**“The Development of the Mystery of Iniquity” The Signs of the Times, 17, 18.**

E. J. Waggoner

Last week we noted the similarity between the theological professors of this age and those of the third century, and pointed out the rapid progress that is being made toward a new Papacy. We showed how the inevitable result of the loose theological teaching that is becoming so popular, is to banish the Bible entirely from common life. This, of course, is naturally followed by a loose state of morals, because, the people being deprived of the Scriptures, there is nothing to restrain them. Even if the Bible is not wholly removed from the common people, its sanctions and prohibitions are nullified in proportion as such teaching as that to which we call attention becomes popular. {SITI May 4, 1891, p. 130.18}

This week we have to note another step in the progress toward setting the Bible aside, and substituting for it the teachings of man. The following, from the literary columns of the New York *Independent* of March 12, will set the matter quite clearly before the reader. It is concerning a little pamphlet, entitled “Easy Lessons in Christian Doctrine. Prepared for Use in Mixed Schools.” (Stevenson & Foster, Pittsburg, Penn.) The *Independent’s* notice in full is as follows:— {SITI May 4, 1891, p. 130.19}

“With the approval of the managers of the Pennsylvania Reform School at Morganza, near Pittsburg, the chaplain of the institution and the vice-president of the board prepared this little manual of fifty pages, which has been in use long enough to justify the high expectations entertained of its usefulness. It is not a colorless, emasculated system of doctrine, which might be accepted by all simply because it contained nothing positive. It follows a broad and truly Christian path, teaching nothing militating against the doctrines of any church that retains faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is simple language, convenient in arrangement, clear, concise, positive in the general treatment of the essential truths of the Christian religion, and neither goes beyond the Scripture nor brings up the mooted points of Scripture. As the Pennsylvania school contains many Catholic youth, a copy of the catechism was sent to Bishop Phelan, of the Diocese of Western Pennsylvania, who, after examination, wrote as follows to Mr. J. A. Quay, superintendent:— {SITI May 4, 1891, p. 130.20}

“‘The book, “Easy Lessons in Christian Doctrine,” is the only book of religious instruction that has come under my notice which claims to keep within lines of belief common to all who profess faith in Jesus Christ. It is, therefore, well suited for a text book in public institutions, where Catholics and Protestants at all times receive instruction. *Catholics* *can accept all that the book contains*, and the important truths of the Catholic religion which it does not contain can readily be supplied by the priest who conducts special services for the Catholic inmates of the institution in which the book is read.’ {SITI May 4, 1891, p. 130.21}

“The bishop here suggests an important point. The manual, while teaching the fundamental truths of Christianity, can for the rest be supplemented by pastors of any denomination. Methodists, Baptists, Episcopalians, or Presbyterians will find in the minds of the students a scriptural basis of truth upon which, if they please, they may build up the distinctive dogmas of their various creeds. The Rev. James Allison, D.D., of Pittsburg, a ‘pillar of orthodoxy,’ a hearty believer in, and a staunch defender of, Calvinistic doctrine, connected with the Morganza Board for many years, and much experienced in this difficult field of labor, writes to the superintendent:— {SITI May 4, 1891, p. 130.22}

“‘As you know, I am a Presbyterian minister, and editor of the *Presbyterian Banner*, as well as chairman of the Committee of Instruction and Discipline of the Pennsylvania Reform School. After careful examination of “Easy Lessons in Christian Doctrine,” I am happy to say that I believe this little work to be admirably adapted to be useful in reform schools and similar institutions, and also that it *contains nothing to which anyone can reasonably object*.’ {SITI May 4, 1891, p. 130.23}

“In these days of church unity and plans for reuniting the separated fragments of the church universal, there is an earnest desire to remove the practical barriers existing between churches which hold much in common. The use of the little book, “Easy lessons in Christian Doctrine,” is evidence that there is, and that there may always be, a comprehension and an acceptance of the fundamental truth of pure Christianity, separate and apart from the denominational theories and practices which have divided the church catholic. We bespeak for the collection careful examination on the part of teachers, and considerate judgment on the part of ministers and prelates.” {SITI May 4, 1891, p. 130.24}

