

# The Signs of the Times, Vol. 8 (1882)

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## "Signs of Christ's Second Coming" *The Signs of the Times* 8, 1.

E. J. Waggoner

In our brief examination of Scripture, we have found that the personal, visible coming of Christ is a fact that admits of no dispute. To deny it is to deny the plainest teaching of the New Testament. The next question that naturally arises is, Have any signs been given by which we may know something concerning the time? Is there any probability that this awful event may take place in our day? But we do not find people generally concerning themselves much in regard to the matter. By far the larger part of mankind desire to hear nothing of it. Some ignore it entirely; others say it is spiritual, or in the past; while others admit all the points which we have thus far examined, but they say that it is impossible for any body to know anything about it. They say that for a man to inquire concerning it is prying into the secrets of the Almighty. Arguing from their own desires, they think that he will not come in their day at least, and imagine that ignorance or forgetfulness will excuse them from all responsibility to the matter.

But the Lord will certainly come, and no amount of indifference will cause him to delay. Moreover, some persons will be alive, and will see him come. Now it is not in accordance with God's dealings with men in the past, to spring any great event on them unawares. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." Amos 3:7. Every judgment has been preceded by a warning, and ample time has been given to prepare for it. It was so in the case of the flood, the destruction of Sodom, the Babylonish captivity, the destruction of Jerusalem, and other instances. Reasoning from analogy alone, we should conclude that this event, so vastly more important than any of those mentioned, should also be preceded by a warning. And we learn that this is so from 1 Thess. 5:1-4: "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. . . . But ye, brethren are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." Paul is here speaking to those who shall be "alive and remain" to the coming of the Lord; see chap. 4:16, 17; and his language proves that such will know of that event.

But because this was addressed to the Thessalonians, some have argued that the apostles and early Christians expected the Lord in their day, and were disappointed—that we have no more duty to look for his coming than people have had in all ages since his first advent. "He may come to-day, and he may not come for a thousand years or more," they frequently say; but the Bible gives no authority for any such statement; and the actions of those who say so, plainly show that they themselves do not believe it.

It is just as contrary to the Bible to say that people might with propriety have expected Christ to come at any period in the past, since his first advent, as it is to

say that he will not come at all. There were some in Paul's day who thought that the coming of the Lord was near, but he disabused their minds in the following language: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." 2 Thess. 2:1-4. All agree that this "man of sin" is the Papacy, which resulted from the "falling away" from the simplicity of the gospel. Until that power had arisen, and had run its course of blasphemy and oppression, it was not proper for men to teach that the coming of the Lord was at hand; it is, therefore, very important to the proper understanding of our subject, to know the facts concerning the rise and progress of the Papacy.

Without entering into any exposition of the prophecy, for lack of space, I will simply state that Bishop Newton, Sir Isaac Newton, Dr. Scott, and other eminent commentators agree that Paul's "man of sin" is identical with the "little horn" of Dan. 7, and refers to the Papacy. In Daniel 7:25 its actions are described thus: "And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." By comparing this text with Rev. 12:6, 14, we learn that the "time and times and the dividing of time" is twelve hundred and sixty days. This, if it were literal time, would be an insignificant length of time for the continuance of a persecuting power. But we must remember that the power is represented under the symbol of a beast; and in order for the prophecy to be harmonious, the time must also be symbolical. Turning to Eze. 4:6 we find that in the prophecy a day is used for a year. Applying this rule to the prophecy in question, we have twelve hundred and sixty years. The Papacy then, was to continue with power to persecute, twelve hundred and sixty years.

We next inquire when the Papacy was developed sufficiently to fill the specifications of the prophecy. We find that in the year A.D. 538, Justinian's decree that the bishop of Rome should be the head of all the churches, went into effect. This gave the Bishop of Rome power to decide what was heresy, and to call people to account for manifestations of it. From that time onward, the most blasphemous assumptions were made by this self-styled "viceregent of the Son of God," and persecutions without number were carried on in the name of Christianity. This meets the terms of the prophecy fully. Now can we find any event at the end of twelve hundred and sixty years that would mark the downfall of this system of oppression? In 1798 just twelve hundred and sixty years later, Berthier, a noted French general, took Pope Pius VI. Prisoner and carried him into exile, where he died. Although another individual was soon after proclaimed pope, the power was broken, never to reach its former greatness. The power of the pope has gradually wasted away, until nothing remains to him now but a

name; and although the will to persecute is as active as ever, the power to do it openly, ceased at that time.

Now as to the bearing of all this on the subject of Christ's coming. In answer to his disciple's question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and the end of the world?" Matt. 24:3, Christ gave a brief outline of the condition of the world to the end of time. After warning them in verses 15-21 of the destruction of Jerusalem, he spoke of a time of "great tribulation" that should shortly follow, "such as was not since the beginning of the world." The destruction of Jerusalem is not referred to here, for this reason: This tribulation was to come upon God's people, for he said: "And except those days should be shortened, there should *no* flesh be saved; but *for the elect's sake* those days shall be shortened." Verse 22. Now when the final destruction of Jerusalem took place there were no Christians in the city, for all had fled according to the command of Christ. The time of trouble here referred to, then, must be the long period of papal persecution. And this corresponds with the statement in verse 22, for, as the result of the Reformation, the persecution actually ceased some years before the year 1798.

We now have the data for a sign that of itself should be sufficient if there were no other. Jesus said: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened and the moon shall not give her light." Matt. 24:29. As recorded by Mark, the language is still more definite. "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light." Mark 10:24. A little while before the year 1798, then, this wonderful sign should have occurred. As a matter of fact, this prediction was fulfilled in the dark day of May 19, 1780. Of this day "Webster's Unabridged Dictionary," speaks as follows:-

"DARK DAY, THE. May 19, 1890-so called on account of a remarkable darkness on that day extending over all New England. In some places, persons could not see to read common print in the open air for several hours together. Birds sang their evening song, disappeared, and became silent; fowls went to roost; cattle sought the barn-yard; and candles were lighted in the houses. The obscuration began about ten o'clock in the morning and continued till the middle of the next night, but with differences of degree and duration in different places. . . . The true cause of this remarkable phenomenon is unknown."

And Herschel the astronomer said:-

"The dark day in northern America was one of those wonderful phenomena of nature, which will always be read of with interest, but which philosophy is at a loss to explain."

It has been well said that science is at a loss to explain this wonderful phenomenon, although numerous attempts to explain it have been made. But its value as

a sign does not consist in its being unexplainable. Its value consists in the fact that it occurred just when our Saviour had said it would, more than seventeen hundred years before. If there had been a hundred other days equally as dark, it would not affect this testimony in the least. To illustrate: A man going on a journey is told that just before he reaches his destination he will come to a large tract of

woods inclosed by a high fence, and on the other side of the woods, and just within the inclosure, he will find a log house. Now when he sees this house, just where he was told it would be, he is sure that he is on the right road, although he may have passed many similar houses. So in the case before us. It is a fact, however, that the dark day of 1780 stands alone and unparalleled.

"And the moon shall not give her light." This was fulfilled in the night following the dark day. Mr. Tenney of Exeter, N. H., said of that night:-

"I could not help conceiving at the time, that if every luminous body in the universe had been shrouded in impenetrable darkness, or struck from existence, the darkness could not have been more complete. A sheet of white paper held within a few inches of the eyes, was equally invisible with the blackest velvet."

Other testimony might be given, but it is unnecessary as the facts are not doubted by any.

"And the stars shall fall from heaven." This is the next sign, and was fulfilled Nov. 13, 1833, in the wonderful display when many now living well remember. Professor Olmstead of Yale College said it was probably "the greatest display of celestial fireworks that has ever been since the foundation of the world."

If any one says that these phenomena have no significance, -no connection whatever with the coming of the Lord-then I ask what they will do with our Saviour's words? Are they not to be fulfilled? Christ was here answering an important question which his disciples had asked him, and we cannot think that he would deceive them or put them off with an evasive answer. His language is very simple and literal. Why can we not believe signs that our Saviour gave, as well as those which we receive from men? If one of our friends goes away and tells us of some event by which we may know when to look for him, we do not think of doubting his word. Our Lord has done this, and has placed his signs in the heavens, so that they may be known by all; and if we neglect them, shall we not be without excuse? The world was once condemned by the preaching of Noah; what then will be the condemnation of those who reject infinitely greater light?

But our Saviour does not leave the matter here. He says: "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." This is a forcible illustration. Nobody has a doubt that summer is near, when the leaves put forth in the spring; and we may be just as certain, now that "all these things" have come to pass, that the Lord is near. There is no opportunity for doubt. It is indeed, a sin not to be certain of the nearness of the event.

It is true that we cannot tell just the day that summer will come. After the buds begin to swell, there may be bitter frosts, and summer may be delayed; but still we are sure that summer is not far distant. In this the parable holds good. Christ says, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man." For a wise purpose the exact time of the event is withheld from us, and it is idle for us to speculate in regard to it, but yet we may be just as certain that it is near "even at the doors." And to put the fact beyond all doubt he says: "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." That is, the generation that shall witness



these signs, or a portion of them, shall see the final consummation of all things. This is indeed a solemn thought. Many of those now living shall see the Lord come. What should be our position, then, at this time? Our Saviour himself gives the answer: "Watch ye therefore; for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrow, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, WATCH."

**February 2, 1882**

**"Who is to Blame?" *The Signs of the Times* 8, 5.**

E. J. Waggoner

There are very many people who want peace, but they want it after their own ideas. It is quite common for people who have taken a wrong course, to lay the blame of the trouble that inevitably follows upon some one who, so far from following in the wrong, has endeavored to set things right. They say, "If you will let us alone, there will be no trouble." Many children are very patterns of propriety so long as everything goes to suit them, but when their tracks are crossed, there is trouble. Then the trouble is charged, not to their own perverseness, but to their parents, or those who try to check their wrong-doing. It is a painful fact that these children do not always lose this trait when they grow up. It is not easy to live under condemnation, and, therefore, the natural mind seeks an excuse for sin, and an *excuse* is not very hard to find.

