

# The Signs of the Times.

"Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev. 22:12.

VOLUME 11.

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, FIFTH-DAY, DECEMBER 24, 1885.

NUMBER 49.

## The Signs of the Times.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY, FOR THE  
International Tract and Missionary Society.

(For terms, etc., see last page.)

Entered at the Post-Office in Oakland.

### WHEN JESUS COMES.

BY MRS. M. LUCINA MOON.

No HEART shall ache when Jesus comes,  
We'll all be gathered home;  
No sad heart break when Jesus comes,  
We'll all be gathered home!  
No tear-drops dim our waking eyes,  
No sound of grief or sorrow's sighs,  
But rapturous songs shall fill the skies;  
We'll all be gathered home!

No more of death when Jesus comes,  
We'll all be gathered home;  
Nor lonely grave when Jesus comes,  
We'll all be gathered home!  
No last farewell, the fond heart crushed;  
No sad refrain, "dust unto dust;"  
But glorious meeting with the just;  
We'll all be gathered home!

Oh, glorious time when Jesus comes,  
We'll all be gathered home!  
Oh, sight sublime when Jesus comes,  
We'll all be gathered home!  
Oh, hasten on great day so blest,  
And bring the saints' eternal rest!  
Oh, let me hide in Jesus' breast  
When we are gathered home.

## General Articles.

### The Primary Cause of Intemperance.

BY MRS. E. G. WHITE.

"Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

ONLY one lease of life is granted us; and the inquiry with every one should be, How can I invest my life that it will yield the greatest profit? How can I do most for the glory of God and the benefit of my fellow-men? For life is valuable only as it is used for the attainment of these objects.

Our first duty toward God and our fellow-beings is that of self-development. Every faculty with which the Creator has endowed us should be cultivated to the highest degree of perfection, that we may be able to do the greatest amount of good of which we are capable. Hence that time is spent to good account which is directed to the establishment and preservation of sound physical and mental health. We cannot afford to dwarf or cripple a single function of mind or body by overwork or by abuse of any part of the living machinery. As surely as we do this, we must suffer the consequences.

Intemperance, in the true sense of the word, is at the foundation of the larger share of the ills of life, and it annually destroys its tens of thousands. For intemperance is not limited to the use of intoxicating liquors; it has a broader meaning, and includes the hurtful indulgence of any appetite or passion. True temperance teaches us to abstain entirely from that which is injurious, and to use only such articles of food as are healthful and nutritious. "Touch not,

taste not, handle not," is a motto that should be carried farther than the mere use of spirituous liquors.

If the appetites and passions were under the control of reason and religion, society would present a widely different aspect from that which is seen to-day. Thousands are now suffering the torture of physical pain, or writhing under a sense of mental and moral degradation, feeling that life is a burden too heavy to be borne. But God never designed that this condition of things should exist; it has been brought about through the gross violation of nature's laws.

Many things that are quite commonly eaten are unfit for food; the taste for them is not natural, but has been cultivated. Indigestible or stimulating food throws the entire system out of order, and creates unnatural cravings, and a desire for stronger stimulants.

The first steps in intemperance are usually taken in childhood or early youth. Stimulating food is given to the child, and unnatural cravings are awakened. These depraved appetites are pandered to as they develop. The taste continually becomes more perverted; stronger stimulants are craved and are indulged in, till soon the slave of appetite throws aside all restraint. The evil commenced early in life, and could have been prevented by the parents. We witness strenuous efforts in our country to put down intemperance; but it is found a hard matter to overpower and chain the strong, full-grown lion.

If half the efforts that are put forth to stay this giant evil, were directed toward enlightening parents as to their responsibility in forming the habits and characters of their children, a thousand-fold more good might result than from the present course of combating only the full-grown evil. The unnatural appetite for spirituous liquors is created at home, in many cases at the very tables of those who are most zealous to lead out in the temperance campaigns. We bid all workers in the good cause, God speed; but we invite them to look deeper into the causes of the evil they war against, and labor more thoroughly and consistently in the work of reform.

Parents should so conduct themselves that their lives will be a daily lesson of self-control and forbearance to their household. The father and mother should unite in disciplining their children. They should feel themselves under solemn obligation to God to train up their offspring in such a way as to secure to them, as far as possible, good physical health and well-developed characters. Upon the mother, however, will come the heavier burden, especially in the first few years of her children's lives. It is her duty to control and direct the developing minds of her tender charge, as well as to watch over their health. The father should aid her with his sympathy and counsel, and share her burdens as far as possible.

Parents should not lightly regard the work of training their children. They should employ much time in careful study of the laws which regulate our being. They should make it their first object to learn the proper manner of dealing with their children, that they may secure to them sound minds in sound bodies. Too many parents are controlled by custom, instead of sound reason and the claims of God. Many who profess to be followers of Christ are

sadly neglectful of home duties. They do not perceive the sacred importance of the trust which God has placed in their hands, so to mould the characters of their children that they will have moral stamina to resist the many temptations that ensnare the feet of youth.

We urge that the principles of temperance be carried into all the details of home life; that the example of parents be a lesson of temperance; that self-denial and self-control be taught to the children, and enforced upon them, as far as consistent, from babyhood. And first it is important that the little ones be taught that they eat to live, not live to eat; that appetite must be held in abeyance to the will; and that the will must be governed by calm, intelligent reason. Much parental anxiety and grief might be saved if children were taught from the cradle that their wills are not to be made law, nor their whims to be continually indulged.

It is not so difficult as is generally supposed to teach the little child to stifle its outbursts of temper and subdue its fits of passion. But few parents begin early enough to teach their children obedience. The child is usually allowed to get two or three years the start of its parents, who forbear to discipline it, thinking it too young to learn to obey. But all this time self-will is growing strong in the little being, and every day makes it a harder task for the parent to gain control of the child.

At a very early age children can comprehend what is plainly and simply told them; and, by kind and judicious management, can be taught to obey. The mother should not allow her child to gain an advantage over her in a single instance; and, in order to maintain this authority, it is not necessary to resort to harsh measures; a firm steady hand, and a kindness which convinces the child of your love, will accomplish the purpose. But let selfishness, anger, and self-will have their course for the first three years of a child's life, and it will be hard to bring it to submit to wholesome discipline. Its disposition becomes soured; it delights in having its own way; parental control is distasteful. These evil tendencies grow with the child's growth, until, in manhood, supreme selfishness and a lack of self-control place him at the mercy of the evils that run riot in our land. He has no desire to lead a useful life. And the object of his creation,—to glorify God and enjoy eternal life in his kingdom,—is lost forever.

Parents should train their children for usefulness. The claims of God and humanity should not be lost sight of. To train the child in the way he should go requires vigilance and perseverance; but it is not an impossible task. The divine blessing will attend all faithful efforts. And "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."

Our kind heavenly Father has given us many and rich blessings, and has intrusted to us precious talents; and he expects of us each a development of character in proportion to the light and grace given. In order to purify and refine our characters, we need divine aid, that we may see and correct our deficiencies and improve that which is excellent. This work, wrought for ourselves in the strength and name of Jesus, will be of more benefit to our associates than any sermon we might preach them. The example of a well-balanced, well-ordered life is of inestimable value.



### Loving Mercy, God's Requirements.

"WHAT doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Micah 6:8. We are required by the God of Heaven to "love mercy," in order to be saved in his kingdom and meet his acceptance. As mercy is one of God's own attributes, those who are to dwell forever in his presence must possess it and appreciate it. This is eminently reasonable. To go to Heaven we must possess the heavenly character. To dwell with God we must be like him. Satan and his adherents were cast out of Heaven because they ceased to be in harmony with the principles which reign there. It would be folly to suppose that God would take those there who were lower in nature than those who were cast out, unless the principles of Heaven were incorporated into their characters beforehand.

What is mercy? Webster defines it as follows: "A disposition to overlook injuries, or to treat an offender better than he deserves; to forgive obligation out of compassion for the offender. An act of favor, pity, compassion, or tenderness." We are required, then, by the God of Heaven, to have a disposition to overlook injuries. We are required to treat men even better than they deserve out of compassion for them. We are required to be tender, kind, pitiful, and forgiving. So says the Lord. Why should we not all have such a disposition? We can see it is beautiful in others when they exercise it. Hatred is not lovely. Revenge is not admirable. It is noble to rise above the personal feeling of resentment and to forgive personal wrongs. Our great Pattern set us the example. When hanging on the cross, after being spit upon, beaten, insulted, and nailed upon the tree, while suffering in agony he looked upon his persecutors and cried, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do." He looked forward to the time when divine justice would unsheathe her sword, and these guilty souls would wail in anguish. His great heart of love pitied them in view of that terrible hour. He looked above the plane of personal feeling. No personal resentment was in his heart. Such an example of mercy was never shown before. We admire it because it was so noble. Will it not be noble in us to cherish the same spirit and put away the unworthy resentments which lodge so easily in our hearts when we fancy ourselves slighted or mistreated?

He is a Christian who really follows Christ. He is not really one who does not. Without the spirit of Christ we are none of his. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow me." "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" And what does he say? "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Matt. 6:15. "When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any; that your Father also which is in Heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in Heaven forgive your trespasses." Mark 11:25, 26. It is strange how some people dare to pray the Lord's prayer, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," when they themselves have no thought of exercising feelings of forgiveness toward those who have offended them. Such virtually pray the Lord never to forgive their sins. "Forgive us as we forgive." It would be a dangerous prayer for such to pray. What is it to forgive? "To cease to feel resentment against."—Webster. It is to get that bad feeling out of the heart which we have when we think of those who may have wronged us. We sometimes hear people say, "I can forgive, but I can never forget." A very foolish remark; for evidently they do not forgive at all, but are determined to hold that miserable feeling of resentment in the heart as long as they live. To forgive is to have that feeling give

place to feelings of kindness. We are not required to think those who do wrong have done right; we may not see anything in their course to admire or imitate; we may know they are selfish, wicked, and on the road to ruin. But feelings of personal resentment in the heart which will not allow feelings and acts of kindness, are not tolerated by our holy religion.

Christ's parable in Matt. 18 is good evidence on this point. He presents before us the case of a king who called one of his servants to account who owed him many millions of dollars. This servant begged for mercy, as he had not wherewith to pay. His lord forgave him. But he went out and found a fellow-servant of his who owed him about fifteen dollars. He took him by the throat and required immediate payment, and because he did not pay him he shut him up in prison. When his lord heard of this act, he delivered him to the tormentors till he should pay the immense debt due him. Had he shown a merciful spirit himself, this would not have been required of him. Says Christ in conclusion, "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

It is not enough to say, "I can forgive, but shall never forget." We must forgive "from the heart." The difficulty with many who seem so loth to forgive, is that they seem to regard it as a sort of luxury to cherish feelings of resentment. Like Peter, whose cause called out the above parable, they feel it is a great strain upon their nature to forgive. He said to Christ, "How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" Jesus said, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times, but, Until seventy times seven"—490 times. That is, we should always cherish feelings of forgiveness and tenderness, even to those who abuse us personally, leaving them to the judgment of God, who will know how to deal with them. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." That attribute belongs to him. We would not know how to use it; we would make great mistakes and often deal unjustly. It would not be safe for him to intrust it to finite man. Hence he has reserved it to himself. We must give "place" to the wrath of God. If we could always realize how much happier we should be to cherish feelings of love and kindness in our hearts, than if we cherished resentment and hatred, we could better understand the Saviour's remarks to Peter. Love is better than hatred. Peace is better than war. Kindness is better than resentment. Forgiveness is better than revenge. The mind of Christ is better than the malice of Satan and of a corrupt heart. Therefore if angry, unkind feelings kindle up because of wrong done us, let us get them out of our hearts as quickly as possible. Never let the sun go down and our wrath remain burning. It is not a good companion to sleep with. Oh, that a spirit of forgiveness and love might ever characterize the followers of Christ! It will characterize all who really follow him, for he never showed any other spirit.

