**“The Penalty of the Law” The Signs of the Times, 16, 30.**

E. J. Waggoner

“Will you be so kind as to explain your statement, ‘When Adam fell he brought the race of mankind under the sentence of eternal death.’ (The Signs of the Times, July 7, 1890), with the fact that he did not die an eternal death? Did he suffer less than the penalty of the law? W.T.D.” {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 428.3}

In answer to the second question we answer, Yes; and that really answers the whole. If Adam had suffered the penalty of the law, he would have died an eternal death; for “the wages of sin is death.” This means death simple and absolute, with no hope of a resurrection. The penalty of the law has fallen upon only one being, and that was Christ. “But he did not die an eternal death.” No; he died for us, that we might be partakers of his life. His death is a part of the great mystery of the gospel, for it is impossible for us to understand how the divine Son of God, the Creator, who had life in himself, could die. But as he, who knew no sin, took our sin upon himself,-was made to be sin for us,-so he voluntarily became obedient unto that death which sin brings. He died for us, however, and not for himself; and since there was no stain of sin upon him, it was not possible that death should hold him (Acts 2:24), for it is sin alone that gives power to death. He had life enough for himself and for all the world besides; therefore when he laid down his life as a forfeit to the violated law, he could take it again. To all who accept him he imparts his own life, which has triumphed over death, and they receive the penalty of the law in him; but when the law demands the life of an unrepentant sinner, as a penalty for its violation, it takes all that he has, and there is no possibility of his living again. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 428.4}

Death, then, is to the Christian in reality only an incident in his life,-a short sleep. “The sting of sin is death;” and when sin has been removed through Christ, of course death has no power to harm. The Christian only sleeps in Jesus. His life has not been taken, for, says Paul to all Christians, “Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” Colossians 3:3. “This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” 1 John 5:11. That which Christ has in his keeping is beyond the reach of Satan or of his agent. Therefore it is certain that the death which those die who believe in Christ (among whom we, as well as our correspondent, place Adam), is not the penalty of the law of God. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 428.5}

This is made very plain by the words of Christ: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” John 5:24. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 428.6}

But death is common to all mankind. The righteous and the wicked both die alike, the only difference being that “the righteous hath hope in his death.” But it is certain that the death which even wicked men now die is not the death which is the wages of sin, for the wicked as well as the righteous are to have a resurrection, when they will receive according to that which they have done. Judgment is not executed upon the ungodly until the Lord comes. Jude 14, 15. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 428.7}

The words of Christ, recorded in John 3:16-18, throw great light upon this whole question: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” This of itself proves that all men who are without Christ are under the sentence of death. This makes it evident that when Paul says that “by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12), he refers to that death which is the wages of sin. It was because Christ saw all the world in this condemnation, that he gave himself for the world, so that all who would believe in him could be freed from condemnation. That they were condemned to perish is shown by the fact that God gave his Son to save them from perishing; and those who believe not are condemned already. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 428.8}

This sentence of death was made known to Adam as soon as he was placed in the garden of Eden, as a warning against sin. When he sinned, he at once came under condemnation, doomed to suffer the threatened penalty. But right here came in the gospel. The sacrifice of Christ was just as efficacious the day that Adam sinned as it is to-day; he is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. For all practical purposes Christ was crucified as soon as Adam fell, for God “calleth those things which be not as though they were.” Christ was given at that time. The sacrifice on the part of God, to give his only begotten Son, was already made; God loved the world then just as much as he did four thousand years later. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 434.1}

If it had not been that Christ was given for man’s redemption, death would have ended all for Adam, and for all the human race. But the promise of a Redeemer carried with it another probation, and so the execution of the sentence was suspended until it should be seen what use men would make of that probation. God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ (Acts 17:31); and until that time the sentence will be held in abeyance. Christ has suffered it, and all who receive him, receive the penalty in him, and his life answers for theirs. But those who reject the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God will abide on them. They will receive the penalty in themselves, and thus the course of sin will be brought to a close, and the law will be vindicated. E. J. W. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 434.2}

**“Sunday in California” The Signs of the Times, 16, 30.**

E. J. Waggoner

Here is a specimen of the *mis* information that is dealt out to Eastern people, concerning the status of Sunday in California. It is from a church report from Southern California to the New York *Christian Advocate:*- {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 434.3}

“California is in an anomalous position in reference to Sunday legislation. In the early days, when this country was little more than a vast mining camp, and Sabbath desecration was well-nigh universal among the inhabitants, it had enacted a good, wholesome statute, protecting Christian people in their religious services. But a few years ago an overwise governor suggested that this law was largely a “dead letter,” and so, for consistency’s sake, it was repealed. So now Sunday is simply a public holiday, being classed with the Fourth of July, New Year’s day, etc. The State laws give no protection to religious assemblages on the Lord’s day, any more than a base-ball game. Those legislators of the early days had not outgrown the influences of their Eastern Christian homes and the sacred associations of the Lord’s day; so while many of them doubtless were careless and more or less wicked, they embodied in the laws of their new State laws protecting and fostering the interests of the Christian church and the Christian home. But the sad results of bad training have caused a later race of legislators to tear down the barriers set up against vice and crime; so that, so far as the State law is concerned, all over California business may be carried on as on other days, the only disability being that notes an other documents signed and dated on that day are not legal.” {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 434.4}

1. The Sunday law that California formerly had, and which was repealed a little less than eight years ago, had nothing whatever to do with the protection of Christian people in their religious services. It was a Sunday law forbidding certain kinds of labor and amusement on Sunday. That is all there was to it. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 434.5}

2. “An overwise governor” had nothing to do with its repeal. It was repealed because a majority of the people of California testified at the ballot-box that they wanted to rid California of a legacy handed down from the Dark Ages, when there was no other way known of making men religious but the rack and the thumb-screw. The sole issue in the campaign that year was over the Sunday law. The Republicans pledged themselves to maintain and enforce it; the Democrats in their platform declared against it. On this issue the Democrats won, and when the Legislature repealed the law, it was simply carrying out the pledge made by the Democratic party, and the instruction of the people at the polls. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 434.6}

3. It is not true that “the State laws give no protection to religious assemblages on the Lord’s day, any more than to a base-ball game.” Section 302 of the Penal Code is as follows:- {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 434.7}

“Every person who willfully disturbs or disquiets any assemblage of people met for religious worship, by noise, profane discourse, rude or indecent behavior, or by any unnecessary noise either within the place where such meeting is held, or so near as to disturb the order and solemnity of the meeting, is guilty of a misdemeanor.” {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 434.8}

Here is protection enough for anybody. In fact, if affords too much protection to suit many people, who would have it specify religious assemblages of those who observe Sunday, leaving others unprotected. There is not a State in the Union where a disturber of any religious gathering would meet with quicker punishment than in California. But there is no special law protecting base-ball games. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 434.9}

4. It is true that Sunday is now simply a public holiday, being classed with the Fourth of July, New Year’s Day, etc. But surely our Sunday-law friends should be the last to complain, since they cite the Fourth of July and other holidays as precedents for making Sunday a holiday. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 434.10}

5. But it is not true that sad results are seen because of the repeal of the Sunday law. The day is observed as strictly as it ever was, and public morals are as good as in any State which has a rigid Sunday law. California has nothing of which to boast in the way of morals; but what it needs is more gospel instead of more law. E. J. W. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 434.11}

**“The Golden Rule Ignored” The Signs of the Times, 16, 30.**

E. J. Waggoner

In the following from an article in the *New Englander* *and Yale Review*, on “Legal Protection for Sunday Rest,” by W. W. Atterbury, D.D., we have a very fair sample of an error into which those who argue for Sunday laws are continually running; namely, that of imagining that what is done solely out of regard for the day is done for the benefit of the people:- {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 434.12}

“We may advance a step farther, to another ground upon which the Sunday laws rest. The chief and highest use to which the weekly rest is put, by the American people generally, is its religious use. And so the law recognizes and protects the right of undisturbed worship, to which the day is devoted. There is a right of worship as well as of non-worship. When the great majority of a people set apart one day for that purpose, it is just and right that their laws should recognize that fact, and, so far as may be needful to this end, protect them, both from being robbed of its opportunity of worship, and being disturbed in its enjoyment. Though it be granted that the law transcends its sphere in a free government when it compels the religious observance of the day, it by no means follows that it transcends its proper sphere when, not enforcing the religious observance of the day, it protects those who may choose so to use it. A Christian people have a right to the undisturbed enjoyment of their day of worship. In a Mohammedan country, the law might justly protect from wanton disturbance the day then set apart for religious use; or in a Jewish State, the law would protect the Jewish Sabbath. In a Christian country, the law rightfully protects from disturbance the Lord’s day; and this not because Christianity is the true religion, but because it is the religion of the people.” {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 434.13}

Now according to this, all that is desired is that the people shall be protected in their right to worship on Sunday; yet what is asked for is not a law to protect *the people*, but a law to protect *the day*-to keep people from doing any labor on it. But, as a matter of fact, there are in every State laws that are amply sufficient to protect all people in their right to assemble for religious worship. Anybody ought to be able to see that it is not necessary to compel everybody to rest on Sunday, in order to secure to a portion of the people the right to rest and worship on that day. The fact that five hundred people go to the woods for a picnic or to the sea-shore on Sunday, does not prevent one hundred other people from going to church and quietly worshiping on that day. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 434.14}

Another fault with the paragraph above quoted, and a very serious fault it is too, is the utter failure to comprehend the principles of true liberty, on which the American government was founded. The Declaration of Independence holds that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed; not of a majority simply, but of all. It holds that all men are created equal, that is, in regard to the rights with which the Creator has endowed them, and which government should preserve for them. Governments are for the purpose of protecting the rights of all, and not simply of the majority. Any law which does not equally respect the rights of all is an unjust law. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 435.1}

When evil things are done by wholesale, they somehow seem to command respect; the human mind seems to be overawed by anything that is large. Thus, a million-dollar defaulter can find ready access to the “best society,” while the petty larcenist is looked upon with contempt. It is well to keep in mind that that which is evil in detail is proportionately evil in mass. If a dozen persons were together in a social party, and ten of them should combine to have everything *their* way, ignoring the rights and wishes of the other two, it would be called gross selfishness. And that is just what it is when the government is asked to make laws that not only ignore but trample upon the rights of the minority. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 435.2}