We do now know of any seemingly trifling thing that has more significance than this notice. It shows that the way has been found for the long-looked-for union of Catholics into practically one church. Surely, when Presbyterians of “the most straitest sect” can unite with Catholics in studying Christian doctrine from the same book, a union of all denominations is not a Utopian dream. The union has already virtually been effected. The *Independent* says that this book contains all the essentials of the gospel, and all agree that no reasonable person can object to anything in it. {SITI May 4, 1891, p. 130.25}

But does not the reader see that this takes away the only argument that “National Reformers” and their allies have ever raised to show that there cannot be in this country any union of Church and State? They have claimed that for such a thing to be effected the State would have to make an alliance with some one denomination, and that all others would object to this. Here, however, we have the way all cleared for just what we have all the time said would take place. All the denominations will agree on the “fundamental truths” which are common to all, so that there will be no more real separation and division in “the church catholic.” All, therefore, that is needed to effect a perfect union of Church and State is for the State to recognize, protect, and support the teachings and practices of this “church universal.” {SITI May 4, 1891, p. 130.26}

And this is already done, to some extent, at least, for we find that this catechism has been for some time in use in a State school of Pennsylvania. With this start, and with the fact that many churchmen and statesmen have been looking for a book setting forth the “nonsectarian principles of Christianity,” which could be used in the public schools, it will readily appear to the thoughtful reader that the question of Church and State in the United States is rapidly approaching a settlement on the basis of an effective union. E. J. W. {SITI May 4, 1891, p. 130.27}

(*Concluded next week*.)

**“The Development of the Mystery of Iniquity. (Concluded.)” The Signs of the Times, 17, 19.**

E. J. Waggoner

There is, however, another feature that must not be overlooked. We have frequently shown that such a union would be an exact image of the Papacy, that was formed in the early centuries. We have copies of this little book, “Easy Lesson in Christian Doctrine,” and we find, what was to be expected, that it is essentially Roman Catholic. It must have been written by a Roman Catholic; and the fact that it is so heartily indorsed by professed Protestants is a striking comment on the extent to which Catholic dogmas have already permeated the entire church. The reader is well aware that while professed Protestants pride themselves on their “liberality,” Catholics never give countenance to anything that is not distinctively Catholic. But a few extracts from the book will show the nature of the teaching which will remove the barriers and reunite “the separated fragments of the church universal.” In this connection let it be remembered that Catholic writers very commonly speak of Protestant denominations are the “separated fragments.” We have space to notice only a few features of the book. On page 15 we find the doctrine of purgatory thus set forth:— {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.1}

“*Question*—Where did Christ’s soul go after his death? {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.2}

“*Answer*—It descended into hell. {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.3}

“*Q*.—Did Christ’s soul descend into the hell of the damned? {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.4}

“*A.*—The hell into which Christ’s soul descended was not the hell of the damned but a place or state of rest. {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.5}

“*Q.*—Who were in this place of rest? {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.6}

“*A.*—The souls of the just, who died before Christ. {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.7}

“*Q.*—Why did Christ descend into this place? {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.8}

“*A.*—To announce to those spirits that were in prison the joyful tidings of their redemption. {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.9}

“*Q.*—When did the souls of the just who died before Christ go to heaven? {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.10}

“*A.*—When Christ ascended into heaven. {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.11}

“*Q.*—Where was Christ’s body while his soul was in limbo, or the place of rest? {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.12}

“*A.*—In the sepulcher, or grave. {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.13}

“*Q.*—On what day did Christ rise from the dead? {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.14}

“*A.*—Christ rose from the dead, in body and soul glorious and immortal, on Easter Sunday, the third day after he was crucified.” {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.15}

On page 23 we find the following concerning witchcraft:— {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.16}

“*Q.*—What is witchcraft? {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.17}

“*A.*—Witchcraft is to try, with the help of the devil, to injure others in their person or property.” {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.18}

From this it appears that only that which is an attempt to injure somebody’s person or property can be considered witchcraft. Dealings with the devil that seem to have a good object are legitimate, according to this standard of faith. {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.19}

Mariolatry, or the exaltation of Mary to the place of Christ, is thus taught, on page 38:— {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.20}

