**“Things We Should Know. No. 2” The Signs of the Times, 16, 21.**

E. J. Waggoner

“Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.” Ecclesiastes 11:9. {SITI June 2, 1890, p. 155.96}

Here is another thing we must know. The knowledge of this naturally follows from the knowledge of the existence of God. He is our Creator, and therefore has a right to claim that we shall do his will; but if this is so, it necessarily follows that judgment must be passed upon us, to see if we have done his will. The text is addressed to young men; but since God is no respecter of persons, we must conclude that all classes of people will alike be brought into judgment. {SITI June 2, 1890, p. 155.97}

That all the world will be brought into judgment, is positively stated in the Bible. In his sermon on Mars Hill, Paul said that God “now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” Acts 17:30, 31. {SITI June 2, 1890, p. 155.98}

What shall be the standard of the final judgment? If we are to know that for certain things God will bring us into judgment, it must be that we can know what to do in order to secure a favorable decision. We have already learned that, being wholly dependent on God, we are bound to conform to his will in every particular: therefore we must conclude that God’s will is to be the standard of judgment. This conclusion is supported by the words in the Lord’s prayer, which indicated that when God’s kingdom comes his will be done by all. {SITI June 2, 1890, p. 155.99}

What then is the will of God, by which we are to be judged? Paul gives the answer in the following words: “Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law.” Romans 2:17, 18. How was it that those whom Paul addressed knew the will of God? Because they were instructed out of the law. Then it must be that the law of God contains the will of God. This is still further shown by the words which David uttered prophetically in behalf of Christ: “Then said I, Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.” Psalm 40:7, 8. It was Christ’s delight-more than his meat or drink-to do the will of God. He ever did the will of the Father. This was because the law of God was in his heart, so that all his actions were spontaneously in harmony with it. But acting in harmony with the law of God was doing the will of God; therefore the law of God is identical with his will. {SITI June 2, 1890, p. 155.100}

Once more: When the young man came to Jesus and asked what he should do that he might inherit eternal life, Jesus answered, “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” Matthew 19:17. In his sermon on the mount, he said: “Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 7:21. Therefore keeping the commandments of God is equivalent to doing the will of God. {SITI June 2, 1890, p. 155.101}

The law of God, then, is to be the standard by which all men shall be judged. This is incidentally shown in the passage already quoted from Romans: “Thou “knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law.” According to the marginal reading it is, Thou “triest the things that differ, being instructed out of the law.” The law of God is that by which we try things that differ, by which we decide what things are honest and just and pure and lovely and of good report, and what are not. This, we say, is incidental proof that we are to be judged by the law of God, the ten commandments; for it is manifest that we must judge our actions by the same rule by which God will judge them. {SITI June 2, 1890, p. 155.102}

In the text quoted at the beginning of this article, Solomon tells the young man to have his own way if he will, to walk in the ways of his heart, and in the sight of his eyes, but to know that for “all these things” God will bring him into judgment. Then we are to know not only that there will be a judgment, but that the judgment will take into account our thoughts; for the ways of a person’s heart are the ways which his heart devises or thinks upon. This is plainly stated in the next chapter: “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” Ecclesiastes 12:14. This agrees with the words of Paul, that when the Lord comes he will “bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.” 1 Corinthians 4:5. {SITI June 2, 1890, p. 155.103}

We have seen that the judgment is to be in accordance with the law of God; and since every secret thought is to be brought into judgment, it follows that the law of God takes account of even the thoughts of the heart. Read now Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” Here we see that the fact that God will bring every secret thing into judgment, is given as a reason why we should keep the commandments of God. This shows again that the law is so spiritual as to detect the slightest deviation from it even in thought. {SITI June 2, 1890, p. 155.104}

With this agree the words of Paul: “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Hebrews 4:12. As showing how the law discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart, we refer to the words of Christ in Matthew 5:18-22, 27, 28, where we find that a single hateful thought or lustful look is accounted a violation of the sixth or the seventh commandment. {SITI June 2, 1890, p. 155.105}

There is an intimate connection between Ecclesiastes 11:9 and Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14. The latter text is an exhortation to keep the commandments of God, based on the truth that by those commandments God will bring “every work into judgment, with every secret thing.” The former text is an emphatic command to those who seem bent on having their own way, to know that “for all these things” God will bring them into judgment. And since that judgment is to be based on the commandments of God, and is to take into account every secret thought, it follows that Ecclesiastes 11:9 is virtually a command for us to know that the ten commandments cover every possible deed or thought, and demand perfect obedience. It is a command for us to study the law, and to meditate in it day and night. If we are ever at a loss to know how perfect the law requires us to be, we have only to consider the life and character of Jesus. He “did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.” This was simply because the law was in his heart. Anyone who models his life in accordance with the law of God, will be just like Christ, and the law will be satisfied with nothing less. {SITI June 2, 1890, p. 155.106}

This righteousness cannot be attained by our own individual effort. Of ourselves we can do nothing; but Christ, who knew no sin, was made to be sin for us, in order “that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” And in the command to know that God will bring us into judgment for every secret thing, includes the command not only to know that the law of God is to be the standard of that judgment, but also that through Christ alone can we attain to that perfect righteousness which the law demands. If Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, then we can exhibit in our actions the righteousness of the law, for if we have Christ in the heart we must have the law there also. And having lived thus, when we are brought before the judgment seat, and God fixes upon us his piercing grace, he will see, not us, but the image of Christ, and because he lives we shall live also. {SITI June 2, 1890, p. 155.107}

**“Christ, the Sinless One” The Signs of the Times, 16, 22.**

E. J. Waggoner

In the last number but one of the last volume of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, we published a short editorial note in reply to a question that was raised in a certain Sabbath-school, as to Christ’s power to sin when he was here on earth. The statement was there made that he could not. We quote a portion of the note:- {SITI June 9, 1890, p. 155.108}

“Our whole hope of eternal life through Christ rests upon this; for if there had been any temptation that could have induced Christ to sin, that would show that there is temptation that is stronger than divine power, which, in turn, would show that he is not “able to save to the uttermost.” {SITI June 9, 1890, p. 155.109}

The question is simply another form of asking: “Can God sin?” for “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.” “The word was God,” just as truly when it was “made flesh and dwelt among us,” as it was in the beginning, “before the world was.” The object of that mysterious union of divinity with humanity was to demonstrate the power of God over sin.” {SITI June 9, 1890, p. 155.110}

We have received several letters in regard to this note, one brother claiming that it is in direct conflict with the following statement made by Mrs. E. G. White: “If it were not possible for him [Christ] to yield to temptation, he could not be our helper.” We are sure that it does not conflict with that statement. The misunderstanding is an instance of the impossibility of giving all sides of a subject in one item. Perhaps we can relieve the minds of our questioners if we say that while holding to the statement previously made, we just as firmly believe the following:- {SITI June 9, 1890, p. 155.111}

Christ was made “to be sin for us.” 2 Corinthians 5:21. He was made “in the likeness of sinful flesh.” Romans 8:3. He was “made of a woman, made under the law.” Galatians 4:4. He took on Him the nature of Abraham, and was *in all things* “made like unto his brethren,” and “he himself hath suffered being tempted.” Hebrews 2:17, 18. He was “in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Hebrews 4:15. These scriptures convey no other meaning to our mind than that Christ voluntarily took upon himself the feeble nature of man, to be subject to all the tendencies of the flesh, and the temptations of the devil. In short, he deliberately put himself into exactly the same position that fallen man occupies, to feel in his own being the full force of the power of Satan working upon fallen humanity. The temptations to which he was subject were real, not fanciful, and the strength of them equaled the strength of all the temptations that all the men in the world have to endure. The human nature that he took was a sinful nature, one subject to sin. If it were not, he would not be a perfect Saviour. We could not then go to him as one who is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” {SITI June 9, 1890, p. 155.112}