Dr. Atterbury says, “In a Mohammedan country, the law might justly protect from wanton disturbance the day there set apart for religious use.” In the first place, a day cannot be disturbed, and therefore has no need of being protected from disturbance. But the people who wish to observe the day may be disturbed, and they not only may be, but ought to be, protected from wanton disturbance. But would the doctor think it right and just for the Mohammedan government to give its Mohammedan subjects full liberty to disturb its comparatively few Christian subjects in their worship on the day which they hold sacred?-Of course not. And he and everybody else knows full well that to protect Christians in their right to worship undisturbed on the day which they religiously observe, would not in the least interfere with the protection guaranteed to Mohammedans in their worship on the day which they devote to religious purposes. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 435.3}

“Or in a Jewish State, the law would protect the Jewish Sabbath.” In a Jewish State or in a “Christian State” the law has no business to know anything except the welfare of all of its citizens. If the majority of the citizens of any country were Jews, the laws, if they were just, would afford as much protection to the Christian as to the Jew. So the laws of this country should afford as much protection to Jews as to Christians. Has not almost the whole civilized world made indignant protest against “Jew-baiting” in some parts of Europe? But what right have the advocates of Sunday laws to protest against outrages committed upon Jews? The people of those countries are Catholic, and the governments are professedly Christian, and the laws are made for “Christians,” and not for Jews. If Jews are not to be protected by law, because they are in the minority, then of course they may be insulted with impunity; and it is for just this state of things that Sunday-law advocates are pleading, although we have the charity to believe that most of them do not realize what they are doing. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 435.4}

The Christian rule is, “Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.” Therefore while there cannot be in this world such a thing as a Christian government, that government in which the majority grant to the minority the same protection which they claim for themselves, approaches the nearest to the standard which Christ gave. In such a government the rights of the majority are respected, not because they are the majority, but because they are men; and the rights of the minority are equally respected for the same reason. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 435.5}

This is a live subject, and cannot receive too much attention. When men in high position can advocate the passing of laws for the gratification (not the benefit) of a certain class, it is evident that they have strayed far from the principles held by the founders of this government, as well as from the principles of the gospel, and that they are unsafe leaders. E. J. W. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 435.6}

**“The Rich Man and Lazarus. Luke 16:19-31” The Signs of the Times, 16, 30.**

E. J. Waggoner

**INTERNATIONAL LESSON NOTES.
(Luke 16:19-21; August 10, 1890.)**

There is probably no portion of Scripture that has been the subject of more controversy than this one, and none which has been more the subject of that grossest of all exegetical view-private interpretation; that is, interpretation according to sound, and not according to sense; interpretation according to one’s previously-conceived opinions, without any regard to the context or to the testimony of other portions of Scripture, on the same point. Accordingly, the first and chief work of the commentator on this passage is to disabuse the minds of his hearers of erroneous notions, by showing what it does not mean. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 435.7}

That this scripture is of the nature of a parable is evident, because to give all its terms a literal application would make nonsense of it. The characters are spoken of as individuals in the flesh, having all the organs and all the desires of men in the flesh. They have eyes, tongues, bosom, power of speech, thirst, love of brethren, etc. But how could Lazarus be in Abraham’s bosom? If Lazarus was taken there, then all the saved must be there, likewise, and that is an impossibility. This, of itself, shows that this is not a literal narrative. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 435.8}

More than this, the general testimony of Scriptures as to the condition of men in death, shows that it is impossible that this should be the story of an actual transaction. In Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6 we read: “For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.” And this agrees with the words of Job 14:21. David also says: “Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.” Hezekiah also said: “For the grave cannot praise thee; death cannot celebrate thee; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.” Isaiah 38:18. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 435.9}

These are strong, positive statements. They cannot be ignored or explained away, without denying the inspiration of the Scriptures of which they form a part. We must believe that they mean just what they say; and therefore we know that the portion of Scripture that we are studying cannot mean that two persons actually carried on a conversation after death. Since a man knows nothing in the grave; he is unconscious of the prosperity of the adversity of his sons; and his thoughts have ceased, it is evident that a man could not after death feel any solicitude for the welfare of his brethren. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 435.10}

But someone will cry, “Who have we not as good right to affirm consciousness after death from this passage in Luke, as you have to affirm unconsciousness after death from the texts that you have just quoted?” For this reason: If we should affirm from one text that the dead are conscious, and from another that they are unconscious, then we make the Scripture contradict itself, and thus deny its inspiration. But the statements quoted from Solomon and David and Job and Hezekiah are positive statements of fact, and the verses in Luke are not literal statements, as we have shown. Therefore we must interpret the figurative or inferential in harmony with the positive and literal; or at least we must so interpret them as not to contradict the positive. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 435.11}

Take another thought. David was a good man; beloved of the Lord, as well as Abraham was. But of David, Peter said when he was full of the Holy Spirit, “For David is not ascended into the heavens.” Acts 2:34. And Paul said, “For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption.” Acts 13:36. If David has not ascended into the heavens, then neither Abraham nor any other saint has ascended into the heavens. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 435.12}

Let us now note a few points to the parable itself. “And it came to pass, that the beggar died; and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom; the rich man also died; and was buried.” What was carried into Abraham’s bosom? Was it the same Lazarus that laid at the rich man’s gate? Was he carried there in person? It has already been seen that this could not be. Those who interpret the parable as teaching the condition of men in death, uniformly say that only the soul or spirit of Lazarus was taken to Abraham’s bosom. But mark, there is no change in the subject. The same one who died was carried. “The beggar died, and was carried.” Shall we say that this means, “The beggar died, and his spirit was carried”? Let us see how it would work in another instance. I am telling about a tornado, and I say, “I ran out of the house and was thrown down.” Someone asks, “Did it hurt you?” I reply, “How could I be hut by the falling down of the house, when I was not in it?” And then you say, “Why, you didn’t say anything about the house being thrown down; you said that you were thrown down.” And this is the fact. My statement was that I fell down; if I meant to say that the house fell down, I should have said so. Likewise, what the text says is that Lazarus died, and that he, the same that died, was carried into Abraham’s bosom. If it be claimed that it was simply his body that died, then it was his body that was carried. If we say that it was the soul that was carried, then it was the soul that died. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 435.13}

In like manner we say of the rich man that the same thing that died was buried. But if it be claimed that the statement that “the beggar died and was carried,” etc., means that he died and that his soul was carried, then it must also be claimed that the statement that “the rich man also died, and was buried,” means that the rich man died and his soul was buried. All this serves simply to show that the passage is not a literal narrative of an actual occurrence, and that therefore it has no bearing whatever on the condition of man in death. The fact that dead men are represented as talking, no more proves that it is natural for dead men to talk, than the fact that in Judges 9:8-15 the trees, the vine, and the bramble-bush are represented as talking, proves that it is natural for trees and vines to use spoken language. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 436.1}

It should also be remembered that the angels do not carry the saints to their reward at death. Jesus said that they who served him by doing deeds of kindness to those too poor to recompense them, should be recompensed “at the resurrection of the just.” Luke 14:14. The resurrection of the just is when the Lord himself descends from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. 1 Thessalonians 4:16. The voice of the archangel calls them from their graves. John 5:28, 29. It is at this time that “he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” Matthew 24:31. It is then that they see the cutting off of the wicked, and not till then. Although probation ceases at death, the judgment does not decide the destiny of men till after that (Hebrews 9:28), even till the coming of Christ. 1 Corinthians 4:5; 2 Corinthians 5:10. Therefore we know that the parable of the rich man and Lazarus was not given for the purpose of showing the condition of men in death. The things which it relates could take place only after the coming of Christ, and the resurrection. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 436.2}

What, then, is taught by this portion of Scripture? That is a more difficult thing to tell. Nobody is justified in telling positively what a parable means, when that parable is not explained in the Scripture. “No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation;” which means that no scripture is an explanation of its own text. If commentators and Bible students had spent as much time studying this scripture as they have in trying to fit it to their own opinions, no doubt there would have been more knowledge of its meaning. We may be sure, however, that incidentally it proves that death ends probation. It also proves that earthly prosperity is not a sign of the favor of God. This was a very necessary lesson for the Jews to learn. They despised the poor, and thought that to be rich was an evidence that God was pleased with them. Of course those who held that idea would very easily get into the habit of employing questionable means to increase their wealth, persuading themselves that the end would justify the means. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 436.3}

Another thing that should not be overlooked is the proof that the Bible is the highest authority. No phenomena can take the place of plain Scripture statements. “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.” “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” This is true in a general sense. If one will not be convinced by the Bible, nothing will convince him; and when one comes to believe a thing because of certain phenomena that he has witnessed, as, for instance, of a future life because of the supposed appearance of departed friends, his form of belief is always that which the Bible does not sanction. This was especially applicable to the Jews, however, for since they refused to be convinced of the genuineness of Christ’s claims by Moses and the prophets, who testified of him, his wonderful resurrection only hardened them. E. J. W. {SITI August 4, 1890, p. 436.4}

**“The Sure Foundation” The Signs of the Times, 16, 31.**

E. J. Waggoner

“He saith unto them, that whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Matthew 16:15-19. {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 436.5}

Two expressions in this passage, namely, “on this rock I will build my church,” and, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven,” have been the object of a great deal of controversy, and they often seriously trouble those who take no stock in the arguments for papal authority, which the Catholics try to draw from them. It is the object of this little study to focus the light of inspiration upon them, that they may be explained, “not in the words which man’s wisdom, teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.” {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 436.6}

First, as to the rock upon which the church of Christ is built. Is that rock the apostle Peter? Or is it something else? That it is not Peter, may be proved both by the text itself, and by the concurrent testimony of Scripture. It is doubtless well known that the proper name Peter signifies a stone. When Jesus first saw Simon, he said to him, “Thou art Simon the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone,” or Peter. John 1:42. But perhaps it is not so generally known that the Greek word for Peter is entirely different from that which in Matthew 16:18 is translated rock. Of the former, *petra*, Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon says: “*A piece of rock, a stone*, and thus distinguished from *petra*.” This latter word, *petra*, where loose stones (*petros*) are not meant, but “masses of living rock torn up.” {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 436.7}

Now with these facts before us, who can say that Peter is the rock on which the church is built? He is a stone; but the church is not built on so unstable a foundation. Peter was a man of power, and was a mighty instrument in the hands of God to help build up the church; but it would never do to build that church upon a foundation which could waver in the least; and Peter at one time, long after this, wavered so greatly that Paul was obliged to rebuke him to the face. Galatians 2:11-14. A fearless man of God was Peter, yet only a fallible mortal. The church is built on a rock, a crag, on something that is fixed. The difference in the terms is alone sufficient to show that the apostle Peter is not the foundation of the church. {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 436.8}

