on condition that we really and humbly desire it, and that we continue in the same humility. The sin is not blotted out as soon as it is pardoned. If it were, God could not deal with us as the king did with his servant. The merit of Christ’s blood is set down opposite the sins of the one who is forgiven, and if it remains there until “the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19), they will be blotted out. But if the forgiven one shows by his actions that he is unworthy of the grace of Christ, and attempts by his evil course to make Christ the minister of sin, then the favor is withdrawn, and he stands face to face with his sin, the same as though he had never been forgiven. He will then be required to pay all that he owes to the Lord, which will be impossible; for he is not able even to live uprightly and do his duty for the future, and he has behind him a debt, to meet which he has nothing. He must then be eternally a debtor, and must receive eternal punishment. How wonderful is the love of God, which provides free pardon for all! Who can fail to allow the goodness of God to lead him to a thorough repentance? W. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.6}

**“The Flood” The Signs of the Times, 14, 5.**

E. J. Waggoner

**Lesson 6.—Sabbath, February 11**

1. When the world became wholly corrupt, what did God determine to do? {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.7}

“And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.” Genesis 6:13. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.8}

2. What provision did the Lord make for the preservation of righteous Noah? Genesis 6:14, 17, 18. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.9}

3. Had there ever been anything to indicate the possibility of a flood? {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.10}

“And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew; for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.” Genesis 2:5. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.11}

4. In obeying the command of the Lord to make an ark, what grace did Noah manifest? {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.12}

“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” Hebrews 11:7. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.13}

5. After the ark was completed, and Noah and his family had gone into it, what wonderful thing took place to convince the people of the truth of what Noah had preached? {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.14}

“And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons’ wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth, there went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah.” Genesis 7:7-9. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.15}

6. How long after this before the flood began? {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.16}

“And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth.” Verse 10. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.17}

7. Was it possible then for Noah to do anything more for the people? {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.18}

“And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him; and the Lord shut him in.” Verse 16. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.19}

8. How long did it rain? {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.20}

“And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.” Verse 12. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.21}

9. What besides rain from heaven helped to make the flood? {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.22}

“In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.” Verse 11. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.23}

10. How extensive was the flood? {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.24}

“Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.” 2 Peter 3:6; Genesis 7:17-23. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.25}

11. How long did the waters remain at their height? {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.26}

“And the waters prevailed upon the earth a hundred and fifty days.” Genesis 7:24. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.27}

12. How long did Noah have to remain in the ark? Compare Genesis 7:11 with Genesis 8:12-16. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.28}

13. When Noah came out what did he do? {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.29}

“And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet.” Genesis 8:20. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.30}

14. What did the Lord say about floods in the future? {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.31}

“And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.” Genesis 9:11. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.32}

15. What pledge did he give to confirm this promise? {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.33}

“And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations; I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.” Verses 12-15. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.34}

16. What peculiar force is there in the expression, “I do set *my* bow in the cloud?” {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.35}

“And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.” Revelation 4:3. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.36}

“As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.” Ezekiel 1:28. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.37}

17. Then how strong was the assurance that there should never be another universal flood?-*God has pledged his own glory that it shall not be*. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.38}

18. Will this earth never be destroyed by any means? {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.39}

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” 2 Peter 3:10. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.40}

19. What word has decreed this?-*The same word that created the earth in the beginning, and that destroyed it once by a flood*. Verses 5, 7. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.41}

20. Why will this destruction take place? {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.42}

“And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.” Luke 17:26, 27. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.43}

21. What description have we of the wickedness that shall be in the last days? {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.44}

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.” 2 Timothy 3:1-5. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.45}

22. Will the earth be filled with violence as it was before the flood? See verse 3. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.46}

23. Who alone will be saved from the destruction that comes because of this wickedness? {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.47}

“The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure. Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off.” Isaiah 33:14-17. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 74.48}

**NOTES**

In last week’s lesson we learned the special direction in which the antediluvians sinned, namely, in reference to the seventh commandment. But where this commandment is long and openly violated, there is no regard for any other commandment; and there is no other form of sin that so quickly and so surely deadens all moral sensibility. So we learn that before the time that God had fixed as the limit of man’s probation, “all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth,” and “the earth was filled with violence through them;” “and God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” There was not the slightest trace of good left in men; nothing by which the Spirit of God could produce conviction of sin, so that it could not strive with them. The only good that men knew was wickedness. They called evil good, and good evil. See Isaiah 5:20-24. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 75.1}

From the flood, and the time just before it, many lessons are drawn for us. We are told that “as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.” Luke 17:26. The wickedness of man will be just as great before the coming of the Lord, as it was in the days before the flood. To many this seems incredible, but if it were not so, God would not destroy the earth. Men will be lovers of their own selves, and utterly indifferent to the welfare of others, except as the welfare of others may contribute to their own selfish gratification. They will be incontinent and fierce, and so, through sensuality, violence will fill the earth as it did in the days of Noah. See 2 Timothy 3:1-7. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 75.2}

Many think that the spread of civilization and the general diffusion of knowledge will be an effectual bar to any such moral degeneration. But these very things, which may be instruments of the highest good, will be what will bring the world to the condition that it was in before the flood. The Egyptians were the wisest people in the ancient world, yet their idolatry was of the grossest character. The Greeks were the most intellectual people who ever lived; it is doubtful if the civilization of the present day is equal to that of ancient Greece; and it is certain that in the fine arts and in scientific knowledge they were far superior to any nation now in existence. And yet they were heathen, and their worship was often characterized by the grossest licentiousness. No; intellect ever can keep a nation from moral degradation. In fact, it was their knowledge, or rather their trust in their own wisdom, which led to their ruin. “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.” Nothing but humble faith in Christ, can keep any soul from ruin. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 75.3}

The elements that will result in bringing this world into the degraded state that existed before the flood, are working to-day. First, men are trusting to science, and to their own wisdom. Second, many who occupy the highest positions, are teaching that evil is a necessity, and that there is in reality no such thing as evil, but that what we call evil is only a lesser form of good. This position was taken by Professor Fiske, of Harvard College, in a lecture in Oakland, last summer. Anyone can figure out the result of such a theory, if it should become general; and the fact that such men hold it is evidence that it would not require a miracle to make it general. Then there is Spiritualism, a cardinal doctrine of which is that there is no atonement, and that every man is his own judge, and is amenable to no one but himself; that his own heart is the only tribunal before which he is to be judged. Read Mark 7:21-25 and Galatians 5:19-21, and you will find out what will result when men follow the natural promptings of their own hearts. Now bear in mind the fact that the corner-stone of Spiritualism, namely, a belief that man is by nature immortal and cannot die, is part of the faith of the mass of professed Christians, and you will see how the way is prepared for all to accept the teachings of Spiritualism, as soon as Satan shall present to them the forms of their dead, whom they believe are really alive. This is but the barest outline, yet the reader can see from it how easily men may be led into the grossest sins. At the same time they will talk of virtue, and will actually think that they are working for the up-building of humanity. Such power has Satan to blind those who do not receive the love of the truth. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 75.4}

It is becoming quite common to say that the flood was limited in extent. Such a statement is directly contrary to the express declarations of Scripture. Peter says that “the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.” 2 Peter 3:6. And the word of God has decreed that the heavens and the earth which followed the flood, shall be destroyed by fire. The flood, then, must have been as extensive as the heavens and the earth which now exist, and as the destruction at the last day. To limit the flood to a small portion of the earth, is virtually to deny that “the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” It is, in fact, to place one’s self among the scoffers who say, “Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” Let all take heed how they receive the word of God. W. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 75.5}

**“Back Page” The Signs of the Times, 14, 5.**

E. J. Waggoner

Several of the large cities of the East are being canvassed for the *American Sentinel*, with good results. Over four thousand yearly subscriptions to that paper have been received within the past month, and the canvass has just begun. Let the work go on, for we believe it is a good one. As one subscriber says of the *Sentinel*, “every voter in the United States should read it.” And those who are not voters should read it too. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 80.1}

A brewery in New York City is called, because of its location, “Hellgate Brewery.” A more fitting name could not be devised, not only for that particular brewery, but for every brewery, distillery, and liquor shop, in the land. Every one of them is a gate to hell and destruction. If everything in this world were called by its true name, there are some things that would have less patronage. Even with man’s natural tendency to evil, the devil finds it necessary to glid sin to a great degree, in order to catch the multitude, and so those gateways to hell are made to appear very attractive. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 80.2}

We have received from James A. O’Connor, publisher, Bible House, N.Y., the fourth bound volume of *The Converted Catholic*, a monthly magazine specially designed for the conversion of Roman Catholics to evangelical Christianity. This magazine is not only good for Christians to read, that they may learn the evangelical way of salvation, but all Protestants will be interested in its contents. It is boldly and aggressively opposed to the Roman Catholic Church, but as Luther said, it was not with men but with the doctrines of that church. Rev. James A. O’Connor, the editor, was formerly a Roman Catholic priest, and is now doing a good work in New York. The subscription price is only $1.00 per year. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 80.3}

A bright, readable paper, and one that we can heartily recommend, is *Our Dumb Animals*, published monthly, by the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 19 Milk Street, Boston, Mass. It is devoted to teaching how to make the lives of our domestic animals more comfortable, and to arousing a healthy sentiment concerning the treatment in general of those of God’s creatures who cannot speak for themselves. It is neatly gotten up, well illustrated, and the matter is adapted to the comprehension of the young, who would certainly be benefited by its perusal. Kindness to animals is as essential to true Christianity as is kindness to men, and we bid the publishers of the little sheet Godspeed in their work. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 80.4}

A tree is known by its fruits. “A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.” Judged by this tree standard, the liquor traffic is evil, and only evil. A dispatch of recent date, from Kingston, Ontario, says:- {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 80.5}

“In retaliation for the hard fight being made by the temperance people of Leeds County, eleven buildings have been burned at Irish Creek. The Methodist Church and a tannery have been burned at Kemptville, and five constables have been stoned and assaulted. Dr. Ferguson, Member of Parliament, and three others, one of them a minister, were assaulted and threatened with murder, and two deacons of the Baptist Church have been warned to dismiss their ministers or have their church burned.” {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 80.6}

This is the kind of fruit that the liquor traffic bears. It manufactures criminals, and then commits crime on its own account, in order to perpetuate its own existence. And yet it has the effrontery to seek the protection of the laws. No man who loves law and order will ever be found pleading for it, and so it is begotten in crime, it lives by crime, and begets only crime and misery. It is for this reason, and this alone, that it should be suppressed. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 80.7}

The *Banner of Light* says:- {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 80.8}

“All things are preparing the way for the advent of the new age that is fast coming in. it is to be the higher age, because the more spiritual one. The scoff at spiritual realities that is now heard from the materialist on the one hand, and the religionist on the other, will be silenced before the resistless power of that great wave which is to overwhelm the world as a tide from Eternity’s ocean.” {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 80.9}

Thus the devil is seeking to prepare the minds of men for the strong, overmastering delusions, when he will attempt to counterfeit the coming of the Lord. And all the time that the poor souls who are taken captive by him at his will, are talking about the “higher age,” and “spiritual life,” and imagining that they are approaching the divine ideal, they will be going deeper into degradation. The exceeding deceitfulness of sin is such that vice itself may appear to be virtue. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 80.10}

The *Review and Herald* in its first issue for 1888, gives some interesting statistics concerning the progress of the work of Seventh-day Adventists for the past year. The gain shown by figures is fourteen ministers, sixteen licentiates, ninety-one churches, 2,790 members, and $45,784.21 in Conference funds. The Central Publishing Association located at Battle Creek, Michigan, has printed of books and tracts 65,611,008 pages, periodicals 22,771,080 pages. The total number of pages printed up to November 1, 1887, was 481,718,747. The sales in 1887 amounted to over $98,000. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 80.11}

The accessions to our ranks form no criterion by which to judge of the progress of the work. The work is not to gather out a multitude, but it is to go to all the world; and the best evidence that it is very rapidly accomplishing this is seen in the broadcast sowing of the printed page. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 80.12}

The *Review* says: “We turn our eyes to the future. The prospect, year by year, grows clearer, the cadence surer, that we have not followed cunningly devised fables in making known the soon coming of the Lord. Prophecies are converging to their fulfillments. Events are moving with accelerated velocity. The word of God is demonstrating its claim to truthfulness, and comforting every humble believer with the thought that the hope that is built upon his word can never fail. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 80.13}

The *Christian Union* is devoting considerable attention to the matter of Sunday railroad trains. In an issue of January 5 there is an article giving the result of interviews with railroad men, all of whom say that no more trains are run on Sunday than are absolutely demanded by the public, and that much less freight is handled on Sunday than on any other day. A letter to the editor, from a prominent railroad man, says that the traffic will be substantially the same per week, whether moved in 178 hours or 144, and that it can be moved in 144 hours per week. He says: “The roads and the public will be put to temporary inconvenience in conforming to this service, but the roads will soon be convinced that it is feasible, and the public will acquiesce.” And the *Christian Union* itself, in an extended editorial, says:- {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 80.14}