“*Q.*—How was a Redeemer promised? {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.21}

“*A.*—To show how hateful sin was to him God cursed the serpent which had deceived Eve, condemning him to crawl upon the ground and to eat the dust; besides, he said enmity should exist between the serpent and the woman, but in the end the woman would crush his head.” {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.22}

On page 7 we find all necessity for the Bible thus summarily disposed of:— {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.23}

“*Q.*—How can we know God on earth? {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.24}

“*A.*—By learning the truths which he has taught. {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.25}

“*Q.*—Where shall we find the chief truths which God has taught? {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.26}

“*A.*—We shall find the chief truths which God has taught, in the Apostles’ Creed.” {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.27}

And then follows the Apostles’ Creed, which was devised by the Catholic Church in the third or fourth century. {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.28}

This is sufficient to show the distinctively Catholic nature of the teaching of these “Easy Lessons in Christian Doctrine,” which are recommended to all sects. But one point more remains to be shown, and that is the essentially immoral tendency of the teachings, a thing that is inevitable in any doctrinal teaching that sets aside the Bible in its purity. On pages 12 and 13 we find the following deliverance concerning sin:— {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.29}

“*Q.*—What is actual sin? {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.30}

“*A.*—Actual sin is any willful thought, word, deed, or omission, contrary to the will of God. {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.31}

“*Q.*—Are all actual sins equally great? {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.32}

“*A.*—No; all sins are not equally great; there are grievous offenses against the laws of God, and there are also small offenses against the law of God. {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.33}

“*Q.*—What are the effects of grievous offenses against the law of God? {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.34}

“*A.*—Grievous offenses against the law of God kill the soul, by depriving it of the true spiritual life of grace, and make it liable to eternal punishment in hell. {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.35}

“*Q.*—What are the effects of small offenses against the law of God? {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.36}

“*A.*—Small offenses against the law of God do not rob the soul of the true spiritual life of grace; but they hurt the soul by lessening its love for God and by disposing to great sins. {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.37}

“*Q.*—Is it a great misfortune to fall into grievous sin? {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.38}

“*A.*—It is the greatest of all misfortunes.” {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.39}

This ends the chapter on sin, leaving it to be inferred that it is not a “misfortune” to fall into a “small offense,” as indeed it cannot be if such an offense does not rob the soul of the true spiritual life of grace. Notice, also, that to fall into “a grievous offenses” is only a misfortune, and that each individual is left to decide for himself what are grievous offenses and what are small offenses. Of course everyone will draw the line at the farthest possible limit. And here, again, we see the necessity for a church council or an infallible pope to which all such questions may be referred. But the above confirms our statement that the tendency of the teaching of these “Easy Lessons” is toward immorality, and this is corroborated by the following, on pages 30 and 31:— {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.40}

“*A.*—Are impure thoughts and desires always sinful? {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.41}

“*A.*—They are not sinful if they displease us, and we try to drive them from our mind as soon as possible.” {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.42}

So, according to this, all that one has to do is to *try* to drive the impure thoughts from his mind, and when he finds that he cannot, he can entertain them with the comfortable feeling that he is not committing sin. {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.43}

But this is surely enough. Further comment is unnecessary. No one who reads this can fail to see that the image of the Papacy is rapidly forming in this country, and that a union of Church and State must necessarily be the legalizing of sin or the full development of the mystery of iniquity. And let it not be forgotten that all this arises from neglect of the simplicity of the Bible. Whoever would keep clear from papal delusions, let him cleave to the inspired word, not as set forth in catechisms, by authority, or interpreted by popes or councils, or any third party, but solely as taught by the Spirit of truth. E. J. W. {SITI May 11, 1891, p. 139.44}

**“How Righteousness Is Obtained” The Signs of the Times, 17, 20.**

E. J. Waggoner

[Synopsis of a discourse on Romans 3, by Elder E. J. Waggoner.] {SITI May 18, 1891, p. 139.45}

The basis of the lesson of the evening is the latter half of the third chapter of Romans, beginning with the nineteenth verse: “Now we know that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” {SITI May 18, 1891, p. 139.46}