Let us now see upon what, according to the inspired word, the church of Christ is actually built. In 1 Corinthians 10:4, we are told that the Israelites in the wilderness all drank the same spiritual drink; “for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed went with them; and that Rock [*petra*] was Christ.” See also Psalm 18:2; 92:15. {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 436.9}

In Ephesians 2:20 we are taken a step farther. There the converted Gentiles are told that being now fellow-citizens with the saints, they are “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.” This shows that Christ is the Rock upon which the church is built, as 1 Corinthians 10:4 shows that he is the Rock from which it derives its nourishment. If it be imagined from the wording of Ephesians 2:20, that the apostles are a part of the foundation, even then Peter is deprived of the position which the Catholic Church would give him as the sole foundation, the “apostles and prophets” being all included. But we shall see that the apostle does not mean that the apostles and prophets are a part of the foundation, but that the church is built upon the foundations upon which the apostles and prophets built, and which they, in a sense, laid. Thus, we read in 1 Corinthians 3:10-13: {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 436.10}

“According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, procious stones, wood, hay stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest.” {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 442.1}

Christ, then, and not Peter, is the foundation upon which the church is built. This will be seen more plainly still when it is remembered that the church existed in the wilderness of Sinai hundreds of years before the day of Peter. See Acts 7:38. When Moses identified himself with this church, he incurred the reproach of Christ. Hebrews 11:25, 26. The Rock from which they drank was the Rock upon which they were built. {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 442.2}

In this connection it is interesting and profitable to note the words of Christ in closing the sermon on the mount. Having given his instruction, he said:- {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 442.3}

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise men, which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall of it.” Matthew 7:24-27. {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 442.4}

Here we learn how it is that we may build upon Christ, the Rock. It is by obeying his words. “The words that I speak unto you,” said Jesus, “they are spirit, and they are life.” John 6:63. His words are divine, like himself, whether uttered with his own voice, or by the mouth of a prophet. In fact, Christ dwells in the word; for we read that he dwells in our heart by faith (Ephesians 3:17), and “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Romans 10:17. By receiving the words of Christ, therefore, we receive Christ himself; and so by building upon those words, we build upon Christ. The members of Christ’s true church, therefore, are those in whom the word of Christ dwells richly. {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 442.5}

To build upon the words of Christ is to believe them so thoroughly that they are made a part of the life, and the mainspring of every action. When it is said that Abraham “believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15:6), the full meaning conveyed by the Hebrew is that Abraham *built upon God*. The same idea is found in 2 Chronicles 29:20, where we have the words of Joshua, “Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.” In reality he exhorted them to build upon the Lord, if they would be established; and contrariwise we have the words of Isaiah to Ahaz, that because he would not build upon the words of God, he should not be established. Isaiah 7:9. Compare these two texts with Matthew 7:24-27. Abraham built upon God, by doing just as God commanded him; for James tells us that Abraham’s obedience to the command to offer up Isaac was the fulfillment of the scripture which said, “Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness.” James 2:23. {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 442.6}

Applying all this to the text under consideration, we see the force of Christ’s words. Peter, speaking for the twelve, said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Christ in saying, “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church,” puts himself, as the Rock of Ages, in direct contrast with Peter. As he said that whosoever should do his words would be building on the rock, so the church is built upon the acknowledgment of Christ as the Son of the living God. Not simple lip acknowledgment, but the acknowledgment of obedience. {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 442.7}

The remainder of the text will be considered next week under the heading, “The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.” {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 442.8}

**“Romans 3:9-12” The Signs of the Times, 16, 31.**

E. J. Waggoner

Before beginning the third chapter of Romans, we must make a very brief summary of the first two chapters, in order to get our bearings. The first chapter, after the comprehensive salutation, tells of Paul’s earnest desire to preach the gospel in Rome, because he is debtor to all men, and is not ashamed of the gospel; and this leads to the real opening of the epistle, in the statement that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, because in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. Then we are shown the justice of God in visiting wrath upon those whose ungodliness stands in the way of God’s truth, because from the things that are made they have full opportunity to know all that may be known of God. We are then told how those who once knew God lost their knowledge of him; and the depth of wickedness to which they fell is made known in few words. This closes the chapter. The second chapter opens with a scathing arraignment of all who know enough to condemn the wicked practices of the heathen, charging them with being in the same condemnation. The apostle goes on to show that none can escape the righteous judgment of God, who is no respecter of persons, but that Jew and Gentile alike must be judged according to the light that they have had; and the last half of the chapter brings the general charge contained in the beginning, directly home to the Jews, and shows that not only are they equally guilty with the Gentiles, but that they are in reality not Jews at all; by their violation of the law, their circumcision is made uncircumcision. Only those are Jews in whom there is no guile; and that only is circumcision which is of the heart. {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 442.9}

The third chapter opens with a series of questions and answers, the questions being those which the apostle puts into the mouth of a supposed Jews, who objects to some of the positions taken in the preceeding chapters. Paul’s writings. Having stated a case and proved it by positive argument, he anticipates all possible objections, and thus presents the matter in the most vivid light. Many people misinterpret his argument, by assuming that the objections which he raises are his own, instead of regarding the questions as those raised by a supposed objector, which he quotes merely for the purpose of answering them. In this case we will examine the questions and answers in detail, and then view the conversation as a whole. {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 442.10}

The first question that arises after the apostle has stated that disobedience makes circumcision uncircumcision, that circumcision is of the heart, and that the Gentiles who keep the law are counted as Jews and circumcised, is, “What advantage then hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision?” This is a very natural question. The apostle’s answer is ready,-“Much every way; chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.” {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 442.11}

It will be understood that the word “circumcision” stands for the Jewish nation, as in Galatians 2:7-9 and Ephesians 2:11, so that the two parts of verse 1 are really one question, and that when Paul says that unto *them* were committed the oracles of God, he means the Jews, who were “called circumcision.” The “oracles of God” evidently mean the ten commandments. An oracle is a revelation or response made by the mouth of any divinity, whether heathen or not. The oracles of God are those revelations made by the mouth of God. This pre-eminently applies to the ten commandments, and then to the whole Bible as an expansion of that law. Stephen spoke of Moses as having “received the lively oracles to give unto us.” Acts 7:38. The holy of holies in the temple was called the oracle (1 Kings 6:19, 20), because it was solely for the purpose of containing the ark which held the ten commandments. They are the “lively” or “living” oracles, because “the word of God is quick [living], and powerful.” Hebrews 4:12. The law was ordained to life (Romans 7:10), and obedience to it secures life (Matthew 19:17). It is the moral representation of the living God, and is the foundation of that throne which is itself alive (Ezekiel 1), and out of which proceeds the river of life. Revelation 22:1. {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 443.1}

To the Jews was granted the inestimable honor of being the depositaries of this law. See article entitled, “The Advantage of the Jew,” pages 410, 411 of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES of July 14. It was a great thing to be the people chosen by the Lord to make known his truth among the nations of earth. The law was not committed to them because they were so much better than other people; but because of Abraham’s faithfulness, and God’s promise to him, God honored his children in a special manner. They were “beloved for the fathers’ sakes.” Romans 11:28. It was not that God had more interest in the salvation of other people, that he committed his law to them, for he is no respecter of persons, and he loved the world; but he committed the law to them in the line of the fulfillment of his covenant with Abraham; and he showed his great desire for the salvation of other nations, by giving his chosen missionary people the prestige of all his mighty acts. {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 443.2}

But the Jews did not appreciate the honor thus bestowed upon them. Not only did they refuse to do the work assigned them, but they neglected to keep the law themselves. For their disobedience they were delivered into the hands of their enemies, and in captivity were compelled to do that which they might have done as the honored and feared of all nations. By the godly life of some of the Jews, who in captivity were advanced to high positions, the heathen learned of the true God and his laws; and the kings Nebuchadnezzar and Darius proved themselves more worthy to be depositaries of God’s law than the kings of Israel had. See Daniel 4, and 6:25-28. {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 443.3}

Nevertheless God did not entirely degrade the Jews from the high position to which he had advanced them. To his servant Daniel he gave a vision in which he confirmed the promised restoration of the Jews to their own land, and assured them that from the time of the going forth of the decree of restoration, four hundred and ninety years should be allotted to the Jewish nation, in which they could prove themselves loyal to the high trust committed to them. See Daniel 9:24-27. This four hundred and ninety years was to cover the period of Christ’s earthly ministry. But in spite of God’s long-suffering kindness, the Jews proved themselves unfaithful. It is true that they never again relapsed into open idolatry; but they shut themselves up to themselves, and built a partition between themselves and those whom they should have mingled with to instruct. While making their boast in the law, through breaking it they dishonored God; and finally they filled up the measure of their iniquity by rejecting the Son of God himself. “He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” John 1:11. Still, as God had given his word, it was needful that the gospel should first be preached to them; but when they not only refused to help on the work, but judged themselves unworthy of eternal life, they were left with nothing but the memory of a wasted opportunity. {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 443.4}

So much for the advantage of the Jew. It was necessary to devote this much space to it, for there is a widespread misunderstanding in regard to it. Comparatively few realize that it consisted chiefly in an opportunity to do good, and not in simply having good things showered upon them. If the Jews had been faithful to their trust, they would have proved that the greatest blessing that God can bestow on any people in this life is to give them an opportunity of working with and for him. E. J. W. {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 443.5}

(*Concluded next week*.)