“Nearly all railroads run a Sunday mail train, and nearly all the Sunday newspapers take advantage of the lines of the railroad. Now, for this, not the railroad, but the people of the United States are to blame. If we do not want Sunday mail trains distributing Sunday newspapers, we have simple to produce such a state of public opinion, that Congress will pass a law that no newspaper mail shall be carried on Sunday, and the reform is accomplished. The *Christian Union* promises its co-operation in such a reform.” {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 80.15}

We have been requested by friends at the Rural Health Retreat to state that G. C. Foye is not now employed at that institution. The reason for the statement is that he has been borrowing money from the brethren, on the strength of his having been connected with the Retreat. Any who help him will do so at their own risk, and we fear to the loss. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 80.16}

**“‘Pearl of Days’” The Signs of the Times, 14, 5.**

E. J. Waggoner

Such is the title of a new monthly published in New York City and “devoted to the maintenance of the Lord’s Day,” so-called. In noticing this new journal and its mission, the *Occident*, a good Presbyterian paper in San Francisco, takes occasion to say of Sunday that it “is indeed the pearl of days,” and that “every thoughtful Christian in our country, and perhaps especially in California, must often tremble lest this day shall be lost to us.” But why this fear? The *Occident* answers: “We have in this State no human law for its protection. Every man doeth on this, as on other days, that which seemeth right in his own eyes.” {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 80.17}

The expression, “no human law,” would seem to imply the existence of a divine law for the protection of this so-called “pearl of days;” but can the *Occident* cite any such law? Is there, or has there ever been, any such law? If there be no such law, and everybody who knows anything about the matter knows that there is none, will the *Occident* please explain why every man should not do “on this, as on other days, that which seemeth right in his own eyes”? {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 80.18}

It would be vain for the *Occident* to appeal to the fourth commandment; indeed it would not be honest in it to do so, for everybody knows that that commandment says nothing of the first day of the week, except as one of the days upon which God requires us to work, that like him we may rest upon the seventh day, which “is the Sabbath of the Lord,” and upon which we are commanded not to do any work. {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 80.19}

Behold! as we write, our eye catches the last paragraph of the *Occident’s* article, and utterly inconsistent though it be, there a part of the fourth commandment is quoted to enforce Sunday-keeping! Surely ‘tis more than passing strange that professedly Christian men, ministeres, and editors of religious papers, will, with the open Bible in their hands, labor so persistently and untiringly to foist upon the consciences of their fellows the keeping of a day, the observance of which is nowhere even hinted at in the Bible, and at the same time teach men to disregard a day for the keeping of which there is a plain “Thus saith the Lord.” {SITI February 3, 1888, p. 80.20}

**“The Spirit of Antichrist. No. 8” The Signs of the Times, 14, 6.**

E. J. Waggoner

Some may think we have made a wildly extravagant statement in saying that the time is not far distant when the majority of professed Christians will be enrolled under the banner of Spiritualism, but we shall present ample proof to show that the so-called orthodox churches are even now ripe for Spiritualism, and wait only till it shall have put on a little more of the livery of Heaven, in order to accept it. In proof of this assertion, I shall quote only from those who are authorized to speak for the churches. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.1}

First, let it be remembered that with almost all the religious denominations of the world, the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul, is a cardinal point of faith; and we have shown that this doctrine is the corner-stone of Spiritualism, and that a belief in it logically tends to all the vagaries and abominations of heathen Spiritualism. A writer in the *World’s Advance Thought*, speaking of the phenomena of Spiritualism, says:- {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.2}

“I can understand why materialists are unable to believe the possibility of such startling proofs of immortality; but why they should be called in question by Christians, when they come to prove the very foundation claim of their faith, and the one of all others which most taxes credulity, I cannot understand.” {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.3}

That is, he can readily understand why Spiritualism is not accepted by those who do not believe in immortality at all; but he cannot see why those who believe in natural immortality for all men, and that there is no such thing as death, should refuse to accept the testimony which proves (?) it. But we shall see that they are not so skeptical as some think. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.4}

A writer in *New Thought*, under the heading, “Who Are Spiritualists?” says:- {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.5}

“As a matter of fact Spiritualists are found among the advocates of almost every system of religion, and all the peoples of the earth. It is received alike by orthodox and so-called heterodox Christians, by theists and deists, on its own testimony of facts. Thousands who believe in a personal God and the divine inspiration of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, are as really Spiritualists as those who deny both.... {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.6}

“Thousands do not think it necessary to leave their churches in order to consistently advocate the spiritual philosophy. Very many would be more active in the cause were it not for the wholesale denunciations of the churches, and of all Christian Spiritualists especially, by some who make themselves offensively conspicuous in our ranks, both as writers and speakers.” {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.7}

That this is not the vain boasting of an enemy who wishes to cast a reproach upon the churches, will be seen by what follows. We begin with the largest body of professed Christians, the Catholics. When Monsignor Capel, the famous agent of the Roman Propaganda, and sometime chaplain to Pope Pius IX., was lecturing in California, he had something of a discussion with one G. P. Colby, a Spiritualist. Colby set forth the beliefs of Spiritualism, and charged Capel with misrepresentation. The following is a part of the *Chronicle’s* account (Sept. 7, 1885) of the priest’s reply:- {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.8}

“Monsignor Capel took up Mr. Colby’s chief statements *seriatim*. He at first expressed surprise that the latter had not tried to ascertain what he in the first place had said before replying to it. Much that was attributed to him was the merest parody of his real words. He was a believer in immortality. If he were not, the Catholic Church would not tolerate him within her bosom for a moment. It was brought against the Catholics that they believed themselves in daily communication with the angels and saints. But the angels and saints were spirits. To Catholics the spirit world was as clear as the light of a gas jet. They walked the streets accompanied by guardian angels. The dead were in their eyes disembodied spirits who surrounded the throne of God. They prayed to them as well as to the saints and angels. To say that they did not hold communication with the spirit world, would be contrary to the whole evidence of the history of the church. Monsignor Capel denied that he had expressed a disbelief in spiritism. He had simply left out of the category of possible supernatural manifestations all biological phenomena. Aside from these, Spiritualism was but a misrepresentation of Catholic teaching, and it had been in the world from the beginning.” {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.9}

Thus we find that, on the testimony of one of its foremost representatives, the Catholic Church is wholly Spiritualist. But we should know that without this testimony, for its prayers for and to the dead, and its host of “saints” to whom adoration is paid, are sufficient evidence of the fact. In his “Life of Pope Leo XIII.” (page 44), Dr. Bernard O’Reilly says of the habit that Catholics have of naming their children after Scripture personages and churchmen:- {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.10}

“It was thought, in the firm and universal belief of the real though invisible communion between the spiritual world of the blessed in Heaven and their brethren still struggling on earth, that the bestowing of these dear and honored names on children in baptism secured them special protectors in Heaven, and was to them a powerful motive, when grown to manhood and womanhood, to honor by Christian lives the sainted names they bore.” {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.11}

And on page 83 he speaks of Stanislas Kostka as “the boy saint whom Catholic Poland reveres as its patron and protector in Heaven.” There is probably not a reader of these lines who could not from his own knowledge of the Catholic Church add many like evidences. So we have the great Roman Catholic Church as essentially a Spiritualist church, and claiming to be such. We turn now to Protestantism. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.12}

The *Sunday Times* has undoubtedly as wide a circulation as any religious journal in the land, and possibly larger than any other. It is undenominational, although its leading editor is a Methodist, but it is taken and read by Sunday-school teachers and scholars of all denominations, and among its correspondents are the leading divines and educators of both Europe and America. In an editorial in the issue of August 20, 1885, we find the following under the heading, “What Our Dead Do for Us:”- {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.13}

“Much of the best work of the world is done through the present, personal influence of the dead. And in our estimate of the forces which give us efficiency, we ought to assign a large place to the power over us, and in us, of loved ones whom we mourn as wholly removed from us. When death takes away one on whom we have leaned, ... the temptation to us is to feel that his work for *us* is done, and that henceforth, while we live on here, we must live on without his presence or aid. Yet, as a practical fact, and as a great spiritual truth, our dead do for us as constantly and as variously as they could do for us if they were still here in flesh; and they do for us very much that they could not do unless they were dead. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.14}

“Some of the saintly faces of fathers and mothers, which are a benediction to all who look at them, could never have shone as now with the reflected light of Heaven, unless they had been summoned to frequent upward lookings through the clouds, in loving communion with their children in Heaven. There are manly and womanly children, who are more serious and earnest and devoted in their young life struggles, because of their constant sense of the overwatching presence of their dead parents.... And so the dead live on here, for, and with, and in, those who mourn and remember them as gone hence forever.” {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.15}

“Our living friends do much for us, but perhaps our dead friends do yet more.” {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.16}

“In the bitterness of our keenest grief over the loss of our loved ones, there may be the consoling thought that we do not lose the stimulus and the inspiration of their memories, nor part, even for the time being, with the more sacred influence of their example, and of their spiritual fellowship.” {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.17}

The most ardent professed Spiritualist could not give utterance to more pronounced Spiritualist doctrine than this. The *Sunday School Times* has an “Open Letter” Department, in which correspondents may freely ask questions or express their opinions on any subject. It often contains sharp criticism on statements that have appeared in the paper, but no criticism on the sentiments quoted above, has ever appeared. On the contrary we have seen quite a number of commendatory notices of the article. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.18}

The *California Christian Advocate* of September 2, 1885, contained a letter from the editor, who was visiting in Oregon. In giving an account of his doings, he said:- {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.19}

“We visited the cemetery, and enjoyed for a little while communion with the dead.” {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.20}

The *Advance*, of Chicago, is the Congregationalist journal of the West, and is one of the leading church papers in the country. In the issue of July 9, 1885, the editor said:- {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.21}

“God’s people never work alone. No child of his is ever left unaided. A great company which no man can number is sent forth to minister unto those who shall be heirs of salvation. Just what they do, or how they help, we may not know, but that they do help and interpose to protect and guide us, we surely believe.” {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.22}

After referring to Hebrews 1:14, which teaches that the angels are all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation, the editor continues:- {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.23}

“But are our departed friends among the number of those engaged in this ministry? Do those who have once lived in the flesh, and on this earth, form a part of this great host? A fair inference from the Scriptures will, it seems to us, give an affirmative answer to this question. We do not say that this is an authorized doctrine, but such inference is a fair one. No one has authority, either from nature or revelation, for the assertion that when the good die they cease to have any interest in the affairs of this world. [Compare Job 14:19-21.] The assumption that they never return to this earth is wholly unwarranted. Indeed, no one can be sure that they ever leave its busy scenes. They may simply pass beyond the range of our few senses. That ‘undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns,’ is good Shakespeare, but it is not good Scripture.” {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.24}

And the above extract from a Congregationalist journal is “good” Spiritualism. If it is not out and out Spiritualism, then there is no such thing. But we have more. The New York *Observer* is a staunch Presbyterian journal, one of the oldest and most influential in the United States. The following Spiritualist verses appeared in its issue of July 22, 1886:- {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.25}

*“How cheering the thought that spirits in bliss
Do bow their bright wings to a world such as this.
They leave the sweet joys of the mansions above,
To breathe ‘oer our bosoms the message of love. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.26}*

*“They come when that pilgrim has rested from woe,
To gild the dark couch of the mourner below.
They smile on the weeper, and brightly appears
The rainbow of hope through the mists of his tears. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.27}*

*“Oh, blessings upon them wherever they fly.
To brighten the earth or illumine the sky.
Heaven grant us, when parted from life and its cares,
A pinion of light, and a mission like theirs.” {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.28}*

No more direct Spiritualist doctrine was ever taught in any Spiritualist paper. Yet there are few professed Christian believers in the natural immortality of man, who would not call it orthodox. Then how far is the Christian world to-day from Spiritualism? Who can tell? W. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.29}

**“Protestant Praise of Catholicism” The Signs of the Times, 14, 6.**

E. J. Waggoner

The New York *Independent*, one of the most well-known and influential religious journals in the world, gushes after the following style over the Pope’s Jubilee:- {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.30}

“To Joachim Vincent Pecci, Bishop of Rome, and Pope of the Catholic Apostolic and Roman Catholic Church, health and an evangelical benediction! A priest of blameless life for fifty years, wise, moderate, successful as priest, governor, archbishop, nuncio, cardinal, Pope, we send him our Christian salutation. Prelates, priests, and peoples of his own communion, gladly pay him homage. We simply offer him kindly greetings in the name of Christ, to whom both Pope and Protestant bow in reverent adoration. Gifts and congratulations pour in upon him from Christian, Turk, and pagan, in honor of the jubilee of his priesthood.... The time was when Popes hurled their unapostolic anathemas against followers of Christ, and Protestants hurled them back with access of intensity, if possible. But Leo XIII. is a kindly Christian gentleman, who loves light, and peace, and purity, and progress. *Lumen in Celo* is his motto; and that his reign will be as a light in the Catholic heavens, is in no wise improbable. He has been Pope just ten years, and these years have been so many years of progress for his church.... He has made peace with France, and Germany, and Switzerland; he has brought about an era of better feeling in Italy; he has reformed many abuses, raised the tone of the church, and gained a strong influence in the councils of Europe.... And so we wish Pope Leo, of that name the thirteenth, continued health, a long reign, and Godspeed in his liberalizing policy.” {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 86.31}

