**“Did Abraham Think that God Would Provide a Lamb?” The Signs of the Times, 16, 26.**

E. J. Waggoner

The editor of the *Christian Union*, Dr. Lyman Abbott, is a strong advocate of the opening of museums, libraries, art galleries, etc., on Sundays. {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 375.65}

“Did Abraham think that God would provide a lamb instead of Isaac?” is a question that comes to us for answer. We read in Hebrews 11:17-19 that Abraham offered Isaac, through faith in God, “accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead.” If Abraham had expected that God was going to provide a substitute, there would have been no occasion for faith in the resurrection, and the matter would have been no trial at all. {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 375.66}

A clergyman of the Church of England, Joseph Leycester Lyne, polpularly known as “Father Ignatius,” is now in this country lecturing and preaching to raise funds for the Abbey of St. Anthony, in Wales, where he has organized a community of Benedictine monks. The rules of the order are the same as those followed at similar Roman Catholic institutions. Mr. Lyne has gathered a number of clergymen who are infatuated with a monastic life. {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 375.67}

Elsewhere in this paper we have written briefly on the subject of eternal life, showing that it can be obtained only in Christ, and that to deny that life comes only through Christ is virtually to deny Christ. Now it is doubtless a fact that the most of the professed Christians who believe that all men, whether good or bad, will exist throughout eternity, imagine that they do believe in life through Christ, because they confound life with happiness. They hold that only believers in Christ will have eternal happiness, and that unbelievers will be doomed to eternal misery, and they call the first state eternal life, and the second state eternal death. But in considering this subject it should not be forgotten that life and death are distinctly opposite conditions. As long as a man has breath he is alive, no matter how miserable he may be. People who are suffering intense agony, sometimes pray for death to relieve them of their sufferings. Nobody considers them dead because they are in misery. So if the wicked were to be drowned to an eternity of conscious suffering, they would have eternal life just as surely as would the righteous in glory. Let the terms “life” and “death” be taken in their simple, obvious meaning, and the doctrine of immortality as revealed in the Bible may very easily be understood. {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 375.68}

At the recent Convention of the New York State Sunday-school Association, Dr. John Hall delivered an address on “The Old Testament Enfolding the New,” in which he said that it is simply calumny to say that God is represented in any other light in the Old Testament from what he is described in the New; and he closed with this exhortation:- {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 375.69}

“Put before your pupils the union, completeness, and beauty of the Old and the New, and you will be magnifying Christ. That is the only thing you need to do. If you magnify Christ, he will draw all men unto him.” {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 375.70}

We are glad to see the attention of people directed to the entire Bible instead of to fragments of it. It is all profitable. {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 375.71}

**“Seek for Immortality” The Signs of the Times, 16, 26.**

E. J. Waggoner

“To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, [God will render] eternal life.” Romans 2:7. {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 375.72}

From this verse we conclude that the sum of glory and honor and immortality is contained in eternal life, which is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 6:23. It also furnishes the most complete refutation of the idea made so popular by Plato and Addison, that men are by nature endowed with immortality, because there is so universal a longing for it. The apostle asks in one place, “What a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?” and with far greater force might it be asked, What a man hath, why doth he yet long for? and with still greater force, What a man hath, why is he exhorted to seek for? {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 375.73}

Let us note the occurrence of the word “immortality” in the Bible. It will not take long, for it occurs only five times, yet they take us by regular steps through the whole subject. First, we read in 1 Timothy 6:15, 16 that the “blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords,” is the one “who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen nor can see.” He has “life in himself,” and can bestow it on whomsoever he will. {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 375.74}

The contrast between God and man is clearly brought out in Romans 1:23, where we are told that the heathen “changed the glory of the uncorruptible [or immortal] God into an image made like to corruptible [or mortal] man.” God is immortal; man is mortal, and he is therefore exhorted to seek for immortality, that he may dwell with God. {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 375.75}

But where shall we seek for immortality? Shall we look to writings of the ancient heathen? Of what use would that be? “The world by wisdom knew not God,” and how then could they know anything of immortality, which belongs to God alone? The word of God alone can direct us in our search, and it declares that the purpose and grace of God in Christ “is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” 2 Timothy 1:10. The gospel, then, is the place where we are to seek for immortality. There alone is it revealed; there alone can it be found. {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 375.76}

Having found where immortality is revealed, how are we to make it ours? The Scriptures are very definite on this point. Thus we read: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” John 3:36. The beloved disciple declares of Christ, that “in him was life.” He was “full of grace [favor] and truth;” and the psalmist tells us that in the favor of God there is life (Psalm 30:5); therefore he who has Christ has the favor of God, and life from him. {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 375.77}

That life comes from God, and that no man can have it except by the grace of Christ, is shown very clearly. Said Jesus: “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” John 10:10. From this, with the statement in Acts 17:28, “for in him we live, and move, and have our being,” we learn that we depend upon Christ, not alone for immortal life, but for this present existence. When Adam fell he brought the race of mankind under the sentence of eternal death, and it was only through the grace of God in Christ that a second probation was granted. So while the saints will throughout eternity offer praises to Christ for bestowing immortality upon them, all men owe thanks to him for giving them this little span of life, in which to seek for immortality. {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 375.78}

Jesus reproved the Jews for inconsistency, in that, while they searched the Scriptures, because in them eternal life was to be found, and those Scriptures testified of him as the way of life, yet they would not come to him that they might have life. John 5:39, 40. Now if life could have been obtained in any other way than through Christ, the Jews might have retorted, “We don’t need to come to you that we may have life, for we have it without you.” This is what they, in effect, did; and it is what thousands are actually saying to-day. It is the language of Spiritualism. Believing that men are by nature endowed with immortality, Spiritualists scornfully reject Christ as the way of life. The inevitable tendency of the doctrine of the natural immortality of man, is to lead men to lightly esteem Christ. {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 402.1}

Read one more testimony. “He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” 1 John 5:10-12. It is a terrible thing to deny that life can be obtained only in Christ, for to do so is to charge God with lying, since that is the record that he has given. Let God be true, even though every man be proved a liar. {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 402.2}

Note that while eternal life belongs to everyone who has Christ, no one is yet in full possession of it. God has given to us eternal life, but this life is in his Son. Not only is it to be found in him, but for a little space it remains in him, for safe keeping. Paul says to Christians: “For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” Colossians 3:3, 4. Eternal life is ours now, if we have Christ, just as surely as it ever will be; but Christ keeps it in his own charge. When will it be ours by actual possession? This brings us to the summing up, which we read as follows:- {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 402.3}

“Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.” 1 Corinthians 15:51-54. {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 402.4}

Now let us review briefly. All men are by nature mortal, corruptible; God only has immortality. If we would have immortality, we must seek for it. It is to be found only in the gospel of Jesus Christ. He who does not seek Christ, will know nothing of immortality. Outside of Christ there is no life. For a little season we have, by the mercy of God, existence granted to us, that we may seek life. As long as God’s mercy is extended to men, good and bad alike may live; but when Christ shall say to those who reject him, “Depart from me,” they will be cut off from the Source of life, and will suffer eternal death. But to those who have accepted Christ, the gift of immortality will be bestowed at his appearing. {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 402.5}

How is it possible that men who profess to love our Lord Jesus Christ, can dishonor him by ignoring him as the giver of life? E. J. W. {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 402.6}

**“Is It Civil?” The Signs of the Times, 16, 26.**

E. J. Waggoner

The latest utterance of the chief worker in behalf of Sunday legislation is the following:- {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 402.7}

“Laws setting apart a weekly ‘Independence-day’ are no more inconsistent with liberty and much more essential to it than the law of the annual Independence-day.” {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 402.8}