**“The Ten Lepers. Luke 17:11-19” The Signs of the Times, 16, 31.**

E. J. Waggoner

**INTERNATIONAL LESSON NOTES.
(Luke, August 17, 1890, p. 17.)**

In the record of the healing of the ten lepers we have, as in the record of all miracles, proof of the divinity of Christ, and an aid to that faith which will give us eternal life. These miracles are recorded that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through his name. John 20:31. In this miracle we see in an especial manner the depth of the love of God, for we see it bestowed on those who had no appreciation of it. From a study of this miracle we shall receive additional proof in the Scripture that God “is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9. {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 443.6}

Leprosy is one of the most loathsome of diseases. It is constitutional, involving the whole system. It may be said to be a living, progressive death, in that, one after another, the different members of the body lose all sensibility, and finally drop off, the disease inevitably ending in death. It is a disease incurable by any means known to man. So loathsome is it that it forever shuts away its victim from the society of the uninfected. {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 443.7}

In all these things it is a fitting type of sin. Sin is a constitutional disease-a disease affecting the whole system. The Lord says to those who have departed from him, and loaded themselves with sin: “Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more; the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores; they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.” Isaiah 1:5, 6. It is incurable by any means known to man. “Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?” Proverbs 20:9. “If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me; if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.” Job 9:20. “For though thou wash thee with niter, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God.” Jeremiah 2:22. If a person is diseased in only one member, that member may be cut off, and the spread of the disease be checked in that way, if it is incurable; but when the vital organs are diseased, and the whole body is affected, there is no hope. As the leprosy separates its victims from the society of the pure, so with sin. “Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you.” Isaiah 59:2. It is possible, says one who has seen much of leprosy, for lepers who have means to secure such medical treatment as removes most of the external signs of the disease. So sinners may by their works outwardly appear unto men to be righteous, but within they are full of hypocrisy and iniquity, and all uncleanness. {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 443.8}

But although the leprosy is so loathsome and so dangerous, Jesus did not fear it, not did he shrink from contact with it. “And, behold, there came a leper and worshiped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.” Matthew 8:2, 3. It was not because leprosy was pleasant to Jesus that he touched the leper; we cannot suppose that it was any more attractive to him than to other people. But his love for men was so great that he would touch the leper, in spite of his loathsomeness, that he might cleanse him from it. So sin is not pleasant to the eyes of God; it is most loathsome. Even to our eyes it often appears hideous; how much more so must it seem to the pure and holy God. Nevertheless he so loved men that “he was made in all things like unto his brethren,” that he might purify them. “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” 2 Corinthians 5:21. In this we may behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 443.9}

*“He saw me ruined in the fall,
Yet loved me, not withstanding all;
He saved me from my lost estate;
His loving-kindness, oh, how great!” {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 443.10}*

The readiness of Jesus to touch the poor leper, and the speedy cure which followed, are designed to show to us his willingness to receive sinners, and his power to cleanse form all unrighteousness. {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 443.11}

It was not necessary, however, that Jesus should actually put forth his hand and touch the diseased person, in order to heal him. The centurion whose servant was sick of the palsy, and who begged Jesus to heal him, understood this. See Matthew 8:5-13. So in the case under consideration, Jesus did not touch the lepers, but healed them with a word. From the case already cited, we know that this was not because he shrank from the contact. It must be to teach us the lesson that the centurion had already learned, that Jesus can speak the word, and heal at any distance. We cannot see him; we cannot feel his physical presence; yet all power is given unto him in heaven and earth, and from the height of his sanctuary, from heaven, his dwelling-place, he can heal as well as when he was present in person. {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 443.12}

“And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.” The command to go show themselves unto the priests was in accordance with the Mosaic law. See Leviticus 14:1-20. They were full of leprosy, yet they were commanded to go show themselves to the priests, as though they were cleansed. “And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.” Their faith was shown in their acting as though they were cleansed before they had any outward evidence of it. Thus they demonstrated the two scriptures, “Faith is the substance of things hoped for” (Hebrews 11:1), and, “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them” (Mark 11:24). Faith makes its own way. {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 443.13}

*“The steps of faith
Fall on the seeming void, and find
The rock beneath.” {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 443.14}*

One of the ten turned back to glorify God and gave thanks. “Whoso offereth praise,” says the Lord, “glorifieth me.” Psalm 50:23. Ten lepers were cleansed, but only one returned to give thanks. Very many blessings are lost to men through unthankfulness. The men who once knew God, yet glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, lost their knowledge of God, and their foolish heart was darkened. Romans 1:21. The nine lepers who returned not to give glory to God were cleansed, and God did not withdraw the healing because they did not appreciate it. “If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself.” 2 Timothy 2:13. “He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” Matthew 5:45. Yet they could not have failed to lose much that the thankful one received. Jesus said to him, “Arise, to thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole.” This seems to imply wholeness in a special sense. It can mean nothing less than healing both of body and soul. It is easy to see why there was this difference between him and the others. By their failure to give thanks, they showed that they were prompted only by a selfish desire for health. Having received health, they cared nothing for the beautiful Giver. Of course those who thought no more of the Lord than that, could not have received the fullness of divine blessing. And so we see right here what they lost by their failure to glorify God; they shut themselves away from his choicest blessing. {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 443.15}

Another practical lesson may be learned from this affair. It is this, that Christ did not confine his good offices to those who had living, saving faith in him, or who would be his disciples. He “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38) because that was his nature. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.” 2 Corinthians 5:12. It is the goodness of God that leads men to repentance (Romans 2:4); and so Christ, in the fullness of his love and goodness, went about a blessing to all. How often we read that “he was moved with compassion.” He could not see suffering without wishing to alleviate it; and so he healed all who would allow him to do anything for them. Some were drawn by his goodness to believe in him to the saving of their souls, while others forgot him. Thus it is now; but if we consider Jesus in this light, as doing good to all, and not simply to those who were or would be his disciples, and then remember that this was but a manifestation of the love of God, we shall have a higher appreciation of that love, and will the more readily incline to yield to such unselfish goodness. E. J. W. {SITI August 11, 1890, p. 443.16}

**“The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven” The Signs of the Times, 16, 32.**

E. J. Waggoner

Last week we studied the first part of Matthew 16:18, finding out what the rock is upon which the church is built, and how we may build upon it, namely, by obeying from the heart the words of Christ, the true foundation. We have now, according to promise, to study verse 19; but first we must notice the statement, “and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” The word “hell,” *hades*, means the grave, as it is correctly rendered in the Revised Version. How is it that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church? The idea is not that of warfare, for gates do not fight and overcome; but gates can shut people in, and close so tightly as to prevent any that are inside from escaping, and thus prevail against them. The meaning of the text is that the gates of the grave shall not prevail against the church of Christ. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 443.17}

Why not?-Because it is built upon him. It is firmly fastened to him, so that the foundation and the superstructure are one. Therefore whatever befalls the foundation, must likewise come to the building. The foundation in this instance occupies the same relation to the building that the head does to the body; and whatever the head shares, the body shares with it. Where the head goes, the body goes. The members of the church are joint heirs with Christ. Now Christ announces himself as the one that liveth and was dead, but is alive forevermore, and has the keys of the grave and of death. Revelation 1:18. Death and the grave were not able to hold Christ. Acts 2:24. Therefore they cannot hold those who are built upon and united to him. Because he lives, they shall live also. This is consistent with the idea that Christ is the resurrection and the life. The grave is only an incident in the lives of those who are his; it has no power over them. But this confident language could not be used if Peter were the foundation of the church. He could not save even himself, but, like all other mortals, is dependent upon Christ for life. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 443.18}

“And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 443.19}

The first thing to consider is what constitutes the keys of the kingdom of heaven. A key is that which unlocks or locks; it is anything by which we gain access to any place, or which enables us to understand any given thing. Now what is it that opens heaven to mankind, and enables us to understand God?-Evidently the gospel, and nothing else. Paul says that Christ has “brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” 2 Timothy 1:10. Immortality stands for all heavenly blessings, as it comprises all. It is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 443.20}

Christ declares himself to be “he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth.” Revelation 3:7. In Isaiah 55:3, 4, we read: “Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.” The sure mercies of David are the blessings which are assured to us through Christ, the Son of David. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 443.21}

While the gospel opens the kingdom of heaven to men, it also shuts out those who reject it. The apostle Paul says: “Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish; to the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life.” 2 Corinthians 3:14-16. Thus the gospel opens and shuts. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 443.22}

It seems plain, therefore, that when Christ said, “And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven,” he referred to the gospel, which he was about to commit to Peter and his associates. But how about their binding and loosing on earth, and it being bound or loosed in heaven? A text in Jeremiah will help us to understand this. In the record of the calling of the prophet, we read: “Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.” Jeremiah 1:9, 10. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 443.23}

Jeremiah was only a man, yet he was clothed with wonderful power. As strong language was used concerning him as was spoken to Peter. Now how was he to root out kingdoms, and to pull down and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant them? Simply by the word of the Lord which he should speak. A prophet is simply the mouth-piece of God. He utters nothing of himself, but only as God speaks through him, and yet he maintains his individuality, so that the words are his own. It is all of man and all of God. The words of the man are also the words of God, and so whatever the man utters on earth, are the decrees of heaven. Whatever he binds or looses on earth, is bound or loosed in heaven. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.1}

It was the same with the apostles. On the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came on them, they began to speak, with tongues, “as the Spirit gave them utterance.” We have before quoted the statement of Paul, that in making known the gospel he spoke, “not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.” 1 Corinthians 2:13. The same word of God, which was given to Jeremiah and Isaiah, was committed to the apostles. Peter, after quoting from Isaiah the statement that “all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth forever,” adds: “And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” 1 Peter 1:24, 25. Therefore just as Jeremiah, as the spokesman for God, could tear down and build up nations, so the apostles, with the words of Christ in their mouths, could bind and loose, according to the will of heaven. The acts of men in such cases were not the acts of men, but of God. Men were simply the mouth-pieces of his righteous decrees. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.2}

But how about the words of Christ being addressed directly to Peter? There is no question but that Peter occupied a prominent place among the apostles. He was a natural leader, and often spoke for the others. Moreover, he was a pioneer in gospel work. In the council at Jerusalem he said: “Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.” Acts 15:7. But although he was the first one to preach to the Gentiles, his special work was among the Jews, as we read from Paul, concerning this same council:- {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.3}

“When they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter (for he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles): .... they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.” Galatians 2:7-9. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.4}

Here we find that a special dispensation of the gospel was committed to Peter, even as unto Paul. But this did not constitute him the sole guardian of the doors of heaven. As one to whom the gospel was specially intrusted, he did most certainly have the keys of the kingdom of heaven in his possession; but this special commission he shared with Paul, and to Paul was given the greater work. So the keys of the kingdom of heaven were committed to Paul as well as to Peter, and in a greater measure, since he “labored more abundantly than they all.” 1 Corinthians 15:10. And not only were the keys given to Peter and Paul, as pioneers in the great work of the gospel, but to all their associates, who received the same divine commission (Matthew 28:19, 20); and not only to the apostles, but to the prophets, who declared the word of the Lord. And so the church, which is the house of the living God, stands not upon any one man, nor upon any company of men, but “on the foundations of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone,” and the entire foundation. E. J. W. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.5}

**“The Day which the Lord Hath Made” The Signs of the Times, 16, 32.**

E. J. Waggoner

“This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.” Psalm 118:24. Does this refer to the first day of the week? There are many who assume that it does. On what grounds?-Simply these: It has become quite a common thing to call the first day of the week the Lord’s day. This custom arose long after the New Testament was written. But having given the day that title, men now claim that every reference to the Lord’s day, or to the day which the Lord made, must refer to Sunday. Thus the Bible is made to support an institution of men. There is not the slightest intimation in the psalm that any day of the week is referred to. The Lord did not make one day of the week any more than another. He made them all. Therefore it is absurd to single out any one day of the week, and say that it alone is referred to by the statement, “*This* is the day which the Lord hath made.” {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.6}