An instance in point is seen in the case of Ahab. His course is briefly stated in the following scripture: "And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him. . . . And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him." 1 Kings 16:30-33. Elijah was a man of God, who dared to stand boldly for the worship of the true God, even though he were the only one in the nation who was not an idolater. His life alone was a constant rebuke to the wicked king, and his testimony was plain. Through him the Lord spoke and said that on account of the wickedness of Israel there should be no rain throughout the land. This came to pass, and great suffering necessarily followed.

But did Ahab acknowledge that he himself was the cause of all this? Hear him. "And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" 1 Kings 18:17. Like a petulant child, he blamed the one who was trying to save him. But Elijah stated the case in its true light when he answered: "I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim." Verse 18.

But human nature is the same now as in the days of Ahab. A few months ago the following paragraph appeared in a report of labor, which a first-day preacher sent to the organ of his denomination:-

"Our next was at Battle Creek. This is the headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventists. As Saturday is one of the busiest days of a city, and Sabbath, [Sunday], the great working day of the Adventists, and as the ungodly are embolden to respect neither, it is hard to tell in Battle Creek whether it is Saturday, Sunday, or Monday. Thus the Seventh-day system spreads infidelity."

Note the parallel. Ahab led Israel into idolatry. Elijah fearlessly preached and practiced the religion of the true God. The result of this was that many of the people halted "between two opinions." 1 Kings 18:21. They did not believe anything. In the modern instance the Seventh-day Adventists teach, and try to conscientiously live out, the commandments of God. This includes the observance of God's Sabbath, the day which he rested upon, blessed, sanctified, called his own, and commanded all men to observe. See Gen. 2:2, 3; Ex. 20:8-11; Isa. 58:13, and many other texts. The great mass of mankind, following in the wake of papal lawlessness and assumption, trample upon God's holy day, and exalt a rival in its place. In consequence of this, some people accept neither. They do not take the trouble to examine for themselves to see which is right, and reject both as of no consequence.

Now who is to blame for their infidelity? Is it those who are walking according to God's rule, or those who walk in a way of their own devising? In the case of Ahab and Elijah all will agree. Elijah did right. He is looked upon by all Bible readers as a model of integrity; and such he was. All the trouble and unbelief that existed is chargeable solely to Ahab's wicked course, and to those who followed him. Would it not, then, be more in accordance with the facts to say that first-day keeping, or at least Sabbath-breaking, leads to infidelity? If God's word remains the same now that it was four thousand years ago, it would. He gave the Sabbath as a sign, that men might know that he was the true God. Ex. 31:13; Eze. 20:20. If men had always kept the Sabbath of the Lord, remembering that it is the memorial of his creative power, there would never have been any idolatry or infidelity.

The question to be decided is simply this: Does it make a wrong thing right, for a majority to practice it? Is it better to disobey God with the many, or to obey him with the few? Will God alter his laws, and make wrong right, because the majority do wrong? His word says: "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." Ex. 22:2; and, "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished." Prov. 11:21. It is safe to believe these statements, in spite of the assertions of men to the contrary. Although the gospel of Christ is a gospel of peace, it does not contemplate a peace purchased by a sacrifice of right-doing. Christ foresaw that men would be shaken when they saw divisions on account of his doctrine, and he forewarned his disciples in Luke 12:51-53. Let men deplore divisions, and let them endeavor to promote harmony; but let them labor only for Bible union, and not fear to say, with Joshua, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord."

**February 9, 1882**

## **"What They Are Doing?" *The Signs of the Times* 8, 6.**

E. J. Waggoner

In accordance with our design to note the progress of the Sunday movement, we give below a few extracts from the Oakland *Times* report of a mass-meeting held Sunday, January 29, in the First Congregational Church of this city. The meeting was largely attended, and the leading ministers of the city were among the speakers. The animus of the movement is better shown by these speeches, than by anything else.

"Mr. Whitney, President of the Home Protection Association, introduced Rev. Dr. Todd, who said that there is a law on the statute book requiring us to observe the Sabbath [Sunday] and it should be enforced. There is a law on the statute books which prevents the killing of game during certain seasons. The law is enforced, and recently a young nimrod was fined sixty dollars for shooting game. The movement in regard to the Sunday law is not transient, but is deeply rooted and the nation will prevail in that matter. If a stranger visits your house you are not required to break any of your household regulations. America established the Sabbath as a household regulation, and we should observe it."

"Rev. Dr. Sprecher was introduced and argued that the law is not contrary to the genius of our government. There is not a nation that can exist without a religion. It is necessary in the organization of a nation that the prevailing religion of the people should be recognized. People must be protected in the exercise of their religion. That is a part of the rights of the people. This is a Christian nation and the laws are made to respect and protect the people in the exercise of their religion. The Sunday law is in perfect keeping with the Constitution of the United States. This is a Christian country and the law was made for the protection of the Christian people."

No comments are needed on the above paragraph. They contain the same sophistries which the advocates of the Religious Amendment to the Constitution have always used. The following, however, is something of a new departure that is not new to the students of prophecy. After reading it, please turn and read Rev. 13:16, 17.

"Dr. McLane delivered a brief address in which he said that home protection is going to be a power in politics. He had been dealing with a person who opens on Sunday, but he had paid him his last rent. He wanted the breeze to blow into the stores, and exhorted the audience not to deal with those who do business on Sunday. The politicians were handled without gloves and the reverend gentleman made an eloquent appeal in behalf of the Home Protection Association."

And this, they tell us, is religious liberty! If it is, may we be delivered from religious persecution. It will not be a difficult matter for any reader to decide whether this movement is in the interests of temperance or of the Sunday. Much enthusiasm was manifested at this meeting, and a large amount was contributed for the aid of the Association.

As showing the feeling of the opposite party, the following account of a trial in San Leandro, Alameda Co., is in point. The proprietor of a hotel, together with twelve other business men, was arrested for keeping open on Sunday. His was

to be the test case. An immense crowd attended the trial. Able lawyers had been secured by both sides. The jury, after a consultation of about five minutes, rendered a verdict of "Not guilty." An uproar immediately ensued. The crowd threw their hats into the air, and cheered again and again. In their frantic joy, benches were kicked over, and the Judge was powerless to secure order. After adjournment the hilarity was kept up for several hours.

It will be seen that the feeling is intense on both sides. The conflict will be a bitter one. We know from the word of God what the final result will be, and need waste no time in speculation. Our only business should be to spread the light of truth. Let us do this with our might. E. J. W.

**February 16, 1882**

**"Our Position" *The Signs of the Times* 8, 7.**

E. J. Waggoner

We are well aware that some honest people, knowing our temperance principles, wonder that we are opposed to the Sunday law; and others, not so honest, have seen fit to revile us, classing us with the lowest rabble, and accuse us of favoring intemperance. To both classes we repeat what we have before stated: The law is not a liquor law, but a Sunday law; it is not in the interest of temperance, but of the Sunday; it is given in the code under the general heading of offenses against religion, and prescribes that *all places of business* shall be closed on the "Christian Sabbath." A strict endorsement of the law would affect saloon keepers less than any other class of men.

This being the case, it is not at all inconsistent with our temperance principles for us to decline to help enforce the law. Indeed, should we join with its friends, we should be recreant to our faith, and violate our own convictions of right; for the Lord has said: "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work." The command to keep holy the seventh day is imperative; *permission*, at least, equally emphatic, is given to labor on the six days, Sunday included; and a permission from God is of more weight than a command from man. We do not try to force any body to keep the Sabbath of the Lord; why, then, should we give the Sunday greater prominence? Would not such an act be in violation of the spirit of the commandment, even though we outwardly observed the seventh day? It certainly would.

As to our convictions on the subject of temperance, they may be learned from the columns of the SIGNS. We are for prohibition. We shall not cease to expose the evils of the liquor traffic, so far as lies in our power. But inasmuch as Sunday is in no sense a sacred day, we cannot become a party to a transaction that will elevate it over other purely secular days. The following paragraph from the *Lever*, a paper wholly devoted to the cause of temperance, expresses our sentiments exactly. We hope no one will accuse the *Lever* of being in league with saloons and brothels:-

"We do not believe, however, that any journal which does not openly and flatly denounce saloonism on week days as well as Sundays will ever command any very vast amount of respect when it pleads in favor of the suppression of Sunday saloonism. The fact is, murder is just as foul a crime when committed on Thursday as when committed on Sunday; and what we want is an open, frank, decided, emphatic, unequivocal, Anglo-Saxon denunciation of saloons and saloonism everywhere and all the time."

One word more in general to our relation to the Sunday question. We are opposed to the law merely from principle, not for pecuniary gain. We do not, however, intend to make any demonstration against it, or say anything in any way derogatory to those who favor it. We are not in sympathy with the so-called "League of Freedom." While they join hand in hand, for selfish purposes; and while in the church "there is a conspiracy of her prophets," we, remain neutral, so far as acts of opposition or friendliness are concerned. But the command has been given concerning the Sabbath question: "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." Isa. 58:1. We may not neglect this command and remain guiltless. Having the light, it is our duty, not only to walk in it, but to let it shine for others. We must let the people know the claims of God's law, and those of its rival, that they may choose whom they will serve; and this we shall continue to do "with malice toward none; with charity for all." E. J. W.