The man who expects that people are going to accept such a feeble comparison, as that as sound argument for Sunday legislation, pays a poor compliment to their intelligence. There is no more likeness between the Sunday observance that is contemplated by the proposed laws and the observance of the Fourth of July, than there is between a Presbyterian synod and a college base-ball nine. When such a plea as that is made for Sunday laws, all you have to do is to ask if under the proposed Sunday laws it is designed to give people the same freedom of action that they have on the Fourth of July. Are we to believe that all the so-called American Sabbath Union is working for is for a law granting the people full liberty to take “a day off” every Sunday, to go on a picnic, let off fire-crackers, lounge around, and do as they please generally? Some less gauzy plea will have to be invented. {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 402.9}

**“The Only Example” The Signs of the Times, 16, 26.**

E. J. Waggoner

The following question and answer we clip from the *Christian Advocate:*- {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 402.10}

“*Question*-Is it wrong for a professed Christian to read Shakespeare’s plays? {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 402.11}

“*Answer*-Wesley read them.” {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 402.12}

We do not quote this question and answer for the purpose of making any comment upon Shakespeare’s plays, or upon the fact that Wesley read them, or to say whether or not any Christian should now read them. What we wish to note is the form of the answer,-“Wesley read them.” We honor Wesley as a man of God, but the fact that he did a certain thing is no reason whatever why somebody else should do it. If it is right for Christians to do any given thing, it is not because some good man has done the same thing. If the thing is right, the Christian of to-day may do it for the same reason that the old-time Christian did it, but not because he did it. {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 402.13}

There is not a man that ever lived on this earth, save “the Man Christ Jesus,” whose example in any given thing may be taken as a reason why others may do the same thing. No matter how good the man was, he who refers to him as authority for any practice, is in a dangerous condition. Christ suffered for us, “leaving us an example, that ye should follow in his steps;” but he is the only example. {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 402.14}

This is the reason why it is so dangerous a thing to take any man, however good, as a model either of faith or practice: There is no man who is infallible; so long as his course is exactly correct, his follower *may not* go astray; but he is liable to err, and then the poor fellower, who has substituted another’s judgment for his own, is sure to go wrong. To follow any man in belief or practice is to invest that man with infallibility, and to blindly copy his mistakes as well as his perfect deeds. The result will be a poor imitation of his goodness, and an exaggeration of his frailties. {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 402.15}

It is no discredit to anybody to say that he is not authority in matters of doctrine, nor an example in the realm of duty. God’s word alone is the standard of truth, for it is the truth, and it unfolds its treasures to the humblest as well as to the great. Whoever has a determination to do God’s will shall know the doctrine. And he who follows a good practice *because* some good man has done the deed, really worships the man, instead of God. Even though the man never made a mistake, his imitator would fall far short of attaining to his goodness, because God is the only one whose worship can elevate. Hero-worship is simply attempted imitation; but he who worships God alone, worships one who is not simply an example, but who lifts the worshiper to his own level. {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 402.16}

Therefore, “be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven.” {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 402.17}

**“Positive Testimony” The Signs of the Times, 16, 26.**

E. J. Waggoner

The *Independent* and the *Congregationalist* have had a little friendly dispute in regard to women taking part in meeting. Both assume that the apostle Paul positively condemned everything of the kind, forgetting that his statement, “Let your women keep silence,” etc., is to be read in connection with his directions as to how they shall appear when praying or prophesying in meeting. But assuming that Paul absolutely forbids women to speak in meeting under any circumstances, the *Congregationalist* says that to disregard the injunction is to impair the revelation of which it is a part. But the *Independent* retorts as follows:- {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 402.18}

“Hardly so. ‘In six days the Lord made heaven and earth;’ that is quite as definite as what Paul said. And when it comes to the Sabbath, there is not only the injunction for the seventh day, as definite as words can make it, but reason given also, in the ordination of the week and the Sabbath as a memorial of creation, as definite as any reason given by Paul for the subjection of women. And yet the whole church has given it up, with no repeal and no history of the change, simply because time and conditions had altered.” {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 402.19}

But the conditions have not changed. It is still a fact that God created the heavens and the earth in six days, and rested upon and blessed and sanctified the seventh day, and the seventh day is still the only memorial of creation, and it is just as important to remember God’s power now as it ever was. The commandment is unrepealed, and is as definite as it ever was. Only the people have changed. {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 402.20}

**“What Think Ye of Christ?” The Signs of the Times, 16, 26.**

E. J. Waggoner

It is reported that Edwin Arnold, author of “The Light of Asia,” is now engaged on a poem to be entitled “The Light of the World,” having for its subject the character and history of Christ. It is said that “the view of Christ’s person is that he was not God, but a perfect man, a link between God and man.” To be sure, Edwin Arnold is not a professed Christian; but his worldly wisdom ought to teach him that nothing can be a link between two objects, unless it actually touches both of those objects. So it is utterly impossible for Christ to be a link between God and man, unless he is both God and man. If he lacked but a hair’s breadth of perfect divinity, then he could not have power to make men partakers of the divine nature; and if by the same amount he failed to come down to the level of man, we could not get hold of him. But he does indeed form a perfect link between God and man, because, having by nature the attributes of divinity, he took upon himself the likeness of men. And, by the way, if Christ were not God, then he could not be a perfect man; for he testified of himself that he is God, and perfect men do not bear false witness. And further if Christ were only a perfect man, and not God, how can the fact be accounted for that never before or since his life on earth has there been a perfect man? Why hasn’t some other man made his way perfect? People may utter all the sentiment they please about the perfection of Christ’s character as a man, but it all amounts to nothing if he is not also acknowledged to be God. {SITI July 7, 1890, p. 402.21}

**“The Indwelling Word” The Signs of the Times, 16, 27.**

E. J. Waggoner

In the sixteenth verse of the third chapter of Colossians occurs this exhortation: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.” This text, rightly understood, solves the problem of Christian living. Let us, therefore, spend a few moments to see how much is involved in it. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 402.22}

That there is a power in the word of God, far above that of any other book, cannot be doubted. The Lord through the prophet Jeremiah rebukes the false prophets, who speak their own words instead of the words of God, and says: “What is the chaff to the wheat?” “Is not my word like as a fire? Saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?” Jeremiah 23:28, 29. And the same prophet thus relates his experience when he was reproached because of the word of the Lord: “Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.” Jeremiah 20:9. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 402.23}

The word hidden in the heart protects against sin. “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” Psalm 119:11. And of the righteous we read that the reason why none of his steps slide, is that “the law of his God is in his heart.” Psalm 37:31. David also says: “Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.” Psalm 17:4. Jesus, also, in his memorable prayer for his disciples, said, “Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.” John 17:17. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 402.24}

The word of the Lord is the seed by which the sinner is born again. We read of the “Father of lights” that “of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.” James 1:18. And the Apostle Peter says: “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently; being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” 1 Peter 1:22, 23. So we learn that, while those who are Christ’s are born of the Spirit, the word of God is the seed from which they are developed into new creatures in Christ. The word, then, has power to give life. It is itself “quick,” that is, alive, and powerful; and the psalmist prays to be quickened, made alive, according to the word, and then says: “This is my comfort in my affliction; for thy word hath quickened me.” Psalm 119:25, 50. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 402.25}

This is stated very plainly by Jesus himself in John 6:63: “It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” This shows that the power of the Spirit of God dwells in the word of God. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 402.26}

With the knowledge that the word of God is the seed by which men are begotten unto a new life, and that the hiding of the word in the heart keeps one from sin, we may easily understand 1 John 3:9: “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.” How simple! There is in the word that divine energy which can transform the mind, and make a new man, “which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” Of course the word can do this only for those who receive it in simple faith. But the word does not lose any of its power. If the soul thus born again retains that sacred, powerful word by which he was begotten, it will keep him still a new creature. It is as powerful to preserve as it is to create. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 402.27}