Mercy is also an active principle. It prompts to acts of pity, love, and tenderness. The good Samaritan had it. It caused Christ to come to earth to save a lost race. Howard, the philanthropist, possessed it. All true benefactors of mankind have had it. All who are ever saved must perform deeds of kindness and love without hope of reward in this life. We must do it because it is noble, because it is right, and because our Lord has set us an example. This is an age of selfishness and covetousness. How few there are who are really trying to do good, how few who are willing to consecrate their lives to works of benevolence such as Christ performed for the purpose of saving others. Many who are forced by the sense of duty to do something for the benefit of others and the salvation of their fellows, feel that it is a great hardship, and want to do just as little as they

can and not feel condemned. For fear of the future they will do a little, and wish they could find some way to escape from it which would satisfy their own minds. Such do not "love mercy." They dislike it very much when expected of them. It is a bitter cup to them. As Christians we should rise above the stress of duty to the high plane of loving to do good for its own sake. We should love to work for that which is noble and godlike; our characters will be more worthy and we shall better answer the end of our creation. When the love of doing right for its own sake and for Christ's sake takes possession of the heart, we shall not go to work like the quarry slave, driven to his task under the whip of stern duty; but we shall delight our souls in the Lord, and his service will be precious to us; better by far than the service of the world and the devil. Then our souls will be sustained with trust in God, and cheerfulness and happiness will be ours. The peace of God which passeth all understanding will rule and reign in our hearts. We like to labor for that which we love. This is a great lesson to "love mercy" for its own sake and for Christ's sake. May God help us all to learn it.

GEO. L. BUTLER.

### Embezzlement of God's Funds.

STARTLING but true. Has God indeed made his children trustees, guardians, or stewards of funds, for which he will require a strict account? No denial of this will be made by any child of God who has even a limited knowledge of the Bible. But who can explain the deadly apathy and lack of realization that covers and hides this truth from the hearts of so great a proportion of the Christians of this day? Is it not the strategy of the devil, to keep this truth in the background of every Christian heart, and thus, not only to strangle if possible the spiritual life itself, but to stay the progress of the cause of God in the world?

What is imperatively needed to-day in almost every agency that is used to save men and the world from sin and eternal death? Some one will answer, "More prayer." Yes, indeed; but the prayers of multitudes of professing Christians cannot "go up as a memorial before God," because the "alms" are absent. It is necessary to bear constantly in mind that God requires more than praying. The prophet Malachi declares to Israel, "Ye have wearied the Lord with words." Following closely these words come those more startling, "Ye have robbed me in tithes and offerings;" and it is particularly stated as the reason why they "were cursed with a curse."

It is very noticeable that the condition of "pouring out a blessing" is "bringing in the tithes and offerings," which was strictly the rendering back to God that which was his property. The promises then follow. Great numbers in the church of Christ, at this age, would doubtless plead ignorance and innocence of the crime of robbery of God's funds. A statute of our State requires the trustee of a savings bank to be present at the meetings of the Board, and on his absence twice consecutively, his trust is forfeited. He must know his responsibility, and discharge the duties of the position. Does not God require of his trustees time, thought, and study how best to use his funds for him?

Human justice looks with severity upon the misuse and perversion of trust funds. Can the Infinite Mind look upon the embezzlement of his trust funds with less abhorrence than men? The prophet Malachi has given the answer. Christ teaches the same principle, if the parable of the talents means anything. Paul devotes nearly whole chapters to instructions concerning the right use of money. Is it not a startling fact that thousands upon thousands of professing Christians are going to the Judgment of God under the charge of embezzlement of trust funds?—M. D., in Watchman.



**Obedience to God.**

It would seem that one who believes the Bible to be the work of inspiration, would need nothing to stimulate him to render obedience to God's requirements, except a knowledge of his demands. Yet there are many who see God's claims upon them, who fully believe his word, but because it involves some cross they hesitate to obey. Some worldly consideration, the fact that obedience requires the sacrifice of property or loss of position, causes them to decide contrary to what God has commanded. How little such realize the outcome of their selfish course! It would hardly seem that if they would stop and candidly consider the whole matter, and not be biased by circumstances, they would act contrary to their highest interest and eternal good.

Suppose that by refusing to walk in God's commandments we could accumulate an immense fortune; of what real benefit would it be to us? "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" The Saviour has given us an opportunity of making the greatest bargain that it is possible for man to make. Upon condition of obedience to his requirements he has offered us that which reaches the limits of his power,—life without end,—and that, too, free from the least pain or unhappiness. When we consider any sacrifice too great for us to make in order to secure to ourselves this happy, unending life, we prove ourselves unworthy of it; and he who made such a great sacrifice to place the prize within our reach will never grant it unto us.

God is no respecter of persons. In all ages those who have refused to heed his admonitions, have rejected his counsel, and have set his authority at naught, have alike been under the condemnation of God. We have on record a most remarkable instance of his displeasure toward one who dared to disobey his voice. Let us briefly notice it.

In the thirteenth chapter of 1 Kings we learn that the Lord sent his prophet from Judah to Bethel with a special message. After the message had been faithfully delivered, King Jeroboam invited the prophet home with him, that he might be refreshed and rewarded. The man of God, true to his directions from the Lord, replied, "If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place." It is very evident that he understood what the Lord commanded him; for he added: "For so was it charged me by the word of the Lord, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest." And with these words to his tempter, he took a different route than that by which he came, and started back toward Judah.

It happened that there dwelt in Bethel an old prophet. His sons came to him, and told him all that the man of God had done, and the words that he had spoken to the king. As soon as he learned the route that the prophet from Judah had taken, he ordered his beast saddled, and pursued after him. On overtaking him, he invited him to return with him, and eat bread. The man of God, still firm to what the Lord had ordered him, repeated to his visitor the plain command, forbidding him to eat or drink in that place. Satan then tried his most effectual temptation. Assuming a religious garb, he worked through his agent, the false prophet, with the desired effect. Hear his deceitful words: "He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him."

This teaches us that we cannot trust the human heart, but that prophets, priests, and ministers may be used by Satan as agents to

deceive and mislead. By reading the remaining verses of the chapter, we learn that the man of God forfeited his life because he turned aside from what God commanded him, and listened to the lying words of the false prophet. This shows us, that, irrespective of every influence that is brought to bear upon us, we should cling tenaciously to the word of God. We should give no heed to any minister or teacher who speaks contrary to any of God's commandments. In spite of all the warnings that can be given against Satan's devices, he will so clothe himself in religious apparel that he will be successful in deceiving a great many of those who profess to be Christ's followers. From his very first attack in the garden of Eden, he has effected his foul designs most completely when clothed in the garments of piety. It is strange that he is so successful in this manner of deceiving, when the Bible so plainly points it out as his most effectual way of planning and executing his hellish devices.

He who does not take the word of God as his own individual guide, will at last be most likely to find himself taken in the snare of the great deceiver. It may be well enough to listen to Bible expositors, but these expositors must be brought to the unerring test. The noble Bereans tested the expositions of Scripture given by Paul and Silas by daily searching the word of God. We must have an individual knowledge of God's requirements in order to successfully meet the archdeceiver, with his multiform temptations. The only true barrier against sin is to adopt the plan of the psalmist, who says: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

E. HILLIARD.

**Present Truth and Present Duty.**

THE Lord is soon coming, as numerous prophecies of the Bible testify. The world is in dire confusion; infidelity, and apostasy from the faith of revelation, abound. The last message of the gospel is being preached, and is spreading over the earth, to many people, and nations, and tongues, and kingdoms. A few are endeavoring to heed this last warning, by keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ. But there are thousands upon thousands to be warned; and the responsibility of giving them the warning and of becoming instrumental in their salvation, is laid upon those whom the Lord has enlightened with the truth for our times. The Lord has said, "Ye are the light of the world." The light which he gives to his people they are to reflect upon others. The example of Christ in giving himself a sacrifice for us, calls upon us to make a sacrifice of time, strength, mental ability, and substantial means to carry forward the great and glorious work of saving souls for whom he died. He calls upon us, every one of us, to become co-laborers with himself, in the cause for which he gave himself, his all, even life itself.

Christ has placed a value upon humanity which we do not comprehend. The worth of eternal life to a human soul we cannot compute. Life to ourselves is beyond our powers to estimate; and it is as dear to others as it is to us. If we may be the means of saving men, great is our reward; but if we neglect our duty, and do not put forth earnest and continuous efforts to save our fellows, great will be our condemnation. Are we awake to the responsibilities of the hour? May God give us a part in his work while the day lasts.

R. F. COTTRELL.

EDMUND BURKE says: "I love clamor where there is an abuse. The alarm-bell disturbs the inhabitants, but saves them from being burnt in their beds."

SIN may open bright as the morning, but it will end dark as night.—*Dr. Talmage.*

**Confessing Christ by Baptism.**

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

HERE we have our faith declared by a symbol. Just as in a book you have engravings here and there to illustrate what is contained in the print, and present it graphically to the eye, so in the system of Christianity we have ordinances, which are a pictorial confession of faith, bringing out into clear and bold relief the confession which we make with the mouth. And you see that it is all-important, in this instance, that the text and the illustrations exactly correspond. A book descriptive of Boston, and filled with engravings representing the principal scenes and streets of London, would be an absurdity. And a Christianity which rests avowedly on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, must have ordinances which exactly correspond to these ideas. Read, now, the confession of the mouth which the Scriptures require, and then compare it with the symbol which the Scriptures give: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead." The death and resurrection of Christ is the confession. "I believe that Jesus Christ died for my sins, according to the Scriptures, and that he rose again from the dead, according to the Scriptures." This is the verbal confession. Now comes the symbolic: "Buried with Christ by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." You see how the picture conforms in every line and shade to the original. You see, then, what baptism is for.

It is, first, *a declaration of faith for all time.* Amid all the unbelief and doubt and denial to which the gospel is exposed, there is great danger that its cardinal truths may be perverted or misread in the course of time. They cannot be intrusted to the stream of tradition, in whose depths so much truth has been engulfed, and on whose current so much error has been floated down. They must be stereotyped into unchanging forms, and fresh impressions must be struck off from them every year and every month for the book of church history. Do you ask me what I am doing in administering the ordinance of baptism? I am doing what the printer does with his types. I am striking off impressions of our belief, that "Christ was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification."

If this ordinance had been maintained in the church in its primitive form, the doctrine of the resurrection would not have been forgotten or denied so largely as it has. There can be no doubt that in those churches where this symbol has been kept most constantly before the eye, the blessed faith of the Redeemer has kept its hold most strongly upon the heart. Do you say that it is only a form, and therefore not essential? The picture of your dead child is not a form. It is a shadow thrown upon paper; there is no substance or life there. But will you, on that account, permit any one to throw it away? Or will you consent that it shall be changed for the picture of some other child, on the plea that it is only a form? Neither will we consent that this graphic picture of our Lord's dying and rising again shall be set aside or modified because it is only a form. Nay; forms and shadows are among the mightiest forces in the world. The pictures of Raphael and Michael Angelo have influenced humanity more than the battles of Napoleon. The battles were acts and realities indeed, while the pictures are only shadows. But these shadows, becoming reflections of divine things, are living just as truly to-day as in the year when they were painted. Let us see to it that we do not slight the ordinances of God because they are only shadows.—*A. J. Gordon, D. D., in Golden Rule.*



### The First Migrations of the Goths. (Concluded.)

"I. THE decisive battle was fought near Naisus, a city of Dardania [Nissa, in Servia]. The legions at first gave way, oppressed by numbers, and dismayed by misfortunes. Their ruin was inevitable, had not the abilities of their emperor prepared a seasonable relief. A large detachment, rising out of the secret and difficult passes of the mountains, which, by his order, they had occupied, suddenly assailed the rear of the victorious Goths. The favorable instant was improved by the activity of Claudius. He revived the courage of his troops, restored their ranks, and pressed the barbarians on every side. Fifty thousand men are reported to have been slain in the battle of Naisus. Several large bodies of barbarians, covering their retreat with a movable fortification of wagons, retired, or rather escaped, from the field of slaughter.

"II. We may presume that some insurmountable difficulty, the fatigue, perhaps, or the disobedience, of the conquerors, prevented Claudius from completing in one day the destruction of the Goths. The war was diffused over the provinces of Mæsia, Thrace, and Macedonia, and its operations drawn out into a variety of marches, surprises, and tumultuary engagements, as well by sea as by land. When the Romans suffered any loss, it was commonly occasioned by their own cowardice or rashness; but the superior talents of the emperor, his perfect knowledge of the country, and his judicious choice of measures as well as officers, assured on most occasions the success of his arms. The immense booty, the fruit of so many victories, consisted for the greater part of cattle and slaves. A select body of the Gothic youth was received among the Imperial troops; the remainder was sold into servitude; and so considerable was the number of female captives that every soldier obtained to his share two or three women. A circumstance from which we may conclude that the invaders entertained some designs of settlement as well as of plunder; since even in a naval expedition they were accompanied by their families.