Can our readers believe that the above, and considerable more of the same, is from a professedly Protestant journal? Where is the Protestantism? What is said about the prosperity of the church, and the progress of its influence, under Leo XIII., is all true; but is that something to rejoice over? If in time of war, a leader on one side should report with every appearance of joy, that since General X had taken command of the enemy’s forces, they had made rapid and continual progress, would he not be considered as harboring traitorous feelings toward his own country? Let it be remembered that the liberties of the people have never been more trampled upon than when wise, learned, and personally upright Popes have ruled, and that the triumph of Catholicism always means death to civil and religious liberty. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 87.1}

We have no fear that the Pope will ever be regarded in this country as he is in Europe, or that the Catholic Church, as such, will ever gain the supremacy in the United States; but what we do fear, and with good reason, is that Protestantism will become so saturated with the principles of Catholicism as to overthrow the liberties of the American people. We do not mean that Protestantism will ever pray to the virgin Mary, or adopt the confessional, or any other Romish dogma that it has not now, but that it will become intoxicated with the lust for power, which is the distinguishing characteristic of Romanism. Catholicism, stripped of its belief that the church should be recognized as supreme in politics, as well as in religion, would be nothing to be feared. If there is to be a union of religion and State, as the National Reformers now put it, we would just as willingly see the Catholic religion elevated to that position as the Protestant. The American people do well to look out for the encroachments of the Papacy; but we fear lest while they are watching the enemy that is approaching from Rome, degenerate Protestantism will steal a march on them and gain the citadel of their liberties. W. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 87.2}

**“The Rich Young Ruler” The Signs of the Times, 14, 6.**

E. J. Waggoner

**The Commentary.
NOTES ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.
(February 26.-Matthew 19:16-25.)**

“And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” Matthew 19:16. From the parallel accounts in Mark 10:17-27 and Luke 18:18-27, we learn that it was a young man who asked this question, and kneeled down before the Saviour. This would indicate real earnestness on the part of the young man. He really wanted eternal life, but, as the sequel proved, he wanted it in his own way. He thought that he could earn eternal life by his good works, and he wanted those good works to be such as should be agreeable. There are many thousands who will come short of eternal life, who would like to have it, and who would have it if they themselves could make the conditions. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 90.1}

But before Jesus paid any attention to the young man’s question, he asked him one, in turn. Jesus caught up the expression, “Good Master,” and asked: “Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God.” He who sees in this any tendency on the part of Christ to depreciate himself, or to disclaim the possession of absolute goodness, comes far short of learning the lesson intended to be conveyed. Jesus was good. Peter says that he “did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth;” and that “when he was reviled, [he] reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not.” 1 Peter 2:22, 23. Isaiah’s prophetic description of him was that “he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.” Isaiah 53:9. John says: “Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.” 1 John 3:5. Paul says that God “made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” 2 Corinthians 5:21. If there had been the least trace of sin in him, he could not have been manifested to take away our sin, and we could not in him attain to the perfect righteousness of God. The fact that we may be made the righteousness of God in him, shows that his righteousness was nothing less than the righteousness of God. To his disciples he declared that Satan had nothing in him (John 14:30), and to the curious, prying Pharisees, who did nothing else, but play the spy upon him, that they might find something against him, he asked, “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” John 8:46. It will not do to say that Jesus was one jot below divine perfection. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 90.2}

It must be held as a settled fact, then, that Jesus was absolutely good; that he was the perfection of goodness. Then since, according to his statement to the young ruler, “there is none good but one, that is, God,” it must be that Jesus is God, and that this was the fact that he wished to impress on the young man’s mind. And the Scriptures everywhere bear out this conclusion. Says John: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” John 1:1. And Isaiah, foretelling his birth, said: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6. Thus it is that his righteousness was the righteousness of God. The law of God was in his heart, because it was his own law, emanating from him as well as from the Father. “In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” Colossians 2:9. Christ’s object in asking the young man, “Why callest thou me good?” and then making the statement that he did, was to see whether he called him “good” as a polite compliment, or because he recognized him as God. Moreover, this question and statement showed that he spoke with authority, so that when the young man turned away, he knew that he was turning his back on the Son of God. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 90.3}

“But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” The man who does this is perfect, for “the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.” Psalm 19:7. They are “the righteousness of God,” which we are to be made in Christ Jesus. Almost the last words of Revelation are: “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” Revelation 22:14. To keep the commandments is the highest ideal that any man can set for himself, it is the divine ideal. God himself requires no more of any man, for we read: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.” Ecclesiastes 12:14. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 90.4}

The young man was surprised at the answer which he received from Jesus. “He saith unto him, Which?” He knew the commandments of God, and felt sure that he had always kept them perfectly; and so he doubtless thought that Jesus must have reference to some higher commandments. He could not imagine that anyone would tell so good a man as he was that he must keep the commandments. To his astonished inquiry, Jesus replied: “Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Matthew 19:18, 19. All of the commandments of the second table of the law were quoted by Jesus, except the tenth. “Thou shalt not covet,” and that was included in the summary of the entire six, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Nothing was said of the first table of the law, which specifies our duties to God. This was not by any means because any one of those precepts is unnecessary, for these four commandments combined make the first and greatest commandment. But Jesus quoted the second table, because the keeping of that, or the failure to keep it, could be most readily seen. Jesus would try him on the lesser duties, and if he failed there, he would of course come short on the greater. Says John: “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” 1 John 5:4. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 90.5}

To Christ’s enumeration of the commandments, the young man replied: “All these have I kept from my youth up; what lack I yet?” This was a great deal to say, yet the young man said it in all sincerity; and there is no doubt but that so far as any man could discern, his life had been above reproach. That there was something attractive about the man, is evident from Mark’s statement that, “Jesus beholding him loved him.” Of course Jesus loved all men; but this specific statement implies that Jesus loved this young man in an especial manner. He loved him for what he was, and for the possibilities of usefulness that he saw in him; and therefore he wished him to take the one step lacking to make him perfect. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 90.6}

“Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven; and come and follow me.” Mark records the thought a little more fully in these words: “One thing thou lackest; go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven; and come, take up thy *cross*, and follow me.” Here we have a refutation of the idea that Jesus taught that any man could gain Heaven simply by his own efforts to keep the commandments. The man who thinks that this can be done is at least in as bad condition as the young man was, and he may be a good deal worse off. Yet the fact remains that he who keeps the commandments shall have eternal life. To keep them is the whole duty of man, and God requires nothing more. Then why was not the young man sure of eternal life? Because he had not kept the commandments perfectly. He thought that he had kept them, but he had not. He had kept them as perfectly as it is possible for any man to do by himself, and that was all. The one thing needful to round out his life, and to make him a perfect commandment keeper, was to follow Jesus Christ, the sinless one, who was made to be sin for us, “that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” 2 Corinthians 5:21. “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” Romans 10:4. Those who go about to establish their own righteousness will ever fall far short of attaining to the righteousness of God. We can be complete only in Christ. Our best efforts are far below perfection; but when we humbly follow Christ, divine grace comes down to meet our efforts, and thus, through faith, we out of weakness are made strong. See Hebrews 11:34. Nothing is required of any man, but that he should keep the commandments; but no man can keep the commandments except by the help of Christ. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 90.7}

In the young man’s question, “What lack I yet?” we see evidence that he thought that eternal life could be purchased by good works. This is a sad mistake. Because of this mistaken idea, many men have gone on pilgrimages, have afflicted themselves, have done penance, and many other things all in vain. The Catholic Church has taken advantage of the natural cry of the soul that is anxious for eternal life, “What must I do to be saved?” to turn the attention of men to certain works. Thus it exhibits the spirit of antichrist, because it turns men away from the Lamb of God, who alone can cleanse from sin and make men righteous. Eternal life cannot be earned, it is too valuable. No man can give an equivalent for it. It cannot be obtained without good works, yet no amount of good works will buy it.” “The *gift* of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.” Romans 6:23. After we have done all, we are still unprofitable servants, and whatever we receive must be as the free gift of God. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 91.1}

“But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions.” This shows that he had not kept the commandments. He had not loved the Lord with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself. His ideas of eternal life were altogether too low. He wanted eternal life with full possession of his earthly estate, not realizing that the riches of Heaven infinitely surpass the treasures of earth. And those riches are obtained only through self-denial. If anyone would share “the unsearchable riches of Christ,” he must be willing to become even as Christ, who though he was rich yet for our sakes become poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. See 2 Corinthians 8:9. In the parable in Matthew 13:45, 46, we learn the only way that the kingdom may be obtained: “The kingdom of Heaven is like unto a merchant-man, seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.” The young man had found the pearl of great price, but he was not willing to part with his present possessions, which were paltry in comparison, in order that he might gain it. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 91.2}

“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” Matthew 19:23, 24. This statement must be accepted as literally true. The supposition that Jesus referred to a gate in Jerusalem, called the needle’s eye, through which a camel might with great difficulty pass, is sheer nonsense. Jesus meant just what he said. A rich man cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven. The apostle tells us whom God hath chosen: “Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?” James 2:5. The man who can live in this world of sorrow and want, and still hoard up great possessions, cannot be a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus, who though he had not where to lay his head, went about doing good. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 91.3}

Yet it is not a sin to be rich. Abraham, the friend of God, “was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.” Job, of whom God said, “There is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil,” was “the greatest of all the men of the East.” But these men did not trust in riches, which is the great sin. See Mark 10:24. They had wealth, yet they did not consider it as their own, but were simply stewards for God. Yet in spite of all their liberality their property increased. Bunyan quaintly puts it thus:- {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 91.4}

*“A man there was, though some did count him mad,
The more he gave away, the more he had.” {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 91.5}*

If God pours wealth upon such a person, he cannot be counted rich in the sense that the word is used in our Saviour’s words. Such a man may enter Heaven, but not as a rich man. He enters it because he is poor in spirit, in nowise puffed up because of his possessions, but regarding them as only the Lord’s. He will be his own executor, distributing his property in his life-time, and not “leaving it” when death forces him to leave it. W. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 91.6}

**“Back Page” The Signs of the Times, 14, 6.**

E. J. Waggoner

The New York *Observer* puts the matter of communism in a nutshell, thus: “Christian communism is the cure for infidel communism. They are antipodes. The spirit of the one is stewardship-it says, ‘Mine is yours.’ The Spirit of the other is selfishness-it says, ‘Yours is mine.’” {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 96.1}

We hope that none of the readers of the SIGNS will skip the “Notes on the International Lesson,” for the reason that they may not be studying those lessons. The notes are designed to be of a practical nature, and of no lss importance to the general reader than to the Sunday-school scholar. All who are interested in the considerat6ion of Bible truth should read these notes. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 96.2}

The United States Commissioner of Labor has just rendered a report on strikes and lockouts. It appears that there has been a steady increase in strikes each year since 1881, except that there were fewer in 1887 than in 1886. The total number of employés involves in all the strikes for the entire seven years, is 1,318,674. In forty-six per cent. of the cases, the strikers gained their object. The result of the strikes, however, was a wage loss to employés of nearly $60,000,000, besides taking from the pockets of other employés, in supporting their fellow-laborers while on a strike, the sum of $4,420,595. It is extremely doubtful if a strike ever pays, while it is absolutely certain that, as a whole, they are decidedly unprofitable. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 96.3}

The *International Record* furnishes some statistics concerning pauperism in the United States, which will doubtless surprise many. It shows that pauperism is more common among men than among women, and that it is much more common among white men than among negroes. The ratio of pauperism is greater in the North than in the South, and in the East than in the West. These statistics are given to verify the following statement: “If New England or Massachusetts be taken as a starting point, it matters not in what direction a line be drawn, the largest amount of pauperism will be found to exist in Massachusetts, and the smallest in the State farthest removed from Massachusetts; while the intervening States will exhibit, with scarcely an exception, a gradual decline in something like the degree of their removal from the extreme northeast.” Much of this may be accounted for by the fact that the foreign-born population furnishes three-fourths of the paupers, and that the worst of these naturally cluster about the point near which they land. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 96.4}

In an article on Church Union, in the *Christian at Work* of January 12, Prof. George I. Crooks, D. D., of Drew Theological Seminary, said:- {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 96.5}

“The objects to be obtained by a co-operative union are not far off. We name here a more thorough evangelism, the protection of marriage as a divine institution, te protection of the Lord’s day as a Christian ordinance, and the repression of intemperance. The first of these was sufficiently discussed at the recent Washington conference. In the protection of marriage, the churches will be called on to deal with the loose divorce laws of many of our States. Their churchly function here will be to create a wholesome public opinion, to revive the Christian idea of marriage, which is in danger of perishing, and to prepare the way for legislation. In the protection of the Lord’s day, I, for one, should be glad if the united American churches were to give emphasis to the declaration that this is a Christian country, historically and politically. If we cannot unite on that, we can at least do something to revive the sense of obligation to observe the Lord’s day as sacred. We can do much to prevent the sweeping away of the legal protection which our American Sunday has hitherto enjoyed.” {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 96.6}

*Question*-If, as we are sometimes told, the only object of Sunday laws is to insure needed rest to workingmen, and that they are only “police regulations,” having no likeness whatever to religious legislation, why is it that the churches are so interested in the matter? and how is it that it is thought necessary that they should combine “to revive the sense of obligation to observe the Lord’s day as sacred’? He who cannot see that the current is setting toward religious legislation, does not discern the signs of the times. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 96.7}