Jesus, our great Example, gave us an illustration of this. When tempted on every point by the devil, his sole reply was, “It is written,” followed by a text of Scripture that met the case exactly. The Christian who would stand fast must do the same thing. There is no other way. This is an illustration of David’s words, “By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.” {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 410.1}

It is this of which we read in Revelation 12:11, where, in speaking of the casting down of the “accuser of our brethren,” the heavenly voice says: “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.” This does not mean, as some have carelessly assumed, the word of their testimony in meeting, but the word of the testimony in which the psalmist found so great delight. They overcame Satan by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of God. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 410.2}

But this cannot be done except by those who have the word of God abiding in them. The Spirit is given to bring truth to remembrance, in time of trial; but that which one has not learned he cannot remember. But if he has hidden the word in his heart, the Spirit will, in the hour of temptation, bring to his remembrance just that portion which will foil the tempter. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 410.3}

Every Christian can testify as to the power of the word at such times. When inclined to congratulate himself on some real or fancied superior attainment, what a powerful check are the words, “Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” 1 Corinthians 4:7. Or when harsh and bitter thoughts are struggling within him for control, what power to quell those turbulent emotions lies in the words, “Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil.” 1 Corinthians 13:4, 5. When provoked almost beyond endurance, how the gentle rebuke, “The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men,” helps one to be calm. Add to this the many “exceeding great and precious promises” which bring victory to every soul that grasps them by faith. Thousands of aged Christians can testify to the miraculous power resting in a few simple words of the Scriptures. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 410.4}

Now whence comes this power? The answer is found in the words of Christ: “The words which I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.” What spirit are they? The apostle Peter, speaking of the prophets, says that it was the Spirit of Christ that was in them. So, as we said before, the power of the Spirit dwells in the word. Yea, Christ himself dwells in the word, for he is the Word. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 410.5}

Who can understand the mystery of inspiration?-He who can understand the mystery of the incarnation; for both are the same. “The Word was made flesh.” We cannot understand how Christ could be all the fullness of the Godhead, and at the same time be in the form of a servant, subject to all the infirmities of mortal flesh. Neither can we understand how the Bible could be written by fallible mortals, exhibiting the peculiarities of each, and yet be the pure, unadulterated word of God. But it is certainly true that the power that was in the Word that was made flesh, is the power that is in the word that the apostles and prophets have written for us. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 410.6}

Now we can begin to appreciate more the power residing in the word. “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.” Psalm 33:6. Christ, by whom the worlds were made, upholds them “by the word of his power.” Hebrews 1:3. The power that resides in the words of revelation, is the power that could speak the worlds into existence, and can keep them in their appointed places. Surely, then, it is worth our while to take time to study and meditate upon the word. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 410.7}

It is by so doing that we bring Christ himself into our hearts. In the fifteenth chapter of John, the Lord exhorts us to abide in him, and to allow him to abide in us; and then a few verses later he speaks of our abiding in him, and his word abiding in us. John 15:4, 7. It is by his word that Christ does abide in the heart; for Paul says that Christ will dwell in the heart by faith (Ephesians 3:17); and “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Romans 10:17. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 410.8}

Many people earnestly long for Christ to come and dwell in their hearts, and they imagine that the reason why he does not do so is because they are not good enough, and they vainly set about trying to get so good that he can condescend to come in. They forget that Christ comes into the heart, not because it is free from sin, but in order to free it from sin; and they possibly never realized that Christ is in the word, and that he who will make it a constant companion, and will yield himself to its influence, will have Christ dwelling within. He who has hidden the word in his heart, who meditates in it day and night, and who believes it with the simple faith of childhood,-such a one has Christ dwelling in his heart by faith, and will experience his mighty, creative power. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 410.9}

Is there not something inspiriting in this thought? When we come to God in secret prayer, and the Spirit brings to our remembrance some precious promise or needed reproof, is it not encouraging to know that as we accept them, Christ is coming into the heart with the same power that brought the worlds from nothing? Does it not clothe the word with new dignity? No wonder David could never tire of sounding its praises. May the thought that God is in the word be a fresh incentive to all to gain time and strength for their work by taking from it more time to feed upon the source of divine strength. E. J. W. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 410.10}

 **“The Advantage of the Jew” The Signs of the Times, 16, 27.**

E. J. Waggoner

The great apostle to the Gentiles, in answer to the question, What advantage hath the Jew? replied, “Much in every way; chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.” Romans 3:2. It will be noted that he does not say that their advantage lay in knowing the law, but in having the law committed or intrusted to them. That the law has to do with all the world, and not with the Jews alone, is shown by Romans 3:19, where the apostle states that the law, speaking to those within its sphere, over whom it has jurisdiction, stops every mouth and makes all the world stand guilty before God. If all are guilty, then all have the law, “for where no law is there is no transgression.” Paul tells us, also, that Christ was “made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.” Galatians 4:4, 5. But Christ died for all (2 Corinthians 5:14, 15); therefore all men are by nature under the law, and, of course, subject to it. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 410.11}

The special advantage of the Jew, then, lay not in the fact that God made known his law to them, but that unto them is was *committed*. To them was given the honor of transmitting it to the other nations. They were chosen as the missionary people. They were to be “workers together with God” in enlightening the world. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 410.12}

God is no respecter of persons. As he sends rain on the just and on the unjust, and causes his sun to shine upon the evil and the good, so the light of his law shines for all. He makes no revelation of himself for the special benefit of any one class of people. The light which he has for one, he is anxious that all should share to an equal extent. So when he gives great light to any people, it is that they may carry it to others. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 410.13}

It is no small honor thus to be associated with God in laboring for the welfare of mankind. When a people has been intrusted with great light, and have selfishly shut it up to themselves, imaging that the light was given them because God thought so much of *them*, they miss the opportunity of their lives. Not only do they fail of the high position which God was willing that they should occupy, as light-bearers, but they lose the light that they have. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 410.14}

God designs that the people shall be the light of the world. See Matthew 5:14. Now it is evident that when he gives great light to any people, that they may impart it to others, he will give them every possible facility for spreading that light. Thus it was with the Jewish nation. When, according to his promise to the Fathers, he delivered Israel from Egypt, he did so in a most wonderful manner. His judgments upon the Egyptians, the dividing of the Red Sea, the miraculous preservation of Israel in the desert, the earthquake at the giving of the law, the victories which he gave them over their enemies, the miraculous passage of the Jordan, and many other things, all combined to give them the greatest prestige among the nations. Their uniform prosperity could not fail to make them feared and respected. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 410.15}

Moreover, the law itself, as long as they kept it, would raise them greatly in the estimation of the surrounding nations. To them Moses said: “Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.” Deuteronomy 4:5, 6. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 411.1}

What a wonderful opportunity they had to do missionary work. God was with them, so that the fear of them and the dread of them was on all nations. No people would dare attack them; they would be safe from molestation in any country. Added to this was the wholesome respect which the people felt for their knowledge of the law. Everything was made ready for them, so that it would not have taken them long to carry to all the nations of earth the gospel which had been preached to them. No such advantages have ever been given to any other people. Well did the psalmist say, “He hath not dealt so with any nation.” Psalm 147:20. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 411.2}

The scope of the Sabbath-school lesson for July 26, which these reflections are designed to accompany, does not allow us to dwell on the way in which the Jews abused their glorious opportunities until their light finally went out in darkness. Let us at this time learn this one lesson, that when God gives us blessings, it is not in order that we may selfishly enjoy them, but that by means of them we may be better qualified to labor for him. Whatever advantages he gives his people, are the means by which they are to lift their light from obscurity to the place where it may be seen by all. If they then fail to do the work for which they have been elevated, the result can readily be imagined. E. J. W. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 411.3}