"III. The loss of their fleet, which was either taken or sunk, had intercepted the retreat of the Goths. A vast circle of Roman posts, distributed with skill, supported with firmness, and gradually closing toward a common center, forced the barbarians into the most inaccessible parts of Mount Hæmus, where they found a safe refuge, but a very scanty subsistence. During the course of a rigorous winter, in which they were besieged by the emperor's troops, famine and pestilence, desertion and the sword, continually diminished the imprisoned multitude. On the return of spring [A. D. 270], nothing appeared in arms except a hardy and desperate band, the remnant of that mighty host which had embarked at the mouth of the Dniester.

"The pestilence which swept away such numbers of the barbarians at length proved fatal to their conqueror. After a short but glorious reign of two years, Claudius expired at Sirmium [near Murovic in S. E. Slavonia], amidst the tears and acclamations of his subjects. In his last illness he convened the principal officers of the State and army, and in their presence recommended Aurelian, one of his generals, as the most deserving of the throne, and the best qualified to execute the great design which he himself had been permitted only to undertake."

"The death of Claudius had revived the fainting spirit of the Goths. The troops which guarded the passes of Mount Hæmus and the banks of the Danube, had been drawn away by the apprehension of a civil war; and it seems probable that the remaining body of the Gothic and Vandalic tribes embraced the favor-

able opportunity, abandoned their settlements of the Ukraine, traversed the rivers, and swelled with new multitudes the destroying host of their countrymen. Their united numbers were at length encountered by Aurelian, and the bloody and doubtful conflict ended only with the approach of night. Exhausted by so many calamities, which they had mutually endured and inflicted during a twenty years' war, the Goths and the Romans consented to a lasting and beneficial treaty. It was earnestly solicited by the barbarians, and cheerfully ratified by the legions, to whose suffrage the prudence of Aurelian referred the decision of that important question. The Gothic nation engaged to supply the armies of Rome with a body of two thousand auxiliaries, consisting entirely of cavalry, and stipulated in return an undisturbed retreat, with a regular market as far as the Danube, provided by the emperor's care, but at their own expense.

"The treaty was observed with such religious fidelity, that, when a party of five hundred men straggled from the camp in quest of plunder, the king or general of the barbarians commanded that the guilty leader should be apprehended and shot to death with darts, as a victim devoted to the sanctity of their engagements. It is, however, not unlikely that the precaution of Aurelian, who had exacted as hostages the sons and daughters of the Gothic chiefs, contributed something to this pacific temper. The youths he trained in the exercise of arms, and near his own person; to the damsels he gave a liberal and Roman education; and, by bestowing them in marriage on some of his principal officers, gradually introduced between the two nations the closest and most endearing connections. But the most important condition of peace was understood rather than expressed in the treaty. Aurelian withdrew the Roman forces from Dacia, and tacitly relinquished that great province to the Goths and Vandals."—*Dec. and Fall, chap. 11, par. 10, 11, 16.*

This treaty was faithfully observed, and peace between the Goths and the Romans was enjoyed under its provisions for about fifty years, down to about the fourteenth year of the reign of Constantine, A. D. 320. But then we read:—

"The Goths, who in the time of Claudius and Aurelian had felt the weight of the Roman arms, respected the power of the empire, even in the midst of its intestine divisions. But the strength of that warlike nation was now restored by a peace of near fifty years; a new generation had arisen, who no longer remembered the misfortunes of ancient days; the Sarmatians of the Lake Mæotis followed the Gothic standard either as subjects or as allies, and their united force was poured upon the countries of Illyricum, Campona, Margus, and Bononia appear to have been the scene of several memorable sieges and battles; and though Constantine encountered a very obstinate resistance, he prevailed at length in the contest, and the Goths were compelled to purchase an ignominious retreat, by restoring the booty and prisoners which they had taken. Nor was this advantage sufficient to satisfy the indignation of the emperor. He resolved to chastise as well as to repulse the insolent barbarians who had dared to invade the territories of Rome. At the head of his legions he passed the Danube, after repairing the bridge which had been constructed by Trajan, penetrated into the strongest recesses of Dacia, and, when he had inflicted a severe revenge, condescended to give peace to the suppliant Goths, on condition that, as often as they were required, they should supply his armies with a body of forty thousand soldiers."—*Id., Chap. 14, par. 35.*

The peace thus granted by Constantine to the Goths continued till A. D. 331. In the meantime the Goths, in the endeavor to extend

their power to the North, were resisted by the Sarmatians, and a bloody war among these barbarous nations was the result.

"After some experience of the superior strength and numbers of their adversaries, the Sarmatians implored the protection of the Roman monarch, who beheld with pleasure the discord of the nations, but who was justly alarmed by the progress of the Gothic arms. As soon [A. D. 331] as Constantine had declared himself in favor of the weaker party, the haughty Alaric, king of the Goths, instead of expecting the attack of the legions, boldly passed the Danube, and spread terror and devastation through the province of Mæsia. To oppose the inroad of this destroying host, the aged emperor took the field in person; but on this occasion either his conduct or his fortune betrayed the glory which he had acquired in so many foreign and domestic wars. He had the mortification of seeing his troops fly before an inconsiderable detachment of the barbarians, who pursued them to the edge of their fortified camp, and obliged him to consult his safety by a precipitate and ignominious retreat.

"The event of a second and more successful action [A. D. 332, April 20] retrieved the honor of the Roman name, and the powers of art and discipline prevailed, after an obstinate contest, over the efforts of irregular valor. The broken army of the Goths abandoned the field of battle, the wasted province, and the passage of the Danube. . . . The Goths, vanquished on every side, were driven into the mountains, where, in the course of a severe campaign, above one hundred thousand were computed to have perished by cold and hunger. Peace was at length granted to their humble supplications; the eldest son of Alaric was accepted as the most valuable hostage; and Constantine endeavored to convince their chiefs, by a liberal distribution of honors and rewards, how far the friendship of the Romans was preferable to their enmity."—*Id., chap. 18, par. 13, 14.*

A. T. J.

### Never a Failure.

NO TRUE life ever was a failure. It may not have been spent in the performance of what the world esteems great and noble deeds; and, according to the world's estimate, it may not have been a success. But any life spent in the faithful performance of the duties of the position in which God has placed it, is a noble life, and will receive from him the highest commendation. It is not the kind of work we are called to do, but the spirit in which we engage in it, and the manner in which we perform it, that gives character and importance to our acts. The meanest service performed in a proper spirit for Christ, in his estimation is sublime. Or if, in the providence of God, we are deprived of the privilege of doing, and are called only to suffer, if we patiently endure as seeing Him who is invisible, under the discipline of suffering our own characters will be ennobled, our example and influence felt for good, and the sufficiency of divine grace magnified, and life, at last, instead of being a failure, will prove a grand success. We should not regard our position, whatever it may be, as insignificant and unimportant. No position is insignificant in which a man may serve and honor God. Whatever our calling may be, we should regard it as a high calling in Christ Jesus. What we do we should do as unto the Lord. A life spent in his service, in any way, is a noble life, and will lead to an exalted end.—*Sel.*

HERE and in all this vicinity, the men who have builded strong and well, and who are now building with the best evidences of permanent success, are men who have no welcome whatever for the old skepticisms which are put forth as the "discoveries" of "religious progress."—*N. Y. Observer.*



## Little Sins.

THE idea has obtained that there are degrees of sin all the way from murder, for instance, down to nothing; that certain actions, though not really proper, are not worthy the notice of God. If some case is mentioned, the reply will be, "O, that's nothing, such little sins are not worth minding." The careless reader is here requested to pause and point out one place in the Bible that speaks of "little sins"—"sins not worth minding," or anything like it. When degrees of comparison are used, sin is always called great, grievous, etc. David says, "O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great." Ps. 25: 11. The Bible throughout holds up sin in its true deformity. No one ever prayed in the Spirit to have his sins pardoned because they were small. It is true that there are degrees of sin, yet no sin is really small. Any act which is a transgression of the law, however small it may appear to men, is sufficient to condemn the transgressor to death, unless he obtains pardon.

For instance, it is supposed to be very innocent to tell a clever falsehood for the sake of playing a trick on another. This is not lying; O, no! it is only sport. It is thought to be quite harmless to joke, tell stories, play all manner of games, and have all the fun and sport possible. It is supposed to be nobody's business how much the mind is occupied with foolish thoughts. It is even looked upon as commendable to get the best end of a bargain by shrewdness and misrepresentation. There are a thousand such things as these that are looked upon as of no importance. But the just demands of an abused law will stare transgressors in the face by and by.

Scripture testimony will now be produced, and if this meets the eye of any careless one, let him remember that the following passages of Scripture, and others of like import, will stand in array against the sinner at the great Judgment day. Many things that are supposed to be of no importance are particularly mentioned in the Bible.

## SINS OF COMMISSION.

Idle words. "But I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of Judgment." Matt. 12: 36.

Foolish thoughts. "The thought of foolishness is sin." Prov. 24: 9.

"He that despiseth his neighbor sinneth." Prov. 14: 21.

"An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin." Prov. 21: 4.

"But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin." James 2: 9.

"As a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, so is the man that deceiveth his neighbor, and saith, Am not I in sport?" Prov. 26: 18, 19.

"It is as sport to a fool to do mischief." Prov. 10: 23. See also Ps. 109: 7; Prov. 28: 9.

Paul's conclusion: "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Rom. 14: 23.

## SINS OF OMISSION.

"Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him naught; and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be sin unto thee." Deut. 15: 9.

"Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy. . . . At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it; lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee." Deut. 24: 14, 15.

"Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." Judges 5: 23.

"Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way." 1 Sam. 12: 23.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." Matt. 23: 23; Heb. 2: 1-3.

James' conclusion: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Chap. 4: 17.

These are only examples. The word abounds with testimony on this subject. If the idle words, foolish thoughts, vain actions of only a single year should be written out before us, what a huge scroll it would be! What a catalogue of sin and folly! We should not want to look at it the second time. The heart would sicken, and the head would faint. But it is nevertheless the fact that a faithful record of these things is kept in the archives of Heaven, and nothing will blot it out but the blood of Christ in answer to our prayers and confessions. There is no safety outside the provisions of the gospel, therefore turn ye to the Lord and live.

D. HILDRETH.

## Popish Convents in America.

AFTER relating how the convents were suppressed in Italy, Dowling, in his "History of Romanism," makes the following appeal to Americans. We wish it might be read by every one who thinks that the encroachments of Romanism are but the harmless advances of a branch of the Christian church:—

"Is it not enough to make the very blood of an American father or brother boil with indignation to think that hundreds of daughters and sisters of America are, at this moment, immured in these gloomy prison-houses, many of them, doubtless, pining and longing for their liberty; and yet that there is no one out of the Romish Church that has the legal right of access to them, however nearly related, and no law which establishes the right even of inspection and inquiry as to the treatment of these helpless females? Does any one doubt that many of such young persons, probably induced to enter these institutions at a time of life when their judgment is feeble and their imagination strong, are compelled to remain against their will? That few of them would remain if permitted to exercise free volition, is a certainty founded on all we know of human nature. It is useless to argue about it. The situation of these women is utterly unnatural, and must be intolerably irksome until the enfeebled mind loses its power to struggle against misery. Moreover, a number of nuns have, from time to time, escaped. Alas! that this word should, in this country, be the only one applicable to the departure of a woman from a house where she has been kept without legal authority. The story told by these is invariably the same. They all have become disgusted with convent life; they all have been eagerly desirous of departure; they all have been carefully watched by their keepers; and they all declare that many, unable to escape, are pining miserably in their cloisters.

"Supposing that the real purpose of these houses is religious,—admitting all that the priests would have us believe of their own superhuman purity,—yet it is horrible that women should be kept in these places after they have found their mistake in going into them. What ground can the priests have for retaining them when no longer nuns at heart? Is it not apparent that if all was right in these places the priests would expel every woman whom they found apostate in soul? Is it reasonable to suppose that they would detain by force, as a bride of the Deity, a young woman whose heart was utterly unfaithful to her vows? It is plain enough that the priests have other than relig-

ious views and maxims in relation to convents. Much also has been revealed of the abominations practiced in these places. It has been proclaimed to the world, upon the authority of Catholics themselves, that houses of religion where young women are under the control of Catholic priests are liable to be perverted into places of shocking licentiousness and most unmitigated despotism over the hearts, minds, and persons of the nuns. In Catholic countries, again and again, ecclesiastical authorities, as we have shown, have searched into these matters, and proclaimed the horrible wickedness of the nunneries; and in our own country, now and then, a wretched woman has contrived to make known to the American people the fact that foreign ecclesiastics are repeating, in the convents, the conduct charged upon them in Europe.