The day referred to in this verse is the “day of salvation,” in which Christ, the head stone of the corner, opens to all men “the gates of righteousness.” This day of salvation, which the Lord has made, in which he opens the gates of righteousness, is a day in which to be glad and rejoice, as the prophet says: “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.” Isaiah 61:10. Abraham saw this day, and was glad (John 8:56), because he received the righteousness of God, through faith in Christ. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.7}

It is true that the Lord has a day of the week that he claims as specially his own, not because he made it any more than any other day, but because he reserved it to be devoted specially to him. The Lord’s day is holy (Isaiah 58:13), and it is the Sabbath-day. It is the seventh day that is the Sabbath. It was for an alleged violation of that day that the Jews upbraided the disciples of Jesus, when he cleared them from the charge of Sabbath-breaking, and showed his authority to decide in the matter, by declaring that he was Lord of the day. Mark 2:23-28. This of itself is sufficient to show that the seventh day and that alone is the Lord’s day. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.8}

But while this is true, it is not true that on this day any more than any other day can people enter into the gates of righteousness. The Sabbath-day is to be kept holy unto the Lord; but the Lord is just as willing to forgive sins and to grant blessings on any other day as on this day. His ear is ever open to the cry of his creatures. The Sabbath is not to be kept as a bribe to induce the lord to bestow blessings, but because of love to him for his love to us in this accepted time, the day of salvation. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.9}

**“Getting Even” The Signs of the Times, 16, 32.**

E. J. Waggoner

An expression that is very frequently heard among certain people is, “I’ll get even with him.” Everybody knows the circumstance which calls the expression forth. The speaker has received some slight or personal injury, at the hands of another, or has been slandered, and he determines to retaliate. He is going to give the other one “as good as he sent,” which was all bad. In other words, one person has done a mean act, and another person is going to lower himself to the same level, in order to “get even.” Isn’t it strange that people never talk about getting even except when they have to lower themselves in order to do it? Would it not be more reasonable to talk about getting even with someone who has done a good act? It is true that nothing is to be done through strife and vainglory, yet we are exhorted to “provoke one another unto love and good works,” and if that is done, it follows that it is proper to be “provoked” in that way. If we are anxious to have things even, let us do it by helping some fallen one up to the place where God’s grace may have placed us, instead of ourselves going down to a lower plane. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.10}

**“Christ Will Come” The Signs of the Times, 16, 32.**

E. J. Waggoner

What is an Adventist? An Adventist is one who believes in the advent or coming of the Lord to this earth the second time. The term is specially applied to one who believes that that coming is near. Isn’t it a piece of fanaticism to think that the Lord is coming to this earth again?-Not if the Bible is the word of God. That Christ will come again is just as sure as that he once came and went away. Hear his own words: “Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” John 14:1-3. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.11}

Now it is certain that Christ did go away. Forty days after his resurrection he talked with his disciples, and renewed to them the promise of the Holy Spirit; “and when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.” Acts 1:9. Now listen to the words that were immediately spoken by two heavenly messengers:- {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.12}

“And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in while apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” Acts 1:10, 11. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.13}

He was taken up, and a cloud received him out of sight; and he is coming in like manner. With this agree the words written by John: “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him.” Revelation 1:7. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.14}

This coming has not yet taken place. No one has seen him descending with clouds. Salvation is yet freely offered to the inhabitants of earth; but when he comes salvation will be complete. He is to come only once more, and that will end the day of salvation. “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” Hebrews 9:27, 28. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.15}

It will be utterly impossible for this coming to take place and everybody not know it, for “every eye shall see him,” when “the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise.” 1 Thessalonians 4:16. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.16}

We have not time and space to note the signs which Christ said should precede his coming, but will only note that he expects his people to know when that coming is near. He said: “Learn a parable of the fig tree; when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh; so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it he is near, even at the doors.” Matthew 24:32, 33. And the apostle Paul says, “But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.” 1 Thessalonians 5:4. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.17}

In view of these plain texts of Scriptures, is not Adventism a reasonable doctrine, and worthy of earnest, candid attention? E. J. W. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.18}

**“Resolutions Not Sufficient” The Signs of the Times, 16, 32.**

E. J. Waggoner

The Washington correspondent of one of the New York religious weeklies writes:- {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.19}

“It is rather remarkable that while the Universal Peace Congress is holding its session in London, there is more talk of war among the nations than for some time past. Here is the outbreak of a war between Nicaragua and Guatemala, and dispatches have been received in this city stating that three more of the South American republics have united with Guatemala in an offensive alliance against Salvador. Considering that the Pan-American Congress, which adjourned but a few weeks since, passed resolutions to substitute arbitration for war, people are wondering what has become of the practical carrying out of that resolution.” {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.20}

There is nothing so very remarkable about it. Resolutions will not change men’s natures. Men may resolve to substitute arbitration for war, but that will not diminish the perilous times which the Scripture has said shall abound because men will be lovers of their own hearts. 2 Timothy 3:1, 2. It is a significant fact that none of these arbitration resolutions are passed by the heads of governments, or by those who have any voice in the management of affairs. There will never be any end of strife in this earth until He comes whose right it is, and, gathering out of his kingdom everything that offends, casts it into a furnace of fire. Matthew 13:40-42. But even when this time of destruction is most imminent, men will be tickling the ears of the world by assurances of peace and safety. 1 Thessalonians 5:2, 3. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.21}

**“Prevailing Prayer. Luke 18:1-14” The Signs of the Times, 16, 32.**

E. J. Waggoner

**INTERNATIONAL LESSON NOTES.
(Luke 18:1-14; August 24, 1890.)**

“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought alway to pray, and not to faint; saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man; and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others; two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” Luke 18:1-14. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.22}

It is highly probable that a majority of those who read this simple parable fail to learn the lesson from it that they should. They look at it as though it designed to teach that the unjust judge is a type of God, which cannot by any possibility be the case. If it were, then it would poorly serve the object of encouraging men always to pray, and not to grow weary. Few persons would have the heart to hold out against oft-repeated rebuffs. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.23}

The parable was spoken in order that men might, according to the Syriac, pray at every opportunity, and not grow weary. Surely this parable would not help men to that end, if it taught that God is like the unjust judge-hard to move. There would be no encouragement in that. Such an idea does violence to the whole tenor of Scripture. Hear what the character of God is:- {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.24}

“Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.” Psalm 103:13. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.25}

“For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers.” 1 Peter 3:12. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.26}

“And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.” Exodus 34:6, 7. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.27}

“Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.” Micah 7:18. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.28}

“I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not; I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name. I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts; a people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face.” Isaiah 65:1-3. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.29}

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” John 15:13. “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.30}

Add to all these the following: “Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?” Matthew 7:9-11. Here Christ is both compared and contrasted with earthly parents. He has the same kind of love for his children who are in need that an earthly parent has for his children, but he is infinitely greater and better, and his love for his children is as much greater than that of an earthly parent for his children, as God is greater than man. If a person, then, wishes to know how willing God is to answer prayer, let him think of his own willingness, yes, eagerness, to give his children needed things, and then multiply that degree of willingness by infinity. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.31}

Besides this, we read: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” James 1:5. He does not upbraid us because we have not asked before, nor because we have squandered that which he has previously given us; when we ask in faith, he gives freely, without taunting us with our short-comings. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.32}

Now we can readily understand the parable of the unjust judge. He was utterly hardened. He “feared not God neither regarded man.” It made no difference to him what people said about him. He was sure of his position for this life, and he had no thought of God and the future life. All he lived for was his own selfish pleasure. This poor widow had a just cause; but he knew nothing of justice, and paid no attention to her. But she persisted; she could not rest without having her cause decided. Her life depended on it. So she kept coming again and again, until finally the judge’s comfort was interfered with. So, at last, in order to get rid of her, so that he might enjoy his own pleasures undisturbed, he granted the widow’s request. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.33}

“And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.” He who concludes from this that in order to get judgment from God it is necessary to plead and urge as long as the widow did the judge, in order to overcome his indifference, or to gain his attention, maligns the character of God. The parable contrasts God with the unjust judge, instead of comparing them. If the unjust judge, with his callous heart, could be moved to do justice by the importunity of the poor widow, shall not God, who delights in mercy, avenge his own loved ones? Who can doubt it. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.34}

“Though he bear long with them.” The Revised Version renders this passage literally: “And he is long-suffering over them.” That deepens the contrast. The unjust judge was cruel, and had no care for man; God loves his people, and is tender and compassionate with them. What a world of encouragement there is in this, to pray at every opportunity, at every time of need, and not to grow weary, thinking that God is weary of granting our request. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.35}

“But,” says one, “I thought that we had to strive, to agonize, to enter in; that the kingdom of heaven must be taken by force.” Very true; we must “pray without ceasing;” but that does not necessarily mean that we must importune forever in order to get one thing. We are not heard for our much speaking; God does not wish us to be like the heathen, who imagine that the more frantic they become in their appeals, the more likely they are to be heard. Note the difference between the prayers of the prophets of Baal, and that of Elijah. 1 Kings 18:26-29, 36, 37. Consider the reverent calmness of the prayer of Christ at the tomb of Lazarus. John 11:41, 42. When we pray, we are to believe that our request is granted, and it is granted. Mark 11:24. The instant Daniel began to pray to God, an angel was dispatched to give him the knowledge he desired. Daniel 9:23; 10:12. Circumstances, and the interests of others, of whom we may know nothing, may delay the messenger, and our faith may thus be tested; but God is not unfaithful. By the cases and the assurances put on record, we may know of a surety that if the answer is delayed, it is coming. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.36}

But having received one petition, we are just as needy. And so we must continue “instant in prayer.” We must not lose heart and become weary. Men ought to pray at every opportunity, at every time of need. This is what the Scriptures mean. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.37}

The parable of the Pharisees and the publican, which follows, emphasizes this, and shows how readily God answers prayer. It also shows what really constitutes prayer. Since the parable was spoken to those who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others, it is evident that such ones do not offer prayer acceptable to God. The one who would receive anything from God must pray “in faith, nothing wavering.” James 1:6. But faith does not and cannot exist in that soul that is “lifted up.” Faith is dependence on another. Faith comes to a man when self goes out. The man who trusts in himself that he is righteous cannot expect to receive anything from the Lord, because he doesn’t ask for anything. Why should he? If he has righteousness by his own works, why should he ask the Lord for it? {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.38}