Verses 21-23 contain, in condensed form, all that is treated of in the remaining verses of the chapter. The remainder of the chapter is an amplification of that which has gone before. In this chapter also occurs the climax of the thought of the epistle. In the first part of this chapter is emphasized the fact that God makes no distinction of persons; works alone are taken into account in the judgment. But while it is true that a tree is known by its fruits, it is also true that it is not within the province of men to judge of those fruits. God alone is judge. He looks upon the heart, while man can judge only from appearances; therefore, while the works of men may seem good to their fellows, to God, who sees what man cannot see, they are known to be corrupt. {SITI May 18, 1891, p. 139.47}

Against, the just shall live by faith. How much of a man’s life must be just?—All, every moment; for the just shall live by faith. But by the deeds of the law shall no act be just. This is a hard saying, but one that must be believed, for it is what the Bible says. No deed that we can do can be just by the law only. By faith alone can a man or any act of his be just. The law judges a man by his works, and the law is so inconceivably great that no human act can rise to its height. There must, therefore, be a Mediator through whom justification shall come. And that justification properly belongs to him to whom it is granted by reason of his faith. {SITI May 18, 1891, p. 139.48}

The heart unrenewed is desperately wicked. Only evil can come from a wicked heart. To bring forth good deeds there must be a good heart, and only a good man can have a good heart. But, as all have sinned and come short, therefore all the deeds of humanity are vitiated. {SITI May 18, 1891, p. 139.49}

The law itself is the standard of perfect righteousness, but Christ is the truth, the way, and the life. In Christ is the perfect righteousness of the law, and the grace to bestow the gift of his righteousness through faith. And of this the prophets themselves are witnesses, for they preached justification through Christ, by faith. {SITI May 18, 1891, p. 139.50}

When a man seeks to justify himself by his deeds, he only heaps imperfection upon imperfection, until, like Paul, he counts them all as loss, knowing that there is no righteousness but that which is of Christ by faith. {SITI May 18, 1891, p. 139.51}

There is but one thing in this world that a man needs, and that is justification-and justification is a fact, not a theory. It is the gospel. That which does not tend to righteousness is of no avail, and not worthy to be preached. Righteousness can only be attained through faith; consequently, all things worthy to be preached must tend to justification by faith. {SITI May 18, 1891, p. 139.52}

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” It is well understood that no act of ours can make right that which is past, but it is just as true that we cannot be justified in any present act any more than we can render the past perfect. We need the righteousness of Christ to justify the present just as much as to make perfect the imperfect deeds of the past. {SITI May 18, 1891, p. 155.1}

In the case of the publican and the Pharisee, the one who put no trust in his own works went down to his own house justified, but he who desired to assume righteousness in himself failed of justification. Everyone can have it who will ask for it, but each must come to the level of all other sinners, and there receive it with the rest, saying, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” {SITI May 18, 1891, p. 155.2}

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” What is “redemption”? It is a free gift to us, but it has been paid for. The blood of Christ has paid for it. We are exhorted to consider his greatness, that we may know that although the thing to be done is beyond our comprehension, the power which is to accomplish it is also beyond our knowledge. {SITI May 18, 1891, p. 155.3}

“To declare his righteousness” for the putting away of our sins. It is he that puts away our sins, and if we but yield ourselves to him, they will be remitted utterly. Christ grants no indulgences, but his righteousness remits the sins that are past, and keeps the heart free from sin in the present, so long as his righteousness fills that heart. {SITI May 18, 1891, p. 155.4}

Faith is the beginning of all wisdom; it lies at the foundation of all knowledge. The child would never learn anything if it did not believe what it is told. Now, that being so in physical things, why can we not be as reasonable in spiritual things? {SITI May 18, 1891, p. 155.5}

Redemption comes through the creative power of Christ, and that is why I love to think that he is the Creator of all things; for he who created the worlds out of nothing, and who upholds all things by the word of his power, can by that same word create in me a clean heart, and preserve that which he has created. To him is all power, and also all glory. {SITI May 18, 1891, p. 155.6}

“It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good-pleasure.” “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law.” {SITI May 18, 1891, p. 155.7}