**“Taking Up the Cross. Luke 11:23-25” The Signs of the Times, 16, 27.**

E. J. Waggoner

**Notes on the International Lesson.
(July 20, Luke 11:23-25.)**

“And he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” The Saviour had just spoken a parable which showed the gracious invitation that God extends to all, and now, in order that none who accept it may have occasion to say afterwards that they were deceived, he tells them plainly the conditions required of everyone who follows him. The Lord does not want anybody to follow him blindly. He would have them know all that is involved before they begin; in that case, they will not be as likely to give up in discouragement. He conceals nothing of the hardness of the way, but rather sets that forth as an inducement. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 411.4}

It is very natural to look upon laws that are unfavorable to the free exercise of religion, as a real hindrance to religion. Persecution is looked upon as a calamity to the church. Now while nobody should court persecution, yet it is by no means certain that it is the greatest calamity the church can suffer in this world. It is true that when these unfriendly laws are repealed, it is easier to induce people to identify themselves with the cause of God; but it is not true that more real strength is added to the church by the many who join in times of peace than by the few who unite in the face of persecution. Those who accept God’s truth, knowing that it will involve persecution and loss of friends and property, will not become frightened when those things come. But those of whom it is said that they would accept the truth if they could see their way clear to do so, are the ones who, if the way were cleared so that they could join, would fall back as soon as the way should again become obstructed. It should not be forgotten that the church’s brightest period was when the whole pagan world was against it. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 412.1}

This brings us the statement that men often make when some practical truth is presented to them, that they “could not make a living” if they obeyed it. They seem blind to the fact that thousands have obeyed it under more trying circumstances, and have not failed to make a living. But suppose they could not; that does not make any difference. Christ calls us to obtain the future immortal life, and if this has to be lost in order to gain that, it is only giving up a small thing for something infinitely greater. “He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake,” said Christ, “shall find it.” Matthew 10:39. Thus it appears that in reality the only prospect one has of making a living is by obeying Christ. “Salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ,” come to those who “loved not their lives unto the death.” Revelation 12:10, 11. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 412.2}

Verse 26 must be read in the light of verse 33, and other texts. When it is said that a man cannot be a disciple of Christ, if he does not hate father, mother, wife, children, life, etc., it means that he must hold them all as secondary to the cause of God. That the word “hate” does not in this passage mean animosity and malice, may be learned from the fact that “love is the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13:10), and that it “worketh no ill to his neighbor;” and that we are commanded to put away all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking and all malice. Also from the fact that the apostle Paul gives express injunctions to husbands to love their wives even as Christ loved the church. Ephesians 5:25. The commandment, “Honor thy father and thy mother,” would forbid feelings of enmity against them. Therefore we are to understand that Christ means that nothing is to be so loved as to shut out love for him. He is to occupy the first place. This will often bring one into direct antagonism with his dearest friends, as stated in Matthew 10:35, 36. And sometimes he will be brought where he will have to reject even his own life. Not that he loves life and friends less, but that he loves Christ more. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 412.3}

This, then, is the cost of the kingdom of God. Christ does not secure any followers on false pretenses. He sets before them all the difficulties, as in Mark 10:29, 30, as well as the grand result, and then asks each one to deliberately calculate whether or not he can undertake it. He who does not count the cost is liable to be put to shame. Happy is the man who, when he sits down to reckon, has his vision *so* clear that he can view things in their proper relation, approving the things that are more excellent, so that he may know that one moment of heaven will outweigh all that he can suffer on earth. In comparison with the “far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Corinthians 4:17), the afflictions that now may be suffered are light. Indeed, the apostle Paul, who had opportunities for accurate calculation, such as no other man ever had, reckoned that “the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Romans 8:18. {SITI July 14, 1890, p. 412.4}

**“Front Page” The Signs of the Times, 16, 28.**

E. J. Waggoner

The following from the Nashville *Christian Advocate* is a very apt criticism on a very common expression: “Neither in church life nor individual experience is there any such thing as ‘holding our own;’ this is the law of death; grave-yards hold their own.” {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 412.5}

“Evidences of Christianity!” exclaims Coleridge; “I am weary of the word. Make a man feel the want of it, ...and you may safely trust it to its own evidence.” A truer thing was never spoken. Not all the logical treatises ever written can turn a skeptic from dead works to serve the living God; but when the soul grows weary with its burden of sin, and hears the voice of Jesus saying, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest,” he knows that Christianity is true. “He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.” 1 John 5:10. {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 412.6}

An article in the *Lutheran Observer*, defending the Augsburg Confession from the charge of teaching infant damnation, closes thus:- {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 412.7}

“The Lutheran way of stating it is easy enough. It is about as follows: Since the children, without any knowledge or choice of their own, come under all that sin has brought, so without their own will and choice may they come into all that Christ has wrought for the world. The sign and seal of all this is baptism. But we are not authorized to say that because the ordinance in any case is absent, therefore the blessings of Christ are wanting. Hence, we erect it into a doctrine for the universal church, that all children, baptized or unbaptized, pagan or Christian, are saved, or, as the revised Westminster Confession will have it, are of the number of the *elect*.” {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 412.8}

And now it rests with them to explain the significance of infant “baptism.” How can it be a sign that the infants are given the benefit of all that Christ wrought for the world, when it is allowed that unbaptized infants share the same? Nothing could show more fully than the above paragraph does the fact that so-called infant baptism is an absurd practice, no foundation whatever in either reason or revelation. {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 412.9}

“That the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved Me.” This is one clause of our Saviour’s prayer to the Father, just before his betrayal. What a precious truth is teaches! That God loves us just as he loves his only begotten Son. Is it difficult to believe this? We have only to remember that “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” If he had loved us less than he loved the Son, he would not have given the Son for our redemption. Why did he so love us? He answers: “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake.” And what will his love accomplish for us? Again he says: “I will make a man more precious than fine fold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ohpir.” {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 412.10}

**“Sinning Without Law” The Signs of the Times, 16, 28.**

E. J. Waggoner

“For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.); in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.” Romans 2:11-16. {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 412.11}

The first part of this passage is a conclusion of what has gone before, as well as an introduction to what follows. God will render to every man according to his deeds, whether he be Jew or Gentile, because there is no respect of persons with him. The fact that a man was a Jew by birth did not commend him to the favor of God, over the Gentile who was equally good. Every soul of man that doeth evil will receive punishment therefor, no matter what his nationality or profession. {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 412.12}

But right here comes in the implied question, How can God do thus, and still be just? There are such varying degrees of light and knowledge that it would seem that the ignorance of some ought to shield them from punishment. The apostle has anticipated this in the beginning, by showing that the heathen are without excuse, since they have through the things that God has made, enough light to guide them aright; nevertheless, he proceeds to explain further. There will be degrees of punishment: those who have sinned without law, shall perish without law; and those who have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law. When?-“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ,” in accordance with the gospel which Paul was commissioned to announce. The difference between sinning without law and sinning in the law is that which will now claim our attention. {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 412.13}

A very slight examination suffices to show that verses 12 and 16 are to be read in connection, and that verses 13-15 are parenthetical. They are thrown in as an explanation of verse 12. A right understanding of them will cause God’s justice, and the universality of the law, to stand out clearly. {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 412.14}

In the first place, let it be remembered that only those who have sinned are to be punished. God doesn’t punish men for ignorance, but for sin; and “sin is the transgression of the law.” 1 John 3:4. Therefore “every soul of man” who in the judgment shall be made to suffer punishment, will be one who has transgressed the law of God, and that knowingly. {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 412.15}

How can this be? it is asked, when in this very connection the apostle speaks of those who have “sinned without law.” Verse 14 and 15 answer this perfectly. Let us read them again:- {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 412.16}

“For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.” {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 412.17}