This was the case with the Pharisee. He “stood”-struck an attitude-“and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are.” He prayed “with himself,” and not to God. Apparently he began by thanking God, but actually he was congratulating himself. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.39}

“And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.” He had no confidence in himself. He did not, like the Pharisee, compare himself with others, to their disadvantage; he had no thought of others, but only of himself as the chief sinner. He used the definite article: “God be merciful to me, *the* sinner.” He acknowledged his own sin, but didn’t confess for anybody else. Thus he put himself directly in the class of those upon whom God delights to have mercy. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.40}

The prayer was short, but it was long enough to get all that he wanted. “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than [instead of] the other.” What had he done to secure this? He had simply trusted in the Lord. He went up to the temple a sinner; he went down to his house a righteous man; not having his own righteousness, but “that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” E. J. W. {SITI August 18, 1890, p. 450.41}

**“Front Page” The Signs of the Times, 16, 33.**

E. J. Waggoner

Among the seven abominations which the Bible says that the Lord hates, is “he that soweth discord among brethren.” Proverbs 6:19. It is worthy of note that the one who does this is classed with “hands that shed innocent blood,” and “a false witness that speaketh lies.” When it is remembered that a “whisperer separateth very friends,” it will be seen that what is often considered as harmless gossip is not so harmless after all. It would seem as though the Lord regards a “tale-bearer,” a “whisperer,” or a “busybody in other men’s matters,” as one of the most despicable of creatures. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 450.42}

The *Congregationalist* remarks that there is a decrease of the use of ear-rings by women, and thinks that it is due to something more than the caprice of fashion. It says that this “indicates a distinct advance toward greater intelligence in matters of dress and personal adornment. The long pendants hanging from the delicate lobes of the ear have entirely disappeared from view, except among the barbarous people with whom the custom originated; and one rarely finds a woman nowadays who is willing to pierce her flesh for the sake of wearing the less conspicuous studs, even if they be diamonds.” Whoever doubts this should observe closely, and he will find it a rare thing for thoughtful, intelligent, refined women to disfigure themselves by making their ears carriers of burdens. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 450.43}

**“Romans 3:9-12. (Concluded.)” The Signs of the Times, 16, 33.**

E. J. Waggoner

The apostle continues, “For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid.” Romans 3:3, 4. It may be noted in passing, that the expression “God forbid” is not a correct rendering of the Greek text. “Be it not so” is a literal translation, and “not by any means” would express the meaning in ordinary language. What the apostle claims in this question and answer, both of which are his own, is that God’s promises to the Jews were not vitiated by the unbelief of some of them. The advantage of the Jew was great, because of the promises of God; and so sure are those promises that, notwithstanding the unbelief of the vast majority of the people, “all Israel” will yet be saved; for the place of the branches that were broken off because of unbelief will be filled by the alien branches which God will graft in. See Romans 11:17-20; Ephesians 2:12, 19. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 450.44}

But Paul is not content with a simple negative to the question whether the unbelief of man can nullify the promises of God. He proceeds thus to vindicate God’s integrity: “Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.” Romans 3:4. God’s word is true, no matter how false man may prove. Not only so, but God alone is true, and every man is a liar, in the sense that he has gone contrary to the truth of God. Truth proceeds from God alone; there is not a truth in the world, not a thing of value, nothing that is worth knowing, that does not come from God. Every conception of truth that even to the faintest degree illuminates the darkness of any man’s mind, is a spark kindled by the Almighty. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 450.45}

“As it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.” This is a quotation from the Septuagint Version of Psalm 51:4. The fact that Paul, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, quoted from the Greek Version instead of the Hebrew original, is evidence that the former expresses the sense of the latter, but in another form. “That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings” is an exact rendering of the Hebrew of Psalm 51:4, and not, “that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest.” But what gives the casual reader trouble with Romans 3:4 is the clause, “and mightest overcome when thou art judged.” We shall see that this is perfectly in harmony with Psalm 51:4 as rendered in the common version, “be clear when thou judgest.” {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 450.46}

Let us begin with the latter rendering. The idea evidently is that in the judgment God’s righteousness will be made manifest. No matter how much men may oppose themselves to God, and cast reflections on his justice, in the judgment it will appear that he is indeed true, and that everything opposed to him is a lie. Thus God will be clear when he judges. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 450.47}

But the very statement that he will be clear when he judges, carries with it the idea that his decisions have been called into question, and from this it is an easy transition to the idea that he himself has been brought into judgment; that his doings are on trial. And this is just what the Scriptures elsewhere represent. The forty-first chapter of Isaiah opens with a view of a court scene, and a call for silence in the court, wherein, although God himself is Judge, he and the heathen and their gods are on trial; and in Isaiah 43:9-12 we have the idea carried out, when the nations are challenged to bring forward their proofs, and those who have seen the mighty works of God are declared to be his witnesses, testifying that he alone is Lord. In a similar sense God was on trial before the people of Israel, in the contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal, when the verdict of the jury was unanimous in favor of God. See 1 Kings 18:19-39. And so God’s dealings with men, especially as they appear in the judgment, are in Romans 15:4 set forth for vividness in the light of a contest between God and men, in which God gains the victory, it being seen that he alone has justice on his side. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 450.48}

In Isaiah 5:3, 4 the Lord asks for the judgment of the people, saying, “And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?” And thus God condescends in all his ways to submit them to the judgment of the people, and thus he educates their sense of right and wrong. Men’s judgments vary now, but in the end will be fulfilled the words of God. “I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.” Isaiah 45:23. True, the wicked will thus acknowledge God’s justice, to their shame; but the righteous will for very joy of heart sing, “Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.” Revelation 15:3, 4. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 450.49}

But the objector proceeds: “But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?” Romans 3:5. The parenthetical expression, “I speak as a man,” is thrown in to show, what we have before stated, that this is merely a human objection. The idea of the question is this: If, as is claimed, God will come out victorious in the contest, and his righteousness will stand out in bolder relief for the contrast with the unrighteousness of men, is not God unrighteous in taking vengeance on those whose unrighteousness has thus contributed to that end? This insinuation is met with another swift negative, and the counter question, “For then how shall God judge the world?” This is an answer from fact. God will judge the world; but he would not do this if there were any unrighteousness in him. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 458.1}

Again the objector returns to the attack, with the same objection in another and even worse form: “For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?” Romans 3:7. The reader will readily see the similarity between verses 5 and 7. It is the same idea which Paul repudiates in Romans 6:1, 2, that we should continue in sin that grace may abound. Taking advantage of the implied statement (Romans 1:21) that God simply requires men to glorify him, the objector, with the most subtle sophistry, claims that since even the wickedness of ma is overruled to the praise of God, therefore it is in reality not wickedness, and the doers of it ought not to be judged as sinners. This is the modern Spiritualist ground, that evil is itself good, and that God cannot punish anybody. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 458.2}

Disgusted, and filled with righteous indignation at such a Jesuitical argument, the apostle breaks in, “And not rather (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say), Let us do evil, that good may come? Whose damnation if just.” Romans 3:8. This cannot be understood unless we read it as in the Revised Version, “And why not,” etc. The idea is plainly this: Why do you not say at once, as some slanderously affirm that we say, “Let us do evil that good may come”? The statement, “whose damnation is just,” refers not to the slanderers, but to those who think to escape judgment for sin by counting evil for good, or doing evil that good may come. The damnation of such is evidently just, for when they say, “Let us do evil that good may come,” as the objector has in effect been saying, they convict themselves of sin. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 458.3}

This retort by the apostle stops the objector on that line, and he helplessly asks, “What then? Are we better than they?” This is in reality the main question at issue (see Romans 2:17-29), and the asking of it shows that the objector has exhausted himself, and now throws the whole matter into Paul’s hands for him to settle, which he does as follows:- {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 458.4}

“No, in no wise; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin [see chapters 1 and 2]; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” Romans 3:9-12. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 458.5}

The remainder of this summing up of the charge against all men, will be taken up in the next article; enough has been quoted to answer the objector’s question, and to close the controversy. And now, having noted these various points in detail, we will close by giving, in a somewhat free rendering, a general view of the dialogue, so that the reader may see the argument at a glance. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 458.6}

*Jew*-What advantage then hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision? Romans 3:1. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 458.7}

*Paul*-Much every way; chiefly that unto them was given the privilege of being the depositaries of God’s law, and thus to be the light of the world; for even if some did not believe, their unbelief cannot by any means shake God’s promises, for God is true though every man is a liar (compare 2 Timothy 2:13), and the judgment will vindicate him in all his ways. Verses 2-4. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 458.8}

*J*.-But if our unrighteousness enables men to see more plainly by contrast the righteousness of God, as they will in the judgment, is not God unrighteous if he condemns? Verse 5. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 458.9}

*P*.-Not by any means; for if God were unrighteous, he could not judge the world, as he certainly will do. Verse 6. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 458.10}

*J*.-Well, if the truth of God has been caused to stand out in bolder relief through my untruth; if my lie against the truth redounds to the praise of God, as it is said that the wrath of man shall praise him, why then should I be judged as a sinner? Verse 7. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 458.11}

*P*.-Why don’t you say at once just what you mean, and what some slanderously report that we say, “Let us do evil that good may come”? This is just what all your talk amounts to; but all who talk that way thereby show the justness of their own condemnation. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 458.12}

*J*.-What then, are we any better than the Gentiles? Verse 9, first part. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 458.13}

*P*.-“No, in no wise; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one.” Verses 9-12. E. J. W. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 458.14}

**“Sunday-law Argument” The Signs of the Times, 16, 33.**

E. J. Waggoner

Here is one of the anomalies of the Sunday-law argument. Mrs. Bateham told us in her lecture that the leading railroads, in deference to public sentiment, have reduced their Sunday freight traffic fully one-third. The universal verdict, said she, is favorable to the change. The mangers say that it is a financial gain to them, their employés are delighted, their patrons make no complaint about delay in freight, and the people in the towns and villages along the lines are pleased. The managers say that the reform ought to go farther, and that not a wheel should move on Sunday. Well, then, why in the name of reason and business common sense, don’t they stop Sunday traffic? If they want to do it, and the people who are concerned want them to do it, what is there to hinder them? They own their roads, and in other matters they usually do as they please; what need is there of a Sunday law in this case? Oh, says Mrs. Bateham, forgetting her admission made a minute before, they would stop if there was a law compelling all to stop, but they are afraid that somebody else will get their business. But this doesn’t tally with their statement that the one-third reduction of their traffic has been a financial gain. It is a marvelous thing to us that business men should need a law to compel them to do that which they have power to do, which they want to do, which all their patrons want them to do, and which they have already demonstrated would be to their pecuniary interest. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 458.15}