We do not think this side of the case can be stated any more strongly; and yet we see no reason to recall the statement before made. If Joseph could say, in the face of strong temptations, “How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (Genesis 39:9); if the beloved disciple could write by inspiration of the Spirit, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God” (1 John 3:9); surely it may be said of the only-begotten Son of God, in whom dwelt “all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,” that he could not sin. {SITI June 9, 1890, p. 155.113}

Take another point of view. Temptation comes through the working of Satan upon the frailty of human flesh, of which Christ himself was a partaker. We know that Satan in person put forth all his power on Jesus, not only in the wilderness, but through his whole earthly ministry, knowing that the fate of all men depended on him. If it had been possible for Satan to induce Christ to sin, he would have done it. The fact that Christ “did no sin”-that he “knew no sin,” although subjected to the severest assaults of Satan, is sufficient to show that he could not be induced to sin. {SITI June 9, 1890, p. 155.114}

This is the idea intended to be conveyed in the note referred to. In one sense, it was possible for Christ to sin, provided he had wished to, for the nature which he took was a nature subject to sin. Yet it was impossible for him to sin, because “God was in Christ,” and that in perfect fullness. Not simply did he have the power of God with him, but he was God, for even when he lay a babe in the manger at Bethlehem, the decree went forth, “Let all the angels of God worship him.” Hebrews 1:6. He never ceased to be God, and therefore he did not sin. He demonstrated in his own person the power of divinity to prevail against the power of Satan working through human weakness. {SITI June 9, 1890, p. 155.115}

But someone will say, “I cannot understand this.” Neither can we. When we can understand how Christ could humble himself to the position of a servant, and become a man, and still retain his divinity; when we can understand how he could be at the same time God and man; when we can understand how the Mighty One who made the heavens and the earth could be born a helpless infant in Bethlehem; in short, when we can understand the mind of God, and can comprehend infinity, then we will explain “the mystery of the gospel.” {SITI June 9, 1890, p. 155.116}

We advise our friends not to try to explain these things. The fact that we cannot understand how a thing can be, argues nothing against it. Finite minds cannot comprehend the workings of Infinity. We can only accept as true the statements which that same divine power makes concerning itself. But we can take comfort in every revelation of divinity. We take the highest comfort in thinking that Christ voluntarily subjected himself to every condition and every weakness that it is possible for men to be subject to; and our comfort in this arises not less from the fact that there is thus a bond of sympathy established between us, than from the knowledge that “his divine power,” which was such that Satan could not by any possibility overthrow it, is that by which are “given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.” 2 Peter 1:3. E. J. W. {SITI June 9, 1890, p. 155.117}

**“Newspaper Reading as a Preparation for Church” The Signs of the Times, 16, 22.**

E. J. Waggoner

In a recent discourse on “The New Birth,” Mr. Moody spoke in the following decided manner concerning the reading of newspapers on Sunday:- {SITI June 9, 1890, p. 155.118}

“I do not believe Gabriel himself could come down into this pulpit and preach with power to an audience that had been busy for two or three hours reading the Sunday papers. But someone says, ‘Be mild, Mr. Moody, or the papers will pitch into you.’ Let the papers pitch into me. I think the time has come for plain speaking. When ministers and members of the church buy newspapers on the street on Sunday morning from little boys who are kept out of the church and Sunday-school by selling these papers, I think someone should speak. I do not know what the Sunday papers contain. I never read one. I would as soon touch pitch; but I am told that the editors gather the scum from all over the world, and publish it on Sunday.” {SITI June 9, 1890, p. 155.119}

The New York *Observer*, which quotes and comments on the above says:- {SITI June 9, 1890, p. 155.120}

“It is greatly to be regretted that so many Christian people support the Sunday newspaper by purchasing it, and by advertising in its columns. It is a well-known fact that it receives a great deal more attention at the hands of its readers than the edition of any other day of the week, and this is why advertising is so readily found for the Sunday columns. Were every kind of support rendered by Christians withdrawn, it is questionable whether the Sunday edition would hold its own.” {SITI June 9, 1890, p. 155.121}

This prompts us to make a few remarks. We think there has been a good deal of misdirected effort in connection with this Sunday newspaper business, both on the part of those who want them suppressed by law, and by many who oppose all Sunday laws. {SITI June 9, 1890, p. 155.122}

In the first place, we will say that the Sunday newspaper is as good as that published on any other day of the week. We speak from actual knowledge. Its only difference from the editions of other days is that it is usually larger. {SITI June 9, 1890, p. 155.123}

Secondly, we can heartily agree with all that Mr. Moody and others say in regard to the demoralizing effect that the reading of the newspapers before church service has upon the attendant at church. We are sure that he who reads the newspaper for an hour before going to church will not be likely to receive much benefit from the most powerful sermon. Therefore we have no fault to find with those ministers who severely condemn the practice. {SITI June 9, 1890, p. 155.124}

But let it not be forgotten that the evil effect does not depend entirely upon the day upon which the reading is done, nor at all upon the day on which the paper if printed. Reading newspapers is as poor a preparation for the mid-week prayer-meeting as it is for the preaching service. To be sure, newspapers are not the best nor even good reading for the Sabbath-day, and he who esteems Sunday as the Sabbath will not read them on that day; but so far as unfitting one for worship is concerned, they are no worse before the Sabbath service than just before the Tuesday or Wednesday evening prayer-meeting. {SITI June 9, 1890, p. 155.125}

And, as we have already intimated, a newspaper published on Tuesday or Wednesday is just as demoralizing Sabbath reading as one published on the Sabbath or Sunday. The man who reads the Saturday evening paper on Sunday morning will be in no better frame of mind for church service than if he read one published on Sunday morning. This must be obvious to everybody. {SITI June 9, 1890, p. 343.1}

Therefore, instead of fulminating against the Sunday paper, ministers and professional reformers should turn their attention to the delinquent church-members. Let them get up a genuine revival of religion in the church. Let them labor and pray for such a conversion of their flocks as shall make newspapers distasteful reading on the day of rest. The fault lies with the lax professors, and not with the newspapers, and the ax should be laid at the root of the tree. To lop off the Sunday newspaper would do no real good, so long as the desire for unspiritual reading remained. Those who are unfitted for church duties by reading the Sunday newspaper, would, in nine cases out of ten, read something worse if that were withheld from them. The existence of the Sunday newspaper, therefore, is no reason whatever for the enactment of Sunday laws. {SITI June 9, 1890, p. 343.2}

In justice to Mr. Moody, it should be said that, so far as we are informed, he did not make the stereotyped plea for the suppression of the Sunday newspaper. His complaint, and it was a just one, was directed against those who pursue a practice that is inconsistent with their profession. E. J. W. {SITI June 9, 1890, p. 343.3}

**“Unrighteous Judgment, Self-Condemnation” The Signs of the Times, 16, 23.**

E. J. Waggoner

The epistle to the Romans is like a grand epic poem, in which the author gives in a few lines at the beginning an outline of the whole subject, and then proceeds to develop it. In the salutation and introduction, comprising the first seventeen verses of the first chapter, the apostle has given the whole gospel in a nutshell. From the statement that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, he naturally proceeds to show, in the remainder of the chapter, the necessity for the plan of salvation. This he does by portraying the deep darkness of the heathen world. In this arraignment the Jews would most heartily acquiesce; and the Gentiles could not gainsay it, for it was corroborated by their own writers. {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 343.4}