**February 23, 1882**

**"A Few Indications" *The Signs of the Times* 8, 8.**

E. J. Waggoner

It is unfortunate for those who claim that the present Sunday agitation is only a temperance movement, that the facts do not agree with their statements. The law itself, as has been shown, is purely a Sunday law; and the speeches of some of the leaders in the movement, show that their object is the better observance of the Sunday by all classes. The terms "sanitary regulation," "police regulation," and "temperance movement" are given to the law, in order that it may be popular with a certain class who do not readily discern its real import.

Brother Frank Lamb, who has been laboring in Castroville and vicinity, this winter, related to us the following incident that came under his personal observation, which shows the spirit that actuates some, at least, of the defenders of the Sunday: In the course of his labor

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a German, who was a blacksmith by trade, commenced to keep the Sabbath. It was necessary, however, that he devote six days to his labor, and as he now closed his shop on Sabbath, he opened it on Sunday. The next day one of the trustees of the Presbyterian Church had him arrested for working on Sunday. He was convicted, and sentenced to pay a fine of twelve dollars, or spend twelve days in jail. He chose the latter. The jail accommodations, however, were so wretched, that after four days' imprisonment he paid the remainder of his fine and

was released, and returned to his work, still determined to keep the commandment-to work six days and rest the seventh.

Soon after this, a minister of the Presbyterian Church-a man of standing in the community-preached a sermon on the enforcement of the Sunday, in which he said that no sacrifice was too great for the Government to make in enforcing the Sunday Law, even to the taking of life!

It cannot be urged that such utterances as these are contrary to the spirit of the movement. At the last mass-meeting held in Oakland, one of the leading ministers advised his hearers to deal with none who would not close on Sunday. He said that he had been dealing with a man who kept open on Sunday, but should do so no more. It was not that the man was engaged in an illegitimate business, but that he engaged in it on Sunday.

It is true that there are many who deprecate any such language-who respect the religious convictions of others. There are those who think that the movement can be confined to the closing of saloons. Such will sometime see their mistake. It does not take long for such a movement to pass beyond the control of the conservative few. It is easier to start a fire than to put it out.

But we have no idea that even these conservative ones will take warning. We do not write with any such object. The "sure word of prophecy" shows that a religious persecution will come, and we see at present the premonitory symptoms. We would do nothing either to help or hinder the movement, except to sound the warning cry, that in that time of trouble all who will, may have the truth of God for their shield and buckler. E. J. W.

**March 2, 1882**

**"Almost Discouraged" *The Signs of the Times* 8, 9.**

E. J. Waggoner

"I am so weak, and have so much to overcome, that I am almost discouraged." How often do we hear this expression in social meeting. It is the burden of some testimonies. It seems as though some people think that there is special merit in depreciating themselves. They almost take pride in their humility. Others do not seem to know that there is any better way for them to do. But however true it may be, or however often it is repeated, it cannot but be displeasing to God. We are commanded to "exhort one another," and to "provoke unto love and good works," but such language is anything but encouraging. Its effect is seen on the individual who uses it. It soon becomes habitual, for each time it is uttered the discouragement increases. It grows by repetition, but it is withering to the soul.

It is the language of unbelief. Although the individual may be unconscious of the fact, the spirit which prompts it is the same as that possessed by the ten spies who brought back an evil report. God had said: "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Having this promise, it was exceedingly wicked for them to say they could not possess the land. On this occasion, as well as at other times of murmuring, God showed his great displeasure. In this instance we

see the natural result of such distrust. They did not enter the promised land. "And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: Your carcases shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun." Num. 14:26-30. They said they could not go, and they did not; but Caleb and Joshua, who said, "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are able to overcome it," did enter the promised land.

Distrust and faint-heartedness are as displeasing to God now as then. His promises are abundant. Listen to a few: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Heb. 4:15, 16. "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." Jas. 1:5. God does not upbraid us, *does not* taunt us with our weakness. A child has not the strength of a man, and no father will ridicule his infant child because of its weakness. Its very helplessness appeals to his sympathy. So God says, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." Ps. 103:13, 14. But it is necessary to "ask in faith, nothing wavering" for "without faith it is impossible to please Him." Again we are exhorted: "Be content with such things as ye have for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Heb. 13:5; and yet again: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. 8:32. One more passage ought forever to stop all our murmurings and doubtings: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Cor. 10:13. Read also Heb. 2:18; 12:1-4; 13:8; Phil. 4:4, 13; and especially Ps. 130:17, 18, and Lam. 3:22-33.

Do we really believe these promises? If we did would we not appropriate them to ourselves? We read them, and say we believe them, and yet to very many they seem vague and unreal. But if they are to be of any benefit to us we must consider them as real, and make our requests accordingly. Our belief is measured by our actions, not by our words. Is it not as much infidelity to disbelieve a promise that God has given as it is to disbelieve any other portion of his word? Let us take heed lest there be found in any of us "an evil heart of unbelief in departing from God."

But ought we not to be sensible of our weakness? Certainly; the more so the better. But we are not to think of it in such a way as to become discouraged. There are two ways of looking at our own frailties. One is to brood over them, lose sight of God's willingness to help, and become discouraged. This pleases

Satan. If we are prone to doubt and become faint-hearted, he will assist us to see more lions in the way than really exist. And such a course is really a form of selfishness. The individual becomes so intensely self-conscious that he can take cognizance of nothing else. He thinks of himself so much that he loses sight of Christ. He imagines that he himself must do the great work that is to be done, and when a few attempts show him the impossibility of it, he becomes discouraged. Another way to consider them is in the light of the promises of God. When we do this we have every reason to be encouraged, and God is pleased with us. The more we distrust ourselves while trusting God, the stronger we will be, for God has said: "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." 2 Cor. 12:9. And in view of this, Paul was led to say: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for *when I am weak then am I strong*." No man ever had more trials than Paul had, or felt less confidence in himself; but he believed God's promises, and it was no vain boast for him to say: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Thus it was with Caleb and Joshua. It was not vain self-confidence which led them to say, "We are well able to overcome it." Hear them: "If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us; their defense is departed from them, and *the Lord is with us*: fear them not." Num. 14:8, 9. So the Lord is with us; his promises are multiplied to us. We have the accumulated proofs of his power and goodness through thousands of years past. It is far more sinful for us to distrust God now, than it was for ancient Israel. Then, "let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised." E. J. W.

### **"Mixed" *The Signs of the Times* 8, 9.**

E. J. Waggoner

Consistency is a rare jewel, and nowhere do we find less of it than among the advocates of Sunday observance. A curious example was lately given in a meeting of the "Home Protection Society," an organization to enforce the Sunday Law. In one of their resolutions it was stated that the weekly rest and worship of the "Christian Sabbath," is a right guaranteed both by the laws of God and of the State. Later in the meeting, the individual who offered the above mentioned resolution, stated that he thought that Seventh-day Adventists, in carrying on their printing business on Sunday, "do not violate the letter and spirit of the law of man, but they do violate the law of God." Now here's the rub. The advocates of the Sunday have claimed that the law which they were seeking to enforce was simply a "police regulation," that there was no thought of enforcing the law as a religious enactment. These same individuals too, at the society meeting referred to, regretted that Brother White, when arrested as manager of the "Pacific Press," for working on Sunday, did not plead guilty. But an eminent member of the same society thinks that he has violated the law of God, but not any law of man, either in letter or in spirit. Of what, then, would they have desired him to



plead guilty? Evidently of nothing, unless they hold that a Police Court is empowered to enforce the law of God. It has puzzled us to know just on what grounds the Sunday advocates stand, but we are not likely to have our curiosity gratified in this request, at least not until they find out for themselves.

One thing, however, we would request as a special favor. We claim to keep the law of God. In fact, the requirements of our denomination are simply to "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." But our friends say we are violating the law of God. We ask, Wherein? We think that, as a Christian duty, they ought to apprise us of our error. It will not be enough to say that we work on Sunday. We know that, but what we want is a plain statement of the law of God that we violate by so doing. Something if it exists, that shows that Sunday has any more claims as a day of rest than Thursday or Friday. We shall not be exacting; a single passage will suffice. All the commandments of God with which we are familiar are very plain-"thou shalt," and "thou shalt not." Give us, then, a statement of it that is plain enough to convict a man in any court-before a jury of unprejudiced intelligent men, and we will plead guilty, and at once and forevermore keep "the venerable day of the sun." We are willing to be enlightened, but while we find no law of God in favor of the Sunday, we shall believe with Paul, that "where no law is, there is no transgression." E. J. W.

### **"Questions Answered" *The Signs of the Times* 8, 9.**

E. J. Waggoner

1. What is the nature of the "strong drink" referred to in Deut. 14:20. It apparently recommends that which other Scriptures prohibit.

2. Are we to understand from Num. 11:31 that the quails fell to the depth of three feet over so great an area of country as here indicated? C. E. W.

1. It is not in Paul's writings alone that there are "things hard to be understood." And it is not alone the "unlearned" that have stumbled over the subject of "strong drink" as found in the Bible. In this case, as in all, it is safe to start out with the assurance that the Bible does not contradict itself. The Hebrew word *shebar*, which is translated "strong drink," means that which *satiates*, as well as that which *intoxicates*. Kitto says: "It had in all probability a much wider signification than is now conveyed by the phrase 'strong drink.'" He classes the various senses of the word under three heads. 1. Luscious saccharine drink, or sweet syrup, especially sugar or honey of dates. From it are derived words meaning "dainty," "dessert," "sweetmeat." 2. Date or palm wine in its fresh or unfermented state. 3. Fermented, or intoxicating palm wine. It is doubtless the first of these that is referred to in Deut. 14:26. The "strong drink" of the first class, was not injurious in itself, but was forbidden whenever the circumstances required abstemiousness, as in Judges 13:4. It is a well-known fact that much sugar or sweetmeats produce a state of fullness, lassitude, and dullness. It was on this account, doubtless, that these things were forbidden to those who "separated themselves unto the Lord." Num. 6:2-4. The use of the last class, that which intoxicates, is not countenanced in the Bible.