Mrs. Bateham told us in her lecture on Monday night that the reason why France has not in the past been able to maintain a republican form of government is that she had no Sunday laws. She said that France is now seeing her mistake; the people have seen that the stability of the United States was due to its Sunday laws, and they are now vigorously agitating the question. She told us that “the maintenance of the Sabbath [Sunday] as a civil institution is an absolute necessity to the stability of any government.” Such general assertions, unsupported by argument, may satisfy those who already think that a Sunday law is the panacea for all the ills that flesh is heir to; but before we accept them, we should like to have a simple historical fact explained to us. Rome existed as a republic for about five hundred years. It tolerated all religions. During this time it conquered the world, and became the strongest government that ever existed on earth. It retained its prestige under the empire for about three hundred years more. “The iron monarchy of Rome” is an apt expression of the strength of the government. All this time it had no Sunday law. Constantine came to the throne. Under his reign Rome was at the height of her glory. He enacted a Sunday law for the empire, and within a good deal less than two hundred years the Roman Empire had crumbled to pieces. Can Mrs. Bateham or any of our Sunday-law friends explain this by their theory? {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 458.16}

One of the richest things in Mrs. Bateham’s talk the other night was her attempt to astonish the audience by the announcement that the District of Columbia has no Sunday law. This, she said, is a late discovery. Until quite recently the people had all supposed that the District had good Sunday laws, but when a little incident called for an investigation, they found to their great surprise that there was on the statue-books nothing but an old, obsolete, colonial law. Consequently they went to work immediately to remedy this grave defect, and the Breckinridge bill was the result. Of its ignominious failure she said nothing, but expressed confidence that the nex Congress would give the District a Sunday law. But what impressed us the most forcibly in her remarks was the fact that the people had got along so well for a hundred years without any Sunday law, and were perfectly happy until they found that they didn’t have one. Then they couldn’t rest. Isn’t it terrible? Just think what a loss the District of Columbia has sustained all these years in not having a Sunday law, and no one was conscious of it! It has been in the condition of the man upon whom the Irish coroner rendered the verdict, “Dead, but not conscious of the fact.” {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 459.1}

One would naturally suppose that those whose whole life is devoted to the securing of Sunday laws, both State and national, would know all about the working of such laws in the past. Yet Mrs. Bateham, in her second lecture in Oakland, said that no trouble had ever yet resulted from Sunday laws, except in one or two cases in Missouri, where a mistake was made; although it is a matter of national report that, in Arkansas, there have been scores of cases of persecution, as also in Tennessee, and that in the latter State one man has been convicted and fined twice for the same act, and his case is now in the courts. One old man was imprisoned for months, to the lasting injury of his health, and in Georgia a man lost his life from exposure in prison. Shall we charitably conclude that the ignoring of such facts as these is due to pure ignorance? {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 459.2}

Last Friday evening Mrs. Bateham delivered a second lecture in Oakland, to an audience of forty-two. She told us, immediately after the reading of Genesis 2:1-3, that the original Sabbath was the first day and not the seventh; that Adam’s first Sabbath was the first day of the week, because “we always count time from the beginning of man’s life;” that God gave the Jews the seventh day as their especial day, going back to the first day at the cross; that the fourth commandment is indefinite, requiring no special day, but only a seventh day after any six days of labor; that whether we believe that Saturday or Sunday is the Sabbath, we can all come together on this common ground, and so can work together for a Sunday law; that “a seventh day” will not satisfy the demands of a Sunday law, but it must enforce a definite day; and finally, that time has been lost, especially by the dropping out of ten days at the changing of the calendar, so that we can’t tell anything about the days of the week, and that it is impossible for everybody to keep the same day anyhow. All of which was respectfully submitted to a presumably intelligent audience. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 459.3}

**“‘N. R. J.’ and the ‘Civil Sabbath’” The Signs of the Times, 16, 33.**

E. J. Waggoner

Editor SIGNS OF THE TIMES: As copied into the *American Sentinel* of July 21, I have this day read your criticism of my letter to the *Christian Statesman* of May 15. Will you admit a few lines in my own defense? For I think you misunderstand me. I am sure your readers will if they did not read my letter in the *Statesman*. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 459.4}

1. I do not believe in a “civil Sabbath” in the sense in which you use the words. I never have said that a “civil Sabbath,” is all that I favor. I differ entirely from the majority of the California people, who ask a Sunday law merely as a police or sanitary regulation. From the first of Rev. Mr. Crafts’ coming here, and all the time, I have most decidedly objected to his theory of a “civil Sunday.” In the *Christian Statesman* I wrote against it; and it was because of my objection to the “civil Sunday” that I wrote what I did about the action of the State Prohibition Convention. I finally reject the secular theory of government and of education alike. Others wish only a “civil Sunday;” I wish the Sabbath of the Lord our God, the Institutor of it. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 459.5}

2. The only authority we have for the observance of a sabbath-the only power that has any right to require a seventh portion of time to be observed as sacred to rest and to worship, whether it be a seventh-day or a first-day Sabbath-is the divine Lawgiver, whose will is declared in the law of the fourth commandment. Neither Church nor State has any right to make law about a Sabbath. “The Sabbath was made [*i.e.*, appointed] for man.” God appointed it. Governments or Legislatures have no power except to recognize it as God’s law, binding upon the people, and to see that the law which forbids work be not trampled underfoot by open transgressors. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 459.6}

3. God is the author of all moral law. He is the source of all authority. “There is no power but of God.” Governments may only find out law, the divine law, and accept and codify it as the law by which the people must be governed. Especially do governments have nothing to do in legislation in the department of religion. Governments only sphere is in civil matters. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 459.7}

4. The law of the fourth commandment is partly religious and partly civil. It commands religious duties: It also commands civil duties. “In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man servant, nor thy maid servant.... nor thy stranger that is within thy gate; that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as them.” That is *civil* law. Government should protect men in the enjoyment of their right. The right to rest as God requires, belongs to a servant. If the master does not grant the right to an employe, he is a transgressor of law. Government must protest the wronged. God requires it. Government is his agent. Thus government may legislate as to the enforcement of God’s civil law for the protection of men in the enjoyment of God-given rights. Thus far I am in favor of a “civil Sabbath.” Am I understood? {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 459.8}

5. “Thou shalt not steal” is a moral, civil law. Governments have no power to either reject it or to modify it. The same is true of the fourth commandment. Except by moral restraints or motives the church has no power to prevent work on the Sabbath. But a law without a penalty is no law at all. Therefore, civil government is the only and the proper power to punish the open transgression of God’s civil law. Thus far I am in favor of a civil Sabbath law. But remember that the permission or obligation to legislate about Sabbath observance is derived wholly from God. Men or governments have no such authority. The religious obligation is the only one existing: *i.e.*, we should have Sabbath laws only because God requires them and for man’s good. And the principle I advocate is applicable whether the first or the seventh day should be kept holy. Which is the true Sabbath is not the question here and now. I honor the convictions of those who conscientiously believe in the seventh-day Sabbath; for I beg leave to say that I do not believe in “only a civil Sabbath.” I am not in favor of “only a civil Sunday law.” I prefer the fourth commandment; and the people, the church, and the State that permit it to be trampled underfoot by lawless desecrators are false to God and to humanity. Yours for the truth and the right. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 459.9}

N. R. JOHNSTON.

We give place to the above letter of explanation, not alone as an act of courtesy to a very estimable gentleman, with whom we enjoy a pleasant acquaintance, but also for the special benefit of the readers of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES. Mr. Johnston is an honored member of the National Reform Association. He was secretary of one of the early national conventions of that organization, and is a regular contributor to the *Christian Statesman*. Therefore when we read a statement from him, we feel that we read the thoughts of the National Reform Association. We shall doubtless have occasion to make frequent reference to that body in the future, and those of our readers who treasure up this letter will know, as well as anyone can know, what its principles are on the Sunday question. We will now offer a few words of comment on the letter, section by section. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 459.10}

1. We wish that all Sunday-law people stood where Mr. Johnston does, and would as frankly avow their belief in, and desire for, a law from a religious standpoint. We are sure that this is where they all stand, in heart; but repeated defeats on that line have taught many to conceal their real sentiments by pleading for a merely “civil Sunday.” With the exception of the statement, “I totally reject the secular theory of government and of education alike,” there is nothing in section No. 1 that we could not heartily second. We also “wish the Sabbath of the Lord our God,” not, however, enforced by civil authority. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 459.11}

But by the above phrase Mr. Johnston means Sunday, which is not the Sabbath of the Lord our God. “The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.” Exodus 20:10. It was such as late as the time when Christ was on earth, and when the New Testament was written. See Mark 2:23-28. If the Lord has changed the day of his Sabbath, it has been done since his revelation was given to man, and we should like to know where the record of the change is, and to whom he committed it. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 459.12}

2. With the exception of the last sentence, we most emphatically say, “Good!” to section 2. But to the statement that it is the province of Legislatures to recognize God’s law as binding on the people, and to see that it is not trampled underfoot, we offer a most emphatic protest. That would be a union of Church and State, for it is simply a partnership between God and the State, by the terms of which the Lord is to enact the laws, and the State is to enforce them. This is just the same as a partnership in which one party furnishes the capital and the other does the work. God has not relegated to any inferior power the right or authority to enforce his laws. To think that he “that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers,” before whom all nations “are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity” (Isaiah 40:22, 17), should intrust the execution of his laws to those same comparatively insignificant creatures, is an insult to common sense, to say nothing of revelation. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 459.13}

It is a misapprehension of the fourth commandment, to assume that it simply forbids work on the Sabbath-day. Paul says that “the law is spiritual.” If it is not spiritual, it is nothing. Just what the fourth commandment does forbid is shown by its Author in Isaiah 58:13: “If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words,” etc. Now if civil government takes it upon itself to see that men do not “trample underfoot” the fourth commandment, it must see that they do not speak their own words on the Sabbath-day. A difficult task it would be, yet as difficult a task was undertaken by the Inquisition. Only the Inquisition could determine to any degree whatever whom to punish for violation of the fourth commandment. God never established the Inquisition, but a National Reform government could not be carried on without it; therefore God has nothing to do with National Reform. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 459.14}