But while the professed worshiper of the true God is contemplating the awful wickedness of the heathen, feeling a sort of contemptuous pity for their blindness, and congratulating himself because of his superiority, his complaisant meditations are rudely broken by the abrupt charge of the apostle:- {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 343.5}

“Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” Romans 2:1-4. {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 343.6}

“Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest.” What a wonderful antidote to pride this would be if it were only borne in mind! The apostle has shown (see chap. 1:19-21); that the heathen are without excuse, and now he extends the same remark to all mankind. If the heathen are without excuse, how much less excuse can there be for those who are sufficiently enlightened to sit in judgment upon the abominable practices of idolaters? Why does the mere fact of condemning the wicked practices of the heathen show a person to be without excuse?-Because he shows that he knows better than to do such things, and yet he himself does those very things. Let us see if this last charge can be sustained. {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 343.7}

That all people in the world stand in the same condemnation before God is difficult for many to believe, because they see such a great difference in men. But it must be remembered that it is not charged that all are equally guilty, but that all are in the same condemnation. It must be remembered, also, that men can look only upon the outward appearance, while God looks upon the heart. Now the inspired word says:- {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 343.8}

“The Lord looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men. From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth. He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works.” Psalm 33:13-15. {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 343.9}

This does not mean that God is responsible for all the wickedness that is in the earth, nor that he has made the hearts of men all alike evil; but it does mean that human nature is the same everywhere. The natural impulses of the heart are just the same in America that they are in darkest Africa. It is a truth of Scripture that “all men are created equal.” The differences in men are due solely to surroundings and education. {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 343.10}

Moreover, we have the testimony of Scripture that the same evils are common to all. Christ said: “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.” Mark 7:21, 22. Compare this list with that enumerated by the apostle in Romans 1:29-31, and it will be seen that the vices of the heathen are simply those which spring from unregenerate human nature. Compare, also, “the works of the flesh,” mentioned in Galatians 5:19-21. {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 343.11}

Let no one charge the existence of these evils upon God, because it is stated that he fashioneth all hearts alike. “God made man upright;” it is man that is responsible for the evil. God made all men with capabilities for the highest good or the greatest evil, and man has corrupted his own way. It is man that treasures up to himself wrath; and in the day of wrath the sinner will receive only the wages that he has earned. The fact that the evil comes from the man, and that goodness comes from God, will appear more fully in the next article. Notwithstanding the evil that is in the world, God’s goodness and justice are unimpeachable. {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 343.12}

The law of God is spiritual; it deals with finer things than gross acts. “The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and morrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Hebrews 4:12. Therefore, as our Lord showed in the sermon on the mount, the law may be transgressed by a thought. “The thought of foolishness is sin. So the man who meditates murder, or who cherishes hateful, revengeful thoughts, is guilty of murder just as surely as the man who strikes down his fellow with the assassin’s knife. The comparative degree of guilt can be determined by God alone. {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 343.13}

From this standpoint there is not much chance for anybody to boast. Every man is guilty, and every time a man condemns any wrong in another, he shows the inexcusability of his own guilt. Infidels, and non-professors generally, often take delight in pointing out the follies and short-comings of professed Christians, forgetting that they are thereby passing severe condemnation on themselves; for they show that they well know what a person ought to do, and yet they do not do it. {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 359.1}

But there is another practical thought to be considered in this connection. It is contained in the words of Christ: “Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” Matthew 7:1, 2. That the word “judge” is here used in the sense of “condemn” is evident from the parallel record in Luke 6:37. This shows not only that those who judge others condemn themselves, as stated by Paul, but also that those who do not condemn others will not be condemned. Harsh judgment always comes from an evil heart. From the scriptures before us we are warranted in saying that when a man sits in judgment upon another, it is evidence that he himself is to some degree guilty of the same sin. The guilty soul loves to proclaim the guilt of another, that he may divert attention from his own. Let gossips and scandal-mongers make a note of this. Let not those who are ever ready to pronounce indignant sentence against evil think that they can thereby escape the righteous judgment of God. {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 359.2}

In this connection we should also read James 4:11, 12: “Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law; but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy; who art thou that judgest another?” This puts in a most forcible light the evil of judging and condemning. To do this is to put one’s self in the place of God. God is the only lawgiver, therefore he alone has a right to judge. {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 359.3}

Not only do we assume the authority of God, when we pass condemnation upon others, but we judge the law, and thereby put ourselves above God. How do we condemn the law?-In this way: The law is the standard of right and wrong; it alone, or its Maker, has the right to condemn. But when *we* condemn, we declare ourselves the standard, thereby judging the law to be wrong; for when we do not leave condemnation to the law, we virtually proclaim that it is not to be trusted. And since we are evil, and our judgment faulty, our condemnation is according to a faulty standard. Thus we in reality speak gross evil of the law by implying that it is inferior to our poor judgment. {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 359.4}

It should be a caution to us, also, against judging our brethren, to know that in so doing we are working in the same line with Satan. He was cast out of heaven as the accuser of the brethren, “which accused them before our God day and night.” Revelation 12:10. Really, it is no small thing to pass condemnation upon others; it is nothing less than partaking of the spirit of antichrist. {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 359.5}

This does not mean that we are not to exercise our judgment as to what is right and what is wrong. The law of God is given to us for the purpose of enlightening our minds on this very point. But we are to decide for ourselves and not for others. A lesson should be learned from the Master, who, while he hated sin as man never hated it, could say to the sinful one whom guilty man would condemn. “Neither do I condemn thee.” They who do not condemn will not be condemned, because it is only the souls that are filled with the Spirit of the Master, who will not be condemned, and such ones have first been filled with so great a sense of their own unworthiness that they thought themselves the chief of sinners; and the constant sense of God’s mercy-unmerited favor-to them depends on the acknowledgment of their own fallibility. E. J. W. {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 359.6}

**“The Sabbath-School. Trust in Our Heavenly Father. Luke 12:22-34” The Signs of the Times, 16, 23.**

E. J. Waggoner

**Notes on the International Lesson.
(June 22; Luke 12:22-34.)**

“And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for your body, what ye shall put on.” Verse 22. The “therefore” implies a reason based on what has gone before. Why take no thought for these things?-Because “a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.” It is evident that the most anxious thought should be bestowed on that which constitutes the chief part of life, and that excludes the things that are merely physical. When Jesus said, “He that believeth not the Son shall not see life” (John 3:36), he showed that he who lives only in this short life does not live at all. He knows nothing of life. Only the immortal life is worthy of being called life. It alone is life indeed. When one looks at the matter in this light, it is easy to see that food and raiment are very small items in life. {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 359.7}

“Take no *thought*.” This gives no encouragement to improvidence and laziness. One part of the Bible does not cross another part, and the apostle Paul says that “if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” 1 Timothy 5:8. See also 2 Thessalonians 3:10. Dr. Marvin R. Vincent, in “Word Studies in the New Testament,” says of the word rendered “thought,” that, being derived from a word meaning *part*, it “was explained accordingly as a *dividing* care, distracting the heart from the true object of life. This has been abandoned, however, and the word is placed in a group which carries the common notion of *carnal thoughtfulness*. It may include the idea of *worry* and *anxiety*, and may emphasize these, but not necessarily.” He cites as instances of the use of the word in the sense of the laudable care, 1 Corinthians 7:32; 12:25; Philippians 2:20, where the sense of worry would evidently be out of place. He then adds:- {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 359.8}