"It is not at all necessary to adduce individual instances, however easy the task, in order to confirm suspicion of the wrong done to American women in convents. No body of men would be likely to have unrestrained power over women without abusing it; and of all men, the Catholic priests, from the nature of their relation to society, are the least likely to be blameless under these circumstances. When opportunity is continual, restraint unfelt, secrecy secured, exposure fully guarded against, it needs no record to inform us of the consequence.

"These women are not under the protection of the law. The law has no knowledge of them; they have no access to it, except at the will of those who keep the keys of their prisons. The law provides that a wife shall have protection against her husband. She may at any time go before a magistrate and make complaint against him, and the magistrate will do her justice, even though he should send the husband to prison. The father has not uncontrolled authority over the daughter. The law shields her against harshness. Were it known that a husband kept his wife locked up, or a father his daughter, an officer of the law would soon inquire into the cause. The woman would have leave to speak, and to speak to those able and ready to redress her wrongs. The State itself is not at liberty to keep a female in prison without permitting inspection by the grand jury, that great vigilance committee, which always watches over personal liberty and right. But what a husband may not do, what a father may not do, what the State may not do, is freely accorded to foreign priests that we know not of, except that in the land whence they came men's hearts are sick and their souls weary because of them. The priests may keep the nuns locked up, nobody interferes; they may offer them the grossest insults, inflict upon them the utmost outrage, and the poor victim cannot make complaint. No grand jury enters these portals, which, once closed upon the nuns, shut them in from all the devices of society for the protection of person. When a nun is removed, nobody knows it; when she dies, nobody necessarily knows it—there are no coroners' inquests in nunneries. Are such places as these suitable abodes for the daughters and sisters of American freemen?

"American convents, awed into at least an appearance of decency by the Protestant sentiment of the country, may throw a more impenetrable veil of concealment over their dark proceedings; but human nature is the same everywhere; their character is the same; no less than Italian convents are they all dark prison-houses, to those who enter them, of slavery, misery, corruption, and despair. Strange that they should ever exist in these free and enlightened United States! Stranger still that they should sometimes grow and flourish through the patronage and support of Protestant Americans! But, strangest of all, that American politicians should sell themselves to Rome, and buy Catholic votes with subsidies drawn from the pockets of Protestant taxpayers to these un-American, popish institutions!"



## The Sabbath-School.

### NOTES ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

JANUARY 3. 2 KINGS 22:1-13.

#### Josiah and the Book of the Law.

In this lesson we return to the kings of Judah. After the good king Hezekiah died, his son Manasseh reigned. "And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, after the abomination of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel. For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. . . . And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards; he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger. . . . And Manasseh seduced them [the children of Judah] to do more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel. . . . Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the Lord." 2 Kings 21:2, 3, 6, 9, 16.

THEN because of all this great evil, the Lord said by his prophets: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Behold I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab; and I will wipe Jerusalem, as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down." Verses 12, 13. "And the Lord spake to Manasseh, and to his people; but they would not hearken. Wherefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria [Esarhaddon], which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon." 2 Chron. 33:10, 11. He was released, however, after a while, and at his death his son Amon reigned. "And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, as his father Manasseh did. . . . And the servants of Amon conspired against him, and slew the king in his own house. And the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead." 2 Kings 21:20, 23, 24.

Thus it was that young Josiah—only eight years of age—came to the throne. And he found the land full of iniquity and abominable idolatry: altars reared to Baal; images of Ash-toreth in the high places; places of worship for horrid Moloch; horses and chariots dedicated to the sun; priests of Baal, and of all the idols, burning incense to Baal, to the sun, to the moon, to the planets, and to all the host of heaven; the house of God shut up; the worship of the Lord forsaken, and the book of the law forgotten,—this had been the condition of affairs for nearly fifty years. In the eighth year of his reign he began actively the work of reformation—to break down the altars; to break in pieces the images; and to burn the chariots of the sun. Thus he did throughout all Judah. "And so did he in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, with their mauls round about." 2 Chron. 34:3-6. While these things were going on, the Levites were at the same time gathering money from all the people, "of the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, and of all the remnant of Israel, and of all Judah and Benjamin; and they re-

turned to Jerusalem. And they put it into the hands of the workmen that had the oversight of the house of the Lord, and they gave it to the workmen that wrought in the house of the Lord, to repair and amend the house."

"AND it came to pass in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, that the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam the scribe to the house of the Lord, saying, Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may sum the silver which is brought into the house of the Lord, which the keepers of the door have gathered of the people." "And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again. . . . And Shaphan the scribe showed the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes. And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Saphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king's, saying, Go ye, inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found; for great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us."

THESE messengers went immediately to Huldah the prophetess, who "dwelt in Jerusalem in the college," and when Josiah received the answer from the Lord, he gathered all the people together, "small and great," and "read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the Lord." And the king made a covenant before the Lord, to keep his commandments, with all their heart and with all their soul. And all the people stood to the covenant. 2 Kings 23:2, 3. "And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him." 2 Kings 23:25.

JOSIAH did a grand work, and it is a grand commendation of the Lord that he received because of it. But this was not written for his sake alone. Those who tremble at the word of the Lord, and turn from their transgressions, as did King Josiah, the Lord will accept and commend as readily as he did him. This reformation by Josiah is only an illustration of the power of the word of God. When Luther found a Bible chained in the library of his monastery, its precious word touched his heart, and by it caused a revolution in all Europe. When Wesley began to obey that word "with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might," the power of the word could not be kept back, but it fairly turned England and America "upside down." So it will be ever. Only let a few men, or even a solitary man, walk in the way of the commandments of God, with all their heart, and with all their soul, and with all their might, and they can move nations. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

THE work of reformation is not yet done. The noble duty of covenanting to walk after the Lord and to keep his commandments, did not cease with this act of Josiah, nor with Luther, nor with Wesley. Even now the Lord sends a message to all people, saying with a loud voice,

"Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." Even now iniquity and idolatry, prevail as really as in the days of Josiah, Luther, or Wesley. And now it is the duty of those who fear God to covenant to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments and testimonies and his statutes, with all their heart, and with all their soul, and with all their might, to perform the words of this covenant that are written in the book.

AS IT was in the days of Josiah, that the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth and the honor of the sun, had supplanted the worship and honor of Jehovah, even so now the worship of the beast (the papacy), and his image (the so-called National Reform), and the honor of the "venerable day of the sun" are fast supplanting the worship and honor of Jehovah. Even now, as of old, the Lord cries out, "If I be a Father, where is mine honor? if I be a Master, where is my fear?" Mal. 1:6. Men who make their boast of the law, through breaking the law are dishonoring God. "Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God?" Rom 2:23. "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; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord." Isa. 58:13. "Them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." 1 Sam. 2:30. A. T. J.

## The Missionary.

### Items from the General Conference.

WE present the following resolutions and recommendations which were acted upon at the General Conference, in addition to those published last week. They are of general interest, as indicating the condition and progress of our work:—

9. *Resolved*, That we hereby indorse the standing rule of our Sabbath-school Associations in regard to taking offerings on the Sabbath, for the following reasons: (1) It trains our young to the habit of giving; (2) If appropriated, not merely for school expenses, but, as is now being done in some places, in part for missionary work, it cultivates a missionary spirit in the children; (3) It is in harmony with the Lord's will as expressed in the law, when more offerings were made on the Sabbath than on any other day; (4) It is in harmony with the light given to us as a people. And—

10. *Resolved*, That the same principles apply to the subject of donations on the fourth Sabbath of the month, which day is devoted to the missionary work; and we recommend that they be so taken.

11. *Resolved*, That in view of the uncertainty of the times, and the danger of depositing money where we can have no idea of its security, we recommend that our Conferences east of the Rocky Mountains deposit their surplus funds in the office of the *Review and Herald*, and those west of the mountains deposit the same with the office of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

12. *Resolved*, That our denominational hymn book be the property of the General Conference, and that all profits which arise from its publication be devoted to the support of missions.

16. *Resolved*, That we recommend that the President of the General Conference visit the Pacific Coast Conferences during the months of April and May, 1886, and that he arrange his visit so as to attend the annual meeting of the Pacific S. D. A. Publishing Association and of the Healdsburg College.

17. *Resolved*, That we recommend that Elder S. N. Haskell return to this country in season to attend the May camp-meetings.

The Hymn Book Committee submitted the following report:—

Your Committee appointed to consider the matter



of the new church hymn book, and make suggestions in regard to the publication of the same, would respectfully submit the following:—

On examination we find that the committee to which this matter was referred at the last General Conference have been diligently at work selecting hymns and tunes, and have already arranged for twenty-six departments, as follows:—

Repentance, Missionary, Reward of Saints, Judgment, Waiting for Christ, Social Worship, Baptism, Lord's Supper, Gospel, Sabbath, Law of God, Sanctuary, Dedication, Second Advent, Christian Experience, Closing Hymns, Family Devotion, Holy Spirit, Praise and Thanksgiving, Public Worship, Kingdom of God, Faith, Closing Message, Funeral Hymns, Special, and Miscellaneous.

We find that most of the hymns and tunes in our present hymn book have been retained, and to these have been added many others of real value, gathered from various sources. We think that so far as the committee has gone, the collection is a good one, and the departments well arranged. But we think that one or two important departments have been omitted.

It is a fact that there is a demand for a book containing pieces especially adapted for use in tent-meetings, camp-meetings, and new Sabbath-schools. Your Committee would therefore recommend that a department covering this ground be added to the hymn book.

For the convenience of those who do not care for the tunes, and to supply the demand in our tent and camp-meetings, where the large book would be too expensive to use, we would recommend that *three separate books* be prepared, as follows:—

1. A book containing all the hymns and tunes, this book to be printed on strong and durable paper, and substantially bound. We also recommend that the type for the music be the larger of the two samples shown to the Committee; that the type of the hymns be Brevier No. 4, as shown in Barnhart Bros. & Spindler's book; that the size of the page be about the same as that of the "Spiritual Songs" published by Scribner & Co., New York; and that in addition to the regular index of hymns and tunes there be an index to the first line of each verse.

2. As there are a large number who do not care for the tunes, on account of not being able to read music, we recommend that another book be prepared, to contain the hymns alone, without the tunes; the size of page of this book to be about the same as that of our present hymn book, "Spiritual Songs."

3. And we recommend that still another book, of about 150 pages, be printed, for special use in tent labor, camp-meetings, and new fields, where it would be too expensive to use the large book; that this last book be made up of pages taken directly from the large book, without change of numbers, said book to contain all those pieces in that department of the large book devoted to tent labor, etc., and such other pieces as shall be thought suitable for this purpose; this book to be bound in paper covers, and gotten up as cheaply as possible and be consistent with good work; the retail price not to exceed ten cents per copy.

#### THEOLOGICAL QUERIES.

The Committee on Theological Queries reported as follows:—

The Committee to whom was referred the subject of the ordination of local elders, would respectfully report that we find there is a difference of opinion existing, and there has been a difference in practice in different Conferences, in regard to the jurisdiction of local elders, or to the extent of their authority to act. In some places the jurisdiction and ordination have been looked upon as confined to the church which elected them; in other cases, they have been permitted to administer the ordinances wherever they might chance to be, as unrestricted as a minister. We have tried to canvass the ground thoroughly, and find that there are difficulties in both positions if separately traced to their conclusions. All agree that it is to be regarded as purely a matter of church discipline, and we believe there is truth in both positions which may be combined into one consistent system. We therefore offer the following recommendations:—

1. That the jurisdiction of a local elder, or his authority to administer the ordinances, be confined to that church which elected him as elder; the only exception to this is where the Conference Committee deems it advisable to instruct him to go to another church under special circumstances.

2. If he be re-elected, or properly elected elder of

another church, his ordination shall stand good. He need not be re-ordained.

3. But in case of his removal to another church or another Conference, the fact that he has acted as elder over another church should not be considered a ground for calling him to act as elder again. The church should consider his qualifications just as they would if he had never been an elder; and if there is any doubt, inquiry should be made of some minister or of an officer of the Conference, to ascertain whether he filled the office acceptably.

4. It is well understood that a *license* from the Conference does not authorize the licentiate to celebrate the ordinances, to administer baptism, or to organize a church. And, therefore, if a local elder receive a ministerial license, it does not enlarge his sphere of action as an elder; it gives him no authority to celebrate the ordinances outside of the church of which he is acting as elder.

5. And, finally, though his ordination shall stand good for all time, except in case of apostasy, whenever and wherever he may properly be called to act, he cannot exercise the functions of an elder beyond the time for which he was elected, unless he is re-elected, or elected by another church. But if from any cause there should be a failure to hold an election, he may then act until his successor shall be elected.