The *Michigan Christian Advocate* says:- {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 96.8}

“The civil authorities of Boston are said to be already planning for a magnificent reception for Singer Sullivan upon his return from England. In the meantime, a preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ lies in a Boston jail for the awful crime of preaching in a public square without a permit, which the same civil authorities refused to grant. And this in the proud city of the Puritans! The preaching of the gospel shamefully entreated, as at old Ephesus or Philippi, and the chief gladiator of the town honored by the highest officers!” {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 96.9}

To this might be added the fact that a marble statue of the prize fighter has recently been unveiled, and the school-children of Boston have marshaled around it to admire it. Thus is art, for which so much is claimed as a refiner and civilizer, made to serve a brutalizer; for it is certain that all of the children who are taught to admire the statue of Sullivan, will insensibly be led to admire the methods by which he obtained such celebrity. Those who think that progress in art or in science will necessarily tend to elevate this generation, are trusting in a vain hope. Art did not save Greece from moral degradation, but the lesson seems lost upon this generation. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 96.10}

The SIGNS OF THE TIMES is in no sense a political paper, and takes no sides in any party contest. Nevertheless it keeps watch of the political field, especially nothing those phases which promise “reform.” A question which will soon claim general attention, as incidental to the National Reform, prohibition, and W. C. T. U. work, is that of women suffrage. The benefit that it is expected will be derived from this measure, is expressed as follows by a correspondent of the *Christian Cynosure:*- {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 96.11}

“It should be emphasized every day in the week that the women of our land, with the ballot in their hands, would ‘fix things,’ and sweep the country of beer and whisky, and secret societies into the bargain.” {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 96.12}

As we said before, we take no sides; but we can’t help thinking of this curious fact, namely, that Maine, Iowa, and Kansas have prohibition, and have no women suffrage, and that Wyoming Territory has long had women suffrage, but has no prohibition. Does this signify anything in the case? {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 96.13}

It is stated that “Father” S. Wagener, of Chicago, has renounced Romanism, and will, with Evangelist Harris, establish in that city a church of “Progressive Christians.” True Christians are always progressive, ever pressing “toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Whether it means this in the case of the proposed Chicago church remains to be seen. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 96.14}

**“An Incentive to Wickedness” The Signs of the Times, 14, 6.**

E. J. Waggoner

The somewhat trite saying, “While there’s life there’s hope,” contains more truth than most people realize. When Satan beguiled “the mother of all living,” almost his first words were, “Ye shall not surely die,” and Eve, seeing “that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise,” and willing to incur the divine displeasure if only she might gratify her curiosity and still live, “took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.” {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 96.15}

Satan’s greatest incentive to wickedness was sprung upon our race in the words, “Thou shalt not surely die.” “This secret dread and inward horror of falling into naught” is a most fearful thought, and with that removed, a vast majority of our race are willing to gamble, as it were, upon the chances of attaining felicity in some way, and at some time, in the eternity of conscious existence promised them by the enemy of all righteousness. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 96.16}

“The soul that sinneth, it shall die,” is the divine sentence, and whoever he be, whether philosopher or theologian, that teaches the natural and unconditional immortality of the soul, only re-echoes the words of the despoiler of Eden, and arrays himself against an eternal truth that underlies the very government of God. The poet sings:- {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 96.17}

*“The soul secure in her existence smiles
At the drawn dagger, and decries its point.” {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 96.18}*

And alas! true it is, that millions of souls, supposing themselves secure in their existence, have defied the God of Heaven, stimulated by the delusive thought that, whether righteous or wicked, their lives would measure with the life of the self-existent and eternal Creator of all things. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 96.19}

**“More Protestant Flattery” The Signs of the Times, 14, 6.**

E. J. Waggoner

On another page we have quoted and commented upon the *Independent’s* servile flattery of the Pope. The *Christian at Work* does not “gush” quite so much, yet it glorifies the head of “the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth,” in the following manner:- {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 96.20}

“Pope Leo XIII. may well feel profoundly grateful, and in the best sense happy, over the splendid and successful celebration of his Jubilee in commemoration of fifty years of service in his church as a Priest, Archbishop, Nuncio, Cardinal, and Pope. His life has been, even by the testimony of those who hate the papacy, above reproach and honest criticism. The whole Christian world, Protestant as well as Catholic, in looking upon this venerable man whose loyalty to God and zeal for the welfare of humanity are as conspicuous, as his freedom from many of the errors and bigotries of his predecessors is remarkable, is ready to exclaim, ‘The hoary head is a crown of glory if it be found in the way of righteousness.’ Nearly fourscore years of age, this great Ruler of a Church which Dr. Hodge, of Princeton, clearly recognized, without, however, endorsing its errors, as a branch of the true church of Christ, has richly earned the honors so lavishly bestowed the other day upon him.” {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 96.21}

It speaks of him as the “Holy Father” and “his Holiness,” and says further:- {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 96.22}

“Allying himself with boundless perseverance to the best ... in the historic creed of his church, and with the wisest and most pacific living authorities among his brethren; and bringing to these the cumulative force of a world-known character for integrity, moderation, discretion, and downright earnestness in doing good, he has been able to revolutionize in a large degree the retrogressive policy of the Roman Catholic organization.” {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 96.23}

Says the inspired prophet: “And all the world wondered after the beast.” “And they worshiped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast?” We may not say that this prophecy is yet fulfilled, but such utterances as we have quoted from influential journals, professedly Protestant, certainly indicate its speedy fulfillment. When Protestants can glory in the advance of the Papacy, it must be that we are in danger from professed Protestantism. {SITI February 10, 1888, p. 96.24}

**“The Spirit of Antichrist. No. 9” The Signs of the Times, 14, 7.**

E. J. Waggoner

The *Christian at Work* of February 18, 1886, contained an original story so full of Spiritualist teaching that one would think it was in a Spiritualist paper, instead of an independent Presbyterian journal. That the reader may get the full force of the article, we quote quite largely from it. It opens thus:- {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.1}

“‘Mamma, are you thinking of Jesus?’ {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.2}

“‘Yes, dear, she seems to be very near me to-night.’ {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.3}

“Bertha drew a low stool to the window by mamma’s side, and asked in hushed tones, ‘Do you indeed think that sister Jessie can sometimes be with us in this room?’ {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.4}

“‘I cannot doubt it,’ was the reply. Mamma’s hand was laid caressingly and soothingly upon the bowed head, for Bertha had not yet learned (alas, how few in this weary world do learn!) the quiet repose and steadfast hope of a perfect faith. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.5}

“After a moment’s silence Mrs. Grey continued: ‘I have been sitting here alone thinking of Jessie’s life among the angels. How happy she must be in her beautiful home! I often wonder in just what way the hopes and aspirations, that made her earth life so pure and true, are finding their perfect realization in the unrestricted possibilities of spiritual life.’ {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.6}

“‘But, mamma, what comfort do you find in that?’ cried Bertha. ‘I want her here; she was older and so much wiser and better than I, and she would have helped me so much.’ {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.7}

“‘But that is a selfish grief, dear Bertha; is it no comfort to know that Jessie is safe and happy? She knows how much you need her help, and can guide you far more truly now, in her perfect knowledge of the good and true, than she could have done in her earthly existence.’ {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.8}

“‘But I cannot see her; I cannot hear her. How can she help me now?’ and Bertha sobbed with the unreasoning abandon of a grief that would not be comforted. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.9}

“‘Be quiet, my child; Jessie does not wish you to mourn for her in this rebellious way. It can be a help to you always to think in what way your angel sister would rejoice to have you think, and speak, and act. If you seek to do those things that merit her approval, you will surely feel her guiding power. Jessie can both see and hear you; but her spirit is released from its earthly fetters, because the loving Father had need of her among the angels. We cannot hear her voice, but we may feel the holy influence of her angelic presence; we cannot see her face, but we may be cheered and comforted by the thought that her bright spirit is near us, and that she loves us with a love that is purer and holier than earth-love, even as her life in its changed relations is purer and holier.’ {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.10}

“Bertha sobbed no more, but listened with eager interest, while her mother talked to her of Heaven and the angels. The gentle voice subdued the rebellious heart. The loving words of faith, submission, and steadfast hope lifted her thoughts from the dark and narrow grave to the beauty and grandeur of the Father’s ‘many mansions.’ Sitting in the moonlight, with her mother’s hand clasped in hers, a strange, sweet peace came upon her. Her heart was filled with an unspeakable joy, born of the thought that Jessie-angel Jessie, might always be unto her an invisible guardian, an intangible, loving presence.” {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.11}

Then follows an account of a dream that Bertha had, in which she seemed to be dead and in the spirit-land, with her sister Jessie and other spirits, all told in the regular Spiritualist style. The story closes thus:- {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.12}

“Suddenly the scene faded from view. In another instant Jessie also had vanished. She felt herself sinking to earth again and was soon conscious of lying in her own bed without the pangs of disease. She opened her eyes to find herself alone in the silence of night, awakened from a beautiful dream. Its calm influence entering her heart taught her that death is indeed life; that God’s angels must far exceed in beauty and power any dream-like conceptions of earth; and that unseen spirits-God’s messengers-may indeed be near us, if the heart be kept pure and true, receiving their whispered counsels and holy influence.” {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.13}

Is this Spiritualism, or is it not? If it is not, can anybody show us the genuine article? We affirm that no more direct Spiritualist doctrine can be found in any Spiritualist paper in the world. It is not Spiritualism simply to the extent that it teaches the intercourse of spirits of the dead with the living, but it carries the thing to the logical conclusion of utterly ignoring Christ. Notice how Bertha’s doubt of the presence of her dead sister is given as evidence that she had not learned “the quiet repose, and the steadfast hope of a *perfect faith*.” A “perfect faith” in what? in Christ? Oh, no! a “perfect faith” in the doctrine that her dead sister “might always be unto her an invisible guardian, an intangible, loving presence,” and that if she should do the things that merited her sister’s approval, she would always feel her guiding power. Thus the people are taught by a professedly Christian journal to put their trust in the dead, instead of in Christ. Such teaching is not a single degree removed from the ancestral worship of the Chinese, or the hero worship of the ancient Greeks and Romans. When people swallow down such teaching, what is there that is opposed to the Bible, that we may not expect them to accept, if it coincides with their fancy? {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.14}

But we have some more “Christian” Spiritualism. In an article commemorative of Dr. Daniel Curry, in the N.Y. *Christian Advocate* of September 8, 1887, Rev. J. Pullman, D.D., said:- {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.15}

“And he is gone! We are not to see him on the Conference floor ever again! We are not to see that white head among us, that noble white head, nor to hear that peculiar, strident voice to which we have listened all our lives! And that face, that wonderful face, with its deep-seeing eyes and beetling brows and massive chin-a face as unique and startling in its way as the face of Giotto’s Dante, but kind and tender, and yet the hiding-place of thunder. ‘A soft, ethereal soul looking out so stern, implacable, grim, trenchant, as from imprisonment of thick-ribbed ice.’ {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.16}

“But he is not gone. We will not say ‘Good-bye’ to him. We will keep him among us still. Reserve that seat in the front pew of the Conference. Let the old place be kept sacred. He was not the man to leave his friends. In the thick battle, in the time of danger or holy communion, in the solemn hour of crisis, he will be there. ‘Are they not ministering spirits?’ No, thou art not gone from us, beloved friend, and we will love thee till Conference is convened in the presence of the King.” {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.17}

Just before Dr. Curry’s death, one of his Methodist brethren called upon him. As the visitor puts it, it was “as he lay within sight of his triumph.” In answer to a wish that he might live many years longer, Dr. Curry said:- {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.18}

“I had marked out in my mind that I might live on till about eighty-five, perhaps; but when a man has lived and worked till nearly seventy-eight, what is left is not of much consequence. About the future, as I wrote to Brother Smith, there are two things. The first is, I have perfect confidence in the general truth of Christianity (although I expect my conceptions to be changed when I get over there); and the second is, that I know that Christ has taken my case in hand.”-*Christian Advocate (N. Y.), August 25, 1887*. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.19}

Some people think it an impossibility that professed Christians should ever as a body deny the doctrine of Christ which they now profess, and which alone holds them to morality. But compare the last two quotations. Dr. Pullman has said that Dr. Curry is not gone, that he would not leave his friends, and that in the thick battle, in the time of danger, he will be there, occupying the front seat which they reserve for him. They will probably not be disappointed. Satan will be most likely to gratify them with the sight of the form of their fallen leader. But before he left, Dr. Curry gave notice that he expected many of his conceptions to be changed when he reached the home “over there.” Therefore when Satan, or one of his angels, does appear to the Methodist Conference in the form of Dr. Curry, and tells them, as Mr. Ravlin’s spirit friends did, that he has learned that his old views of the Bible were all wrong, they will have their minds all prepared to receive whatever he may give them in their stead. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.20}

The Michigan *Christian Advocate* of September 1, 1887, contained an address delivered at the funeral of Bishop Harris, in which the following occurs:- {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.21}

“He is not dead-God’s saints don’t die; they only change their modes and forms of life.” {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.22}