2. It is not a necessary conclusion, even from our English version, that the quails lay on the ground to a depth of two cubits, and the original does not warrant it. The sense is conveyed by the Vulgate, a literal translation of which is: "They flew in the air two cubits high above the earth." E. J. W.

### **"Sunday Law Tract" *The Signs of the Times* 8, 9.**

E. J. Waggoner

Last week an edition of 5,000 of this tract issued, and another edition is already called for. The Oakland church has taken and distributed 1,500, the San Francisco church 1,000, and other churches that ordered only a few hundred, are calling for more. The demand for it convinces us that it is the right thing at the right time. Our object in circulating the tract was not to stir up strife, but to take advantage of an interest that had been awakened by the friends of the Sunday, to place the truth of the Bible on this question before the people. The truth on the Sabbath question has probably been brought before more people in California during the past two weeks than ever before.

That the prejudices of some should be aroused by it, is no more than could be expected. The truth has ever met with opposers, and we know of no way to avoid opposition except by keeping silent in regard to the truth, and this we cannot do. On the whole, however, the tract has been well received, and has received favorable notice from the press of this city. Some persons accused us of playing into the hands of the "League of Freedom," of desiring to enforce the observance of the Sabbath, and other things equally absurd. But none who have candidly read it, find any difficulty in understanding exactly our position.

We have nowhere charged the "Home Protection Society" with the arrest of the manager of the Pacific Press. They disclaim any connection with it, and we give them the benefit of the supposition that when they started the movement they did not foresee the result. Some evidently thought that a law which is general in its application could be enforced upon simply a few. They doubtless have learned better by this time. The Oakland *Times* justly says: "The obstacles in the way of a Sunday Law are much greater than had been anticipated when the agitation was first started." One of two things must now be done: The law must either be strictly enforced or else repealed. Whatever happens we are content, so long as the agitation serves to make the truth of God more clear to the people. E. J. W.

**March 9, 1882**

### **"Can We Keep the Sabbath?" *The Signs of the Times* 8, 10.**

E. J. Waggoner

There are thousands throughout the United States and in Europe who are ready at once to answer this question in the affirmative, for they know by experience that it is possible. Indeed, the question really admits of only one answer, and that is, "Yes; we can if we want to." But there are many persons who imagine that they cannot keep the Sabbath, and for their benefit I propose to

consider some of the so-called reasons which they give. This article is not intended for those who, in order to avoid the acknowledgment that the seventh day is the Sabbath, plead that the world is round, that time has been lost, and other flimsy objections against the Sabbath. It is only for those who acknowledge the truth of the Bible, are fully convinced that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, and know that it is the duty of all men to keep it, but fancy that they are so situated that it would be impossible for them to do so. I say they fancy, for it is not so in fact. No individual was ever yet placed in such a position that he could not do what was certainly his duty to do. He might find it difficult, and perhaps unpleasant, but never impossible.

"I would like to keep the Sabbath," says one, but my business will not let me." Well, if this is really the case, then get some other business that will not hinder. If you saw that your present business was greatly injuring your health, and would cause your death in a few months, unless abandoned, you would lose no time in changing your occupation. But by disobeying God you lose his favor, and this will bring eternal death.

"But I could not live if I were to keep the Sabbath." This is of the same stamp as the reason given above, and is offered alike by those who are in prosperous business, and those who labor for their daily bread. How do you know that you could not live? Are there not thousands who are keeping the Sabbath, and do not they live? Ask those who have tried it, and see what testimony they bear. It is true, you may not be able to amass quite so much property, but "what is a man profited if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

But let us consider this matter further. You say you cannot live if you keep the Sabbath. Are you sure that you can if you do not keep it? Have you any guarantee that your life will be continued indefinitely? Do those who violate God's law live any longer on an average than those who keep it? You certainly know of no one who is not subject to death. The psalmist says: "What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?" Ps. 89:48. "It is appointed unto men once to die," and this without any distinction in regard to age or belief. Then why do you assume that you will be exempt if you do not keep the Sabbath.

"But," our friend will doubtless reply, "I expect, of course, to die sometime in the natural course of events, whether I keep the Sabbath or not; what I mean is, that I shall not be able to earn a living for myself and family." Well, you profess to believe the Bible; let us see what it says in regard to this matter. "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But *seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*" Matt. 6:31-33. Could any promise be plainer than this? If it does not mean just what it says, it does not mean anything. And God is fully able to fulfill this promise. Just consider what a vast estate he has. Here is a description of it: "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof."

Ps. 50:10-12. Surely you need have no fear of starving, if you serve such a master as that.

Listen to another promise: "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, *and verily thou shalt be fed.*" Ps. 37:3. There you have the promise; now listen to the testimony of one who had an opportunity to know, as to how this promise is fulfilled: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." Verse 25. You can verify this in your own experience if you choose. Who are they that form the great army of tramps, that wander through the country begging bread? Are they Christians, as a class? Are they those who have sunk their property in the service of God? I think no one ever saw a tramp that was noted for his piety. An active worker in the Young Men's Christian Association says that of the hundreds who have applied for charity to the institution with which he is connected, all are irreligious persons, and that he has never known a regular attendant of church to apply for alms. Truly, "the blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it."

Again the Lord says: "But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God; for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth." Deut. 8:18. No one can doubt the truth of this statement. "He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." We could not keep ourselves alive for a single moment. All men, good and bad alike, are equally dependent on God for life and its attendant blessings. Now, if God has prospered you in the past, when you were trampling on his law, unwittingly it may be, will he not be more likely to continue his blessing if you obey him? Will he not have an especial care for his servants who cheerfully obey him? Certainly no person who professes faith in God's word should ever fear to keep his commandments.

Do not, however, get the idea that abundant riches are promised to those who obey God. The psalmist saw that the wicked were "not in trouble as other men;" he saw that they had more than heart could wish; and he became envious when he saw the prosperity of the wicked. But when he went into the sanctuary of God, and understood their end (Ps. 73:17), then his envy ceased. He saw that God does not propose to reward either the good or the bad in this life. The wicked may well have riches in this life, for that is all the enjoyment they will ever have; and the righteous can well afford to have but little of this world's goods, and even to suffer affliction and persecution, since for them God has reserved "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away"-"an exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

But there is this difference between the wealthy sinner and the poor servant of God: There is no promise made to the transgressor of God's law. God allows the sun to shine, and the rain to fall, alike on the just and unjust. But the transgressor has no assurance that all his riches may not "take to themselves wings and fly away," and he be left a beggar; while the righteous man who may have but a bare living, has the promise that that little will be continued to him. God often permits his servants to be brought into strait places, and, in order to try their faith, to be sometimes brought where they can see no opening whatever; still his promises are sure, and cannot fail. Food and clothing are promised, and

though these may be scant, yet "a little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked." Ps. 36:16.

One thought more: If we keep the commandments of God, we are God's servants. If we refuse to obey him, whose servants are we?—We certainly must be the servants of Satan. There is no neutral ground. "To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey." Now suppose you continue in sin, and sin is nothing else but the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4), what is your prospect for living? Here is it: "For the wages of sin is death." Rom. 6:23. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." Eze. 18:20. You say you cannot live if you keep all God's commandments; God says you cannot live if you do not keep them. If your statement were true, you would only lose this present life, and many men in times past have lost their lives for the truth of God, and we honor them for it; but if you disobey God, you will lose eternal life. Jesus says: "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." Matt. 16:25. Satan may promise well, but he has nothing but the treasures of this world to offer, and they are all forfeited, so that he has really nothing to offer you. How different is the service of God. The apostle says: "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." 1 Tim. 4:8.

But the promises of God and happiness to those who fear God are almost innumerable. Not a tithe of them has been given. Surely those mentioned are sufficient to enable anyone to trust God. Some further objections, and Scripture testimonies, may be considered next week. E. J. W.

**April 20, 1882**

**"Can We Keep the Sabbath? No. 2" *The Signs of the Times* 8, 16.**

E. J. Waggoner

One of the most common objections that people urge against keeping the Sabbath is that it is peculiar, and that very few people observe it. There are two classes of people who make use of this argument. The first class attempts to make capital out of it against the Sabbath, and argue that since the Sabbath is observed by so very few people, it cannot be right, assuming that the majority must be right. The second class believe that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, but have not the courage to live out their convictions of duty. They say, "If everybody else would keep the Sabbath, I would be glad to do so too."

The first class might easily be convinced if they wished to be. Let us see to what absurdity the theory that the majority must be right will lead us. Less than four hundred years ago it was the universal belief that the earth was flat, and that it was stationary. For hundreds of years no one had thought of questioning this belief; and when, finally, a few bold spirits ventured to advance the idea that the earth is spherical, and that it moves, they were regarded as fanatics and dangerous heretics. But the proof that the earth is round was convincing, and now all enlightened nations hold to that belief. Now if it be true that the majority must be right, we must conclude that several centuries ago the earth was really

flat, but that, as people advanced in knowledge it gradually assumed its present shape. Many other conclusions equally absurd must be accepted if we hold to the theory that whatever is popularly believed is right. But the advocates of that theory rarely urge it on any subject except the Sabbath. The truth is that the opinions of men have no effect whatever on facts. Men's opinions change, but the truth is always the same.

Those who dare not venture out alone to obey the truth, may have their faith strengthened by considering some cases that are on record. Paul says in Rom. 15:4, that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews contains a list of notable men. We are referred to Noah, who "walked with God" in an age when the "wickedness of man was great in the earth," and "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." It must have been no slight effort for Noah to face the world with such an unpopular truth as that the world was to be destroyed by a flood. No doubt he was jeered at in a most unmerciful manner, and considered a fool, but the event proved the wisdom of his course. Had he waited for people enough to accept the truth for that time to make it respectable, before commencing to build the ark, he would have been drowned with the rest.