“In other cases that idea is prominent, as, ‘the *care* of this world,’ which chokes the good seed. Matthew 13:22; compare Luke 8:14. Of Martha: ‘Thou art *careful*.’ Luke 10:41. Take thought, in this passage [Luke 12:22; Matthew 6:25], was a truthful rendering when the A.V. was made, since *thought* was then used as equivalent to *anxiety* or solicitude. So Shakespeare (‘Hamlet’): {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 359.9}

*‘The native hue of revolution
Is sickled o’er with the pale cast of*thought*.’ {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 359.10}*

And Bacon (Henry VII.): ‘Hawis, an old man of London, was put in trouble, and died with *thought* and anguish.’ Somer’s ‘tracts’ (in Queen Elizabeth’s reign): ‘Queen Catherine Parr died rather of *thought*.’ The word has entirely lost this meaning.... It is uneasiness and worry about the future which our Lord condemns here, and therefore the Revision rightly translates, *be not* anxious.” {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 359.11}

“Consider the ravens; for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have store-house nor barn; and God feedeth them; how much more are ye better than the fowls?” Here, again, the Lord, while chiding worry and useless anxiety, and teaching implicit trust in God, uses an illustration which precludes the idea of idly waiting for something to turn up. The birds do not sow nor reap nor gather into barns, as did the rich man who trusted in his possessions and forgot God, yet God feedeth them, while his anxiety profited him nothing. But God does not feed the birds while they sit on a limb of a tree with open mouths waiting for him to bring the food along. The psalmist, in praising God for his wonderful care for the dumb creatures, says of them: “These all wait upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them *they gather*.” Psalm 104:27, 28. They gather what God provides for them, and are content with that which suffices for the present. Since men are of far greater value than the birds, there is every reason to think that God will take far greater care of them than of the birds. Therefore men have far less cause for anxious care and worry than the birds have. If God does not forget the birds, how much more will he not remember man, whom he has made in his own image? The fact that Christ commended us to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread,” is proof that God designs for to give us each day the food that is necessary for that day. {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 359.12}

In the same line, but stronger, is the reference to the flowers. Jesus said: “Consider the lilies how they grow; they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?” The clause, “Which is to-day in the field,” is better as in the Revised Version: “The grass in the field which to-day *is*.” That is, the grass in the field which to-day lives, and to-morrow is destroyed. {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 359.13}

There is nothing more frail than the flowers of the field; and upon nothing else has God lavished a greater wealth of beauty. In the early spring the California plains are fairly dazzling with the brightness of myriads of flowers of different variety; yet in one day I have seen a plot of flowers so trodden down by men and cattle that no one would imagine that a flower had ever bloomed on the spot. What should we learn from this?-The infinite wealth of the resources of God. He can afford to clothe nature lavishly. And since it is in creation that the power and divinity of God are made known to us (Romans 1:20), he designs that from this we should learn to trust him. We may thank God for the birds and the flowers; not simply because they please our senses, but because they are object lessons of God’s tenderness. He who does not look at them in this light, does not derive from them half the comfort that he ought. {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 359.14}

*“Beneath His watchful eye,
His saints securely dwell;
That hand which bears all nature up
Shall guard his children well.” {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 359.15}*

From all this, the practical, common-sense question is asked, “And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?” This is in effect, “Do not worry about that which you cannot affect.” All the worrying in the world never accomplished a single thing; how foolish, then, to indulge in it, especially since it is an implied denial of God’s care for us. {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 359.16}

“But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good-pleasure to give you the kingdom.” That is the one thing of worth. “The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” How foolish, then, for men to waste valuable time worrying about that which is but for a moment, and neglect that which is for eternity. Yet the worldling is far wiser than the professed Christian who plans chiefly for this world. The former has not had his eyes opened to see the world to come, and he plans as far ahead as he sees; but the latter has had opened before him an eternal inheritance, yet he plans only for the present. Truly, the children of this world are wiser in their generations than the children of light. {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 359.17}

But although the kingdom of God is the one thing of worth, we are not to have anxious care and worry even for that. We are to seek it, yet with loving trust in the heavenly Father, who provides everything. We are commanded to “fear not,” because it is his good-pleasure to give the kingdom. And right here, to strengthen this assurance, comes in God’s care for us in this present life. Surely he who cares so kindly for our temporal wants, will not neglect the greatest of all. Thus even the lilies become to us a pledge of God’s love, and of his faithfulness to give us eternal riches; for the lilies are a pledge that God will care for our temporal wants far more than for theirs; and if he will do that which is least, he surely will do that which is greatest. And so we can say, with the psalmist, “For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work; I will triumph in the works of thy hands.” E. J. W. {SITI June 16, 1890, p. 359.18}

**“Goodness Leading to Repentance. Romans 2:4” The Signs of the Times, 16, 24.**

E. J. Waggoner

**(Romans 2:4.)**

“Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” Romans 2:4. {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 359.19}

It is very common for men to lay the blame of their sinful condition upon God; to say that they are just as God made them. This kind of talk is increasing, and the logical result is the denial of any future punishment for sin. But that such a position is directly contrary to Bible teaching, it needs only this verse to disprove. God cannot deny himself, and therefore he cannot work at cross-purposes. He cannot at one time deliberately set about to undo that which he has once done. That he has deliberately set about the salvation of men, the entire Bible attests. He manifested his hatred for sin, and his desire to rescue men from it, by giving his Son to die. This was the supreme manifestation of his goodness to lead men to repentance. All this effort to save men from sin is utterly inconsistent with the theory that God is any way responsible for sin. {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 359.20}

The apostle tells us plainly that “by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.” Romans 5:12. The terrible depth of sin into which man fell, and the first act of God’s goodness to lead him from it, are brought to view in Genesis 3:15, where these words of the Lord to the serpent-Satan-are recorded: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.” The fact that God had to put enmity between man and Satan, shows that in the fall all of man’s natural enmity to Satan had been obliterated. {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 359.21}

God made man in his own image, both physically and spiritually; but when man yielded to the tempter, he deliberately rejected God, and became, body and soul, the servant of Satan. In that condition all his desires would have been for evil, and, like Satan and his angels, he would have had not the shadow of a desire to do right. Of course a simple offer of salvation from sin could not have been any benefit to a man in such a condition. “Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?” Of what use to offer freedom from sin to a man incapable of appreciating goodness? Therefore as the first act in the great plan of salvation, God put into the heart of man an enmity against Satan. It was purely an act of divine love. And since this enmity has been a part of the inheritance of every one of Adam’s race, it follows that not a man has lived in earth, no matter how wicked, who was not just to the extent that he ever had a thought of goodness, a subject of the grace of God. {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 359.22}

It is this enmity implanted in the heart of men by God, upon which the Spirit works when it strives with men. It is this seed which the Spirit waters into fruitfulness, in those who will yield to its influence. Thus the Spirit of God, through his goodness, is leading all men toward repentance. God “will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” 1 Timothy 2:4. But all men will not be saved. Thousands say to the Spirit: “Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee;” and still other thousands refuse to give it any recognition. {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 359.23}

It is in this sense that God “is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.” 1 Timothy 4:10. His love is bestowed alike upon all; to all he comes as a Saviour; but only those will be saved who will accept salvation. It is thus, also, that Christ is “the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” John 1:9. Every man that has come into the world has had some rays of divine light shining into his heart,-enough to have led him into the glorious liberty of the children of God, if he had followed it; and for that light he was indebted to the grace of God in Christ. {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 359.24}

The goodness of God is thus set forth by the apostle Paul: “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 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 shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 2:1-7. {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 359.25}

And that this goodness is manifested to men in sin, in order to deliver them from it, is shown also by these words to Titus: “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” Titus 3:3-7. {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 359.26}