At the funeral of Rev. Israel Thrapp, August 29, 1887, Rev. A. S. Fisher delivered an address which was printed in the *Methodist Recorder* of October 29, 1887, from which we take the following:- {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.23}

“For more than fifty-six years he answered the roll call of his Conference here on earth. He answers now to another call, where the weary are at rest. At rest, but not idle. He cannot be. It would not be Israel Thrapp if he were idle. He was not idle here, and he cannot be there. He will go, if bidden to itinerate as a ministering spirit, and carry help to some who are to be ‘heirs of salvation.’” {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.24}

Surely the Methodists stand in grand array on the side of Spiritualism. W. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.25}

**“No ‘Perhaps’” The Signs of the Times, 14, 7.**

E. J. Waggoner

In the first chapter of second Corinthians, verses 18-20, we find the following positive statements: “But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.” {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.26}

In this fact alone can the sinner find any confidence in approaching to God. “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever,” is the sinner’s only hope. It is not to taunt them, nor to glory in disappointing them, that the gracious call is given to men. “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” Isaiah 55:1. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.27}

Says Jesus, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37); and Paul says that “He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.” Hebrews 7:25. And the same apostle also says:- {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.28}

“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4:14-16. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.29}

Again we read: “But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” Hebrews 11:6. Faith, then, and boldness, are characteristics that the Lord wants those to manifest who come to him. Our mind was forcibly turned to this line of thought a few days ago, by reading an old hymn, the first three stanzas of which are as follows:- {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.30}

*“Come, humble sinner, in whose breast
A thousand thoughts revolve;
Come, with your guilt and fear oppressed,
And make this last resolve:- {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.31}*

*“I’ll go to Jesus, though my sins
Like mountains round me close;
I know his courts, I’ll enter in,
Whatever may oppose. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.32}*

*“Prostrate I’ll lie before his throne,
And there my guilt confess;
I’ll tell him I’m a wretch undone
Without his sovereign grace.” {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.33}*

That is good; no better resolve could possibly be made; it is just what God wants every sinner to do. He says:- {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.34}

“Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” Isaiah 55:6, 7. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.35}

This is the language of positive assurance. What then shall we say to the sentiment expressed in the fourth stanza of the hymn above referred to? It reads thus:- {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.36}

*“Perhaps he will admit my plea,
Perhaps will hear my prayer;
But if I perish, I will pray,
And perish only there.” {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.37}*

Such language might be excusable in one who knew nothing of God; but uttered by one who has known God, or, rather, is known of God, it can be regarded only as a libel upon God’s word. The sinner is exhorted to resolve to throw himself prostrate before God, to confess his sins, and plead for mercy, and then is “encouraged” with the thought that *perhaps* God will hear his prayer, and admit his plea. Not in that manner does God encourage those who are sick of sin. Says the beloved disciple, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9. He promises that he will “have mercy” upon and “abundantly pardon” those who turn to him confessing and forsaking their sins. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 102.38}

There is no such thing as “perhaps” with God. His promises to the penitent, and his threats to the impenitent, are equally positive. “He that believeth and is baptized *shall be saved;* but he that believeth not *shall be damned*.” Mark 16:16. To the straying he says: “Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:12, 13. Again he says: “I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth; I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain; I the Lord speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.” Isaiah 45:19. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 103.1}

Christ says: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” Matthew 11:28, 19. There is no “perhaps” about this. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 103.2}

“God is love;” he has revealed himself to us as a God that “delighteth in mercy.” The surety of this is found in the fact that Jesus died for us. “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8. And “he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” Romans 8:32. “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” 1 Timothy 1:15. Since he came for this express purpose, how can there be any doubt about his receiving those who come humbly to him? {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 103.3}

When Queen Esther was implored to go in before Ahasuerus, to beg for the life of her people, she at first refused, because it was death to go before him without being summoned; but finally she yielded, saying: “Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day; I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish.” Esther 4:16. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 103.4}

Ahasuerus (Xerxes) was a heathen king, and an unreasonable despot. In going before him, the queen took her life in her hand. But our God was held out his scepter to us; he wants us to come, and entreats us to come. “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” Ezekiel 33:11. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 103.5}

We said that there is no such thing as “perhaps” with God. James says that with him is “no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” Then those who come to him, doubtful if they will receive what they ask for, must displease him, because they reflect upon his truthfulness. That God is displeased with the one who doubts, is evident from Hebrews 11:6, and also from the following words:- {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 103.6}

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.” James 1:5-7. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 103.7}

The man who thinks that “perhaps” God will hear his prayer, thinks that “perhaps” he will not; such an one cannot ask in faith, nothing wavering, and consequently cannot receive anything. The only way to come is to come boldly. The violent take the kingdom of Heaven by force. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 103.8}

One thought more. God is pleased to have us come to him with confidence, because it shows that we believe what he says; and his own glory depends on the fulfillment of his promises. Says Paul: “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 2:4-7. That is, God intends to exhibit us throughout eternity, as an evidence of the exceeding riches of his grace; the souls that are saved will be an everlasting trophy of his unchanging goodness; how then can it be imagined that he will not hear the prayer of the contrite soul, with whom he has said that he delights to dwell? {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 103.9}

Have you repented of your sins? do you hate them, and long for a better life? Have you confessed them? Then take the assurance of God’s word as evidence that your sins are forgiven, and that you are entitled to peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Then you may say with the prophet: “And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.” Isaiah 12:1, 2. W. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 103.10}

**“Call of Abraham” The Signs of the Times, 14, 7.**

E. J. Waggoner

**The Commentary.**

**LESSON 8.—SABBATH, FEBRUARY 25**

1. Where did Abraham live when the Lord first appeared to him? {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.1}

“And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran.” Acts 7:2. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.2}

2. What did the Lord say to him? {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.3}

“And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee.” Verse 3. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.4}

3. What promise did the Lord then make to him? {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.5}

“Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” Genesis 12:1-3. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.6}

4. What did Abraham then do? {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.7}

“Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.” Acts 7:4. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.8}

5. How old was he when he went to the land of Canaan? {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.9}

“So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him; and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.” Genesis 12:4, 5. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.10}

6. Did he know before he started where he was going? Genesis 12:1; Acts 7:3. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.11}

7. In thus going from his home, what did he manifest? {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.12}

“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.” Hebrews 11:8. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.13}

8. What promise did the Lord afterward make him? {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.14}

“And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.” Genesis 13:14, 15. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.15}

9. To whom besides himself was the promise made? Verse 15. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.16}

10. How numerous did the Lord say that his seed should be? {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.17}

“And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.” Verse 16. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.18}

11. Had Abraham any children at this time? {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.19}

“And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus.” Genesis 15:2. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.20}

12. What did the Lord again say as to the number of his posterity? {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.21}

“And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them; and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.” Verse 5. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.22}

13. How did Abraham regard the word of the Lord? {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.23}

“And he believed in the Lord.” Verse 6, first clause. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.24}

14. How did God regard Abraham’s faith? {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.25}

“And he counted it to him for righteousness.” Verse 6, last clause. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.26}

15. What is meant by faith being counted for righteousness?-*The forgiveness of sins*. See Romans 4:5-8. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.27}

16. Through whom were the promises confirmed to Abraham? {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.28}

“And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.” Galatians 3:17. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.29}

17. And who are the promised seed? {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.30}

“And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Verse 29. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.31}

18. What is the inheritance of which they, with him, are heirs? {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.32}

“For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.” Romans 4:13. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.33}

**NOTES**

In the promises to Abraham we have an instance of the necessity of the New Testament as a commentary on the Old Testament. The casual reader would hardly draw from those promises, that the whole world was to be the inheritance of Abraham, yet Paul tells us (Romans 4:13) that they included nothing less than that. Still, a careful student should see that the promises, “In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed,” and, ‘I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth,” could not be fulfilled except in the possession of the whole earth by his seed. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 105.34}

“Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” What was involved in this? Nothing less than the forgiveness of sins,-the imputing of righteousness without works. Paul, after stating

that Abraham’s faith was counted to him for righteousness, says that David describes the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputes righteousness without works, but solely on account of faith, in the following words: “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.” Romans 4:7, 8. This counting a man righteous without works is the stumbling-stone over which so many fall. Some say that it is impossible, while others go to the other extreme and say that it at once and forever releases the believer from all obligation to make any effort. But it is done, and it does not release the individual from obligation to put forth continued effort. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 106.35}

How else can a man gain acceptance with God? He cannot do good deeds to make up for his past sins, for it is impossible for him to do more than his duty at any one time. Besides, an evil deed cannot be canceled by a good one. If he gets rid of the sins that he has committed, they must be taken away as an act of free grace on the part of God. Faith is the condition on which they will be removed. Take Abraham as an example. The Lord made a promise to him, that would have staggered most men, it was so great, so incomprehensible. But Abraham “staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God,” and was fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform; “and therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.” Romans 4:20-22. The Lord made a great promise; Abraham said, I believe; and the Lord, in return for that simple faith, declared his sins forgiven. Thenceforward Abraham lived by faith, and thus it could be said by the Lord, “Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.” Genesis 26:5. He could not have done this without faith, for without faith it is impossible to please God. Hebrews 11:6. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 106.1}

In what did Abraham have faith? In just the same thing that we are required to have faith if we would obtain the forgiveness of sins and eternal life,-that is, in the death and resurrection of Christ. Paul says that the promise to Abraham was confirmed in Christ. Galatians 3:17. Therefore Abraham’s faith was of the same nature that ours must be. He believed in Christ, “whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” Romans 3:25. No one can possibly have more perfect or more intelligent faith, than Abraham had, for he is “the father of all them that believe.” “Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it [righteousness] was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” Romans 4:23-25. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 106.2}

But why is it that this faith does not tend to presumption, and to looseness of life? The reason is this: The possession of such faith as Abraham had, indicates humility, and submission to the will of God. Faith and humility are co-existent. Neither can exist without the other. “Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith.” Habakkuk 2:4. The man who will implicitly trust God’s word, even against his own judgment, shows that he believes that God knows more than he does; he has put himself into God’s hands, to be guided as God shall think best. Then of course as long as he retains that faith, he will gladly do the will of God. Thus true faith always leads to obedience. Abraham’s faith was shown to be perfect by his works. W. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 106.3}

**“Christ’s Last Journey to Jerusalem” The Signs of the Times, 14, 7.**

E. J. Waggoner

**NOTES ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.
(March 4.-Matthew 20:17-29.)**

The other accounts of the events recorded in this lesson are found in Mark 10:32-45 and Luke 18:31-34. Luke does not record the request for the two sons of Zebedee. As they were going up to Jerusalem, where Jesus was to be offered as a sacrifice for sinners, he tried to prepare the minds of his disciples for the terrible trial before them; but they could not comprehend his words. Jesus told them everything that should take place,-that he should be betrayed into the hands of the chief priests and scribes who would condemn him to death, and then deliver him to the Gentiles, who in turn would mock him, and scourge him, and spit upon him, and finally put him to death by crucifying him, and that on the third day he should rise again. But although he told them only what had been written by the prophets, “they understood none of these things; and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.” Luke 18:34. It was not until all these things had been accomplished, and Christ had “expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself,” that they could understood. So difficult is it for preconceived opinions to give way for truth. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 106.4}

“And the third day he shall rise again.” More needless controversies have been waged over the length of time that Christ lay in the grave, than over almost any other Scripture event. In answer to the request of the scribes and Pharisees for a sign, Jesus had said that no sign should be given them but the sign of the prophet Jonah: “For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” Matthew 12:40. Taking their stand on this text, some will claim that it wasn’t fulfilled, because from Friday, when Jesus was crucified, till Sunday morning when he rose again, was not three days and three nights; while others claim that he must have been in the grave seventy-two hours, and that therefore he must have been crucified earlier in the week than Friday. Neither position is correct. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 106.5}

The simple fact of the matter is that Christ was crucified on Friday, the preparation day, the day before the Sabbath, and that he rose very early in the morning of the first day of the week, and still he was in the heart of the earth three days and three nights, in the sense in which Christ spoke those words. Christ said that he should be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights; he also said that he should be crucified, and “the third day should rise again.” Therefore we must conclude that these two expressions mean the same thing. When the two disciples on the way to Emmaus recounted the betrayal and crucifixion of Christ, they said: “To-day is the third day since these things were done.” Luke 24:21. That the expressions three days and three nights, and the third day, were used interchangeably with reference to the same period of time, is proved by a passage in the book of Esther. When Esther had decided to go in before the king, she sent to Mordecai, saying: “Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day; I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.” Esther 4:16. And the record says that “on the third day” Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king’s house, etc. Esther 5:1. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 106.6}

The blindness of the disciples, and their slowness to believe that Christ did not intend to establish an earthly monarchy at that time, are shown by the fact that immediately after Christ had told them of his soon-coming sufferings, the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus, saying, “Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on the right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.” Matthew 20:21. Mark says that James and John made this request (Mark 10:35-37); but from Matthew’s account we are to understand that they made the request through their mother. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 106.7}

In this request we have an exhibition of pride and ambition for position. It was this same spirit that caused the fall of Satan in Heaven. Isaiah 14:12-14. The same ambition instilled by him into the heart of Eve, resulted in the fall of our first parents. When Satan said to Eve, “In the day that ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be like God,” she took of the fruit. It is evident, therefore, that such a spirit must be entirely banished from the hearts of those who will share the kingdom of Heaven. If places in that kingdom were distributed as they are in earthly kingdoms, confusion and ruin would ensue. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 106.8}