Abraham is another individual who is held up as an example of faith. I think we do not generally realize the full extent of the sacrifice that he made when he obeyed the command, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, and unto a land that I will show thee." His father's family, as we learn from Joshua 24:2, 3, were idolaters. No doubt he had to endure much opposition and ridicule from his relatives, for thus leaving them and going away with apparently no object whatever, without even knowing where he was going. No one who starts out to obey God in these times can have a darker prospect to all outward appearances, than Abraham had. Had he drawn back, instead of becoming the father of all the faithful, his name might never have appeared among them. Other instances might be cited indefinitely.

Who does not honor those moral heroes? and who has not wished that he might be even like them, and be accounted worthy to share in their reward? Well, who is there that cannot? They were men, subject to weaknesses and temptations the same as men are nowadays. They lived in the world, associated with their fellow-men, and transacted business, the same as men do now. How, then, did they become so honored of God?—Simply because they were willing to be regarded as peculiar; they thought more of God's approval than they did of the applause of men. For this we hold them in high esteem, yet we shrink from doing what we commend in them. We may, however, be like them if we will, for their cases are recorded, as Paul says, simply for our encouragement.

We shall find, if we study carefully, that the Bible says much in favor of peculiar people. The Jews were brought out from Egyptian bondage that they might serve the Lord, and be a peculiar people. Paul says in Titus 2:14 that Christ "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." The apostle here speaks especially to those who are "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious

appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." It seems, then, that the people of God need not hope to become popular in these days any more than in the past. Christ was very unpopular: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." John 1:11. Very few believed on him, and they were of the most despised class, and at the last even these forsook him, while he suffered the most bitter persecution. And what does he say to his disciples? If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." Those, then, who are waiting for truth to become popular before accepting it, will wait in vain.

One thought in regard to this expression, "peculiar people." The idea is not meant to be conveyed that people are to strive to make themselves conspicuous by their peculiarity. The people of God are peculiar simply because they are "zealous of good works," in a time when men (professed Christians) are "lovers of their own selves," "despisers of those that are good," etc. 2 Tim. 3:1-5. Christ was peculiar in this respect, yet he was a pattern of humility. This people are to be like him; not despised on account of individual peculiarities, but because of their steadfast adherence to truth. "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." John 15:18, 19.

Who is not willing to suffer with Christ? When he endured so much for us, can we not endure a little for him? If it were possible for us to get to heaven without any suffering, would we not feel ashamed to say that we had never suffered for him? We have also this to comfort us, that whenever we suffer for the truth, he suffers with us, and accounts all injury done to his people as done to himself. And to crown all, we are assured that "if we suffer we shall also reign with him," and that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." E. J. W.

**April 27, 1882**

**"Sunday Law Sentiment" *The Signs of the Times* 8, 17.**

E. J. Waggoner

Anti-Chinese legislation has of late been such an all-absorbing topic on the Pacific Coast, that but little space is devoted in the newspapers to the Sunday Law. Although the friends of the Sunday closing movement seem as determined as ever to press the matter, public sentiment in general does not seem to have yet reached that point where a very rigid enforcement of the law may be expected.

So far as we know, only four convictions have been obtained since the decision of the Supreme Court. In Oakland, the first two cases, both saloon-keepers, resulted in conviction, and in each instance the fine was placed at \$50.00, the highest amount allowed under the law. In the third case the jury returned a verdict of "Not guilty," almost immediately.

In San Francisco several saloon-keepers have been tried, but in every case the jury has acquitted or else failed to agree. Last week, however, a prominent

hatter was convicted and sentenced to pay a fine of ten dollars. This would indicate that the enlightened jurors of San Francisco think selling hats on Sunday worse than selling whisky. People may get along with old hats or go without, but whisky is regarded as a necessity. These three cases, with one in Sacramento, are the only convictions of which we have any knowledge at present.

After a trial in a Police Court in San Francisco, last Friday, in which the jury disagreed, the Judge informed the Prosecuting Attorney that if a conviction did not follow the second trial of the case, on the 10th of May, he would dismiss all the Sunday Law cases now on the docket of the court. And this is, we think, an index of the feeling of most of the officials. They are opposed to the law at heart, do not think that convictions can be obtained, and desire to be rid of the insurmountable amount of work before them.

The League of Freedom is rejoicing somewhat over what looks like an evidence of weakening on the part of the Home Protection. The President of the San Francisco League claims that he was approached by a prominent member of the Home Protection Society with the statement that the latter society would withdraw all complaints for a consideration. He refused the offer on the ground that the League of Freedom had no fears as to the result. He offered to meet the Executive Committee of the Home Protection Society and give full proofs of his statements, with the name of the individual who made the offer. The Protectionists refused to meet him, but said that he could make his statement through the papers, which he refused to do. Thus the matter stands. Each society professes to feel confident that it will accomplish its purpose.

A large mass-meeting was recently held in Sacramento, and several resolutions were presented, among which was the following:-

*Resolved.* That in the approaching political campaign we will support no candidate for the Legislature who is pledged to the repeal of the Sunday Law of California.

Rev. Mr. Hansen, in speaking of these resolutions, said he hoped they would be acted on by a rising vote. He said the friends of the law meant business, and the politicians were going to have a lively time on this question, and the men who want to have a foothold in the future had better look to it where they step now. The friends of the law had resolved to "fight fire with fire, and blood with blood, and money with money." His remarks were loudly applauded. When the vote was taken, the entire audience, with few exceptions, rose in the affirmative, and none in the negative. A committee of some of the leading citizens was appointed to wait on the Mayor to request that the best efforts of the authorities be employed to enforce the Sunday Law. In this connection it is well to note that at a meeting of the Licensed Dealers' Association, a few evenings before, it was resolved to make politics secondary in the next election, and to support no man who would not promise to vote for a repeal of the Sunday Law. Also the Democratic convention in San Francisco adopted an anti-Sunday resolution at a recent meeting.

From these statements our readers can get a pretty fair idea of the present status of the Sunday cause in California. Whether the law is repealed at the next session of the Legislature or not, the matter will not end there. The advocates of



Sunday observance are too numerous and too determined to let the matter drop; and those who have set themselves to actively oppose the law will not submit without a struggle. As has been stated before, the principal result of the present agitation in California will doubtless be to stimulate those in the East who are working for a Religious Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, to make more decided efforts than ever before.

It may not be amiss to state for the benefit of some who still seem to misunderstand our position, that Seventh-day Adventists take no sides in this controversy. We have no part in it whatever. We say "God speed" to every effort to prohibit the liquor traffic, but cannot join a purely Sunday movement. In this and coming time, it is ours simply to watch the fulfillment of prophecy that we may not be taken unawares, and to "fear God, and keep his commandments," for this, and nothing less, is our "whole duty." E. J. W.

**June 8, 1882**

**"Miracles—Do They Now Exist?" *The Signs of the Times* 8, 22.**

E. J. Waggoner

Of late, this question has occupied quite a prominent place in religious journals, but none of them have disposed of it in so few words as the *Christian at Work*. We give its remarks on the subject, together with the question which called them out:-

"If the age of miracles is not passed, can the sick still be healed by faith and prayer? And are such cures now wrought? If miracles are not to be looked for, how are the remarkable cases of sudden healing, called 'faith cures,' to be accounted for? or are they not cases of sudden healing?"-*Watch-Tower*.

"The age of miracles is past; the modern 'faith cures' can all be explained by Psychology, just as bread pills have effected like wonderful cures. Miracles are something more than preternatural events,—they are supernatural occurrences sent to authenticate the divine character of a messenger. *That* is the touchstone of every miracle related between the covers of the Bible."

When any question is thus arbitrarily answered, it is an evidence either that it has been so thoroughly canvassed previously that the answer is self-evident, or else that the one who answers the question has no argument except his dogmatic assertion. We think it can be shown that the latter is true in this instance.

It is a sad fact that the answer given above voices the sentiment of a large portion of the religious world of to-day. A sad fact, because it is only the stepping-stone to a disbelief in the inspiration of the Bible, and the divinity of Christ. The rank infidel claims, with equal reason, that such things as miracles never existed. Indeed, if we deny that miraculous cures may be effected now, we virtually do deny that they were ever performed. No one now living ever saw any of the miracles that are recorded in the Bible. We accept them on the authority of that book. The Bible has ample evidence in itself that it is an inspired book, and we are bound to accept its statements as the truth. We therefore believe that

miracles were really performed by Christ, and by the apostles and prophets. But the same book upon which we rely for our information in regard to miracles in the past, assures us that they will occur. See Mark 16:17, 18; James 5:14, 15. Why should we accept the statement of the Bible in one place, and disbelieve it in another?

"Miracles," it is said, "are supernatural occurrences sent to authenticate the divine character of a messenger." But it is well to remember that none of Christ's miracles *seem* to have been performed for this purpose. There is nothing forced or unnatural about them. There was

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always a want to be supplied, some distress to be relieved. All of Christ's miracles of healing were done as though they were the natural service of one who sees suffering, and puts forth his power to alleviate it. The idea of the pity and compassion of Christ is the most prominent in all his miracles. It is true that these miracles attested his divinity, and constrained the people to say "That God hath visited his people," yet nowhere does the humanity of Christ appear more plainly than in his contact with the afflicted. At the tomb of Lazarus he wept; he had compassion on the widow of Nain, and on the multitudes who were ready to perish through hunger and fatigue. He "went about doing good," not with parade and ceremony, as though to call attention to himself, but as one whose compassionate nature was touched by the sight of pain. Now we cannot believe that Jesus is any less tender and compassionate now than when he was on earth. Although we cannot see him with our eyes, he is as truly present, "beholding the evil and the good," as when he walked with man; we read that he is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," and that he cares for us. We might reasonably expect, then, that his power would at times be put forth to help his creatures, even if we had not been assured that such would be the case.