But where shall we stop, if we attempt to recount the goodness of God, which is manifested to lead men to repentance, since the whole Bible, like the whole earth, “is full of his goodness.” Let us sum the whole matter up in one or two passages of Scripture. The first shall be Hebrews 12:1-3:- {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 359.27}

“Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.” {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 359.28}

What was the joy that was set before Christ? It seems as though the question is fully answered in Philippians 2:6, 7, which says that although Christ was in the form of God, he “thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant.” The idea is, as expressed in the Revised Version, that he counted it not a prize, or a thing to be grasped or held to, to be equal with God; but he emptied himself. The thought, then, in brief, is this: {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 359.29}

Christ was equal with God, the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person. He was God. Before him all the hosts of angels, whom he had created (Colossians 1:16) bowed in adoration. His glory was the glory of the Father. John 17:5. Not a thing was there to mar the perfect peace of heaven, and nothing more could have been conceived to add to the perfect enjoyment of all its inhabitants. But when Christ looked upon the world of men “dead in trespasses and sins,” treasuring up for themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, all this glory seemed to fade away. He did not count it as a thing at all to be desired, so long as men were perishing before his eyes without help. And so he divested himself of all his glory, and submitted to degradation and death, in glory, and submitted to degradation and death, in order that he might win a still greater joy. {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 375.1}

Yes, even the joy of heaven could be increased, and that by removing the Joy of Heaven to earth, that earth’s misery might be turned to joy. Who can estimate the depth of love that could count the immeasurable bliss of heaven as nothing compared with the joy of bringing, through reproach, ignominy and death, fallen men to share it with him? And this is the goodness of God toward men. Ought it not to lead them to repentance? Yea, verily; and such will be its effect upon everyone who will but steadfastly look at it. Oh that men would indeed look to Jesus, not once nor twice, but continually! Of such a look could it with truth be said, “There’s life in a look.” {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 375.2}

And there is life. What power there is in the thought of God’s love in Christ, to lift up the soul of the dependent, and to strengthen the weak. Human words cannot give any just conception of this great love, which has healing in it, for the mind cannot grasp it. {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 375.3}

*“For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man’s mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.” {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 375.4}*

What, then, “shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” “Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.” E. J. W. {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 375.5}

 **“The Baptism of Fire” The Signs of the Times, 16, 24.**

E. J. Waggoner

From Texas comes the following request: “If you can possibly do so at once, please give me an exposition of the baptism of fire spoken of in Matthew and Luke.” {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 375.6}

The words of John the Baptist to the Pharisees and Sadducees among the crowds of Jews assembled on the bank of Jordan were these: “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire; whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” Matthew 3:11, 12. The record in the third of Luke is the same. {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 375.7}

We have here two classes of people brought to view,-the wheat and the chaff; and likewise we have two treatments mentioned,-the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and the baptism of fire. The two baptisms are as distinct as are the two classes of people. As the question concerns only the baptism of fire, we shall consider that alone. {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 375.8}

It would seem as though the text itself should be sufficient to give a good idea, if not to settle the question, as to what is meant by the baptism of fire. Having stated of Christ that he will baptize with fire, it says that he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. This sets us on the right track; let us see how perfectly the figure fits the final destruction of the wicked. {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 375.9}

In the first place, it must be borne in mind that “baptism” always and everywhere means immersion, and that only. “Baptism” of a whole congregation with a quart of water was a thing unheard of for the first two or three centuries after Christ. John baptized in Ænon near to Salim, “because there was *much water* there.” John 3:23. It would not require as much water to “baptize” a thousand people according to the papal perversion of the ordinance, as would suffice to quench the thirst of half a dozen men. Without going further into detailed proof, let it be remembered that whenever a person or thing is said to be baptized in any fluid substance, the person or thing baptized is wholly enveloped in the substance. {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 375.10}

Let the well-known fact also be borne in mind that it is the nature of fire to consume and destroy that which is cast into it. This is its nature, and it will also do so unless the thing is immediately removed after being cast in, or else the fire is quenched before it can begin its devouring work. But if the fire is so great and so fierce as to be unquenchable, then there is no hope of saving anything that it has enveloped. Especially is this so when the substance cast into it is as combustible and as light as chaff, to which the wicked are compared. {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 375.11}

Now read Revelation 21:8: “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.” Revelation 20:14, 15 also speaks of the “*lake* of fire.” {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 375.12}

This lake of fire will be at the time when “the elements shall melt with fervent heat” (2 Peter 3:10), and the earth shall be “clean dissolved” by the fire of destruction. See Isaiah 24:19. When the earth is melted with the intensity of the heat, there will be indeed a “lake of fire,” into this the wicked, as chaff, thorns, and worthless branches, will be cast, and burned up. They will literally be immersed in a lake of liquid fire. And this is the “baptism of fire,” for which some earnest but misinformed souls sing and pray. {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 375.13}

Baptism in water is for the remission of sins, and so it is sometimes referred to as washing away sin. See Acts 22:16. Consistently with this idea, the baptisms of fire for the purpose of washing away sin; but there is this difference; the baptism by water is for the remission of sin and the salvation of the individual; but the baptism by fire is for the destruction of the sin and of the individual upon whom it is found. It is this that is brought to view in Isaiah 4:3, 4:- {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 375.14}

“And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.” {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 375.15}

This is the time when “whomsoever was not found written in the book of life [“written among the living in Jerusalem”] was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15); the time of the melting of the elements with fervent heat, in the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men (2 Peter 3:7, 10), when “the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.” Isaiah 24:6. {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 375.16}

At that time the filth of the daughters of Zion shall be washed away, and the blood of Jerusalem purged with fire. The earth will be cleansed from the curse of sin. Before that time all will be given a chance to wash themselves from sin in the blood of the Lamb; on such the second death-the lake of fire-will have no power. But those who refuse the gracious offer will have to be baptized when the time comes for this to be done, those who have fully identified themselves with sin, and who are permeated with it, will necessarily be destroyed by the same fire which removes it from the earth.E. J. W. {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 375.17}

**“The Sabbath-School. Notes on the International Lesson. Height of Mercy” The Signs of the Times, 16, 24.**

E. J. Waggoner

**Notes on the International Lesson.
(June 29.)**

This being the close of the quarter, the choice is given of reviewing or of substituting a lesson on temperance or on missions. The scripture suggested for one of the substituted lessons is Isaiah 55:8-13, and on this a few comments will be made. The text reads thus:- {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 375.18}

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.” {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 375.19}

The text quoted begins with “for,” indicating that it is a conclusion from something preceeding. The sixth and seventh verses contain an exhortation: “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 have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” Then naturally follows the statement, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts,” etc. The unrighteous man is to forsake his thoughts, because they are not the thoughts of God. From this we learn the wonderful fact that men must think the thoughts of God, in order to please him. {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 375.20}

What are the thoughts of God? It is evident that we must be able to determine this, to some extent, at least, or else we should not know whether or not to forsake the thoughts that we have, as not being his thoughts. Since the Bible is the word of God, it is plain that it must express his thought. In it we find what he thinks of different actions of men. But that which is most specifically the thought of God is his law, the ten commandments. This is his revealed will, comprehending in itself all that is drawn out in detail in the various books of the Bible. {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 375.21}

The law of God is a law of love. It was given as love. Deuteronomy 33:2, 3. The object of it is love. 1 Timothy 1:5. Love is the fulfilling of it. Romans 13:10. The keeping of the commandments is the only complete manifestation of the love of God. 1 John 5:3. And it is in vain that anybody makes a profession of love to God, while he does not keep his commandments. See John 14:15; Luke 6:46. From these Scripture facts we may know that when the apostle Paul says that love “thinketh no evil” (1 Corinthians 13:5), he means that perfect obedience to the law of God consists in being free from evil thoughts. This must necessarily follow, because the law of God is the thoughts of God. {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 375.22}