3. A queer mixture is in this paragraph. Governments have nothing to do with religion, yet they must codify and enforce divine law! Since God is the moral Governor, and human governments are to enforce his decrees, yet are to have nothing to do with religion, we may ask, Whence, then, comes religion? But why should the law of God need to be codified by human legislators? Is it not sufficiently clear and concise? The idea that poor, weak, fallible mortals can codify the laws of the Omnipotent Ruler of the universe, which were spoken by his own voice, and engraved in the flinty rock with his own finger, is too monstrous an assumption to be amusing. To codify is to epitomize; to arrange or systematize; to make an orderly collection or compendium of. It is a long step in advance of having the same thing loosely arranged. Therefore since the National Reform government would codify the laws of God, it must be a legitimate successor of that power that “opposeth and exalteth itself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped.” {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 459.15}

4. Yes, you are understood quite well. “The law of the fourth commandment is partly religious and partly civil!” We have often heard the claim made, and now propose to place it by the side of one text of Scripture. “For we know that the law is spiritual.” Romans 7:14. Can you say that, Brother Johnston? or have you information of a later date than Paul’s? That cannot be, for he spoke by inspiration that which he had learned from God himself; and God does not change. Facts cannot change. If the law was spiritual in Paul’s day, it is spiritual still, not partly spiritual and partly something else. The idea that the moral law is partly civil is a modern invention, conjured up by presumptuous, self-seeking men, as an excuse for their attempt to divide honors with the Almighty. In saying this, we mean no disrespect to Mr. Johnston. Even the apostle Barnabas was once unsuspectingly carried away by dissimulation. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 459.16}

But, Brother Johnston, you say in paragraph one that you don’t want a civil Sunday law; you are frank in your avowal of a desire for a Sunday law form a religious standpoint; then why the reference to the supposed civil features of the fourth commandment as an aid to your plea? Why detract from its complete and perfect morality, and make it partly secular, when you don’t want a secular Sunday law? We can answer. It is because nobody can argue for Sunday laws without involving himself in hopeless inconsistencies. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 459.17}

If the reference to “gates” in the fourth commandment be construed as referring to city gates, then the whole commandment must be considered as addressed to the government, and not to the individual. But it is actually addressed individually to every man. Each man is to keep the Sabbath; his son and his daughter must likewise keep it; his man-servant and his maid-servant must also keep it; and also the stranger within his gates. That is, all who are upon the man’s premises must keep the Sabbath, because if they worked, it would be the same as if he worked. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 460.1}

It is true that government must protect a man in the enjoyment of God-given rights; but that does not signify that it must force a man to accept that which he does not regard as a right, but which he thinks is positively wrong. Protection and compulsion are widely different. Government must protect the wronged. If a servant wishes to keep Sunday, and his employer by force and power compels him to work, then he may appeal to the law for protection, and so may any man who is forcibly deprived of his liberty. But we must confess that we have never heard of such a case since the abolition of slavery. In these days when employés strike for the most trivial causes, and almost every laborer belongs to some organization which assumes the right to dictate to the employer just how far he may go in any case, it is sheer nonsense to talk of men being compelled to work on Sunday against their will. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 460.2}

5. In this section we have the climax. “‘Thou shalt not steal’ is a moral civil law.” The Bible knows nothing of any such mongrel. “The law is spiritual.” It is wholly spiritual. He who keeps it only outwardly does not keep it at all. Read the Saviour’s dissertation on the law, in Matthew 5:19-28, and his denunciation of hypocrites, in Matthew 23:25-28. Thousands of men who have never been guilty of any act of which the State could take notice, have lived in daily violation of the eighth commandment, as well as the seventh, and others. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 460.3}

But what shall we say to this: “But a law without a penalty is no law at all. Therefore, civil government is the only and the proper power to punish the open transgression of God’s civil law,” which is the *moral* law of ten commandments. God says, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay;” but National Reform says that God hasn’t the power, and that if human governments do not administer the penalty, sin must go unpunished. Christ says that God has given the Son authority to execute judgment, and that he will do this when he comes from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire (see John 5:27; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9); but National Reform says that human governments must execute judgment now, or else the sinner will go free. Could any worse insult to the majesty of Jehovah be invented? Mr. Johnston is a minister of the gospel, and we know that he is personally devout and reverent; therefore we feel the more astonished that he should champion a cause which puts man above God; yea, which sets man on the throne of judgment, and relegates God to obscurity. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 460.4}

We have studied brevity in noticing these points, for our space is limited; but we trust that all the readers of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES can see that opposition to Sunday laws, and to the theory which underlies them, is not simply a matter of protesting against a possible injustice to a few men. It is a religious duty incumbent on everyone who has any regard for the honor of God. Human government is secular, and only secular; that is, it pertains wholly to this world and to worldly affairs. God is the only moral governor; his government is the only moral government; his law is the only moral law; and it is wholly moral. With it man has nothing to do but to obey it. The duty of the king is identical with that of the humblest subject. Both are alike answerable to God, and to him alone, for violation of it. So broad are its requirements, that no one can keep them except through the grace of Christ; no one can boast over another; and no one can get beyond simple, personal obedience to it, so that he can act as an overseer to his fellows. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 460.5}

To those who assume to exercise the prerogatives of God, he will say at the last day, “Who hath required this at your hands?” and like the man in the parable, they will be speechless; for “the lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.” E. J. W. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 460.6}

**“Entering the Kingdom. Luke 18:15-30” The Signs of the Times, 16, 33.**

E. J. Waggoner

**INTERNATIONAL LESSON NOTES.
(Luke 18:15-30; August 31, 1890.)**

Verses 15-17 relate the bringing of children to Jesus, the rebuke of the disciples, and his call for children to come to him. There is not in this, as is sometimes assumed, the slightest hint of infant baptism. Infants that have not come to an age where they can understand right and wrong for themselves, are special subjects of God’s favor. By virtue of Christ’s sacrifice they share in the universal redemption from the death which results from their being descendants of Adam. They do not have to be baptized in order to be made alive from this death, for that is promised to the wicked as well as to the good. But being made alive from this death, they cannot suffer the death which is the penalty of sin, for they have never had personal guilt. Consequently they are saved by God’s grace, the same as all who are saved, but without baptism, for it is impossible for them to comply with the conditions of baptism; they can neither believe nor disbelieve. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 460.7}

Since God is so merciful toward the infants, it naturally follows that he will gladly receive the children who come to him voluntarily, no matter how young they may be. When we say there is no authority for infant baptism, we do not say that sometimes very young children may not properly be baptized. As soon as a child is old enough to believe in Christ, it is old enough to be baptized. And that children are capable of understanding and accepting the gospel, yea, that they can understand and receive more readily than adults, is shown by verse 17: “Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.” He does not say that children are to receive the kingdom as old people, but that all are to receive it as children. This does not mean that people must become childish, but that they must have the simple, trusting faith of children. The belief of children is made the model. It is strange that, in the face of such a scripture as this, any should ever question the propriety of receiving into the church children who give evidence of a knowledge of Christ. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 460.8}

“And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? None is good, save one, that is, God.” This was not a modest disclaimer on the part of Christ of the epithet “good.” He did not mean to imply that he was not good, for that would have been to deny himself. Says the psalmist, “He is my Rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.” Psalm 92:15. Peter says that he “did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.” 1 Peter 2:22. Paul says that he “knew no sin.” 2 Corinthians 5:21. John says, “And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.” 1 John 3:5. He was absolute goodness personified, for it is in him that we are to be made the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:21. Then what must he have meant when he said to the young ruler, “Why callest thou me good?” Simply this, that he himself was God. “The Word was God,” and “the Word was made flesh.” John 1:1, 14. At the very outset Jesus took advantage of the young man’s form of expression to let him know that he was standing in the presence, not of a pious Jewish rabbi, but of divinity in the form of humanity. He took this striking way of intimating to the ruler that the one whom he was asking what he should do to inherit life, was the author of life, the one who had it to bestow, and who could therefore answer his question with authority. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 460.9}

The narrative in Matthew is a little more complete than in Luke. We quote from the former. Jesus, having incidentally shown his high position and authority, as we have seen, answered the young man’s question thus: “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” Matthew 19:17. Passing by for the moment the answer of Jesus, we note the young man’s reply. “He saith unto him. Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness. Honor thy father and thy mother; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up; what lack I yet?” Verse 18-20. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 460.10}

In view of the last statement made by the young man, the question, “Which?” was a most natural one. When Christ said, “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments,” there was no doubt in the young man’s mind as to what was meant. Every Jew was instructed in the law, and this young man was a ruler. But he was struck with astonishment that Christ should use such language to him, who prided himself on his obedience to the law. His question, “Which?” was almost equivalent to a challenge to Christ to tell him what he ought to do that he had not done. He in reality thought that he lacked nothing. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 460.11}

“If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” They are the rule of life, and will be the standard in the judgment. “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.” Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14. And since the commandments are to be the standard of character in the judgment, it follows that everyone whose character is in harmony with them will have eternal life. So we read, “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” Revelation 22:14. This was the condition of eternal life from the beginning. See Deuteronomy 11:26, 27; 30:15-19. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 460.12}

But if this is the condition of eternal life, and the young man had kept all the commandments from his youth up, how could it be that he lacked anything to enable him to inherit eternal life? This is just the point; he hadn’t kept them. Christ tested him on the last, which really underlies the whole. Said he, “Sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” This test the ruler could not endure. He loved wealth more than he loved God; he loved this world more than the next. He did not love his neighbor as himself, and he had other gods beside the one God. While rendering outward obedience to all the commandments, he had unconsciously been breaking them all in spirit. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 460.13}

The one thing lacing in his case was to follow Christ. Jesus did not mean that he should add following him to obedience to the commandments, for, as we have seen, he had not kept the commandments. The one thing lacking to a perfect obedience to the commandments was to was to follow Christ, without whom nothing can be done. Eternal life can be had only on condition of keeping the commandments; but no one can keep the commandments without Christ. So Christ is the one thing needful. Having him, we have everything. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 460.14}

The young man was one of the Jews who had followed after the law of righteousness, but who had not attained unto righteousness, because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. Romans 9:31, 32. Without faith it is impossible to please God. Hebrews 11:6. “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.” Romans 10:4. This does not mean that he puts an end to the law, for he himself declares that the law is the test of fitness to enter heaven. But in him the end of the law, which is righteousness and peace (see Isaiah 48:18), is found; for “he is our peace,” and we are “made the righteousness of God in him.” And so we have “the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” inseparably joined together. Neither can exist without the other. There can be no keeping of the commandments outside of Christ (John 15:5; Hebrews 11:6), and whoever is united to Christ will keep the law, for Christ is the personification of the righteousness of God. {SITI August 25, 1890, p. 460.15}