But what is a miracle? It is simply a wonder, a wonderful thing. Then the fact that man, frail as he is, exists at all, is a standing miracle. David praised God because he was "fearfully and wonderfully made," and Jeremiah felt that "it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not." No one could, by his own power, keep himself alive for a single moment. No man can create even the tiniest blade of grass, although he may know the elements which compose it, nor can he understand how it could be made to grow. The whole creation is a constant proof of the power of God continually exerted. Why, then, should we limit his power? If God is constantly performing miracles of one kind, why may he not perform others?

But there is still another point to consider. In Ps. 103:2, 3, we read: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." Here we have the forgiveness of sins, and the healing of diseases placed together, as two things for which to be thankful. Whoever will seriously consider the terrible condition of man in a fallen state, cannot but be convinced that the work of man's redemption, the plan by which his sins may be constantly forgiven, is one of the greatest miracles that can be conceived. Now that Christ forgives sins, no Christian can deny. This is the good news which the gospel brings to man. If this were not true, the gospel would

cease to be a gospel. But the psalmist carries the idea that the healing of diseases belongs to God as well as the forgiveness of sins, and it must be that he does heal diseases, or there would be no occasion for thanking him for it. And there is no intimation that the work of healing diseases should cease before the work of forgiving sins ceased.

If we study the New Testament, we shall find this fact still more clearly taught. Read the plain testimony in James 5:14, 15: "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith *shall save the sick*, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." There is no guess-work about this. It is a simple declaration of what *shall be* if certain conditions are complied with. It is very common to ignore this passage, or explain it away, claiming that it does not mean exactly what it says. But if we so dispose of the first part, we must treat the second in like manner, and claim that sins are not actually forgiven. Both statements are equally emphatic. There are many who can testify to the fact that God does forgive sins; and witnesses of his healing power are not few. Those who are disposed to cavil, will say that God does not heal all the diseases even of those who profess that their sins have been forgiven, for if he did, none would die. To this we can answer that man is not promised immunity from death. "It is appointed unto men once to die," and this without reference to whether they are good or bad. Immortality is conferred upon God's people only at the resurrection. See 1 Cor. 15:51-54. But the fact remains that men are healed by the power of God, when human power utterly fails. It is God that keeps us alive, and it is he that heals all diseases. As before quoted, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed."

But there is still stronger evidence that the healing of diseases and the forgiveness of sins are co-existent, and it is given by our Lord himself. Read the account of the healing of the man sick of the palsy, as recorded in Matt. 9:1-8, also in Mark 3:1-12, and Luke 5:18-26. When Jesus saw the faith of the sick man and his attendants, he said to him: "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house." Here we have the power to heal the sick given as an evidence of the power to forgive sins. "Whether is easier?" Both are entirely beyond the comprehension of man. Sin is disease of the soul, as sickness is of the body. Sickness and death are but the result of sin (Rom. 5:12), and God alone can save from both. In the future state, when all sin is forever done away, we are told that "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain;" and it is said that the inhabitant of that country shall not say "I am sick." Now since God, in his infinite mercy, is pleased to forgive us our sins, if we but comply with the conditions, and give us, even here, foretastes of the heavenly glory, is it not reasonable that he should at times relieve the pain which his followers suffer?

Add to this the many plain declarations in the Bible, and who can doubt it? That there are many pretended cures, and many that are simply imaginary, cannot be denied, but to say that all "faith cures" are such, is to play into the hands of infidels.

The Bible itself is the best evidence that it is the word of God, because it is always consistent with itself. The different parts have so close a relation that they cannot be separated. The man who begins to doubt any portion of it, is in danger of disbelieving the whole. If we let one point go, and hold to our unbelief, the rest must surely follow. There are many things in the word of God that are "hard to be understood," and we cannot hope to know how God can perform his works; but it is foolish and wicked to reject and deny all that we cannot understand. Rather let us say with the psalmist: "Thy word is true from the beginning; and everyone of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever." E. J. W.

**July 13, 1882**

**"The Intercession of Christ" *The Signs of the Times* 8, 26.**

E. J. Waggoner

A brother residing in the eastern part of the State, writes concerning a man in that place, professedly a Seventh-day Adventist, who has been making known some of his peculiar views. He thinks that this people are all right except wherein they differ with him. He has, he says, talked with several of our leading ministers, but has received no satisfaction. The brother writes in behalf of the church in that place, that they may know what credence to give to this man's theory. The theory in question, as given to us, is this:-

"He thinks that the death of Christ was all that is necessary on Christ's part to secure man's redemption. No necessity for intercession in Heaven. That it belittles the character of God to suppose that he could be influenced to change his decision by the intercession of Christ. If a man has lived conscientiously in this life, God, who made him and can measure his motives, and sympathize with his weakness, will render unto him his just deserts anyway; and consequently Christ's intercession becomes at least a very puerile and unnecessary thing. . . . He goes not believe that God can be angry in any degree, for that element would be contrary to the attributes of his nature. 'Anger resteth in the bosom of fools.'"

We have here an example of the way some men will get an idea from a single text of Scripture, and then, mounting their hobby, will fly off regardless of a thousand other texts on the same subject. It has been well said that the peculiarity of the hobby horse is that when a man is once astride of it he cannot get off; and this is doubtless the reason why the man failed to receive any satisfaction from those ministers with whom he talked. If only the single individual were concerned, there would generally be but little use to try to answer him; but unfortunately the carrying capacity of a hobby is unlimited, and the rider is always anxious to share his seat with his friends.

In the first place, if we can believe the Bible, "God is angry with the wicked every day." Ps. 7:11. He himself says, "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God,

visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments." Ex. 20:5, 6. In many places in the Old Testament we read of his anger being kindled against the Israelites, and threatenings of anger if they should disobey him. David says, "He will not always chide; neither will he keep his anger forever." Ps. 103:9.

Jeremiah, speaking in prophetic vision, says, "I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by his fierce anger." Jer. 4:26. Again, "Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched." Jer. 7:20. "Behold, a whirlwind of the Lord is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked. The anger of the Lord shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly." Chap. 23:19, 20. Read also Jeremiah 25:15-38. Nahum says: "Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger?" Chap. 1:6. Again we read: "The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, . . . And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord. . . . Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land." Zeph. 1:14-18. And then the exhortation is given: "Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." Chap. 2:3. See also Chap. 3:8.

We believe that God understands his own attributes better than any man; and it will not do to presume upon the mercy of God, when he plainly says that his anger will be poured out on those who persist in their rebellion against him. Finite man cannot judge an infinite God. The threatenings contained in the Bible should serve to make man "tremble at his word." Paul says, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." 2 Cor. 5:11.

But the objector quotes: "Anger resteth in the bosom of fools." Very true. It remains there, constantly springing into activity at every provocation, or no provocation at all. He harbors it in his heart, and cherishes it. But David says of the Lord: "For his anger endureth but a moment." Ps. 30:5. The Lord, speaking through the prophet Isaiah, of the punishment of the wicked, says: "For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction." Isa. 10:35. To compare the petty anger and malice which dwells in the human heart, and which so many glory in, with the just indignation of a long-offended God, is irreverent, to say the least.

The idea that Christ does not intercede for man is of the same nature. It is a plain contradiction of the Bible. However confident others may be of their power to stand and plead their own case before God, we are glad for the promise that "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John 2:1. Read also the following: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." 1 Tim. 2:5. "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Heb. 9:24. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Rom. 8:34. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Heb. 7:25. These texts plainly teach that man has an advocate; that that advocate is Christ; and that he is now making intercession for us. To call his intercession puerile and unnecessary is simply blasphemy. Let such a one read and consider Heb. 10:28, 29.

The fact that a man is represented at court by an advocate does not prove that the judge is unjust, or disinclined to listen to the man's case; but it does prove that the man is unable to properly present his own case. There is nothing in man that would recommend him to God, for he has forfeited all claim upon his mercy. God cannot look upon sin with any allowance. It is exceedingly repugnant to him. When man was pure and innocent he could talk face to face with God; but when he fell, God hid his face from him. A just God could not endure a sinful being in his presence, even to beg for mercy. Therefore we now have to come to God through the intercession of Christ. Christ says: "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." John 14:6. Christ is the sinner's only hope.

If a man were in danger of drowning and a rope were thrown to him, he would not stop to criticize the rope, or the man who threw it. If he were wise he would seize it at once. He would not cavil, and wonder why those seeking to save him did not use some other means; nor would he hesitate, for fear that the rope would not hold him; neither would he, unless he were blind, say that no rope had been thrown; nor, unless he were insane or hopelessly conceited, would he assert that he could climb into the ship without the aid of any rope. Should he do any of these things, the tide would carry the rope beyond his reach, and he would be left to drown. So the one who carps at the plan which God has chosen by which to save men, is in danger of losing the benefit of the offer which is held out to him. Perhaps God might have devised some other means of salvation, if it had pleased him to do so, but since he did not, it ill becomes us to question his wisdom.

To those whose ears are assailed with such false theories we would quote the language of Paul: "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace." In other words: Beware of the man with a hobby. E. J. W.

**September 14, 1882**

## **"Occupy Till I Come" *The Signs of the Times* 8, 35.**

E. J. Waggoner

It is the especial work of scoffers to point out the inconsistencies of professors of religion. Although this custom is by no means a benefit to the fault-finder, it is not on the whole a very bad thing for the church, as it operates to some extent as a church. And it is well for professed Christians to heed criticisms of non-professors, for the latter are usually very good judges of what constitutes Christianity, by standing self-condemned.