These thoughts are as much higher than the thoughts of the natural man as the heaven is higher than the earth. Therefore when a man fully turns to the Lord, his thoughts must be elevated as much as from earth to heaven. And this one point shows the exceeding greatness of God’s law, and how far short of it all men come. Men in their self-righteousness may boast, like the Pharisee, over those whom they regard as great sinners, but their boasting is vain, for, while there are indeed degrees of sin, the difference in the guilt of different men, when compared with that heavenly standard, the law of God, is only as the difference in the height of different trees on earth compared with the distance of earth from the farthest star. {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 375.23}

The statement that as the heavens are high above the earth so are God’s thoughts higher than our thoughts, may remind us that the heavens themselves may enable us to think God’s thoughts after him. As the law of God is an expression of God’s thoughts as to morals, so the material universe is an expression of God’s thoughts in concrete form. “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork.” In them we see what great thoughts God had to mind when he planned the universe. They show his eternal power and godhead, and thus are an aid in lifting our thoughts to the level of God’s, in the realm of morals. Surely it is impossible for a person to gaze upon the heavens thoughtfully, and with reverent recognition of their Creator, and at the same time to harbor evil thoughts. {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 375.24}

But there is comfort as well as instruction in the fact that God’s thoughts are as much higher than ours as the heavens are higher than the earth. It is in connection with the statement that God will “abundantly pardon “those who turn to him. Now of his thoughts toward us we read: “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. His thoughts toward us are thoughts of peace, and they are as much higher than ours as the heavens are higher than the earth. This agrees with the statement in Psalm 36:5: “Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.” Also Psalm 108:4: “For thy mercy is great above the heavens; and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds.” And Psalm 103:11: “For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.” It would be well sometimes if doubting souls could think of their own *good* traits in contrast with those of God. I do not mean for them to think how evil they are, but to rate at a fair value any good qualities they may possess, and then, holding to that valuation, think in how infinitely greater degree those same good qualities exist in God. For instance, take the quality of mercy; let a man think how he would receive one who, having injured him, comes to him with tears in his eyes, making an humble confession, and asking pardon. There are few who would even wait for the penitent one to finish his confession before assuring him of full pardon. His thoughts toward him would be all kindness; but God’s thoughts are as much higher than ours as heaven is higher than earth. God is as much more merciful than man as he is greater. Whoever will institute such a comparison as this, will become ashamed of his own doubts. {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 375.25}

That which should be of special encouragement in the line of missionary effort is the statement that God’s word will accomplish that which he pleases, and prosper in the thing whereto he sends it. This does not mean that it will result in the conversion of the whole world. The word of God has been as powerful in every age of the world as it is now, or as it ever will be; yet in no age of the world, not even when the word was incarnate, have even a large minority of people acknowledged God. It is true, however, that even then it accomplished God’s purpose. It gathered out of the multitude a people for his name, and left the remainder without excuse. Of one thing we may be sure, that the word will prosper. Therefore consecrated effort to spread abroad a knowledge of the word will not be in vain. “In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.” Ecclesiastes 11:6. It is certain that either this effort or that will prosper, and there is a possibility that both may yield abundant returns. And the few from every age, who have heeded the word of God, will at last form a great multitude whom no man can number, who shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God, when the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, and the whole earth shall resound with the praises of God. E. J. W. {SITI June 23, 1890, p. 375.26}

**“According to His Deeds. Romans 1:5, 6” The Signs of the Times, 16, 25.**

E. J. Waggoner

“And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But, after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds.” Romans 2:3-6. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.27}

The last two verses contain that to which we wish to call special attention, the others are quoted in order that the reader may get the connection. The truth that we wish to impress is very clearly expressed, yet it is very generally ignored. It is this, that they who at the last suffer the pains of the second death get no more than they have been working for, and they alone are responsible for it. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.28}

God takes no pleasure in the death of any. But sin when it is finished bringeth forth death, because sin cannot exist in the presence of the glory of God, and the time will surely come when the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waves cover the sea. For a little moment God has allowed sin to flaunt itself and develop its full measure of hideous deformity, but he will soon blot it from existence; and when sin is destroyed, those who have made sin a part of themselves, and are so permeated with it that it cannot be separated from them, must necessarily go with it. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.29}

But God calls on all men everywhere to repent. To all men comes the proclamation, “Be ye reconciled to God.” To all he says, “Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.” No man can serve God and mammon at the same time. He must choose one or the other. But the freedom and power of choice are given to man, so that he need not serve Satan unless he wishes to. The service of God leads to life; but “the wages of sin is death.” Romans 6:23. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.30}

Now when a man has the choice set before him, and he despises the riches of the goodness and forbearance and long-suffering of God, and deliberately chooses the service of Satan, who can say that when that man dies for his sin he does not get just what he bargained for? He gets simply his wages. Then who can charge God with injustice in punishing the ungodly with everlasting destruction? Whom do we call the unjust man-the one who pays the wages promised? Or the one who withholds them?-The latter of course. Now from the beginning it has been plainly set forth that the wages of sin is death. Paul says that the benighted heathen know that they who commit the crimes of which they are guilty, are worthy of death. Then when a man deliberately chooses that work, the wages of which has been so plainly declared to be death, all must see that to pay the wages promised is the only thing that is consistent with justice. God could not be just and at the same time withhold the wages promised to the worker of iniquity. Many will not admit this now; but at the last day every soul that perishes will acknowledge that it receives but its just due. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.31}

This is perhaps sufficient for this; but how is it with the righteous? Do they likewise get what they earn? The apostle declares that God will render to every man according to his deeds; and Christ himself declares, “Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” Revelation 22:12. But while this is so, it must not be forgotten that eternal life is a gift. The reward of the righteous is put in direct contrast with that of the wicked. While the wages of sin is death, the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. It follows, therefore, that no man earns eternal life by his good deeds. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.32}

And yet eternal life is the reward of righteousness. Not of a certain number of righteous deeds, but of righteousness. And how does righteousness come?-Why, it is a gift, for Paul says: “For if by one man’s offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.” Romans 5:17. Now since righteousness itself is a gift, eternal life may be the reward of righteousness, and at the same time be a gift. And thus it is. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.33}

But how about being rewarded “according as his works shall be”? Does not that seem to indicate that individual works come into the account in rendering the reward?-No; not so that the individual works determine the person’s desert. From what do good works come?-From a good heart. Christ says, “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil.” Luke 6:45. Good works are simply the fruit of the Spirit of God, by which righteousness is created in the man. This simply shows that righteousness dwells within. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.34}

One thought more. “It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.” Lamentations 3:22. John the Baptist was called the prophet of the Highest, because he went before the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways, “to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God.” Luke 1:77, 78. Thus we learn that it is through the mercy of God that any are saved. But mercy is that quality which treats an offender better than he deserves. No one deserves eternal life; no one can deserve it. After we have done all, we are still unprofitable servants; we have not by our righteousness added anything to the sum of righteousness, so that God should reward us for it. We have only let shine out the righteousness of God which has been given us through the grace of Christ. And so while God gives the sinners the wages which they have earned, and thus displays his strict regard for justice, he gives to the righteous eternal life, according to the righteousness which his mercy has bestowed on them. E. J. W. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.35}