Jesus did not say whether James and John should or should not occupy the places which they desired; but he showed them what they must pass through. “Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.” Bold language this. They were bold because they were ignorant. They had no idea of what Christ was about to endure. If they had realized it, they would probably have been less confident; for we find that when they were brought face to face with the sufferings of Christ they forsook him and fled. Yet afterwards they did drink of the same cup, and were made partakers of his sufferings, even as Christ foretold. What made this change? Simply this: They had learned of Christ. They had learned that Christ’s kingdom was not temporal, but eternal, and that the way to it lay through tribulation. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 106.9}

In Matthew 20:23 the translators have made an unnecessary insertion. They have supplied the words, “it shall be given to them,” in the sentence: “But to sit on my right hand, and on my left is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.” It seems that a plain translation of the Greek, without supplying anything, would be much better. Then it would read thus: “To sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but for whom it’s prepared of my Father.” That is, he could give it to none, except to those for whom it was prepared, and that meant those who were prepared for it, through self-denial and suffering. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 107.1}

When the ten heard the request that James and John had made “they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.” This would indicate that they had the same spirit that the two brethren had. They wanted to occupy as high places as there were, and they were indignant to think that these two had been trying to get ahead of them. James and John would have made admirable politicians, with the same spirit that they then had; they would not lose any opportunity to advance their own interests. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 107.2}

“But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” Matthew 20:25-28. Here we have the road to true honor and greatness laid out before us. Paul taught the same thing when he said: “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another.” Romans 12:10. And again when he wrote: “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.” Philippians 2:3. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 107.3}

The wisdom of this world would call that foolishness; but the wisdom of this world would therein exhibit its own foolishness. Actually, the plan laid down by Jesus and Paul would, if carried out, result in the greatest possible good for all men. As it is now, each man looks out for himself, and for nobody but himself. In order for a man to build himself up, it is often necessary for him to pull somebody else down; and thus the whole world is peopled with Ishmaelites. Now in such a case it is evident that a man can get no more than his own strength or wisdom will bring him, and often not so much as that, since others may prevail against him. But where the divine rule is followed, everybody gets far more than he could if each one were looking out simply for himself. If there are a hundred men in a community, and each one esteems every other one better than himself, and seeks the honor of others, each man will have the strength of a hundred put forth in his behalf. Each one forgetting himself, would find his interests advanced far more than they could be if he had devoted his entire attention to himself. So it appears that the manner of life necessary to fit one for Heaven, is really the best for men’s temporal welfare, if they would but follow it. For “godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” 1 Timothy 1:8. W. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 107.4}

**“Back Page” The Signs of the Times, 14, 7.**

E. J. Waggoner

The new universal language “volapuk,” seems to be growing in the favor of the learned. The University of Munich has voted to permit Dr. J. E. Meiss to lecture upon it in the university. Volapuk has been studied by over 100,000 persons in Europe, and eleven journals are devoted to it. Whether it will ever become in fact the “world language,” remains to be seen. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 112.1}

“The Lutheran Church Consistory of Dresden, Saxony, has passed a resolution that persons known to be adherents of Spiritualism shall not be admitted to the Holy Communion.” But if they should pass a resolution excluding from the communion all who are really Spiritualists, because of holding the fundamental doctrines of Spiritualism, the number of communicants would be reduced a great deal more than Gideon’s army was. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 112.2}

The “grand Christmas number” of the *Messenger of Wisdom and Israel’s Guide* has been sent to us. Like most papers of the class indicated by its name it hails from England. It is devoted, not professedly, but actually, to the work of confusing the minds of the people concerning the prophecies, and of arousing prejudices in the minds of sensible people against the doctrines of the second advent of Christ. The only satisfactory thing about such papers is that they are usually written in such obscure jargon that nobody can understand what they are trying to teach. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 112.3}

It is stated that in two London churches actors have been invited to read the lessons for several successive Sundays, lately, and have given great satisfaction to the audiences. We see no reason why they should not; as a general thing actors can read better than ministers can, and when the service consists merely of music, and the reading of a set “lesson,” the best reader must give the best satisfaction. From this little circumstance anybody ought to be able to see how a liturgical service naturally tends to make moral character and biblical knowledge minor qualifications for a minister. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 112.4}

Some people are consoling themselves with the idea that President Cleveland’s gift to the Pope had no political significance,-that he did not make it officially, but as a private person. But we are very certain that the President did not so regard it, and that the Pope did not receive it as from a private person. In return for it, he sent his blessing to the President, and to the country of which he is the head. It is worth noting that the kingdom of Italy and the united kingdoms of Sweden and Norway, are the only civilized nations of any importance in the world, that honored themselves by not honoring the Pope with presents on the occasion of his jubilee. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 112.5}

A few days ago, we saw a report of a revival sermon that was preached by an evangelist now holding meetings in San Francisco. The report was intended to be complimentary to the evangelist, and the statement was made in the most matter-of-fact manner that the discourse the preceding evening was on the visit of Nicodemus to Jesus, recorded in the third chapter of John, and that it was enlivened and illustrated by many humorous stories. We have no doubt of the truth of the report, for we once heard the same speaker tell some humorous stories in a revival sermon. But who that has read the third chapter of John, would consider it suggestive of humorous stories? And what can be the quality of that man’s reverence, who can read that chapter and tell jokes in the same breath? And what will be the quality of the converts which he makes by such sermons? Will they not be “funny” Christians? Where has reverence gone? The next thing that we may expect is that some “revivalist” is eliciting roars of laughter by a sermon on the crucifixion of Christ. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 112.6}

Speaking of the story that has been going the rounds of the secular press, and has found its way into not a few professedly religious papers, namely, that the Seventh-day Adventists of Battle Creek, Mich., had fixed the time for the Lord to come, and had disposed of their property, and prepared ascension robes, the *Bible Banner* says:- {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 112.7}

“The facility with which such a yarn about white robes can be started and made to be credited in this year of grace, and of abounding newspapers, accounts for its persistent existence forty years ago as a smutch on a people who expected Christ, and relieves any nervous souls from feeling any need to attempt to refute it in future. The race of liars is not dead, and it is as foolish as ever to run after foolish liars to contradict them.” {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 112.8}

That is all that need be said about the matter, except that the number of people who make and love a lie seems to be on the increase, and that this age of “abounding newspapers” wonderfully increases the facility for circulating such yarns; for while hundreds of papers will readily publish a falsehood concerning religion or a religious body, very few will publish a correction-unless the religious body has political influence. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 112.9}

In a recent speech in New York, Dr. McGlynn said of the Papal authorities at Rome:- {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 112.10}

“I will go on, and if they try to crush me, then I will proceed to expose them, and I can give facts that will make the country too but to hold some of them. It will be part of prudence for them to let me alone.” {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 112.11}

We have no doubt that Dr. McGlynn can tell some pretty damaging things about the Romish authorities. He has been behind the scenes, and has been in their confidence. From his remakrs, it would seem that he knows of some gross crimes that they have perpetrated; and it would not surprise us at all to find out that this is so. But the question is, Why does he make the exposing of them a matter of revenge? If he were a true reformer, he would not rest his actions on such low ground. If he would tell what he knows, calmly, and with the desire of keeping as many innocent people as possible from being duped, it would have much more weight. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 112.12}

From the publisher, A. B. Deming, 121 Post St., San Francisco, we have received a copy of *Naked Truths about Mormonism*, which we understand is to be published monthly. It contains a great many facts about the rise of Mormonism, and there are affidavits from respectable persons now living, testifying to the frauds by which the “Book of Mormon” was foisted upon the people as a revelation from Heaven. While we like to see frauds exposed, we have no idea that such exposure will affect Mormonism in the least. The Mormon leaders well know the fraudulent character of their pretensions; and their converts are made mostly from the ignorant and the depraved in this country, and from those in foreign countries who could not be reached by any exposure published in the English language. So long as there are people who love and make a lie, lies will be believed by many in preference to the truth; and that will be until the Lord comes. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 112.13}

The *Christian Union* says of Mr. C. A. Berry, who recently declined the pastorate of Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, that when he was in this country, he left the impression of being a man of executive force, of individuality and independence of character, and a preacher of more than ordinary skill and attractiveness. A man who apprehends the drift of modern thought and life.” And it adds that this age needs a message of hope, “and it needs this message broadly and rationally interpreted, so that it shall be accordant with the best modern thought and credible by a man’s whole nature.” {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 112.14}

In this last statement the *Union* has made just one mistake. It should have said that this age *wants* such a message, not that it *needs* it. A person must be wonderfully ignorant of human nature, and blind to the prevailing *drift* of the day, who thinks that a message which accords with an’ nature, and with the “drift of modern thought and life,” can have any real elevating power. One who preaches such a message would doubtless be very acceptable to those who “will not endure sound doctrine,” but who will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 112.15}

**“A Good Place” The Signs of the Times, 14, 7.**

E. J. Waggoner

This expression is emphatically true of the Rural Health Retreat, near St. Helena, Cal. It is a good place for the sick to go in order to get well, and for the well to go in order to get better. The old epitaph, “I was well; I wanted to be better; I took physic, and died,” can never be written by the well man who goes to the Health Retreat, in order to get better; for there he will take only nature’s remedies under the most favorable circumstances. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 112.16}

Great improvements have been made at the Retreat. The main building has been enlarged to more than double its former capacity, so that now a family of one hundred can be well provided for. The building is four stories in height with a well-lighted room and a promenade upon the fifth floor which is the roof. An elevator run by water, of which the Retreat has now an abundant supply, provides easy access to every floor. Besides this, the rise of the mountain is such that one can step from every floor, and also from the top of the building, directly out upon the ground. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 112.17}

The view from the Retreat is most delightful, and from every spot of ground in the neighborhood round about, a different landscape s resented to sight. The climate is so mild that invalids can, even at this season of the year, take comfort in sitting out upon the verandas. The variation of temperature is not great, and what Eastern people would call cold weather is never known there. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 112.18}

As for the fare, we can say that the tables are provided with everything that is good. The only difficulty any one will find will be to restrain his appetite when so great a variety of nourishing and toothsome food is spread before him. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 112.19}

Genial managers and kind attendants combine to make the sum of happiness complete for the invalid or the wayfarer. Given the bracing air, the mild and equable climate, the medical attendance and the good treatment, the rest, alternated with judicious exercise, either active or passive, according to the strength of the patient, and the nourishing diet found at the Retreat, and if a sick person cannot recover his health there, it is because recovery is impossible; while the professional man who feels worn out with close confinement to his office and the daily routine of business, will find his spirits wonderfully revived by a week’s stay at the Retreat. In short, the place is what its name implies, a quiet home where one can retreat from the noise and bustle of the world, and find the blessing of health. {SITI February 17, 1888, p. 112.20}

**“The Spirit of Antichrist. No. 10” The Signs of the Times, 14, 8.**

E. J. Waggoner

From a sermon preached at Cornell University, by Rev. Henry M. Field, D. D., and published in the *Christian Union* of November 3, 1887, we take the following extract:- {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.1}

“As I stand here, I have before me the vision of one in all the grace and charm of womanhood, the idol of her home, who in an instant vanished out of sight. It was the flashing of an angel’s wings as the shining gates were opened and she passed into the heavenly city. How precious are these memories of the dead, without which this world would be poor indeed! The conversation of the living is but tame and commonplace compared with that which is whispered to us from those lips of air. Oh, may the dead ever be with us, walking by our side, taking us by the hand, smoothing the cares from the troubled brow, and pointing us upward to the regions of everlasting light and peace!” {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.2}

If anybody can tell us the difference between this and Spiritualism, we should like to know it. Instead of looking to Christ for comfort and guidance, the dead are invoked for that purpose. Is not this the spirit of antichrist? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.3}

On Sunday, November 20, 1887, services in memory of Dr. Parker were held in the First Baptist Church at Los Angeles, Cal., at which Mrs. P. W. Dorsey, the wife of the Baptist minister, read a “Tribute,” of which the following [printed in the *Herald of Truth*] is an extract:- {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.4}

“Another soul has taken its place among the great cloud of witnesses, and to-day looks on with clearer, juster, kindlier vision than earth can know at the battle you and I are still waging. Have you thought with what loving interest he is watching our work and lives? Not with the imperfect vision of men, and with the unjust judgments of earth, but with the clear and just discrimination of Heaven we are seen by him to-day as we in turn shall see. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.5}

“There is for us who meet in Parker Chapel a new tie binding us to Heaven, and there is just as surely a new motive for more earnest, more worthy, more holy living and work on earth. If there be any incentive to worthy endeavor in the thought that the great and good of all ages are witnesses of our efforts, then the knowledge that he who so recently was with us has taken his place in the great host of heavenly witnesses, should be a fresh motive for us to lay aside every weight, and run our race with patience.” {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.6}

*“‘Do we indeed desire the dead
Should still be near us at our side?
Is there no baseness we should hide?
No inner vileness that we dread? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.7}*

*“‘Shall he for whose applause I strove,
I had such reverence for his blame,
See with clear eyes some hidden shame,
And I be lessened in his love? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.8}*