There is perhaps no body of Christians that is a target for more criticism, both just and unjust, as Seventh-day Adventists. The reason for this is plain. They lay more stress on the commandments of God than almost any other people, and teach as a fundamental doctrine of their faith that the coming of the Lord is very near. The world recognizes the truth of John's statement, that "every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure." 1 John 3:3. Inconsistencies in a people holding such a high profession cannot fail to be noted.

But there is one charge brought against Seventh-day Adventists that is not well founded. It is something like this: "You profess to believe that the Lord will come very soon—in a few years; that men now living will see him. And yet you show the greatest activity in erecting publishing houses, and in building and equipping colleges for the thorough education of children. If what you profess to believe is really true, then the Lord will come before many of these children are old enough to use their education. Where, then, is the consistency?" It is not skeptics alone who talk thus, but honest, worthy brethren are sometimes troubled over the matter. Such persons do not fully understand the spirit of the Lord. We think it can be easily shown that the more we exhibit in every laudable undertaking, the more nearly do we fulfill the commands of our Saviour.

The two parables of our Lord, one in 25th of Matthew and the other in 19th of Luke, fully set forth the duty of the Christian while waiting for the return of Christ. Christ is represented as a nobleman going into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. He called his servants and delivered unto them his goods. We are not to suppose that this refers to any one particular thing, but that it embraces everything with which we are endowed. There are various kinds of talents. They comprise intellect, health, strength, influence, ability to gain property, etc.; everything the possession of which is counted as a benefit to mankind. Some have more than others. To everyone is given "according to his several ability." The parable in Luke represents each one as receiving the same amount. This may represent the truth of God, which is given to all. There are some who have not health and strength; some have not the faculty that others have to acquire property; and there are varying degrees of intellectual strength; but to all the word of God is given, and his Spirit is free to the poorest and weakest who will ask in faith. All temporal and spiritual blessings which we receive are the talents which God has bestowed upon us.

Now to the servants it is said, "*Occupy* till I come." The word "*occupy*" does not mean possession merely. It does not mean that each individual should simply

hold that which is committed to him. It means this and more. It has the sense of trading, negotiating, and doing business, of increasing by use. We may learn this from the sequel. Those whose talents had increased on their hands, who had added to that which they had received, were praised and rewarded by their lord when he returned. But there was one who had simply that which had been given him. Some of it was missing; it had been carefully preserved, but it had been allowed to lie idle. To this one it was said, "Thou wicked and slothful servant;" and he was rebuked for not putting the talent to the exchangers so that his lord could have received his own with increase.

From this we learn that God expects us to constantly improve all our gifts, however small, always, of course, to his glory. If we have property, we are to remember that it is God that gives us power to get wealth. Deut. 8:18. Whatever strength we may possess, we must remember that we are to glorify God in our bodies. God has endowed us all with reasoning faculties, and he expects us to use them. If our talents do not increase, then we are of no more value than the beasts, for they answer the end of their existence. And it is not enough that we gain something, but we must gain all that is possible.

And then again we have the command, "Occupy *till I come*." We are to be active in using the talents which God has given us, till the coming of Christ. It is he that endureth unto the end that shall be saved. But if we quit working before the end comes, how can it be said that we have endured unto the end? The idea that activity in our every-day work is incompatible with true godliness is a remnant of the popish custom of going into utter seclusion in order to serve God fully. Daniel was a most upright and godly man, and yet he was prime minister of a vast empire, and had all the affairs of State on his hands.

The wise man says, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." In this we glorify God. Of course it is understood that we are to consider all we gain, whatever it may be, as, belonging to God. And when we are engaged directly in the work of God, or in fitting ourselves for a place in that work, we have special need of diligence. God desires all who would work for him to have the necessary preparation. And if we are diligent in this preparation, it matters not if the Master comes before it is completed. If we have been obeying orders, -doing his will- it is well. Activity in the work that is given us is not inconsistent with a belief in the near coming of our Lord, but idleness and negligence are inconsistent with such belief. Whatever our position, whether it is ours to labor with our hands, to study, to teach, to preach, or whether we are waiting further orders, let us be faithful in the discharge of our duty. "Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing." E. J. W.

**October 5, 1882**

**"Is It a Sin?" *The Signs of the Times* 8, 38.**

E. J. Waggoner

A few days ago one of our brethren distributed some copies of the "Special Edition" on the local train in Oakland. Pretty soon a gentleman who had been



reading a copy came and sat down beside the brother, and said, "Don't you think you would be doing a good deal more good if you wrote and preached against sin, instead of saying so much about the Sabbath?"

The idea expressed in this question is one that obtains quite generally. To be sure, there are many who teach that Sabbath-breaking is a sin; but the Sabbath whose observance they would enjoin is a counterfeit Sabbath, and not the true Sabbath of the Bible. But it is true that even among those who believe that Sunday is the Sabbath, there is a great deal of indifference as to the manner in which it is observed.

In order to ascertain whether Sabbath-breaking is a sin or not, we must first determine definitely what sin is. There are certain things which few would hesitate to call sin, but we want a general rule that will cover all cases; a standard that will enable us to tell at once if a certain action is wrong, so that we may not be left to conjecture. Fortunately, we have just such a rule—one that is given by the pen of inspiration. We find it in 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law." Paul makes the same statement in another form: "For where no law is, there is no transgression." Rom. 4:15: and, "Sin is not imputed where there is no law." Rom. 5:13. And this fact is universally recognized. You cannot convince any man that he is doing wrong unless you first show him a law that he is violating. And whenever a man does anything, knowing that that act has been forbidden by some power having the right to enact law, he stands self-condemned.

Solomon tells us that to fear God and keep his commandments is the whole duty of man. Then it must necessarily follow that the law to which John and Paul refer, the transgression of which is sin, is none other than the law of God—the ten commandments. A few texts will suffice to show the importance of observing that law. As above quoted, it comprises man's whole duty. Eccl. 12:13. It is "perfect, converting the soul." Ps. 19:7. The keeping of the law is the test of our love to God. 1 John 5:3. It is only by keeping it, in connection with faith in Christ, that we are to inherit eternal life in the kingdom of God. Matt. 19:17; Rev. 22:14. On the other hand, we are told that "he that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." Prov. 28:9. Surely no worse fate could befall any man than that God should turn with loathing from his entreaty. And we learn that a partial obedience to the law will not suffice to bring the promised reward, or avert the penalty, for partial obedience is disobedience. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." James 2:10. It could not be otherwise; for since God is the author of the whole law, we dishonor him if we do not render obedience to the whole law. If we willfully refuse to keep one of the commandments, we show that we do not keep the other nine out of any special regard to the Lawgiver, but because it is convenient or for our self-interest to do so. We do, therefore, really dishonor God by violating one of his commandments as truly as though we violated them all.

Turning to consider this law, upon the observance of which our eternal destiny depends, we find that the Sabbath commandment is the most honored of them all. The fourth commandment is the one chosen to make known to men who the maker of the law is. It is true that three other commandments contain the word

"God," but there is nothing in them to designate who is referred to. "There be gods many and lords many, but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things." 1 Cor. 8:5, 6. The fourth commandment expressly declares that this only true God, the Creator of heaven and earth, is its author.

This law is almost universally recognized as the embodiment of all morality, the summary of all law; and the open violation of nearly all of them, especially the first three, and the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth, is considered a flagrant sin. The violation of the fifth and tenth is also theoretically considered a sin, although practically those two commandments are little regarded. But whether men regard the commandments in their lives or not, in theory they are generally ready to admit that they are all binding, with the exception of the fourth. The only reason of which we can think why men should thus lightly regard the fourth commandment, is that its violation is so common. Indeed, the custom of the people is often urged with all seriousness as a sufficient reason for not keeping the Sabbath. The Sabbath commandment is the only one concerning which men argue thus. They do not argue that God will not punish the thief because there are so many who steal; or that false swearing is now pleasing to God because it is so common. But in regard to the fourth commandment, they seem to imagine that they can overawe God with numbers, and convert him to their way of thinking. But sin is sin, whether practiced by few or many. Men become accustomed to sin, so that its heinousness is lessened in their estimation; but it is not so with God. The multiplication of sin only serves to make it more offensive to him. In this age of the world, human life is held very cheap, and murders are so frequent that we read of the worst crimes with scarcely a second thought; but we are not to suppose that God is less moved by a murder now than when Cain killed his brother. The fact that a multitude join together to commit any sin, does not recommend it to him. He says, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil;" and he has expressly declared that "though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished."

Who can tell which commandment God regards as the most sacred? It is beyond the power of man. When Christ was asked, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" he did not specify any one, but quoted the two great principles which cover the whole law. We have no assurance that God regards Sabbath-breaking as any less a sin than theft or murder. From the place which he has given the fourth commandment in his law, as the one to show the badge of his authority, his creative power, it would seem that if any distinction were made, Sabbath-breaking would be considered as the greatest of sins. But even if we were able to discriminate between the commandments, and say that one is greater than another, it would not release us from keeping the least commandment; for Christ says, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called least [i.e., of no account] in the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 5:19. Following the verse in which James says that to offend in one point makes a man guilty of all, we read: "For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law." James 2:11. The fourth commandment may be supplied in place of the sixth, and we would

then read, For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou break the Sabbath, thou art become a transgressor of the law. The same may be said of any other precept of the decalogue.

Sabbath-breaking, then, is a sin, and those who would be preachers of righteousness must give the Sabbath its proper place in the law of God. We do not teach Sabbath observance to the exclusion of the other commandments, but we exhort men to obey all the law, for that is the standard by which "God shall bring every work into judgment." "And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before God, as he hath commanded us." Deut. 6:25. E. J. W.