**“‘Now’” The Signs of the Times, 16, 25.**

E. J. Waggoner

A correspondent writes concerning the note on Hebrews 10:38, “Now the just shall live by faith,” in the Sabbath-school lesson for April 26, where it is stated that the word “now” is not an adverb, and has no reference to time. He says: “It seems to me that to take that view of it destroys the connection in which it stands, for the context certainly refers to a time in close connection with the second coming of Christ. While it is impossible for the just to live in any other way, only by faith, it seems to me there is a special sense in which the word ‘now’ may be rightly used in reference to time.” {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.36}

There is no question but that the word “now” may rightly be used with reference to time, for that is a very frequent use of it. But it is also frequently a conjunction. In the case under consideration it is not an adverb, but only a connective particle. Our correspondent says that “to take this view of it,” seems to destroy the connection. He does not seem to distinguish between a matter of interpretation and a matter of fact. To say that “now” in Hebrews 10:38 is not an adverb, is not to take a certain view of the text, but simply to state a fact. We could no more take another view of it than we could take another view of the sun than to say that it shines. To say that the word “live” in the same text is a verb and not an adjective, is not a matter of interpretation, but a fact. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.37}

It must be remembered that the word “now” is not a Greek word. The word which is rendered “now” in this instance is *de*, a conjunctive particle (not participle) which has no reference whatever to time, but is used to introduce an additional thought. The use of the word “now” to introduce a sentence is very common. “Now of the things which we have spoken” (Hebrews 8:1); “Now Barabbas was a robber” (John 18:40); “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly” (1 Timothy 4:1); “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for” (Hebrews 11:1); “Now I say” (Galatians 4:1); “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples” (1 Corinthians 10:11); “Now it was not written for his sake alone” (Romans 4:23); “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made” (Galatians 3:16). Scores of similar instances might be given. The word is rendered “for” in Luke 23:17, and “but” in 1 Corinthians 7:29, where, as in Hebrews 10:38, the coming of Christ is mentioned in close connection. In this latter place it might as well be rendered “but” or “for” or “nevertheless.” {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.38}

It is impossible to regard “now” in this instance as an adverb of time, without concluding that there is a certain especial time when the just shall live by faith. To say, “*Now* [at this time] the just shall live by faith,” is to imply that at some previous time they did not live by faith; but that would not be true. It requires no more faith to live a just life at the present time than it did in the days of Moses or Enoch. Abraham had the righteousness of faith; and the highest position to which any Christian can attain, is to “walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham.” This of itself is sufficient to settle the question concerning the force of the word “now,” even though a man knew nothing of grammar. Let us guard against the idea that we are so much better than the ancient worthies; that we have faith and works to a far greater degree than they; for in so doing we charge God with partiality, and run the risk of losing that which we have. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.39}

**“The Righteousness which Is in the Law” The Signs of the Times, 16, 25.**

E. J. Waggoner

A friend sends us the following question, which we are glad to have the privilege of answering:- {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.40}

“What does the apostle mean by being blameless concerning the righteousness of the law, as we read in Philippians 3:6? Is not the righteousness which is in the law the righteousness of God?” {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.41}

The further question implied is, “Was not Paul therefore perfect before he came to Christ?” Let us see if this is what he meant to convey. To do this we will first recall to our minds a few principles concerning the law. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.42}

1. The law of God is righteousness. Psalm 119:172. It is the expression of God’s righteousness. Isaiah 51:6, 7. It is the expression of his will. Romans 2:17, 18. Being the standard of righteousness, anything that is unlike it is sin. 1 John 5:17. And since it is a transcript of God’s character, the perfect expression of his most perfect righteousness, it follows that nothing more can be required of a man than perfect obedience to it. Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14. “It shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us,” said Moses. Deuteronomy 6:25. This is self-evident. If we should do the righteousness of God, we should make that righteousness our own. And since nothing more than obedience to the law, or conformity to God’s righteousness, can be required of any man, we can readily see that “the doers of the law shall be justified.” Romans 2:13. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.43}

2. But “there is none righteous, no, not one.” Romans 3:10. “They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” Verse 12. “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Verse 23. Consequently, all are guilty before God. Verse 19. Now a good law cannot justify a wicked man. To justify means to make righteous, or to show that one is already righteous. But a righteous law cannot do this for a wicked man; for if it should say that he had done no wickedness, it would bear false witness, and thus show that it was not good itself; and it cannot take away his sin, so as to make him righteous. Therefore since “the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good” (Romans 7:2), and since all men have broken the law, it is very evident, as Paul says, that “no man is justified by the law in the sight of God.” Galatians 3:11; Romans 3:20. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.44}

3. Further; not only has there been no man since the fall who has not broken the law, but there has not been a fallen being who in his natural condition, out of Christ, could by any possibility keep the law. Whoever reflects that the law is the complete expression of God’s perfect righteousness,-that it is a statement of his way-,will readily admit this statement; for what fallen man is so presumptuous as to claim that he can of himself do any act that is as good as though God himself had done it? But not to multiply words, we need only quote the positive declaration of Inspiration: “The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” Romans 8:7, 8. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.45}

4. Yet there will be some who will be saved, because, like Enoch, they will have the testimony that they please God. Now how will they do this? How can they stand justified before God? Here is the problem to be solved: The law of God is the standard of righteousness; it is God’s righteousness. Whatever does not conform to that standard is sin, and is displeasing to God. None can be counted just except those whose lives conform to it. But there is no one whose life has perfectly conformed to it, and there is no man who can perfectly keep it. And yet there will be some righteous, even as thousands have been. How? {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.46}

5. The answer comes in the words of Paul. “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.” Romans 3:21, 22. A seeming paradox, yet exceedingly simple when we consider that in Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and that therefore the law, which is the righteousness of God, is the righteousness of Christ. The law came from the Son as well as from the Father, for they are one. But *grace*, as well as truth, came by Jesus Christ. John 1:17. By his divine, creative power all things are given to us that pertain to life and godliness. He can and will, in response to our faith in his sacrifice, impart his own righteousness to us. For Paul continues: “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; 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 3:24, 25. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.47}

Let us talk familiarly about this for a moment. The law came from Christ as well as from the Father. It is his righteousness. Now the law has only condemnation for us, because we have broken it; but Christ is full of grace, and came into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. Herein is the wonderful, inexplainable love of Christ, that while the righteousness that is in the law is in him, yet while the law condemns sin, he, the originator of righteousness, will justify. So when the law cannot give us righteousness, we turn to Christ and get it; and this righteousness is such that the law will witness to its genuineness. It cannot be other than the genuine article, for we get it at the same place that the law gets its righteousness. This is righteousness put upon us and created in us. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.48}

6. This is the righteousness which Paul said that he wanted to have when Christ should appear. His anxiety and labor was, “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.” Philippians 3:8, 9. Now we have all the points necessary to an understanding of the sixth verse. Note particularly. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.49}

7. That the apostle says that the righteousness which is of the law, is his own righteousness. But Isaiah declares that “all our righteousnesses are filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6); and that which Paul calls “mine own righteousness” must be the same, for it is that which he did not dare be found having when Christ comes. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.50}

8. Now it was “touching the righteousness which is in the law,” or Paul’s “own righteousness,” that he was blameless. In other words, Paul was blameless from a human standpoint. So far as the natural man could discern, Paul was perfect. With this agree his statements elsewhere concerning himself. He said before Agrippa: “My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.” Acts 26:4, 5. And again: “I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.” Acts 23:1. When he, a Pharisee, though, like his brethren, that he could establish his own righteousness by the deeds of the law, he was scrupulous in the performance of duty as far as he understood it. He did no violence to his conscience. So far as any man could see, he kept the law perfectly. As Calvin says: “He was therefore in men’s judgment holy, and spotless from all legal blame. A rare praise, and almost singular; yet let us see how much he esteemed it.” He counted it loss. Why?-Because God sees not as man sees; man looks upon the outward appearance, but God looks upon the heart. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.51}