*“‘I wrong the grave with fears untrue;
Shall love be blamed for want of faith?
There must be wisdom with great Death;
The dead shall look us through and through. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.9}*

*“‘Be near us when we climb and fall.
Ye watch, like God, the rolling years
With larger, other eyes than ours,
To make allowance for us all.’” {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.10}*

Who is it that is near us, watching over us, protecting us, inspiring us to noble action, looking us through and through, judging us with clear and just discrimination, and making allowance for us all? Is it “God the Judge of all?” Oh, no; it is *the dead!* What greater power could they give to God himself? Such an utterance is nothing less than a deification of the dead. Can it be possible that the papers from which we have quoted all these Spiritualist utterances, profess to teach and hold to the Bible and the religion Jesus Christ? Oh, the far-reaching influence and the blinding power of Satan’s lie in Eden! Of a truth, we may now say of him as was once said of Christ, “Behold, the world is gone after him.” With very few exceptions, all have accepted the lie by which he caused our first parents to fall. If it caused Adam and Eve to lose Eden, will it not likewise cause those who are now deceived by it to lose the eternal life which it professedly holds out to them? How can it be otherwise? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.11}

But we have yet a few more quotations to give. In her address of welcome at the National Woman’s Christian Temperance Union Convention, held in Nashville, Tenn., November, 1887, Mrs. Meriwether spoke as follows of her dead sister:- {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.12}

“In this work I have had her daily companionship, her inspiration, and her help, and I know I shall have it until I, too, cross the river, and meet her face to face, upon the other side. The morning has come for me. The sun has risen, and shall set no more. Bird nor bee nor blossom, wind nor wood, nor wave, shall ever again sigh to me, ‘only one,’ for we two walk together once more, and shall never again lose each other’s hands. We walk and talk together, just as when, on the sunny, upland slope of this century, we clasped our little hands, and roamed the daisied fields together. She lives in my life, works through me, thinks through my brain, speaks through my voice. Very rarely, if ever, have I stood upon the platform, but words of hers came to me unbidden, and I spoke her message with my own, and to-night as I stand here and bid you welcome, down through the blue fields of ether comes the solemn sound of her prophetic measure, and salutes you through my lips.” {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.13}

We have very closely scanned the pages of Spiritualist papers, but we have never seen from the lips of a professed medium any more explicit declaration of belief in spirit control than this from Mrs. Meriwether; and yet Mrs. Meriwether would no doubt be indignant if she were told that she is a Spiritualist. So would Mrs. Dorsey and Rev. Henry M. Field, and all the others from whom we have quoted. But if they are not Spiritualists, what are they? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.14}

And now we will hear from the talented Dr. T. De Witt Talmage. Dr. Talmage is a learned and eloquent man, a Presbyterian. In his tabernacle, Brooklyn, N.Y., he probably preaches to more people every Sunday, than any other preacher in the United States. More than this, his sermons are printed in scores of papers, so that there are few, if any, preachers in the world, whose influence extends farther than his does. Some time in the summer of 1887 he preached a sermon on “The Employments of Heaven,” in which he told how all the dead are busying themselves at their several callings. Among other things, he said:- {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.15}

“What are our departed Christian friends, who in this world had their joy in the healing art, doing now? Busy at their old business. No sickness in Heaven, but plenty of sickness on earth, plenty of wounds in the different parts of God’s dominion to be healed, and to be medicated. You cannot understand why that patient got well after all the skillful doctors of New York and Brooklyn had said he must die. Perhaps Abercrombie touched him-Abercrombie, who, after many years’ doctoring the bodies and the souls of people in Scotland, went up to God in 1844. Perhaps Abercrombie touched him. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.16}

“I should not wonder if my old friend, Dr. John Brown, who died in Edinburgh-John Brown, the author of ‘Rab and His Friends’-John Brown who was as humble a Christian as he was skillful a physician and world-renowed author-I should not wonder if he had been back again and again to see some of his old patients. Those who had their joy in healing the sickness and the woes of earth, gone up to Heaven, are come forth again for benignant medicament.” {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.17}

It is quite the fashion with some to mildly sneer at Talmage’s extravagant statements, but nobody sneers at that. Such statements as the above find ready entrance anywhere. Well, the devil does make a pretense of doing a big business in the healing line; and with those words of Dr. Talmage’s in their minds, thousands of people will readily visit any “healing medium” who professes to be controlled by the spirit of Abercrombie shall appear more readily still, when Abercrombie shall appear to come back in person to heal the sick. Be assured that the devil will treasure up that sermon by Dr. Talmage, and will reap a harvest of souls from it. But read further:- {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.18}

“What are our departed Christian friends doing in Heaven, those who on earth found their chief joy in the gospel ministry? They are visiting their old congregations. Most of those ministers have got their people around them already. When I get to Heaven-as by the grace of God I am destined to go to that place-I will come and see you all. Yea, I will come to all the people to whom I have administered in the gospel, and to the millions of souls to whom, through the kindness of the printing press, I am permitted to preach every week in this land, and in other lands-letters coming from New Zealand and Australia, and uttermost parts of the earth, as well as from near nations, telling me of the souls I have helped-I will visit them all. I give them fair notice. Our departed friends of the ministry are engaged in that delectable entertainment now. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.19}

“But what are our departed Christian friends who in all departments of usefulness were busy, finding their chief joy in doing good-what are they doing now? Going right along with the work. John Howard visiting dungeons; the dead women of Northern and Sourthern battle-fields still abroad looking for the wounded; George Peabody still watching the poor; Thomas Clarkson still looking after the enslaved-all of those who did good on earth busier since death than before.” {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.20}

If this is not Spiritualism, where can Spiritualism be found? See how Dr. Talmage has prepared the way for thousands to be deceived. He assures the people that when he dies he is coming back to them. Says he, “I will visit them all. I give them fair notice.” Having been thus taught, they will not be surprised when they see a form that looks like him, and claims to be him. And then when he shall tell them that the churches have held wrong views of the Bible, and confirm them in some erroneous doctrine which they already hold, of what account will a plain declaration from the word of God be to them? Who of those that accept the teaching of his sermon, will presume to take the simple, commonsense statement of Scripture, in opposition to the declarations of what they believe to be a saint direct from glory? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.21}

Another thought. If a man disbelieves one plain, unequivocal statement of the Bible, what is there to hinder his disbelieving the whole Bible? If he reads the statement that the dead know not anything, and straightway declares that they know everything, he shows that he does not believe the Bible according to what it says, but according to his fancy. He shows that he has not received “the love of the truth,” but rather the love of his own opinion. Now when Satan comes to such an one, in the form of some highly esteemed friend, and declares that the Bible is all a fiction, designed to teach certain “spiritual” truths, what is to hinder his discarding the Bible entirely? Nothing at all. Well, the whole world is in just that condition now. And when confidence in the Bible has been shaken, when the atonement is regarded as a myth (and Spurgeon says that it is so regarded now by very many Baptist ministers), and when men have gained so high an opinion of themselves, as immortal beings, that they lightly regard God and his law, vice and immorality must flood the land to an extent not known since the days before the flood. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.22}

Then it will be that the churches will have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof, and Spiritualism will work wonders to resist the truth. W. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.23}

**“In the Beginning” The Signs of the Times, 14, 8.**

E. J. Waggoner

The brother who sent the following questions, says that there has been some dispute over them in the Sabbath-school:- {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.24}

“1. What does ‘in the beginning’ refer to in the first verse of the Bible? to the beginning of the first week or to some other time? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.25}

“2. Was the earth created during the first week, or was it simply fitted up then, and created ages before? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.26}

“3. Were the sun and moon created during the first week, as the Bible says, or were they created ages before?” {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.27}

1. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Genesis 1:1. In the beginning of what? Not of God’s existence, because he is from eternity. Not the beginning of eternity, because eternity has no beginning. Then the text must mean that in the beginning of time God created the heaven and the earth. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.28}

2. Time, then, begun with the first act of the creation of this earth. Now read the first verses of Genesis: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.” Genesis 1:1-5. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.29}

Here we have the work of the first day. What was it? It was the creation of the heaven and the earth, the creation of light, and the separating of the light from the darkness, thus forming day and night. The measurement of time by days and nights must, of course, have begun as soon as time began. So “in the beginning” refers to the first day of the first week of time, in which the heaven and the earth were created. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.30}

3. “Were the sun and moon created during the first week, as the Bible says, or were they created ages before?” We are quite inclined to believe that it was just as the Bible says. We know it is not fashionable nowadays to believe the Bible in all particulars, and those who do so are considered as old-fogyish; but we have never yet found any more reliable authority than the Bible. We would advise our Sabbath-schools to stick to the Bible, and not to run after the speculations of “science, falsely so-called.” W. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 118.31}

**“Different Kinds of Righteousness” The Signs of the Times, 14, 8.**

E. J. Waggoner

The Bible recognizes two classes of righteousness. In his sermon on the mount, Christ said to his disciples, and to the multitude, “For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:20. The Pharisees were the best people in the Jewish nation, and it may be said, in the world. That is, so far as outward acts were concerned. The name Pharisee signifies “separated;” and they took this name because they were separated from the common people by their superior goodness. They were full of zeal for the law, yet Jesus said to his hearers, and to us, “Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven.” {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 119.1}

Some have erroneously concluded from these words that Jesus was finding fault with them for keeping the law so strictly, and that he would have us ignore it. But on the contrary, he says that our righteousness must *exceed* theirs. That is, it must go as far as theirs, and farther still. Then we must keep as much of the law as they did, and more. How can that be? Matthew 23:27, 28 explains: “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.” The Lord wants righteousness that comes from the heart. He did not object to having the scribes and Pharisees outwardly righteous; he would not have us openly break the law; but he wants outward service, and inward service, too. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 119.2}

These two degrees of righteousness are really two kinds of righteousness. These two kinds of righteousness are named by Paul in Philippians 3:8, 9: “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 119.3}

In these words Paul recognizes his own righteousness as a righteousness entirely distinct from the righteousness which is of God by faith. The former was such righteousness as the scribes and Pharisees find; the latter is the kind which we must have,-a kind far exceeding that of the Pharisees,-if we would enter into the kingdom of Heaven. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 119.4}

On one occasion Jesus said to the Pharisees, “Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.” Matthew 21:31. How could it be that the publicans and harlots, the scum of the earth, could get to Heaven more readily than those strict Pharisees? One would naturally think, “Surely the publicans and harlots have a great deal more to do to get ready for Heaven, than the Pharisees have.” Luther has explained this matter in the following words:- {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 119.5}

“Wherefore they that seek to be quickened and justified by the law, are much further off from righteousness and life than the publicans, sinners, and harlots. For they cannot trust to their own works, seeing they be such that they cannot hope to obtain grace and forgiveness thereby. For if righteousness done according to the law do not justify, how can sins justify, which are committed contrary to the law? Therefore in this case they are in far better ease than the justiciaries; for they have no affiance in their own works; which greatly hindereth true faith in Christ, if it do not utterly take it away. Contrariwise, the justiciaries, which abstain outwardly from sins, and live holily and without blame in the sight of the world, cannot be without the opinion of their own righteousness, with which the true faith in Christ cannot stand. And for this cause they be more miserable than the publicans and harlots, who offer not their good works to God in his displeasure, that for the same he may recompense them with everlasting life, as the justiciaries do, for they have none to offer; but desire that their sins may be pardoned for Christ’s sake.”-*Luther on Galatians, chap. 5*. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 119.6}

Christ’s statement in Matthew 21:31, is repeated by Paul, in other words, in Romans 9:30, 31: “What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.” Then in answer to the question, “Wherefore?” he continues: “Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.” Verse 32. “For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.” Romans 10:3. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 119.7}

Now we have the whole thing before us. The Jews followed the law, and so far as anybody could see, they kept it strictly. Then they trusted to their own works, and did not submit to the righteousness of God. But the Gentiles, and the publicans and harlots, had no good works to trust in, and therefore they willingly accepted the righteousness which is of God by faith. Thus the publicans and harlots receive the blessing of God more readily than the Pharisees. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 119.8}

But why is it that the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees could not count for something? and why could they not be counted as nearer the kingdom of God than those who were openly vicious? For the reason given in Romans 14:23: “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” How can this be? Just this way: Simple outward righteousness is as much righteousness as any man can attain by himself; but this is so far below the righteousness that God requires that it is indeed sin. It isn’t real righteousness at all. Thus Isaiah says: “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” Isaiah 64:6. Anyone who has any just conception of God, must acknowledge the truth of this. Whose righteousness can bear any comparison to the righteousness of God? Compared with the spotlessness of his character, the righteousness of the best of men (that is, their own natural or acquired righteousness), must be acknowledged to be but filthy rags. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 119.9}

Then what will be the condition of the man who looks at is own good works with complacency, and who thinks to atone for his short-comings by his own good deeds? He is simply trying to cover one filthy, ragged garment by putting on some more filthy rags. Instead of making himself better, he is in a worse plight. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 119.10}

To like import Paul says: “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident; for, The just shall live by faith.” Galatians 3:10, 11. That is, a curse is pronounced upon all who do not keep the whole law. But “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23), and moreover, no man is able of himself to keep the law, no matter how hard he may try. Galatians 5:17. Therefore, all who trust in their own works, are necessarily under the curse of the law. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 119.11}