We believe that a failure to regard either of the above recommendations will open the way to disorder and confusion in our churches.

The question has been proposed to the Committee: If a contractor sub-lets a part of his work, and the sub-contractor does work upon the Sabbath, is the contractor responsible?

It is difficult to answer this question because there are so many contingencies presenting themselves; contracts assume so many different phases. We will try to clear the case of some of its difficulties.

1. If the contractor did his work on Sunday, and the sub-contractor worked on the same premises on Sabbath, this would bring reproach, as it would appear to the world that the contractor had work done on his job every day of the week.

2. If the sub-contractor was incompetent or unreliable, and needed to be watched every day to insure his doing his work right, the watching on the part of the contractor, or of any one in his employ, would be a violation of the Sabbath.

3. Any sub-contract which involved oversight, care, or anxiety on the part of the contractor, would be wrong, as the contractor could not rest on the Sabbath to the Lord, and be free from his worldly business, if he were obliged to have such care, oversight, or anxiety.

4. We think that a strictly conscientious regard for the Sabbath on the part of the contractor, will guard him from making a contract which will wound his own conscience, or give the world occasion to reproach him.

#### DISTRIBUTION OF LABOR.

The recommendation of the Committee on the Distribution of Labor, that Elder Wm. Ings go at his earliest convenience to England to labor, which was deferred till Elder W. C. White should be present, was taken from the table, and after discussion by W. C. White and others, was adopted.

The Committee on the Distribution of Labor offered the following additional recommendations:—

12. That if the Michigan brethren will cheerfully assume the burden of the work in Ontario, this field be connected with the Michigan Conference.

13. That Brother J. F. Ballenger, of Illinois, labor under the direction of the Michigan Conference.

14. That Brother C. H. Bliss, of Illinois, be requested to labor in Georgia, with the counsel of Elder G. G. Rupert.

15. That, if it is consistent with his health and circumstances, Brother J. I. Collins, of Minnesota, labor in Alabama and Mississippi, with the counsel of Elder G. G. Rupert.

16. That Victor Thompson, of Ohio, make Maryland his field of labor.

17. That Brother N. M. Jordon, of Wisconsin, labor under the direction of the Michigan Conference, in the Northern Peninsula.

18. That Brother I. D. Van Horn assist Elder

R. M. Kilgore in Illinois for about six weeks before the next camp-meeting season.

19. That W. H. Saxby and wife, of Kentucky, go to Washington to labor in the mission there.

20. That Brother Frank D. Starr, of the North Pacific Conference, join the Illinois Conference.

21. That Brother I. H. Evans, of Michigan, go to Kentucky to labor.

22. That Brother R. M. J. Pound, of Kentucky, labor in Michigan.

#### FINANCES.

Committee on Finances reported as follows:—

Your Committee on Finances, after collecting all the information at our command, and carefully considering the wants of the cause in its different branches, would report that we find an urgent and pressing need of funds to carry forward our work. The treasuries of the European and Scandinavian missions are empty, and these missions are in debt to the *Review* office several thousand dollars. The English and Australian missions need additional funds to carry forward their work successfully. The funds of the International Tract Society are exhausted; and this Society, which has done such a noble work in the past in sending out rays of light and truth to all parts of the world, and has by this means brought the light of truth to many that were in darkness, and opened new fields that could not otherwise have been reached, is now, for lack of funds, powerless to occupy the field of usefulness which it has held among other agencies for the spread of the Third Angel's Message. There is also great need of a fund to support city missions outside of organized Conferences.

It is evident to the minds of your Committee, after careful and candid consideration, that funds *must be raised*, or the work we have begun *must be abandoned*, an idea which no true believer in the Third Angel's Message can entertain for a moment.

We would therefore recommend—

1. That \$15,000 be raised for the Central European Mission, \$15,000 for the Scandinavian Mission, \$5,000 for the English Mission, \$5,000 for the Australian Mission, \$10,000 for the International Tract Society, and \$10,000 for the support of city missions.

2. That our people everywhere be requested to make Christmas donations to the European and Scandinavian Missions, to relieve them as much as possible from their present embarrassment. And we would further recommend that the week between the holidays, including the Sabbath, January 2, be set apart as a week of prayer; and that the General Conference Committee suggest suitable subjects for consideration each day, and also prepare addresses to be read at the beginning of this week of prayer and at suitable intervals during the week. We would urge all presidents of Conferences, ministers, and church elders to give this matter their immediate and faithful attention, and see that every church, and as far as possible every individual, is informed of the nature and object of this week of prayer; and that all join in humbling ourselves before God and pleading with him for a deeper conversion, that his blessing may rest upon the work that is begun, and that he may open the hearts of those that have means, to use this talent which God has given them to send the truth to the nations of the earth, to gather out of them a people for his name.

3. That the General Conference Committee use the best means at their command to raise the above mentioned funds to sustain the work already begun, either by themselves visiting men of means, and laying the wants of the cause before them, or by appointing suitable persons to do this work, or in any other way that may seem to them most feasible.

4. In view of the fact that the College buildings are entirely too small to accommodate the students already seeking the advantages of instruction, we recommend that \$40,000 be raised to pay the present indebtedness of the College, and to erect such additional buildings, and provide facilities for fully instructing those who seek its aid in preparing themselves to do more efficient work in the cause of truth, that the College may fill the position which the Lord has shown it should occupy.

We believe the work in which we are engaged is the work of God, and that he has a special care for it. And we believe that in the hours of trial which may be permitted to come upon us to test our fidelity to him and his cause, we should trust in God and move forward, believing that to the faithful will come the victory.



# The Signs of the Times.

"Can ye not discern the signs of the times?"

J. H. WAGGONER, - - - - - EDITOR.  
E. J. WAGGONER, }  
ALONZO T. JONES, } ASSISTANT EDITORS.  
URIAH SMITH, }  
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OAKLAND, CAL., FIFTH-DAY, DECEMBER 24, 1885.

## The Coming of a Literal Christ.

(Continued.)

WHAT we said in our first article about literality and a literal interpretation, scarcely needs any confirmation; yet it may be well to fortify the point in the minds of the readers by reference to Scripture examples.

In John 1:41 are the following words: "We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ." Now we insist that "the Christ" is a literal interpretation of "the Messiah." But according to the theory which we call in question, it cannot be a literal interpretation; for then it must be, "the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Messiah." The mystical theory does not admit of any change of terms in a literal interpretation. A stone, as we have seen by that theory, is literally interpreted, a stone! And then the Messiah should be literally interpreted the Messiah. But that is no interpretation at all. Messiah is a Hebrew word, which, being interpreted into the Greek, is the Christ; literally, not figuratively, the Christ. And this, being again interpreted into the English, is the Anointed—as it is in the margin of our Bibles. And this, again, is literal.

In the next verse (42), we find these words: "Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone." This is what he was to be called, and so he was. It cannot be objected here that he was not literally a stone, and therefore the interpretation is not literal. It does not say he should be a stone, but he should be called a stone. That was literally true.

Again, in Heb. 7:1, 2, we read: "For this Melchisedec, King of Salem, . . . first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is King of peace." "Melchisedec" is composed of two Hebrew words, the first meaning king, and the second, righteousness. This again is a literal interpretation. Salem is also literally interpreted; it means peace.

We will now notice a few texts of a somewhat different character, of which much needless misapprehension has existed. Eze. 37:1-10 contains the prophet's vision of the valley of dry bones, which were caused to come together; then by the prophet's word flesh came upon them, and breath came into them, and they stood upon their feet, a great army. This has been applied in the most fanciful manner, generally to a great revival of religion. But the Lord himself explains it in verses 11-14. He says that these bones are the house of Israel; that he will bring them up out of their graves, and cause them to live, and bring them into their own land. This was the promise to Abraham that he should possess the land forever, both he and his seed. Stephen said that he never did possess it (Acts 7:2-5); and Paul said that Abraham dwelt in the land of promise as in a strange country (Heb. 11:9); and he died in the faith of the promise (verse 39), which cannot be fulfilled except through a resurrection of the dead, as is shown in Eze. 37. We insist here that in Eze. 37:11-14 is given a literal interpretation of the vision of the first part of the chapter. But they who claim a mystical or "spiritual" interpretation of prophetic symbols say, "No; it does not mean the resurrection of the dead out of their graves; it

is to be spiritually understood." But the Lord said it did mean the bringing of Israel up out of their graves. If this explanation or interpretation of Jehovah himself does not mean what it says—if his words need to be interpreted or explained—then we insist that he gave no interpretation at all; then his words are useless; for we could have given a mystical or imaginary meaning to the vision without his interpretation, as well as we can with his interpretation, if a mystical or imaginary meaning is to be given to it. But if we may not accept the Lord's interpretation, whose shall we accept? It is easy to see that they who *spiritualize* the words of the Lord which he has spoken in interpretation of the vision, make his words of no effect—of no signification—which is nothing short of an insult to the author of all revelation and inspiration.

Once more, in Matt. 13:24-30 is the parable of the tares of the field. This, too, is very often mystified by suppository interpretations. According to the theory which we are calling in question, a literal interpretation would be to take the parable literally. The wheat means only wheat, and the tares mean only tares; for so the writer whom we have noticed takes Dan. 2:35. But that is not a literal interpretation; it is no interpretation at all. It is destroying the parable as a parable, and making it a literal narrative. But the Saviour was asked to "declare" unto them the parable, and he did so, and he gave a declaration or interpretation strictly literal in all its terms. The world, the children of the kingdom, the children of the wicked one, the Son of man, the devil, the angels, the end of the world or age, the separation of the wicked and the righteous, and rewarding each according to his work or character,—every term and every fact is strictly literal. If they are not literal, what do they mean? What is represented by the world? by the Son of man? by the angels? by the children of the kingdom and the children of the wicked one? If these are still to be interpreted, if they are not literal, then the Saviour declared nothing, he explained nothing, and his language is meaningless. We think it must be very evident to every one that the Saviour interpreted the parable by changing its figures into literal facts, which is a literal interpretation. But if not—if he only changed the figures into other figures—then both the parable and his declaration of it remain to be interpreted. And then who shall declare it? If we cannot believe his word, whose shall we believe? From all this we lay down the following rule:—

*If a parable or a symbol be taken literally, it is then no parable or symbol; but if the interpretation is not taken literally, it is then no interpretation.* We may safely challenge any one to attempt to invalidate this proposition. But if this is true, then it forever settles the controversy as to the literal interpretation of prophetic symbols.

We now return to the text under first consideration, and proceed to show the fallacy, the inconclusiveness of the arguments of the learned writer in the *Interior*. All admit that the several parts of the image which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream are symbols; they are not to be taken literally. The prophet said to the king: "We will tell the interpretation thereof before the king." Now if it were literal—if the stone meant a stone—then no interpretation was admissible; an interpretation of a literal statement is a mere pretense. But Daniel explained the several parts of the image to mean several kingdoms, according to their characteristics, beginning with that kingdom of which Nebuchadnezzar was the head and representative; and the stone he interpreted to mean the kingdom of the God of Heaven. To show the analogy, or the completeness of the interpretation, we will quote what is said of the stone in the dream, and what is said of the kingdom in the interpretation. "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the

image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." In the interpretation the prophet said: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."

Inasmuch as the image begins with Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, and gives successively the kingdoms which succeeded his, we know, as all admit, that the gold, the silver, the brass, and the iron represented Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. But the writer in the *Interior*, and with him all who deny the literal interpretation of the prophecy, said that because the stone is not to be taken literally—that is, the surface of the earth will not be covered with stone—therefore the kingdom which the God of Heaven will set up is not a literal kingdom! Never was a greater fallacy put forth. Are the gold, the silver, the brass, and the iron to be taken literally? No; no one, not even the writer in the *Interior*, would claim that; all admit that these metals are used as symbols, even as the stone is used as a symbol. Very well. Then we inquire: Were Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, literal kingdoms? Not at all, replies the spiritualistic interpreter. The gold, silver, brass, and iron are not to be taken literally; therefore the kingdoms which they represented were not literal kingdoms! According to that argument, this conclusion is unavoidable. Not a literal kingdom has existed upon the face of the earth since the days of Daniel the prophet! They are all to be taken "spiritually," because they were all represented by symbols in the prophecy!

No one can deny that our conclusion is just, if that theory is true. No one has any better right to spiritualize one part of the prophecy than we have to spiritualize every part. If the first four symbols—also the feet and toes—represent literal kingdoms, why may not the fifth symbol? Or, if the fifth kingdom is not literal because it was represented by a symbol, then the four kingdoms were not literal because they were represented by symbols. If this reasoning is not just, will some one give a reason why it is not? That cannot be done.