Go where you will, it is impossible to get outside the sphere of the law. Even the Gentiles, who “sin without law,” are judged guilty by that same law written in their hearts. And so it appears that they are not actually without law, after all. All the law that they are without is the written law; but they have in their hearts a copy of that law, which, although not by any means so complete and perfect as the written law, is yet sufficient to either acquit or condemn them in the judgment, according as they have obeyed or violated it. {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 412.18}

We have, in a previous article, referred to the enmity which, immediately after the fall, God implanted in the heart of men against Satan. Now since enmity against God is hatred of his law, it follows that enmity against Satan must be love for that law; for Satan is in every respect opposed to God. The putting of this enmity into the heart of man was an act of grace on the part of God; nevertheless, it is correct to say that man has this by nature, since God made it to be a part of his nature. It is the light wherewith Christ lights every man that comes into the world. {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 412.19}

We see, then, that men are not born into this world totally depraved. They have some knowledge of right and wrong, and some promptings to do right. They may obliterate this knowledge and these promptings by their own evil course, if they will; or, yielding to the good impulse, they may grow in knowledge. It is this knowledge that men have, by which the Holy Spirit produces conviction of sin. It is only when the Spirit has been resisted till sin has completely darkened the soul, and the mind is wholly void of judgment, that the Spirit ceases to strive with man, because there is nothing left by which it can produce conviction. Then the conscience has become seared as with a hot iron, and the sinner is beyond hope. {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 418.1}

Now it matters not how little a heathen may know as to what is right and what is wrong, it is evident that if he knows only one thing, that one item is sufficient to condemn him, if he disregards it. If a man who has a little knowledge of the righteousness which the law requires, ignores that little, that is proof that he would treat the whole law in the same way, if he had it. It is not necessary, therefore, to try him by the whole law, in all its exceeding breadth. He is judged by just that which he has. In the judgment, according to the text under consideration, he will not be confronted by the whole law, which he has never seen, but he will be brought face to face with himself. He will be confronted by the things which he knew that he ought to do, and did not do; and it can be said to him as well as to the sinner who lived in the full blaze of the gospel, “Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not.” {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 418.2}

Thus the heathen who has never seen the law will “perish without law;” but since there is nothing that a man ought to do, which is not commanded by the law (“Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.” Ecclesiastes 12:13), it remains a truth that it is by the law, in reality, that every work and every secret thing are brought into judgment. {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 418.3}

Of course there is no difficulty about those who, sinning in the law, are judged by the law. They are those who, having the whole law revealed to them, disregard it, and are judged by the whole law. The only thing in this passage that ever troubles anybody, is the matter of sinning without law; but we have seen that this gives us warrant for claiming that there is sin which is not taken account of by the law, or that any are outside the jurisdiction of the law of God. {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 418.4}

It is worth bearing in mind, also, that the light which is sufficient to condemn man, is sufficient, also, to save him, if it is followed. If the man who has but a little knowledge of right and wrong, will but walk in the light that he has, he will be justified. To him more light will be given, for “light is sown for the righteous.” “If any man willeth to do his will he shall know of the teaching.” John 7:17, Revised Version. And thus is seen the justice of God’s dealings with man. E. J. W. {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 418.5}

**“Pleading for Persecution” The Signs of the Times, 16, 28.**

E. J. Waggoner

The *Lutheran Observer* refers to Dr. Hickok as “the highest authority in political economy and moral science,” and quotes from his “Moral Science” with reference to religion in the State. Following is a portion of the citation:- {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 418.6}

“A State has, and ever must have, some form of religious faith. It must use religion and appeals to conscience, and apply the doctrine of future retribution in some way, or it cannot attain its end in the conservation of the public freedom; and this necessity for religious forms will make it necessary that it recognize some articles of faith. It must have its own binding oaths, and holy days, and sacred books.... The only course for any individuals who may dissent from such religious faith, is to follow each the honest dictates of his own conscience, and subject himself to such retributions as the State in its judgment deems necessary for its own ends of freedom. All regard for honest differences of conscience should be scrupulously exhibited as far as may be; yet, with a single eye to public liberty, it may be necessary that the State should sometimes determine against individual conscience; and in all such cases, while the individual should preserve his own conscience in its integrity at any hazard, he must still quietly yield to the penalty which the State, in its honest regard for public freedom imposes. {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 418.7}

“A theistic nation may thus incorporate into its national education the religious acknowledgment of a personal God; a Christian nation may use the Gospels as a text-book; a Protestant nation may use the Protestant Bible in the public schools.” {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 418.8}

By the same token, a Catholic nation may use the Catholic Bible in the public schools, and the Protestant minority must say nothing, or suffer for conscience’ sake. There is no question but that the Catholic nation would ignore the convictions of Protestants; but it does seem inconsistent for a professed Protestant to uphold it in such a course. {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 418.9}

The same line of reasoning that Dr. Hickok uses would uphold all the barbarities practiced by Turks upon Chinese. The government must have some form of faith; that form must of course be the will of the majority; if the majority are Mohammedans or pagans, then the Christians whose conscience will not allow them to practice the prevailing religion, must suffer. The man who advocates State religion, thereby pleads for religious persecution, and justifies the martyrdom of Stephen, James, and Paul, the burning of Huss, and every other murder that has been perpetrated in the name of religion. It is very easy to talk about other people suffering for their convictions, but few stop to think that it means simply martyrdom. {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 418.10}

In such a discussion as this it should not be forgotten that the United States is no more a Protestant nation than it is a Catholic nation. This country is not yet a church organization, notwithstanding the efforts to make it such. {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 418.11}

**“The Eight-day Sabbath” The Signs of the Times, 16, 28.**

E. J. Waggoner

A friend has just stepped in to ask for an explanation of Ezekiel 43:26, 27, which has been presented to him by some zealous people as a sure proof that God ordained the Sunday as the Sabbath. After satisfying his mind on the subject, it occurred to us that others might be troubled in a similar manner, so we call attention to the text here. It reads thus:- {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 418.12}

“Seven days shall they purge the altar and purify it; and they shall consecrate themselves. And when these days are expired, it shall be, that upon the eighth day, and so forward, the priests shall make your burnt-offerings upon the altar, and your peace-offerings; and I will accept you, saith the Lord.” {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 418.13}

The taking of this text as an argument for Sunday observance is a specimen of the too common practice of adopting a theory, and then seizing upon some text and trying to fit it to the theory *by sound*, regardless of what it actually says, or of its connection. In this way many honest people deceive themselves, thinking that they are really studying the Bible; and many people who are not so honest deceive others who have little acquaintance with the word. In this case let the reader note the following points:- {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 418.14}

1. There is not in the entire chapter, nor in the chapter before, or the chapter following, any mention of the Sabbath or of Sabbath observance. The subject of discourse is the sanctuary and the altar that was to be built for Jewish service. {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 418.15}

2. The verses in question are a part of the directions as to how the priests should prepare the altar for service. Verses 13-17 give the dimensions of the altar; and verses 18-27 give the ordinances of the altar, to prepare it for regular use. Bullocks and goats were to be slain and offered as sin-offerings, to cleanse the altar.” See verses 18-25. For seven days these ceremonies were to be performed, and then it would be ready for service; and from the eighth day it was to be in constant use, not every eighth day, but upon the eighth day and onward, every day. This is all there is in the text, and all that can be made from it. “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear,” and “whoso readeth, let him understand.” {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 418.16}

3. But some, not satisfied with learning what the text clearly says, will say that it may mean something else; so we will, in a few words, show what it cannot possibly mean. We will grant, for the moment, for the sake of giving the Sunday cause every possible advantage, that the seven days were to begin with Sunday, so that the eighth day would also fall on Sunday, and that the expression, “upon the eighth day and so forward,” means every eighth day, instead of every succeeding day. No what? Does that prove that the certain thing commanded was to be performed every Sunday? Not by any means, as can be seen by anybody who can count as far as eight on his fingers. The next eighth day would be Monday, the next one Tuesday, the next one Wednesday, the next one Thursday, the next Friday, and the next Saturday; and only once in seven weeks would it be possible for it to fall upon Sunday. Every day of the week would receive the same treatment. It requires no great mathematical skill to figure that out. {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 419.1}