How foolish then for one sinner to compare himself with another; for one to think that he has not so great a work to do to be saved, as some other one has, because he has not lived so wicked a life as that other one has! Both have been wicked, although perhaps not to the same degree; and therefore both need the cleansing blood of Christ. They cannot be saved without Christ “for there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Acts 4:12. There is nothing but the blood of Jesus that can wash away sin. Therefore sinners, both great and small, must all do the same thing; they must go to Christ for cleansing. There is just as much for one to do as for another. And since the love of God in Christ is infinite, it is just as easy for him to cleanse the vilest sinner as the most scrupulous Pharisee. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 119.12}

And when the sinner has been justified by faith, what then? Then “the just shall live by faith.” “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” 1 John 5:4. “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.” Romans 10:4. Then the one who has the most faith, will live the most upright life. Of course, for human righteousness is of no more worth *after* a man is justified than it was *before*. Says Christ, “Without me ye can do nothing.” {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 119.13}

“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” Romans 12:3. How highly ought a man to think of himself? Just as much as upright Job did after he had seen the righteousness of God. Said he, “I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” Job 42:6. Then how much have we to do, to prepare to meet Christ in peace? We have to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and to exercise much faith,-the real faith that works by love. Then will Christ be made unto us “wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption.” “And this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” W. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 119.14}

**“Abraham and Lot” The Signs of the Times, 14, 8.**

E. J. Waggoner

**The Commentary.**

**Lesson 9.—Sabbath, March 3**

1. When Abraham left his native land, whom did he take with him? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.1}

“And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.” Genesis 12:5. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.2}

2. After his sojourning in Canaan, where did he go? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.3}

“And there was a famine in the land; and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land.” Verse 10. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.4}

3. Why did he go there? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.5}

4. How was he prospered while there? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.6}

“And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.” Chap. 13:1, 2; 12:16. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.7}

5. How was Lot situated as regards wealth? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.8}

“And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.” Genesis 13:5. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.9}

6. What was the consequence of the great wealth of both Abram and Lot? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.10}

“And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together; for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram’s cattle and the herdmen of Lot’s cattle; and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.” Verses 6, 7. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.11}

7. How was Abraham affected by this strife? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.12}

“And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.” Verse 8. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.13}

8. What generous part did Abraham act? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.14}

“Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me; if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.” Verse 9. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.15}

9. How did Lot respond to this generous offer? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.16}

“And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east; and they separated themselves the one from the other.” Verses 10, 11. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.17}

10. What alone seemed to influence Lot in his choice? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.18}

11. Near what city did Lot pitch his tent? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.19}

“Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.” Verse 12. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.20}

12. What was the character of the men of Sodom? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.21}

“But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.” Verse 13. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.22}

13. Did Abraham lose anything by his generosity? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.23}

“And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.” Verses 14-17. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.24}

14. What great battle was fought some years after? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.25}

“And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar;) and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim; with Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings with five.” Genesis 14:8, 9. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.26}

15. What happened to the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and their people? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.27}

“And the vale of Siddim was full of slimepits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain. And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way.” Verses 10, 11. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.28}

16. Who else was taken captive? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.29}

“And they took Lot, Abram’s brother’s son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.” Verse 12. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.30}

17. What do you think was the indirect cause of Lot’s misfortune? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.31}

18. What charge is given to the rich? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.32}

“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.” 1 Timothy 6:17-19. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.33}

19. How sure may a man be of retaining riches? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.34}

“Labor not to be rich; cease from thine own wisdom. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.” Proverbs 23:4, 5. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.35}

20. What proverb was fulfilled in the case of Lot? {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.36}

“He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live.” Proverbs 15:27. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.37}

**NOTES**

In the transaction which forms the basis of this lesson, there is a striking contrast presented. Lot was the nephew of Abraham, and an orphan (see Genesis 11:27, 28), and seems to have been the ward of his grandfather Terah (Genesis 11:28), and, after his death, of his uncle Abraham. Lot accompanied Abraham to Canaan, then down to Egypt, and then back to Canaan. By that time both men had become so very rich that it was impossible for their flocks to be pastured together. The herdsmen of the two flocks began to quarrel over the pasturage; but Abraham took the precaution to prevent any of this strife from extending to their masters. He generously said to Lot: “If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.” It was very fitting that Abraham, as the elder, should make this proposition; but it would have exhibited Lot in a much better light if he had as generously waived the right of choice thus tendered to him, and had insisted that Abraham choose first. The record does not indicate that he did anything of the kind. He immediately chose the plain of the Jordan, because he saw that “it was well watered everywhere,” “even as the garden of the Lord.” Peter bears record that Lot was a just man (2 Peter 2:7), but Abraham certainly appears to the better advantage in this transaction. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.38}

Now note the result: Abraham was unselfish, and was willing to take whatever should be left, yet his wealth increased right along: Lot eagerly took the first choice, looking out for his own interests, and lost everything. It doesn’t always pay, even from a worldly standpoint, to be too eager for gain. We would not dwell unduly on the course of Lot, for the Bible makes no comment upon it; but we cannot but note that Abraham appears as the grand patriarch worthy of our admiration. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.39}

While the Bible says nothing directly concerning Lot’s course, there is a great deal suggested in the statement that “the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.” It is strongly implied that Lot knew this, and that he ought therefore to have kept away from there. He “pitched his tent *toward* Sodom,” but we find that before long he was *in* Sodom. No doubt it was a good business town, affording a good market. Having started towards Sodom with the idea of bettering his fortunes, it was a very natural thing for Lot to go into Sodom for the same purpose. “But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.” 1 Timothy 6:9. We do not learn that Lot himself was at all swerved from virtue by the wickedness with which he was surrounded; on the contrary, we know that he was very much vexed by it; but he suffered terribly in the loss of his family and his property. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.40}

“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy,” is the exhortation of the apostle Paul. Riches themselves are not an evil; but trusting in them is. Money is a good thing; but the love of it is the root of evil. When men set their hearts on riches, then they show where their trust is. The man who didn’t know what to do with his goods, and so pulled down his barns and built greater, and said to his soul, “Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry” (Luke 12:18, 19), trusted in his riches, and not in God. So does every man who hoards up his wealth. Such a man is an idolater; he sets gold ahead of the Lord; he tacitly says that his sole dependence for support is in his hoarded treasure, thus grieving God. The warnings in the sixth chapter of first Timothy are not all for the rich. The poor may love money, and by their strivings after it for its own sake, even though they strive in vain, they may show that they trust in uncertain riches, rather than in the living God. W. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 122.41}

**“Christ Entering Jerusalem” The Signs of the Times, 14, 8.**

E. J. Waggoner

**NOTES ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.
(Matthew 21:1-16. March 11.)**

This event is recorded by all four of the evangelists. The other accounts are found in Mark 11:1-11, 15-18; Luke 19:20-46; John 12:12-19, and all should be studied together. It is an account of a wonderful fulfillment of prophecy. The Saviour was going up to attend the last Passover, when he sent two of his disciples ahead to bring an ass’s colt to him. He told them where the colt would be found, and told them that the owner would willingly send it, if they said, in answer to his inquiries, “The Lord hath need of him.” All took place as he said, and the disciples spread their clothes upon the unbroken colt, and placed Jesus thereon. Thus Jesus proceeded to Jerusalem, while palm branches were strewed along the road. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 123.1}

“As they proceeded, the multitude was continually increased by those who had heard of the coming of Jesus and hastened to join the procession. Spectators were constantly mingling with the throng, and asking, Who is this? What does all this commotion signify? They had all heard of Jesus, and expected Him to go to Jerusalem; but they knew that He had heretofore discouraged all effort to place Him on the throne, and they were greatly astonished to learn that this was He. They wondered what could have wrought this change in Him who had declared that His kingdom was not of this world.” {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 123.2}

“While they are wondering and questioning, the eager crowd silence their queries with a shout of triumph that is repeated again and again, and is echoed from the surrounding hills and valleys. And now the joyful procession is joined by crowds from Jerusalem, that have heard of the grand demonstration, and hasten to meet the Saviour and conduct him to Jerusalem. From the great gathering of the Hebrews to attend the passover, thousands go forth to welcome Jesus to the city. They greet him with the waving of palm branches and a burst of sacred song. The priests at the temple sound the trumpet for evening service, but there are few to respond, and the rulers say to each other in alarm, ‘The world has gone after him.’” {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 123.3}

“The Saviour during his earthly life had hitherto refused to receive kingly honor, and had resolutely discouraged all attempts to elevate him to an earthly throne; but this occasion was intended by Jesus to call public attention to him as the world’s Redeemer. He was nearing the period when his life was to be offered a ransom for guilty man. Although he was soon to be betrayed and to be hanged upon the cross like a malefactor, yet he would enter Jerusalem, the scene of his approaching sacrifice, attended by demonstrations of joy and the honor belonging to royalty, to faintly prefigure the glory of his future coming to the world as Zion’s King.” {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 123.4}

This was in its peculiar features the most remarkable day in the earthly experience of our Saviour. To his disciples it was the great day of their lives. What emotions of triumph, what anticipations of glory, as in their imaginations they saw only a very short distance between them and the establishment of Jesus’ kingdom, with themselves at the right hand of power. But as with many earthly experiences it was the sunny, joyous day before a night of gloom and tempest. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 123.5}

“A very great multitude” attended his way, and spread it with their garments in sign of their submission to royalty, and cutting branches from trees, these were used to decorate the path, and as a mark of respect and honor to the new-found King. At the time of the passover Jerusalem was full to overflowing. In Nero’s time a census showed the number to be 2,700,000. These were attracted by the excitement; they knew of the fame of Jesus and readily caught the enthusiasm. From one end of the vast procession to the other arose loud shouts of Hosanna! “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord;” showing the intense feelings by which they were moved. All Jews were longing for the coming of the Messiah. In him they looked for salvation from earthly tyranny. It is not strange, then, that they should be so moved, and forget for a moment the voice of discretion, and that in the city, throughout the day, while they witnessed his healing power, even the children should partake of the enthusiasm, and join their “hosanna to the Son of David” to the acclamations of the throng. And he was the children’s friend. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 123.6}

The jealousy and vindictive wrath of the Pharisees were deeply stirred as they witnessed this demonstration. They protested in the name of order. Their sense of propriety was shocked. What will the Romans say? Jesus replied, “I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.” Luke 19:40. Because, long ago this entry into Jerusalem had been foretold and described. Zechariah 9:9; Isaiah 62:11; Psalm 118:26, and God’s word cannot fail in one jot or tittle. This was one of the reasons for which the Saviour brought these circumstances about, “All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet.” {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 123.7}

Another purpose before the Saviour’s mind is well expressed as follows:- {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 123.8}

“It was the purpose of Jesus to draw attention to the crowning sacrifice that was to end his mission to a fallen world. They were assembling at Jerusalem to celebrate the passover, while he, the antitypical Lamb, by a voluntary act set himself apart as an oblation. Jesus understood that it was needful in all future ages that the church should make his death for the sins of the world a subject of deep thought and study. Every fact connected with it should be verified beyond a doubt. It was necessary, then, that the eyes of all people should be directed to him, that the demonstrations which preceded his great sacrifice should be such as to call the attention of all to the sacrifice itself. After such an exhibition as that attending his entry into Jerusalem, all eyes would follow his rapid progress to the final end.” {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 123.9}

But with all the marks of popular homage which were bestowed upon the Saviour this day, there was his ever-present meekness and lowliness. The show of real earthly pomp and kingly power did not attend this strange triumphal procession. He had, as yet, no kingdom to share with his disciples; but he brought them that which was of infinitely greater value, salvation. Not freedom from the Roman yoke, but from Satan’s bondage. Not release from taxes and tribute, but from sin and death. {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 123.10}

Another significant action of the Saviour in this connection was the cleansing of the temple. This was, according to Mark, the next day. Jesus looked about the temple until “eventide” and saw much that caused him sadness as he witnessed the trafficking and bartering, and listened to the clink of money and the voice of greed within the sacred inclosure. He retired to Bethany to spend the night, and the ardor of the throng quickly subsided. Returning on the morrow he directed his way at once to the temple and drove therefrom all those who were making merchandise of God’s service. These traders occupied booths and stalls in the court of the Gentiles or outer inclosure, and seem to have been introduced as a matter of convenience, where people coming to offer could exchange their foreign coin for sanctuary money, and where those who wished animals for sacrifice could buy them. But the spirit of covetousness prevailed, and dishonesty and extortion were so prevalent that the Lord exclaims, “Ye have made it [his Father’s house] a den of thieves.” {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 123.11}

Upon another occasion he had, in the early part of his ministry, found a similar state of things, and performed a similar work, when these voracious money-makers fled in confusion, apparently before a whip of small cords (John 2:13-16); but in reality it was the craven fear of conscious guilt in the presence of a righteous rebuke. It is as sinful to-day as in the days of Christ to make merchandise of sacred things and sacred places. Doubtless these men quieted all conviction by the thought that while they defiled the sacred with the profane, and added oppression and dishonesty to their unholy traffic, they were thus “supporting the cause.” {SITI February 24, 1888, p. 123.12}