But we now apply the rule, the justness of which we have demonstrated. If the interpretation is not literal, then there was no interpretation at all. Daniel spoke of a kingdom of which Nebuchadnezzar was the ruler; of another kingdom which was to succeed this; and another, and yet another, which was to bear rule over all the earth. This was his interpretation of certain symbols. And the interpretation was literal, because the kingdoms were literal; the prophet meant just what he said—neither more nor less. And he is presumptuous who attempts to correct the prophet,—who says he did not mean what he said, but something else. And we insist, and our claim cannot be denied, that the fifth kingdom is to be as literal as the other four. It breaks them in pieces; it destroys them; it occupies their place in the same territory. The stone was neither more nor less literal than the iron; the fifth kingdom is to be neither more nor less literal than the fourth. The prophet said nothing about "spiritual kingdoms" in his interpretation. Who has received authority to add to his words? He promised to interpret the dream to the king. But if his words need to be interpreted—if they cannot be understood without somebody correcting them and telling us what they mean—then he did not interpret the dream. But if he did interpret the



dream, then no explanation of his words is admissible.

Were it not for the popularity of the spiritualizing system, were not that system so all-controlling in the theology of the day, we should feel like apologizing for dwelling upon this point at such length. But we are desirous that all should see this truth clearly, for we have yet to trace this subject further.

(To be continued.)

### The Law of God—for Whom Made.

LAST week, under the head of "Principles and Precepts," we showed that not simply the great principles of love, but the embodiment of those principles in the ten commandments, are the rule of life for all men in all ages; that the law is adapted to pure and holy beings, and is kept even by the angels in Heaven. After one additional thought on this point, we shall proceed to notice in detail some things that are offered as objections to this view.

The difference between sinful man and the law of God, is shown by Paul in the following words: "For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin." Rom 7:14. Between things spiritual and things carnal there is no possibility for the slightest union, as is proved by Gal. 5:17: "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other." And therefore, as a consequence of this implacable enmity, the words of Paul follow very naturally: "So that ye cannot do the things that ye would." This last statement is made more emphatic in Rom. 8:7: "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

That by the term "law" Paul refers to the ten commandments, and not to certain abstract principles, is easily seen from Rom. 7:7 and 2:17-23. The fact, then, is made plain that men cannot meet the requirements of the ten commandments, because the commandments are spiritual, and men are carnal. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God," Rom. 8:8. Now it is required of all men that they please God, and therefore the apostle proceeds to show how it may be done: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." Rom. 8:9. A man in whom the Spirit of God dwells is certainly spiritual, and therefore just in harmony with the law of God, which is also spiritual. And so we see that instead of the law being adapted only to sinful beings, it is especially adapted to the righteous; for they are the only ones who can continue in its requirements. It is the keeping of the ten commandments (which can be done only by those who are "in Christ") that makes men spiritual; when they cease to keep the law, they cease to be spiritual.

In supposed opposition to the position which we have taken, is 1 Tim. 1:9, 10: "Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine." Whoever imagines that this text means that a righteous man is not under obligations to keep the law, has never given it a second thought. He cannot have read more than the first clause. Since the law is "made for" those who steal, lie, kill, commit adultery, blaspheme, etc., we should gather that it forbids all those things, and so it does. Then according to the common supposition, the righteous, for whom the law is *not* "made," are not prohibited from these practices! A necessary conclusion which is so absurd, shows plainly that the premises are wrong.

But if it is the duty of Christians to keep the law,

how shall we understand Paul's statement that the law is "made" for the wicked, and not for the righteous? We can answer this question in no better way than by quoting a portion of Dr. Clarke's comment on 1 Tim. 1:9:—

"He [the apostle] does not say that the law was not MADE for a righteous man; but *ou keitai*, it does not LIE against a righteous man, because he does not transgress against it; but it *lies against* the wicked; for such, as the apostle mentions, have broken it, and grievously too, and are condemned by it. The word *keitai*, *lies*, refers to the custom of writing laws on boards, and hanging them up in public places, within reach of every man, that they might be read by all; thus all would see against whom the law *lay*."

This is exactly in harmony with the primal meaning of the word law,—"something laid,"—as given in the article last week. The law is "laid" for the benefit of all; it *lies against* the man who violates it, and crushes him if he persists in his disobedience; but it does not *lie against* the righteous, because they "walk in the law of the Lord." There is no opposition between them and the law; to them the law is indeed "the way of peace," because they delight in it. But let one of the righteous ones step out of this way, and that step will bring the law *against* him.

And now to the statement that Christians are in duty bound to keep the ten commandments, and that, in fact, that is the badge of their discipleship, we must add another statement which necessarily follows, namely, that this delightful duty will be theirs throughout eternity, just as it has been that of the angels ever since they were created. "Angels that excel in strength" do the commandments of God, "hearkening unto the voice of his word." Ps. 103:20. And when the kingdom of God is established upon earth, God's will (the ten commandments) will be done on earth even as it is now done in Heaven. Matt. 6:10. As long as the throne of God endures, the ten commandments will be the law by which God rules his vast Government, because they are the very basis of that Government, the foundation of his throne.

E. J. W.

### How Does It Happen?

WHEN people for the first time hear or read the truth concerning the Sabbath, the nature of man, the coming of the Lord, and other Bible doctrines held by Seventh-day Adventists, they frequently ask, "If these things are so plainly taught in the Bible, as you claim, why is it that they have not been taught by Bible students in past ages? Why is it that Luther, Calvin, Wesley, and other learned and pious theologians did not see these doctrines?"

A satisfactory answer to these questions may easily be given. We must consider the circumstances under which those men began their labors. We must remember that when the Reformation began, the Bible had been for several hundred years a proscribed book. The art of printing was unknown, and books were necessarily copied by hand. This was a tedious process, and made it impossible for poor people to own them. Besides this, the only copies of the Bible in existence were in the original Greek and Hebrew, or in Latin; and when we remember that Greek and Hebrew were rarely taught, even in the universities, and that few learned men had any knowledge of those languages, Latin being the only language of educated people, we see that the number of people who could use the Bible, even had they possessed a copy, was very limited. Still further, when we remember that the few manuscript copies of the Bible that were in existence were the property of the Catholic Church, which had no interest in circulating them among the people, but on the contrary, kept these copies carefully concealed, we see that it was next to impossible for anybody to have any personal acquaintance with the word of God. Says D'Aubigne:—

"The priests having taken into their own hands

the disposing [of] a salvation which belonged only to God, had thereby secured a sufficient hold on the respect of the people. What need had they [the priests] to study sacred learning? It was no longer their office to explain the Scriptures, but to grant letters of indulgence; and for the fulfilling of that ministry, it was unnecessary to have acquired any great learning. In country parts, says Wimpeling, they appointed as preachers poor wretches whom they had taken from beggary, and who had been cooks, musicians, huntsmen, stable-boys, and even worse.

"The superior clergy themselves were sunk in great ignorance. A bishop of Dunfeldt congratulated himself on never having learned Greek or Hebrew. The monks asserted that all heresies arose from these languages, but especially from the Greek. 'Greek,' continued he, 'is a modern language but recently invented, and against which we must be upon our guard. As to Hebrew, my dear brethren, it is certain that whoever studies that immediately becomes a Jew.' . . . Thomas Linacer, a learned and celebrated divine, had never read the New Testament. Drawing near his end (in 1524), he called for it, but quickly threw it from him with an oath because his eye had caught the words, 'But I say unto you, Swear not at all.' 'Either this is not the gospel,' said he, 'or we are not Christians.' Even the schools of theology in Paris did not scruple to declare before the Parliament, 'There is an end of religion if the study of Hebrew and Greek is permitted.'"

"If here and there among the clergy some learning existed, it was not in sacred literature. The Ciceronians of Italy affected great contempt for the Bible on account of its style. Men who arrogated to themselves the title of priests of Christ's church translated the words of the Holy Ghost into the style of Virgil and of Horace to accommodate them to the ears of men of taste. The Cardinal Bembo wrote always instead of 'the Holy Spirit,' 'the breath of the celestial zephyr;' for 'remission of sins' he substituted 'the pity of the manes and of the gods;' and instead of 'Christ the Son of God,' 'Minerva sprung from the brows of Jupiter.' Finding, one day, the respectable Sadoletus employed on the translation of the epistle to the Romans, 'Leave these childish productions,' said he, 'such puerilities do not become a sensible man.'"

It was only a few weeks ago that a Catholic priest in Montreal, speaking of the Protestant Bible, said to his congregation: "I want to be understood that the Church forbids you to read those Bibles. If you have any of them in your house, burn them; and if you do not want to burn them, bring them to me, and I will burn them."

It was amidst influences like these that the Reformation began. Luther was twenty years old before he had even seen a copy of the Bible. Now if any one wonders why he did not, in his life-time, grasp all the truths which it contains, let him try an experiment: Let him give the Bible to a man who has never seen the book, and see how long it will take him to thoroughly understand it. Let the reader consider his own case, and see how great an understanding he has of the Bible; then remember that there can scarcely be a parallel to Luther's case nowadays, because the influence of the Bible is everywhere. The people who have never read it have met its teachings in books, or perhaps in sermons, or in their intercourse with other people. When we think of these things, instead of wondering that Luther did not understand more of the Bible, we are lost in astonishment that he was able to grasp so many of its truths as he did.

When we come to the time of Wesley, we find that he had a still better understanding of the Bible than Luther had. This was not because he was a more talented or a more devoted man than Luther, but because he had better advantages. He had the benefit of all of Luther's study and experience, as well as of that of many other learned men. And as we come down a hundred years later, to our own time, it is no egotism to say that we may have a deeper insight into the truths of the Bible than Wesley had, because we have the aid of his research, and that of Bible students since his time. It would indeed be a cause for shame to any intelligent Bible student if he did not profit by the light thrown upon the



word by those men of God. Besides this, we must remember that there are special truths for special occasions. Peter speaks of the "present truth." There is such a truth for every age. The special truth for the time of Luther was justification by faith. The people were swallowed up in dead forms and useless ceremonies, and needed instruction in the first principles of the gospel, of which the world was totally ignorant. All the preaching needed to be directed to that one thing. As the Bible became a common book, and the doctrine of justification by faith and not by works was more generally understood, other points could be brought in. As we come down to the early portion of this century, we see a special prominence given to the doctrine of Christ's second coming. Ministers of all denominations seemed moved by a common impulse to study the prophecies, and to teach them to the people. A little later the doctrine of eternal life only in Christ, and that received at the resurrection, began to be preached quite extensively. This was a natural consequence of the preaching of the second advent. And still later we find special attention given to the law of God, and the Sabbath, until now the truth on this point has been circulated throughout the world. To be sure, there have been a few people in all generations who have held all, or nearly all, of these truths; but the attention of the people as a whole has been directed to only one new truth at a time.

Our Lord, in speaking to his disciples, recognized the fact that the human mind must be led into truth step by step when he said: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." John 16:12. It will be noticed, however, that while in different generations one truth has been made especially prominent, the truths which have been brought out in preceding generations are not ignored, but the new truths are added to them; and thus is fulfilled the statement that "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Prov. 4:18.

It is not for us to spend time wondering why former generations did not have certain doctrines preached to them, but simply to inquire, Are these things so? This may be easily determined by the Bible, and we should, instead of questioning, rejoice that new light is given to us, and should walk in the light while we have the light, lest darkness come upon us.

E. J. W.

#### The Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul Subversive of the Truth.—No. 4.

GOD created man upon the earth, and gave him dominion over all upon it. He made him, not as the angels, but *lower* than they—inferior to the angels. Ps. 8:5; Heb. 2:7, margin. God made man upright, but through the deception of Satan he turned to crooked ways—he sinned. And although God had put all things in subjection under him, and "left nothing" that was not "put under him," yet now, says Paul, we see not all things put under him. Heb. 2:8. Through sin he has been deprived of his glory, and honor, and dominion, which God gave him, and which the Lord intended that he should forever enjoy. This sin was brought upon him by Satan, and, hard upon sin, death followed.

But when man had thus sold himself under sin, God gave by promise, and in the "fullness of time" he gave *in fact*, his only begotten Son, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." When man had so sold himself under sin, under the curse, God gave his dear Son to redeem him from sin, from the curse, and from all condemnation. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. 8:1. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed

is every one that hangeth on a tree." Gal. 3:13. "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 Cor. 5:21. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, *condemned sin in the flesh*; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. 8:3, 4.