4. Again; supposing still that the text means that the eighth day was to fall on Sunday, and that the expression, “and forward,” means only every eighth day, let us see how it will work in an exactly parallel expression. Turn to Leviticus 22:27, and read:- {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 419.2}

“When a bullock, or a sheep, or a goat, is brought forth, then it shall be seven days under the dam; and from the eighth day and thenceforth it shall be accepted for an offering made by fire unto the Lord.” {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 419.3}

Now, according to the argument which makes Ezekiel 43:27 teach Sunday observance, we learn that a young bullock or sheep or goat was to be exempt from use as a sacrifice for the first seven days of its life, but that every eighth day after that it was to be offered as a burnt-offering! Impossible? Oh, no; it must be so, or else the argument that makes Sunday the Sabbath will fall to the ground! {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 419.4}

5. But we haven’t yet exhausted the possibilities of Leviticus 22:27. From the Sunday theory of Ezekiel 43:27 we have learned that “the eighth day and so forward” means not only every eighth day, but that every eighth day falls on a Sunday, and that thus the text is an evidence that Sunday was to be observed. So by the same token we learn that when a young bullock or sheep or goat had lived with its mother seven days, it was to be offered as a sacrifice on the eighth day, which, of course, was always a Sunday, and that every Sunday thereafter (every eighth day) it was likewise to be offered as a burnt-offering, in order to show the Jews that in the new dispensation Sunday would be the Sabbath. {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 419.5}

This is nonsense? Of course it is; and so is the argument which makes Ezekiel 43:27 refer to Sunday. You say that anybody can see that what Leviticus 22:27 means is that from the eighth day of an animal’s life it may be taken at any time, no matter what the day, as a burnt-offering. Certainly; we agree with you; but what seems so strange to us is that anybody should not be able to see just as easily that what is meant in Ezekiel 43:27 is that after the altar had been purified for seven days, it could be used any day thereafter, no matter what day of the week, and every day, if necessary, for burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 419.6}

6. And now, finally, doesn’t it seem as though the Sunday cause must be extremely destitute of argument, when its friends are forced to use such palpably absurd methods to support it? Could there be any stronger argument brought against the claim that Sunday is the Sabbath than the effort to get Sunday argument out of Ezekiel 43:27? Contrast this with the simple language of the fourth commandment, in connection with Genesis 2:1-3. “What is the chaff to the wheat?” E. J. W. {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 419.7}

**“Notes on the International Lesson. Lost and Found. Luke 15:1-10” The Signs of the Times, 16, 28.**

E. J. Waggoner

**NOTES ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.
(Luke 15:1-10. July 27, 1890.)**

“Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.” The publicans were those who gathered the *publienum*, or government revenue. The publicans of the New Testament were, according to Trench, “men of an inferior sort, who did the lower work of the collection. They were everywhere hateful for their rudeness, their frauds, their vexations, and oppressions; we possess long lists of opprobrious epithets with which, among the Greeks, they were assailed. But there was that which made keener yet the scorn, and more intense the hatred, with which the Jewish publicans were regarded by their own countrymen. They were nothing less than renegades and traitors, who for filthy lucre’s sake had sided with the enemy, and now collected for a profane heathen treasury that tribute which was the evident sign of the subjection of God’s people to a Gentile yoke. This scorn and hate found utterance in a thousand ways; no alms might be received from their money chest; their testimony was not received in courts of justice; they were as the heathen, and in some sort worse than the heathen.” {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 419.8}

Their calling was a lawful one, yet full of temptation. The natural tendency of most men would be to take advantage of the opportunity which it so abundantly offered to make money dishonestly, since nothing but an eager desire for money would tempt one to put himself under the ban of public sentiment; and the fact that the publicans were everywhere despised, would naturally tend to give them a despicable character. That as a class they were very bad is shown by the connection in which they are frequently referred to-“publicans and sinners;” also by Christ’s statement that an incorrigible church-members was to be regarded “as an heathen man and a publican.” Matthew 18:17. Yet they were not wholly depraved, nor insusceptible to good influences, as is shown by many instances. They were sinners, it is true, but still in a more hopeful condition than were the self-righteous Pharisees. See Matthew 21:31. We find this verified in Luke 7:29, 30, where we are told that the publicans justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, not being baptized of him. They also flocked to hear Christ’s teaching, as noted in this lesson, because he had a message of hope for them. {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 419.9}

“And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.” The pride and bigotry of the scribes and Pharisees are shown by this murmur. But we may leave them, to consider the charge that they brought against Jesus. “This man receiveth sinners.” It is a cause for joy to know that the Pharisees told the truth on this occasion. Christ receives sinners. “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out,” said he. John 6:37. He sends out the gracious invitation, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28. “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8. He calls sinners to him, and receives them, because they are sinners, and he alone has the power to cleanse from sin. Would that every despondent sinner might believe the words spoken of Christ, “This man receiveth sinners.” Poor, blind Pharisees! They trusted to themselves that they were righteous, and did not know that they were sinners, even worse than the despised publicans. Had they known that, they might have proved to their everlasting joy the truth of that which they supposed was a bitter reproach; for Christ would have received them likewise. {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 419.10}

Verses 4-9 contain two vivid illustrations of God’s interest in sinners. The first one is this:- {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 419.11}

“What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.” {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 419.12}

In this the reasonableness of Christ’s receiving sinners is shown. Anybody would go to search for a lost sheep, even though it was only one out of a hundred. God’s creatures are his flock. How natural that he should seek after the lost ones. “The Son of man is come to save that which was lost.” And since he came at an infinite personal sacrifice, to save the lost ones, who can for a moment doubt that he will gladly receive those who come to him? How is it possible for a sinner to doubt the willingness of Christ to receive him? He gave his life for no other purpose than that they might come to him. He “gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.” Titus 2:14. {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 419.13}

“Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.” But where are they that need no repentance? Not on this earth, certainly; “for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23. It will not do to say that Christ meant that there is more joy over one sinner that repents, than there would be over ninety-nine that needed not to repent, if there were any such. It is evident that those who need no repentance must be the unfallen angels and the inhabitants of other worlds. But this is a minor matter. The great point is that not only is Christ willing to receive sinners, but he calls for them, and rejoices when they *come*. {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 419.14}

“Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” It does not say that there is joy among the angels over one sinner that repenteth, although we may be sure that they who are sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation, are deeply interested in everything that concerns them. But there is joy “in the presence of the angels.” The Father and the Son do not conceal their joy “over one sinner that repenteth.” Who, then, may despise the day of small things, or esteem it a small thing to convert one sinner? What if the labor be hard, and the expenditure great, and only one soul is saved as the result, is it a small thing to add to the joy of Heaven? And does not this give us a clue to the meaning of the words which the Lord will say to the faithful servants, namely, “Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord”? The joy of the Lord is to see sinners repent and be saved. This joy is great because the salvation, has been achieved at an immense sacrifice. If we are permitted to share the joy of the Lord, it will be to rejoice over the salvation, not of ourselves, merely, but of others, and especially of those whom our influence has helped to bring to the knowledge of the gospel. E. J. W. {SITI July 21, 1890, p. 419.15}