9. Note further that this righteousness which is in the law, touching which Paul said that he was blameless, is one of the things concerning which he says, “Though I might also have confidence in the flesh.” Philippians 3:4. Ah! The righteousness which is in the law, touching which he was blameless, was simply that righteousness to which the flesh may attain. But by Paul himself it is said that “they that are in the flesh cannot please God;” “because the carnal (fleshly) mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” So then, actually, in its spiritual depth, Paul did not, before he knew Christ, keep the law at all. He was blameless in the eyes of the natural men, by whom spiritual things are not discerned; but compared with the true righteousness of Christ, his righteousness was a dead loss-a minus quantity. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.52}

So we find that while the law is the exponent of perfect righteousness, it has none at all to impart to sinners. The only righteousness that there is in it for an unrenewed man is an empty shell of dead works. Yet when the individual loses confidence in the flesh and its feeble attempts at righteousness, and comes to Christ, who is the source of righteousness, as he is the source of the law, that law will bear witness that the righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, is the genuine righteousness of God. E. J. W. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.53}

**“Notes on the International Lesson. Lawful Work on the Sabbath. Luke 13:10-17” The Signs of the Times, 16, 25.**

E. J. Waggoner

**(July 6; Luke 13:10-17.)**

The story of the lesson may be told in few words. Jesus was teaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath, and saw a woman in the congregation, who through infirmity was bent so that she was forced to go in a stooping position. For eighteen years she had been thus afflicted. Jesus called her to him, and saying, “Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity,” he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. This miracle, instead of calling forth praise, only aroused anger in the heart of the ruler, who harshly told the people that if they wanted to be healed, to come on one of the six working-days, and no on the Sabbath. Jesus put his adversaries to shame by pointing out that this was an act of mercy, of far greater importance than the watering of stock, which they themselves would attend to on the Sabbath-day. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.54}

The title of the lesson suggests the statement that Jesus made on another occasion when he had performed a miracle of healing on the Sabbath. Said he, “It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath-days.” Matthew 12:12. This recognizes a law for the Sabbath, and that law is the fourth commandment. All that Jesus had done was in the direct line of his mission. “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” 1 John 3:8. The binding of the poor woman was one of the works of Satan, and in loosing her, Jesus was destroying Satan’s work. It is lawful to undo the heavy burdens and let the oppressed go free on the Sabbath-day. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.55}

Inasmuch as the official lesson notes “the Sunday-sabbath” is made the subject of comment. It must receive attention here, although the lesson does not hint at any question as to which day is the Sabbath. We quote the following from “Peloubet’s Select Notes on the International Lessons“:- {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.56}

“Sunday is just as really the seventh day and the *Sabbath*-day as is the Saturday-Sabbath of the Jews. All the difference lies in beginning the count from a different point. Bush well says: ‘All that the commandment expressly requires is to observe a day of sacred rest after every six days of labor. The seventh day, indeed, is to be kept holy, but not a word is here said as to the point from which the reckoning is to begin. The seventh day is not so much the seventh according to any particular method of computing the septinary cycle, as in reference to the six working-days before mentioned; every seventh day in rotation after six days of labor.” {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.57}

That those who offer this excuse for not keeping the seventh day of the week do not regard it as valid is shown by the fact that they reject the Saturday-Sabbath. If their theory be true, then they must admit that Saturday is just as much the Sabbath as Sunday. This they will not do. Further, they would accuse a man of being a Sabbath-breaker if he paid no attention to either Sunday or Saturday, even though he rested regularly every Tuesday. This shows that they do not at all believe that the commandment requires simply one day in seven, and that it makes no difference where we begin to count. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.58}

If this theory were true, then it would follow that there is in reality no Sabbath-day; one day of the week would be the Sabbath just as much as any other day. But the commandment is not indefinite. It speaks of “the Sabbath-day,” literally, “the day of the Sabbath,” and says that “in *it* thou shalt not do any work.” Now what day is it in which no secular work is to be done? It is the seventh day that God blessed and sanctified after he had rested upon it. See Genesis 2:1-3. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.59}

Did the Lord rest on one particular day, or not? Or course he did. He could not rest on no day in particular. So there must have been a definite place from which to count. And that all men have always believed that there is a definite place from which to count, is shown by the fact that everywhere, in all countries, and in all ages, they have counted from the same place. Even those who argue that the Sabbath is any seventh day after six days of labor, agree with the rest of mankind in calling the day on which they rest, the first day of the week. How can a day be both the first and the seventh? {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.60}

But the folly of the idea that we can begin to count where we please, and so make the seventh day come just where we want it, and that the commandment warrants this course, may be shown by trying it on something else. Who would claim that if a man has seven sons you could make the first-born the seventh, simply by beginning with the last one and counting backwards? If a question of property were involved, would any court listen for a moment to such nonsense?-No; for no pettifogger would have the audacity to insult the court with so puerile a plea. But men will juggle with divine precepts in a way that would do discredit to the intelligence of a child. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.61}

The indignation of the ruler is an example of hypocrisy that is very common. It was not because he was so zealous for the Sabbath, for if he had been he would have known that in healing the woman, Jesus was fulfilling the highest design of the Sabbath; but he hated Jesus, and took this means to arouse the prejudices of the people against him. Religious prejudice is easily aroused, and is a bitter thing to have to meet; but, as in this case, it is almost always aroused where the individual has done no wrong. All the religious persecution that has ever disgraced humanity, whether by pagans or professed Christians, has been directed against those who were doing right, but who did not bow to the false standards set up by the persecutors. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.62}

The significance of the miracle of healing the deformed woman should not be overlooked. Jesus was anointed “to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.” His miracles were done that men might know that he was the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, they might have life through his name. John 20:30, 31. When the woman whom Satan had bound in body for eighteen years was loosed from her infirmity, it was designed as a striking object-lesson, illustrating his power to release men from the bondage of sin, in which Satan has held them for years. His compassion for the woman in her infirmity should cause us to come to him with boldness, because he is touched with the feeling of our spiritual infirmities. E. J. W. {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.63}

**“A Timely Reminder” The Signs of the Times, 16, 25.**

E. J. Waggoner

We have made a little comment in another item, on the word “now” in Hebrews 10:38, showing that the text does not mean that the just shall live by faith at one time more than another. But while this is so, we would not be understood as claiming that there is not special significance in the fact that the statement, “The just shall live by faith,” occurs in close connection with the announcement of Christ’s soon coming. The Scripture has foretold that just before the end the attention of the world would be called in an especial manner to the law of God, and to the necessity for observing it intelligently as a whole; and the warning against rejecting the commandment of God is the burden of the message of warning is now being given. Thousands have heeded it, and have acknowledged their obligation to keep the whole law of God. And now comes the great danger, for wherever there is great light there is also great danger. The danger in this case is that those who have seen their error in neglecting important duties, will, like the Jews of old, make their boast in the law, instead of in Christ. Filled with delight at the wondrous beauty of the law, many are led unconsciously to truth in their own works for salvation. The tendency of the human mind is to go to extremes, and in matters of religion Satan is always ready to help them along. When there is a revival on one point, the tendency is to lose sight of everything else. So the apostle reminds us in these days that the just shall live by faith, and not by works. He would not have us forget in our zeal for the law, that the only real obedience is “the obedience of faith.” {SITI June 30, 1890, p. 375.64}