To put away sin and plant righteousness in its stead, is the mission of Christ to this world. That he might accomplish this, he had to make the awful sacrifice of *himself*, the Creator of the universe. "Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Heb. 9:26. By the greatness of the sacrifice we may judge of the enormity of sin, and how abhorrent it is in the sight of God, and also how widely contrary it is to every principle of the government of the King of Eternity. To deliver man from its thrall-dom he spared not his own Son. Rather than to see the blight and stain of sin upon the fair face of his universe, God gave up the "Son of his love" to die the cruel death of the accursed tree. John says: "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. *For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*" 1 John 3:8. The work of the devil is sin; for he says, "He that committeth sin is of the devil." Therefore when it is said that the Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil, it is simply expressing, in other words, that which we quoted from Paul, that Christ appeared to put away sin.

As therefore Christ's mission is to destroy the works of the devil—to put away sin—it follows that as long as there is a vestige of sin remaining, his mission is not accomplished. Whatever therefore tends to perpetuate sin, tends just so far to delay the accomplishment of the mission of Christ. And if by any means sin were made eternal, the inevitable result would be to nullify and subvert the mission of Christ. Now that is exactly what is done by the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul. The very meaning of the word *immortal* being "not subject to death," it follows that if the soul be immortal, it must live eternally, whatever its condition may be; and from this again it follows that when the awful sentence is pronounced, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still," whatsoever soul it be that shall then be unjust must live so to all eternity; which is simply to make sin eternal, and so to subvert the mission of Christ.

That sin is to be eternal is strenuously maintained by those who believe that the soul is immortal. This is shown positively in the doctrine of the eternal torment of the wicked. In fact, the belief in the eternal torment of the wicked is simply the necessary consequence of the belief in the immortality of the soul. We know, for the word of God says it, that the wicked will be punished. We know likewise, by the same authority, that they will be punished as long as they live (*aion—a life-time*). Now if they live eternally, it is evident that they will be in pain eternally. But the word of God says just as plainly that the wicked shall die, as it says anything at all about them. "The wages of sin is *death*." Rom. 6:23. "The soul that sinneth, *it shall die*." Eze. 18:4. That word tells us of a time when, "Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them," shall be heard saying, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." Rev. 5:13. This scripture can never be fulfilled if the doctrine of eternal suffering be true, or, in other words, if the doctrine of the immortality of the soul be true. Again, we read of a time when "There shall be no

more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, *neither shall there be any more pain*; for the former things are passed away." Rev. 21:4. If the doctrine of eternal suffering be the truth, it is literally impossible that there can ever come a time when there shall be "no more pain."

But there stands that faithful word, that there is coming a time when there shall be no more pain; there is coming a time when every voice in the universe will ascribe "Honor, and glory, and power," "unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb *forever and ever*." This is the truth of God; he has given his only begotten Son that it might be accomplished; and we have seen that the mission of the Son is declared to be "to put away sin," to "destroy the works of the devil." And the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, in making sin eternal, and in immortalizing the works of the devil, frustrates the purpose of God and subverts the mission of Christ.

Once more: The doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul makes the body only worthless clay, formed into a prison that binds, and fetters, and clogs the free action of the soul; while death is the friendly messenger that bursts the prison bars, and sets free the aspiring soul to seek its native sphere. One of the most influential of American preachers said lately, of one who had *died*, that that person "is living, and more thoroughly living, to-day than any of us who are clogged and hampered and chained down by earthly impediment." This is simply the expression of the common belief of those who hold to the idea that the soul is immortal. Embodied in metre so that it can be sung, it runs on this wise:—

"Why should we start and fear to die?  
What timorous worms we mortals are!  
Death is the gate to endless joy;  
And yet we dread to enter there."

Now we read in the word of God, as follows: "O death, I will be thy plagues." Hos. 13:14. And again we read that "death" "shall be destroyed." 1 Cor. 15:26. Can it be that God is going to visit with plagues, and destroy, the gate to endless joy? Is he so displeased to have his creatures entering into endless joy that he is determined to destroy the very means by which they enter that blissful state? If the words of this preacher and the language of this hymn, and the doctrine upon which these are founded, be the truth, then the Lord is going to do just the thing that is here pointed out, that is, he is going to visit with plagues, and destroy, the gate to endless joy.

But this is not all. We read further of Christ: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might *destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil*." Heb. 2:14. Granting the claim that death is the gate to endless joy, then from this scripture it follows just as absolutely as logic can demonstrate, that *the devil*, having the power of death, *is the gate-keeper*. And so the Lord is not only going to destroy this "gate to endless joy," but he is going to destroy him that keeps it. Nor yet is this all. Granting not only the claim, based upon the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, that death is the gate to endless joy, but also that the soul is clogged, and hampered, and imprisoned by its confinement in the body, and that it is released by death, it follows that if there had never been any death in the world no soul could have ever been set free, and there never would have been any gate to endless joy. And as it was the devil who brought death into the world, therefore, under that doctrine, to him must be accorded the honor of setting men free from this world, and of creating and opening to men the gate of endless joy. But this is the very thing that Christ says that he himself came to do. He says: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no



man cometh unto the Father *but by me.*" John 14: 6. "*I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved.*" John 10: 9. Therefore when the doctrine of the immortality of the soul makes death the gate to endless joy, and the friendly messenger that releases men from this world, it supplants the Saviour of the world, and bestows upon Satan the honor that is due to Christ.

And by all this, we lay against the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul, the legitimate and logical charge that it frustrates the purpose of God, that it nullifies the mission of Christ, and that it supplants the Saviour of the world. And if anything more is needed to show that between that doctrine and the truth of God, there is a difference wide as eternity, we promise to present it in our next issue. A. T. J.

### Cheerful Workers.

THIS is the name of a society of young people in San Diego County, Cal., the object of which is to disseminate the light of the Third Angel's Message. They have been working something over one year. Their object is to do something for the Master. They pledge themselves to send out a certain number of Signs each week. The support comes from their own labor, and this stimulates them to industrious habits. They have system in their work; each one secures from his parents a certain number of rods of ground. This is planted to that which will bring in the greatest returns; some plant their portion to melons, others to beans, etc. After the crop is gathered and marketed, the proceeds are given to their treasurer. Then it is appropriated as the members see fit.

Their income the past year amounted to thirty-five dollars. This money they wanted to lay out to the very best advantage, and after due deliberation they voted to purchase two distributors to be placed in some public place in San Francisco. The money is to purchase reading matter to keep them supplied, and the work of filling them is to be done by our city missionary.

This surely is an example for others; and I hope that many will catch the same spirit and do likewise. Parents, encourage your children, and inculcate in them a missionary spirit; then their active minds can be educated in the right channel of thought, and in doing work for the Master.

I am glad to see the young taking hold of the work. Should all enter as heartily as those have in San Diego, much could be accomplished. Cities are to be entered, and there will be plenty of chances for means to be invested for the support of distributors, etc. How many are there in our Conference who will follow the example mentioned above, and thus be laying up treasure in Heaven? May God bless the little band of workers in San Diego. Wm. Ings.

### Labor in Nevada.

I HAVE recently held a course of meetings in a country school-house at Brown's Station. These meetings closed with an addition of four to the ranks of those who propose to keep all of God's commandments. I next visited the companies of believers at Reno, Virginia City, and Carson, and found them of good courage in the truth. At the latter place three were baptized. I am now holding meetings in the village of Empire, which will be my post-office for a few weeks to come. Though the people of Nevada have many of the characteristics of a transient mining community, yet there are some honest souls here. Pray that the Lord will bless the labor put forth to gather out such. December 17, 1885. E. A. BRIGGS.

If one would have a robust faith and living piety, he must cultivate his mind and heart.

## News and Notes.

### RELIGIOUS.

—New York is to have a new building for the Young Women's Christian Association, which is to cost \$150,000.

—The American Board is about sending a trained nurse to Japan, to establish a training-school for nurses at Kioto.

—The Indian school at Carlisle Barracks, Pa., which had 84 students in 1879, now has 494 students, from 38 different tribes, their ages ranging from seven to twenty-four years.

—San Francisco is to have a new and magnificent Catholic cathedral. Work on it has already commenced, and it is believed that the corner-stone will be laid in two or three months.

—The *Osservatore Romano* states, as the result of the estimates made by the various missionaries, that the total number of the members of the Roman Catholic Church throughout the world is between 275,000,000 and 300,000,000.

—The recently published annual report of the Women's Christian Association of Hartford, Ct., states that during the last thirteen years nine hundred women have been entertained at the "Home" provided by this Association for the benefit of women, young women especially, who enter the city in search of work.

—A correspondent of the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* hits a weak point in the evangelical Christianity of the day when he says: "When great men die, theology gets genial and mild. It is a terrible strain on the creeds" to teach that "national heroes and great philanthropists who are not devotees of the church are lost in endless ruin."

—General Gordon, whose death in the Soudan was universally lamented, is reported as saying to a Roman Catholic bishop: "Do not forget me in your prayers. Catholics and Protestants are but soldiers in different regiments of Christ's army; but it is the same army, and we are all marching together." This feeling is becoming more and more prevalent.

—In Eisenstadt, Germany, there is a community of Jews who have always been faithful in the observance of the Sabbath. Their "quarter" has always been closed on Sabbaths and holidays. Three years ago a Christian bought a house there, and as he protested against the gates being closed on Saturdays, the street was kept open. The man died recently; and the Jews promptly bought his house, and on the 17th of October again enjoyed a quiet Sabbath.

—The evils of the pew-renting system are forcibly expressed in the following from the *Boston Transcript*: "A gentleman prominent in one of our oldest churches, speaking of a possible change in the pastorate, said: 'I think it a matter of buying up stock—excuse me, I mean pews. If Mr. —'s friends can buy up pews enough before the parish meeting, they will, of course, call him. If the other side gets the pews, why, Mr. —'s friends will be left. You laugh; but the control of a church is a good deal like the control of a bank or railroad nowadays. If you can buy up a majority of the pews, you can run it to suit yourself.'"

### SECULAR.

—The wheat crop of France this year is about 6,000,000 bushels above the average.

—The London *Times* confirms the statement that a Franco-Burmese treaty was found by the British at Mandalay.

—Several persons were seriously injured, some of them fatally, by an explosion in a coal mine near Wilkesbarre, Pa., December 14.

—The liberal press in Russia urges an alliance with England, as the only means of settling the Eastern question, and punishing the perfidy of Germany and Austria.

—Congress has voted Mrs. Grant a pension of \$5,000 a year. The names of Mrs. Tyler, Mrs. Polk, and Mrs. Garfield are on the pension list, each receiving \$5,000 a year.

—Gen. Robert Toombs died at his home in Washington, Ga., December 15. He was a prominent Confederate general during the civil war of 1861-5, and one who was always faithful to the "lost cause," as he would never take the oath of allegiance under the amnesty proclamation.

—A project is on foot to colonize about two thousand colored families in Brazoria County, Texas. The plan is to purchase one hundred thousand acres, and divide it into fifty-acre farms.

—The agreement between Germany and Spain with reference to the Caroline Islands was signed in Rome, in the presence of the pope, and with much pomp and ceremony, December 17.

—Eleven persons were killed, and three others so seriously injured that it is thought death will result, by a collision on the Georgia Pacific Railroad which occurred near Atlanta, December 15.

—A dispatch dated December 19 states that a terrible dynamite explosion has occurred in a mine in Siberia. Particulars have not been received as yet, but the number killed is estimated at from four hundred to one thousand.

—A tenement house in Plymouth, England, burned December 13; and when the flames were subdued, the bodies of twelve victims were found among the ruins. One person was killed by jumping from a high window, and two others are missing, who are believed to have perished in the fire.

—Russia has offered to assent to the union of Bulgaria and Roumelia, on condition that the policy of Bulgaria be subordinated to Russia's policy. A still later dispatch says that the Sultan of Turkey has appointed Prince Alexander Governor for life over Eastern Roumelia, with the right of succession.

—The Servian troops are insufficiently protected from the severe cold, and on an average not less than thirty are frozen daily. They are suffering from typhus fever and small-pox also. Yet Servia is determined to continue the war to the last extremity, rather than yield to the demands of Prince Alexander.

—A part of the roof of a coal mine in Nanticoke, Pa., caved in, December 18, letting into the mine a large quantity of quicksand and surface water. Fifty-two men were working in the mine at the time; of these twenty-eight are believed to have escaped, while the remaining twenty-four are imprisoned in the mine.