**“Church Union” The Signs of the Times, 16, 29.**

E. J. Waggoner

We have received a very interesting pamphlet entitled, “Which? One Church or Many?” written by W. K. Marshall, D.D., of the Methodist Episcopal Church, introduced by Dr. James Burrell, of the Presbyterian Church, the object of which is to advance the idea of a union of the various Protestant churches. The author quotes the numerous passages of Scripture which speak of the unity that should exist among the followers of Christ, declaring the church of Christ to be *one body* and which rebuke the tendency to schisms in the church, and then briefly reviews church history. Coming to our own country, he finds many powerful reasons for church union, chief of which are the growing disregard of Sunday; the gigantic proportions of the liquor traffic; the boldness and impudence of infidelity; the encroachments of Romanism, and secularism upon our public-school system; the corruption of party politics; and the rapid growth of cities, and the diminishing proportion of church-membership. These things, he says, “cry loudly for some kind of organic and practical union among the churches of Protestantism, which has not yet been realized, that they may stand solid, compact, aggressive, triumphant in the face of these mighty forces of evil which confront us upon every hand.” {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 420.1}

After noticing the hopeful signs on such a union manifested in the different churches, he mentions as the five points upon which there must be agreement: The recognition of the right of every Christian to the Lord’s table, no matter by whom spread; the recognition of the right of all Christians to their private judgment; the validity of the ordination of the ministry in all orthodox bodies; the willingness of each sect to surrender and totally abandon everything that stands in the way of recovering the lost unity of the church, although each body is to retain its own distinctive organization; and then he summarizes the methods and results as follows:- {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 420.2}

“Such a union as would cover these five points, it is believed, might be brought about by a federation of all Protestant bodies, and as exists among the different States of our republic, each single body preserving its denominational integrity and independence as to ecclesiastical polity. Its peculiarities as the methods and all doctrinal faith, and in all practical methods of a general missionary work, the evangelization of the masses in the great cities, the building of hospitals, orphan asylums, training-schools, deaconesses’ homes, Bible-schools, the support of Sabbath observance, temperance, and other reforms, the enforcement of just and righteous laws for the promotion of public morality, and all other enterprises and agencies that tend to herald the day when our Lord and Saviour will indeed claim the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.” {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 420.3}

We have outlined the little book thus at length because we think that it is a very significant sign of the times. While we recognize the Christian spirit and honest purpose of the author, we cannot fail to recognize in his plan the erroneous idea that is becoming so prevalent, that the church is, by some sort of combination, to purify politics, and by means of purified politics to bring in the millennium. Our criticism, in brief, is as follows:- {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 420.4}

1. We know that as Christ is not divided, his church is not divided. “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.” Ephesians 4:4. The true members of Christ’s body are all baptized by one Spirit into that body (1 Corinthians 12:13); and this shows that any union that is mechanical, and not the result of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, will be no real union. It will be the same as a “marriage of convenience.” All who have the one Spirit are by that Spirit made members of one body. They form a real union, and not a confederation. {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 420.5}

2. While unity is a very desirable thing, it is not desirable if truth has to be sacrificed to attain it. It is deplorable that there are so many sects in Christendom; but those divisions are inevitable, so long as people do not hold to the same things; and only the Holy Spirit can cause men to see alike. The truth of God is the only true basis of church union, and those who do not agree upon this cannot be really united, no matter what combination is formed. If it is claimed that men “cannot see alike,” we have only to reply that they can if they are led by the one Spirit; for the Holy Spirit is given for the purpose of leading believers into all truth; and since there is only one Spirit, one truth, and one hope, people must see alike just to the extent that they are led by that Spirit. {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 426.1}

3. If a union were effected by any other than purely spiritual means, the inevitable result would be the using of the combined power in an unspiritual manner, to influence politics, and then would be demonstrated the truth of the statement that “combinations of religious bodies for political purposes are always dangerous,” and this notwithstanding the good intentions of the people so combining. Such a federation of churches into one general church, working for the ends proposed, some of which directly involve legislation, would be nothing less than a State church; and the evils that would result would be vastly greater than those which now exist. {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 426.2}

Therefore while we most heartily believe in Christian union, we have no confidence in any scheme of a union of churches. The latter may be brought about by negotiations between the representatives of leading denominations; the former only by a faithful preaching of the truth as it is in Jesus, depending upon no power but the power of the Spirit. E. J. W. {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 426.3}

**“Communion Wine” The Signs of the Times, 16, 29.**

E. J. Waggoner

The pastor of St. Paul’s M. E. Church, in Lowell, Mass., has decided upon an innovation. In a conversation following a recent class-meeting, one of the members stated that before his conversion he was addicted to the use of liquor, and that he strongly disapproved the use of wine at the sacrament, as he had twice fallen, by the temptation thus placed in his way. The pastor stated that he could never pass the wine to this brother after learning this fact, and he had long been debating in his mind the advisability of discontinuing its use. He was followed by others, who strongly urged him to use pure water instead of wine at the communion service, commencing next Sunday. This he promised to do, and his promise was unanimously indorsed. Consequently, nothing but pure water will be used at the communion service at St. Paul’s hereafter, and it is believed to be the first Methodist Church to adopt the practice.” {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 426.4}

The Lowell *Mail*, from which the above is taken, adds:- {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 426.5}

“This question was agitated in this city at a union meeting of the Methodist Churches some years ago, but its adoption was defeated by a single vote.” {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 426.6}

Thus one unscriptural practice leads to another. To use water instead of wine at communion is the same as having no communion at all. Such a ceremony is most certainly not the one which the Saviour instituted. The Catholic Church is more consistent in withholding the cup entirely from the laity, although it uses it in the mass. {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 426.7}

But all this perversion of the ordinance would be avoided if the communion were celebrated, as it should be, with the “fruit of the vine,” the pure, unfermented grape juice. This, and this only, is fit to be used as an emblem of “the precious blood of Christ,”-the incorruptible thing by which we are redeemed,-and there is no more danger in it than there is in the fruit which is served daily upon the table. The Lord knew what he was doing when he instituted the Lord’s Supper; and he never sets temptation in any man’s ways. When men try to improve on his ordinances, they always get into trouble. {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 426.8}

 **“The True Circumcision. Romans 2:17-29” The Signs of the Times, 16, 29.**

E. J. Waggoner

“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; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest they boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Therefore, if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfill the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 426.9}

Before dwelling upon the one central thought of these verses, we will call attention to a few of the incidental points. From verses 17 and 18 we learn that the law of God, in which the Jews made their boast, is the will of God. They knew the will of God, because they were instructed out of the law. This fact settles the matter of the breadth, the holiness, and the unchanging nature of the law of God. Someone may object that the law could not be the perfect expression of God’s will, since the Jews, who rested in it, were so far from perfect. But Paul provides the answer to that by showing that although they rested in the law, it was only the pride of possession which they felt, while they disregarded its claims. {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 426.10}

“Which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.” In Coneybeare and Howsen’s free translation, this is rendered, “Possessing in the law the perfect pattern of knowledge and of truth.” This is exactly what the law is, and this is why those who are instructed out of it are able to “approve the things that are more excellent” (see verse 18), or, as the margin says, “try the things that differ,” or, as Conybeare and Howsen put it, still more plainly, “give judgment upon good and evil.” The law of God-the ten commandments-is that by which every work, with every secret thing, is to be brought into judgment.” See Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14. {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 426.11}

Verses 21-23 contain a series of pointed questions, which are in reality a strong arraignment of those “who trusted in themselves, because they do the same things; and he clinches the point so plainly implied in his questions, by saying, “For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.” Reference is here unmistakably made to 2 Samuel 12:14, where we find that the prophet Nathan, speaking of David’s adultery, said to him, “Because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.” Therefore, when the apostle said to the Jews, “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you,” he directly charged them with living in open violation of the law which they professed to honor. Professors of religion may cause the name of God to be blasphemed, by living lives contrary to their profession; and thus, although they may appear very reverent in their speech, they may be guilty of violating the third commandment. So true is it that the breaking of one commandment involves violation of another. {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 426.12}

Having now convicted the Jews of transgression of the law of God, and shown that they are therefore even worse than the heathen, who had not the written law, the apostle proceeds to show (in verses 23-25) that they are not in reality Jews at all. This is a very important passage of Scripture. It proves not only that God is not now a respecter of persons, but that he never was, and that the condition sof his favor are the same to all people in all ages. {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 426.13}

“For circumcision verily profiteth if thou keep the law.” As will be seen more directly from chap. 3:1, 2 when we reach it, the term “circumcision” has not so much reference to the physical act as to the people who were specially represented by it. “The circumcision” and “the uncircumcision” were common terms to indicate the Jews and the Gentiles. See Galatians 2:7-9. So when Paul said that circumcision profits if they keep the law, he meant that it was a good thing to be a Jew if one kept the law. Wherein the profit lay, we shall learn in the next chapter. {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 426.14}

“But if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.” That is, those who were circumcised as the literal descendants of Abraham, were in reality not circumcised, and were consequently not children of Abraham, if they did not keep the law. This was what John the Baptist told the Pharisees who flocked to his baptism. Calling them a viper’s brood, he said, “And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.” Matthew 3:9. Sooner than acknowledge such hypocrites as children of Abraham, God would make children out of stones. Jesus, also, when the wicked Jews said, “Abraham is our father,” replied: “If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God; this did not Abraham.” John 8:39, 40. And then he directly charged them with being children of the devil. {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 426.15}

“Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?” Let it be remembered that only Abraham’s children are the children of God (Galatians 3:29), and that all of Abraham’s children were to be circumcised. Genesis 17:10. But in the verse just quoted, Paul says that keeping the law is counted to an uncircumcised man as circumcision. Therefore, although according to the Scriptures only the circumcised are the children of God, it follows that the man who obeyed God is and was owned as a child of God, even though the rite of circumcision had never been performed upon him. And this is in harmony with Peter’s statement that “God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.” Acts 10:34, 35. {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 427.1}

The whole matter is summed up and emphasized in the last two verses, which we requite:- {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 427.2}

“For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 427.3}

A few parallel texts will indicate the harmony of the Scriptures on this point. In Ephesians 2:11 the apostle Paul speaks to the converts from among the heathen as those who were “called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh.” He does not speak of either party absolutely, as being uncircumcised or circumcised, but as being “called uncircumcision” and called “circumcision.” This is in keeping with his statement that “circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandment of God.” 1 Corinthians 7:19. {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 427.4}

In Philippians 3:3 Paul says, “We are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh;” and in Acts 7:51-53 we learn from Stephen that the Jews were “uncircumcised in heart and ears,” because they resisted the Holy Ghost, and had not kept the law, which they had received by the disposition of angels. This, taken in connection with Romans 2:28, 29, proves that true circumcision was of the heart. In harmony with this idea were the words of Jesus to Nathanael, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.” John 1:47. {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 427.5}

Let not the reader get the idea that this view of circumcision, and of the true Israel, is peculiar to what is known as “the Christian dispensation.” Nothing less than yielding the heart to the influences of the Holy Spirit, and keeping the commandments of God, has ever been recognized as true circumcision. In Romans 4:10, 11 Paul speaks of the time when circumcision was first given to Abraham, and says that “he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised.” Circumcision, therefore, was a sign of righteousness, and a sign does not of itself amount to anything if the thing signified is wanting. And so even in the days of Abraham, Moses, and the later prophets, the outward form counted for nothing with the Lord; only obedience was counted as circumcision. {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 427.6}

This is shown by Deuteronomy 30:6-8: “And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. And the Lord thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecute thee. And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the Lord, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day.” See also chap. 10:16, and Jeremiah 4:4. {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 427.7}

A right idea of what really constituted a Jew, according to the Scripture, constituted a Jew, according to the Scripture, will settle many a disputed point. It shows the unity of God’s plan of salvation; that he was not partial in choosing the Jews; and that his requirements are the same in all generations. It helps us to understand also the full extent of the promises to the Jews, and lifts the Old Testament history out of the narrow boundaries which so many regard it as occupying. It settles the question as to the return of their own land, and enables us to see wisdom and justice in the statement that “all Israel shall be saved.” E. J. W. {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 427.8}

**“Notes on the International Lesson. The Prodigal Son. Luke 15:22-21” The Signs of the Times, 16, 29.**

E. J. Waggoner

(Luke, August 3, 1890, p. 15.)

There are few more comforting passages of Scripture than the parable of the prodigal son. Coming in the connection that it does, it carries its explanation with it: It is a most graphic representation of the love of God for the rebellious sons of men, and of his longing to receive them to himself again. It is true that it was spoken for the special benefit of the scribes and Pharisees, who murmured because Jesus received publicans and sinners, being designed to show how more than willing God is to receive the most degraded and despised sinners; but this very fact makes it the more valuable, for if he will receive such, we may know that he will receive all. It is a vivid illustration of the saying, “Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.” {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 427.9}

The younger son in the parable may stand for all sinners. Everything that they have they have received from God; yet, forgetful of their obligation to him, they have despised his ways, and have “gone away backward.” We may not press too closely the main points in the narrative, which are necessary to give it form; yet it seems allowable to compare the young man’s joining himself to a citizen of the country, when he began to be in want, to the sinner’s plunging deeper into sin in order to shake off the first convictions of sin. How often when the want of God first makes itself felt, a man thinks to satisfy the want by joining himself more closely to the world. {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 427.10}

“And he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him.” He was now deserted by the false friends that flocked around him in his prosperous days, and was denied even the poor privilege of trying to satisfy his craving with the coarsest kind of fare. The husks, it is hardly necessary to say, were not the husks of corn, but were the pods of the carob tree, which somewhat resembled the locust. {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 427.11}

“And when he came to himself, he said.... I will arise and go to my father.” Although his position as a feeder of swine, forsaken by his companions, and starving, seems a most pitiable one, he was far better off now than when he was spending his substance in riotous living. Then he was intoxicated, and unable to distinguish the proper relation of things. Now the dizzy whirl had ceased, and he came to himself. He was in just as bad condition before as now, but he didn’t know it. The worst thing about backslidden professors is not that they are “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,” but that, being in this condition, they know it not. {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 427.12}

The office of the Holy Spirit is to convince of sin and of righteousness. Often the conviction is produced in a way that seems very humiliating. Too often, when the conviction has been brought about by plain reproof, the sinner becomes angry at the reproof, thinking that it was administered for the purpose of humiliating him. He does not realize that the humiliation which he feels is due entirely to the position in which he has placed himself, and which the reproof has revealed to him. The reproof which brings conviction shows the kindness of God in seeking to rescue him from his fallen condition. The witness of the Spirit that we are the children of God is no surer evidence that God cares for us than is the reproof of his Spirit, which brings the shame of conviction, “Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourageth every son whom he receiveth.” {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 427.13}

Note how quickly the father cuts short the confession. He does not wait for him to go into a detailed account of all the evil deeds that he has committed. It is enough that the so has returned repentant to his father’s house. He is alive, and coming back to put himself under the father’s care and guidance. The son had no claim on the father; he had spent all the portion of the estate that would have fallen to him, yet the father receives him on the same footing as though he had never gone astray. {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 428.1}

And so the great point to be learned from this parable is that God receives sinners just as they are. If the poor prodigal had thought, when he came to a sense of his need, that he must fix himself up with a decent suit of clothes before he could go to his father, he would never have gone. The sinner is justified only by faith; and faith comes only when self-trust ceases. Whoever is overwhelmed with the sense of his sin, and despised, perhaps, by men, may know that for him there is hope, for “this Man receiveth sinners.” E. J. W. {SITI July 28, 1890, p. 428.2}