—An announcement is made that as an outcome of the striking riots in the Monongahela Valley, Pa., the non-striking miners have organized to defend themselves from the strikers. They declare that they will not be shot down without revenge, but that if any of their number fall while going to their work, they will have life for life.

—During the year ending October 1, the elevated railroads of New York City carried 103,354,729 passengers. They have been in operation nearly fourteen years, and in that time have carried 577,820,287 passengers. The remarkable fact is stated that of this immense number of persons only one lost his life, and that was due to his own carelessness.

—Mr. A. M. Bell, supervising architect of Government buildings, in his annual report to the Secretary of the Treasury, says that there are now in course of construction eighty new United States Government buildings in various parts of the country, ranging in cost from \$25,000 to \$2,000,000 each, and calling for a total expenditure of over \$8,000,000.

—The prohibition party of Georgia have "won a thorough victory in a fair, square fight." And now Senator Colquitt of that State announces that he intends to introduce a bill into the Senate giving the people of the District of Columbia a chance to vote on the prohibition question. He thinks prohibition is to be one of the great issues of the future, and that it should be decided at the seat of Government.

—A dynamite plot has been unearthed by the San Francisco police, and four of the conspirators were arrested December 15. They had on their "proscription list" the names of over twenty prominent citizens and officials, whom they considered it necessary to arrest and execute before proceeding to carry out their plans. Among these were the names of Senator Stanford, Governor Stoneman, Consul Bee, several judges, the chief of police, the mayor, and several military and naval officers. Having disposed of these obnoxious persons, they proposed to get possession of the municipal Government, and then they declared, "The Chinese must go." The "Revolutionary Committee," who seem to have for the chief article of their creed "pillage and plunder," is believed to number between three and four hundred, with a much larger number of deluded followers. The authorities have in their possession dynamite bombs, giant powder, batteries, etc., as proof positive that these desperate and lawless men fully intended to put their threats of violence into execution.



# The Signs of the Times.

OAKLAND, CAL., FIFTH-DAY, DECEMBER 24, 1885.

THIS is the last number of the SIGNS that will be printed this year. The first number of volume 12 will bear date of Jan. 7, 1886.

IF it seems as though the index this week crowds out a good deal of reading matter, remember that this entire number is extra. Notwithstanding the publication of the index, you have a dozen pages of reading matter more than usual; and it is all worth reading, too, even if we have had to omit some departments.

LAST Sunday, Dec. 20, Elder W. M. Healey and wife sailed on the steamer *Mariposa* for Honolulu, taking along a 50-foot tent in which to hold meetings in that city. Brother Healey preached for the church in Oakland the day before he sailed. The prayers of our people accompany him for the success of his mission.

BEGINNING with the new volume, there will be some changes in the make-up of the SIGNS, which will, we think, tend to increase its efficiency. It is our determination to make the SIGNS OF THE TIMES the very best paper of its kind in the world. Will not every one who reads this help us with his prayers, his contributions, and—his subscription?

QUITE a large number of subscriptions to the SIGNS OF THE TIMES expired with last week's issue; but we have continued them to the present number, seeing it is the last of the volume, hoping that we may not have to cut them off at all. Shall we not hear from all before the next issue? It will be an accommodation to our mailing clerk if renewals are sent in early. You cannot afford to be without the SIGNS during the coming year.

OWING to snow blockades in the mountains, the overland mail which brought our *Reviews* was three days late last week, and therefore the recommendation for a week of prayer could not reach our people on this coast as early as was intended. For information concerning the time, object, etc., see note on this page from the president of the General Conference, and in "Items from the General Conference," on page 775, the paragraph numbered "2," in the report of the Finance Committee. The object is worthy, and the necessity is urgent; let all who read heed the call.

WE occasionally comment upon articles found in our exchanges, when they contain statements of doctrine which we deem particularly erroneous. In so doing we always confine our strictures to the point under consideration, and have never made any thrusts at the denomination publishing the paper, or cast any reflection on the style or management of the paper itself. Our business is not to find fault with individuals or sects, but to teach truth and expose error. We should much prefer to make no mention of individual instances of erroneous teaching; but error is so deeply rooted that very often people would not make the application of the truth for themselves, if it were not contrasted with error. We call everything an error which is opposed to plain Bible teaching. The Bible is our sole standard of comparison, and not our belief nor the belief or practice of the majority of people. We do not ask any one to accept our word; but we have a right to demand that professed Christians, at least, shall accept what the Bible says. And we have also a right to expect that those who differ with us shall give the plain testimony of Scripture, and nothing else, in support of their views.

ONE evening last week, we had the pleasure of listening to a temperance lecture by John B. Finch, of Nebraska. To say that the lecture was good, conveys no just idea of it. Mr. Finch is a logician, and presents hard facts in so telling a manner that he forces conviction upon his hearers, while his skill as a speaker is such that he cannot fail to secure the individual attention of any audience. Moreover, he impresses every one with the fact that he is terribly in earnest, realizing what an awful curse the liquor traffic is. Absolute prohibition is his watchword, and he does not propose to give whisky any quarter. Our only regret during the lecture was that it could not be heard by those who are wasting their energies in trying to secure high license. With Mr. Finch, we believe in "no license, either high, low, or middle."

## Holiday Gifts.

THE holidays are right upon us, and we are looking around for something to present to our friends. The question should be, What can I give that will accomplish the most good, and will leave a lasting impression upon the mind? I know of nothing that would fill the bill better than Vol. 4 of "The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan." This book ought to be placed in the hands of every person; for all need just the information that it contains.

If every Seventh-day Adventist in this Conference would send this valuable work to some friend, great good would be accomplished. How many will join me in this enterprise? Send \$1.50 with the address to the Pacific Press, Oakland, Cal., and they will mail a copy of the illustrated edition direct. Send in your orders immediately, and then write your friends that you have sent them a New Year's present, and you will be doing great good.

WM. INGS.

## Making Void the Scriptures.

SAYS the Nashville *Christian Advocate*: "Whoever has felt the shame of detected meanness or crime has felt hell fire. It is the bitterest drop in the cup of a true penitent."

This is a specimen of the theology which vitiates the Scripture and makes it mean anything except what it says; but like most false theories, it furnishes the matter for its own overthrow. According to the above quotation, it is the penitent who suffers hell fire, and not the very wicked. Of certain of the wicked we are told in the Bible that they are "past feeling," and have their "conscience seared with a hot iron," and it is a well-known fact that a long-continued course of sin tends to deaden all sensibility. The one who has gone but a little way in sin feels very acutely the shame of detection, and his conscience upbraids him although he be not detected. But the longer he continues his evil practices, the less does he feel the stings of conscience, until at last he becomes so hardened that even open exposure and rebuke produce no feeling of shame. Therefore, according to the *Advocate's* theory, the man who has sinned but little suffers the torments of hell fire the most intensely, while the one who is steeped in sin escapes with no punishment at all!

It is true that at the last, men who are now reckless will have their sins presented before them in so vivid a manner that they will feel remorse to the fullest extent, and this lashing of an awakened conscience may form a large portion of that "tribulation and anguish" which is to be rendered to "every soul of man that doeth evil;" but notwithstanding this, the fact remains that "the wages of sin is death," and that this death is to be brought about by means of fire. The sin is an actual fact; so likewise will be the fire into which the wicked are to depart, and also the death which will follow. There is no more reason for saying that the word

"death" is used in a figurative sense than there is in using "sin" in the same manner.

Either the Bible means what it says or it means nothing. That it means what it says when it declares that "the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch," is plainly shown by Peter when he says that the turning of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes was "an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly." 2 Pet. 2:6.

Whoever claims that the fire that is spoken of in the Bible as consuming the wicked is simply remorse of conscience, must also claim that literal fire and brimstone were not rained upon the cities of the plain, and that the hardened wretches of Sodom simply had their consciences awakened, and that Lot was driven out, lest perchance his attention should be called to some sin in his past life, and thereby he be made to endure the pangs of hell fire! This sort of "philosophy and vain deceit" is getting to be very common. It is infidelity dressed in the garb of religion, and is tenfold more dangerous than the bold infidelity which openly denies the entire Bible.

## A Week of Prayer.

FROM the last number of the *Review and Herald*, we take the following:—

The readers of this issue must not fail to read that portion of the proceedings of the General Conference which speaks of the *week of prayer*, including Christmas and reaching through the Sabbath, January 2. In the hurry of the closing Conference, as the paper is just going to press, we can say but a few words. More will follow in succeeding issues of the *Review*. In view of the rapid increase of our work, and the vast magnitude of the interest centering in our missions and other aggressive agencies connected with the promulgation of the message, together with the lack of men and means threatening to hinder the growth and prosperity of the cause, and the lack of devotion and sacrifice manifested by many of our people, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists have solemnly set apart this *week of prayer* for all our people who may be able to get this notice in season.

During this time it is expected they will hold meetings of humiliation and devotion, seeking most earnestly for the Spirit of God to rest upon them, and open the eyes of all to the vast importance of supporting the work so that it shall not be crippled or hindered in its onward march. Never was there a time in the history of this work when openings were so plentiful in all directions. We must arouse and move forward as we never have in the history of this people. What could be more fitting than a week of solemn humiliation and prayer at such a crisis? May God awaken our men of means and ability, and help them to break their hold upon the world, and give their hearts to God as never before!

GEO. I. BUTLER, Pres. Gen. Conf.

## Sound Reasoning Paralleled.

THE secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Missions, Rev. Arthur Mitchell, D. D., delivered a sermon at the late meeting of the Board, on the "Necessity of Foreign Missions." In this sermon he took decided ground against the too prevalent idea that in some way or other the heathen will be saved without the gospel. Commenting on Acts 26:17, 18, he said:—

"Christ's words and his action here exhibited the necessity of sending this missionary [Paul] to the heathen, in order that they might 'receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified.' That necessity was so great that it justified the reopening of Heaven by the ascended Saviour in order that it might be met; justified the appointment of the first of living men [as missionary]; justified Christ's devotement of himself to a life which should wear him out and prematurely kill him. For Christ to do all this, and to say that he did it in order that the heathen might be forgiven and saved, when he knew that there was no



necessity for it in order that they might be saved—when in fact he knew that they would be saved anyway whether the gospel were carried to them or not—*would have been impossible.*"

No one can deny that this is sound reasoning. As Dr. Mitchell says, it is impossible to conceive of Christ sending Paul to preach to the heathen at such an immense sacrifice, unless there was an urgent necessity for such preaching. We think there are few, if any, professed Christians who would question the correctness of this reasoning. And now we wish to present a few thoughts in exactly the same line.

Christ himself said to the Jews, "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." John 5:40. This text would imply that he had life to bestow, and this is proved in the twenty-eighth verse of the same chapter, in which Christ says that he has life in himself. In John 10:10 Christ, speaking of the people, said, "I am come that they might have life." Again we read in John 3:16, "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." These last two texts show that Christ came for no other purpose but to give life to those who should believe on him, and that those who do not believe on him could not have life, but should perish.

Now we say that for Christ to come to this earth and voluntarily take upon himself man's nature with all its attendant ills, and for God to send his only begotten Son to be tempted of Satan, despised and rejected of men, and put to a shameful death, in order that men might have life, when they were already in possession of it, would have been an utter impossibility. Such a supposition is an impeachment not only of the love but of the wisdom of God. And yet this ground is really taken by every one who holds that man is immortal; that he is by nature endowed with a life which cannot be extinguished. Who can fail to see that the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul really exhibits God in the light of a monster who would sacrifice his only Son for nothing? And yet there are persons who tell us that it is of no practical importance what we believe concerning the immortality of the soul.

## Obituary.

CURTIS.—Died, in Exeter, Maine, of consumption, Oct. 22, 1885, Flora B. Curtis, only daughter of James and Viannah Curtis, aged fifteen years, six months, and twenty-two days.

Flora was a very conscientious girl, and in her sickness was very patient. She sang praises to the name of Jesus, and expressed a willingness to die, hoping soon to meet loved ones where parting will never be known. She leaves a father, mother, and one brother, and numerous other relatives to mourn their loss; but they mourn not as those without hope, for they expect to meet her in the near future. Words of comfort were spoken by I. Dammon (first-day Adventist), from 1 Cor. 15:2.

S. F. THOMPSON.  
(Review please copy.)

## THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES,

PUBLISHED WEEKLY, AT OAKLAND, CAL., FOR THE

## International Tract and Missionary Society.

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## THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

FOR 1886.

A 16-PAGE WEEKLY PUBLISHED AT OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA,

FOR THE

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