**October 19, 1882**

**"The Fruit of the Spirit" *The Signs of the Times* 8, 39.**

E. J. Waggoner

If we compare the fruit of the Spirit with the result obtained by following the teachings of the Bible, we shall find that they are identical. Paul says that all Scripture is "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. 3:16, 17. So if a man will profit by the reproofs and instruction found in the word of God, he will be perfect, lacking in no good thing. But a man cannot be more than perfect, and anything different from perfection is imperfection. The fact that any belief or practice is not indorsed or sanctioned by the Bible, is sufficient to condemn it. If it is not found in the Bible, it is not a part of the outfit necessary to make a man perfect.

In Gal. 5:22, 23 we read, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." These fruits of the Spirit are the results which come from following the guidance of the Spirit. We will examine them in detail, and see if they differ in any particular from the word of God.

The first thing mentioned is love. Very many persons entirely mistake the Bible meaning of love. With many it consists in a sort of good feeling, an indefinable condition, the principal feature of which is that the person feels happy and extremely well satisfied with himself. But the kind of love that the Bible brings to view does not depend solely on the emotions, but is very practical. John says, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." 1 John 5:3. Again, "And this is love, that we walk after His commandments." The keeping of the commandments is the test of love. Paul says, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Who ever heard of a law being fulfilled by its violation? Some persons think that they have so much love to God that he will accept it as a substitute for keeping the law; but we here learn that love *is* the keeping of the commandments. How a person can love God, and refuse to keep all his commandments, is a mystery that no one has ever been

able to explain. Those who make such a profession lay themselves liable to the charge in 1 John 2:4.

We see, then, that the result of following the Holy Spirit is to keep the commandments. But this is the whole duty of man. Eccl. 12:13. And we shall find that while love is the keeping of the commandments, all the other things mentioned by Paul in Gal. 5:22, 23, as the fruit of the Spirit, are the natural results of keeping the commandments. Joy and peace are mentioned next; and they attend the keeping of the law. The psalmist says, "Great peace have they which love thy law." Ps. 119:165. Again we read, "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." Isa. 48:18. Here, too, the Spirit and the word agree.

Long-suffering and gentleness are given as part of the fruit of the Spirit. Paul says, in 1 Cor. 13:4, that charity (love), which we have seen is simply the keeping of the law, "suffereth long, and is kind." He also says that it "vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up;" and as we have seen, meekness is a part of the fruit of the Spirit. Goodness is also part of the fruit of the Spirit; and Paul tells us that love "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth."

Again we read that "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." 2 Cor. 3:17. But James says that the law of God is a "law of liberty." Jas. 1:25; 2:12. And David says that those are at liberty who keep the law. Ps. 119:45. Here, again, we see perfect harmony. Again Paul says, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Rom. 8:14. John tells us that those whom God in his great love calls his sons, and who have a hope to see him as he is, purify themselves. 1 John 3:1-3. And Peter completes the chain of testimony by saying, "Seeing ye have purified our souls in *obeying the truth*," and he adds that this purifying is done "through the Spirit." 1 Peter 1:22.

But it is not necessary to multiply proofs. That there can be no inharmony between God's word and his Spirit is so self-evident that no one who professes to be a Christian should presume to question it. Indeed, the Bible is the work of the Holy Spirit itself. We read, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter 1:21. May the Lord help us humbly to follow the leadings of the Spirit, that we may be guided "into all truth" (John 17:17), and finally share the promise of our Father to "see him as he is." E. J. W.

**November 2, 1882**

**"Why Not?" *The Signs of the Times* 8, 41.**

E. J. Waggoner

We are constantly told by the adherents to Sunday observance that the main idea of the fourth commandment is rest; that the particular day on which men should rest is of minor importance; that the Lord saw that rest would be a necessity to mankind, and wisely provided for it, but left it for men to determine which day would best suit their convenience. People can worship God just as well on Sunday as on Saturday; and since this is so, it is evident that the day

which is most convenient for the majority, is the day which the Lord intended should be kept.

Thus they argue. Now for a practical application. The President of the United States has appointed Thursday, November 30, as a day of public thanksgiving and prayer. Any individual can plainly see by reading the proclamation, that the greatest stress is laid on the giving of thanks, and that but very little is said in regard to the day on which thanksgiving services should be held. If people are only properly thankful it can certainly make no difference to the President on what day they express their thanks, since there is nothing in the day itself.

Now, it is a fact that to stop work, and shut up stores on Thursday, Nov. 30, as many good people will feel under obligation to do, will be a great inconvenience. Not only will it be an inconvenience to those who thus rest, but it will seriously interfere with the business of many who do not intend to pay any attention to the President's proclamation. And since the giving of thanks, and not the observance of any specified day, is the real point of the proclamation, it is evident that its requirements will be fully met if the people meet in their respective churches on Sunday, December 3. That day will be the most convenient for the great majority of the people, and hence it seems clear that the President really designed that the thanksgiving services should take place on that day.

And further, there may be some eccentric people who will imagine that the President really meant what he said, and will keep the identical day mentioned in the proclamation, thus showing that they are bound by the form, and cannot grasp the spirit of the proclamation. But since such fanatical persons will form only a small minority of the inhabitants of any State, it will be highly proper, and absolutely necessary, that the majority should pass a law compelling all to keep thanksgiving on the third day of December. This will insure uniformity.

It is true that uniformity of practice might be gained by all uniting to celebrate the day which the President appointed, but since, on account of the inconvenience, all will not do this, it is manifestly better to choose some day upon which nearly all can agree, than to have many people observing no day of thanksgiving whatever.

And now we ask our Sunday friends if such a course would be obeying the President's proclamation. Would it be showing proper respect to the Chief Magistrate of the United States? Would it not be putting the will of the governed above that of the ruler? No one will hesitate to say that such a course would be, to say the least, highly disrespectful. And now the question arises, Is not the great Jehovah, the creator of the universe, entitled to be treated with as much respect as the President of the United States? If not, why not? E. J. W.

**November 9, 1882**

**"Death or Translation?" *The Signs of the Times* 8, 42.**

E. J. Waggoner

One of Oakland's most prominent D.D.'s., when announcing the death of the Rev. Thomas Guard, spoke highly of his many good qualities, and said, "Death to

such a man is translation." The thought at once arose, "According to your theory of the condition of man after death, is it any special favor to a man to be translated?" Let us see. The Doctor holds, of course, in common with all so-called orthodox believers, that all men are essentially immortal, and that none cease to exist even when they are said to die; that the wicked go at once to their punishment, and that the good at once enter into a state of never-ending bliss. Now if this were really true, of what benefit would it be to any man to be translated? What better off would one be who was translated, than one would be who had died, except that he might have escaped some of the suffering incident to dissolution? It does not appear that he would gain anything.

But in the case under consideration the man had actually died, yet the preacher said that his death was equal to translation. The idea conveyed to the mind of the hearer was that since the man had been an unusually good man, he was, according to the preacher's idea, granted a favor not allowed to ordinary people. If the preacher had been a Catholic, the thing would have been plain enough. Then we would have said, "He means that the man was so pure that he was permitted to enter Heaven at once, without stopping in purgatory to expiate some unconfessed sin. But he was not a Catholic, and so we set the expression down as an instance of the impossibility of accurately describing an erroneous doctrine with the language of Scripture.

One thing was plain, however, and that was that even to the darkened spiritual understanding of the speaker, the word "translation" expresses something different from what most people finally pass through; something better than death. The Bible alone shows us how it is better and more to be desired.

The fifth chapter of Genesis contains nearly all that we know of the patriarchs who lived before the flood. The sacred writer has simply given the number of years that they lived, and closes the record of each with the sentence, "And he died." Only once exception is made; of Enoch it is said that "he was not; *for God took him.*" Paul says of him, "By faith Enoch was translated *that he should not see death.*" Now we see that there is a great deal of difference between death and translation, and that translation is to be preferred to death. It was a great favor that was conferred upon holy Enoch. And how was he favored above the other patriarchs? The answer is found in these words: "For God took him." The others all died, but God took Enoch. Noah walked with God, but he died; faithful Abraham was called the friend of God, but he also died. And so the record runs. Only one besides Enoch is said to have been translated.

Now does the Bible mean to convey the idea that Enoch received a special favor in being translated? No one can doubt it. We then ask, "Can the believers in natural immortality tell in what that favor consisted?" If when Enoch arrived in Heaven he found that Adam was already there, by how much was he the gainer? It is clear that in such a case Adam would have been the gainer by fifty-seven years, for he died that long before Enoch was translated.

But there need be no questioning about the matter. If language means anything at all, the record is clear that God did not "take" those of whom it is said that they died. Paul settles the matter when he closes the long list of tried and faithful ones, with the words: "And these all, having obtained a good report

through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Heb. 11:29, 30. With a few exceptions, none of the good of past ages have yet entered upon their reward. There is no precedence in point of time. They do not enter Heaven till we do. And how is it finally to be accomplished? There are but two ways, as we may say, of entering Heaven, and death is not one of them. Both are given by Paul in 1 Thess. 4:16, 17: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord

Resurrection or translation are the alternatives. Those who have died cannot be translated, and those who are to be translated cannot have died. And all are to be glorified together: Noah, Daniel, Job, Paul, or the beloved disciple, will be on a level, so far as the time of reward is concerned, with the weakest saint that lived. But when the last great day shall come-that day to which Paul looked with such anxious longing-when the dead are raised incorruptible, and the living are changed to immortality, all can join in the triumphant shout, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" E. J. W.

**November 16, 1882**

**"A Criminal Theology" *The Signs of the Times* 8, 43.**

E. J. Waggoner

The *American Baptist Flag* recently contained the obituary notice of an infant, to which the following lines were appended:-

"Asleep in Jesus,  
Oh so young.  
Yet the Lord has said  
'Suffer them to come.'"

We have no disposition to criticize the so-called "poetry," but to call attention to the implied comment on the well-known words of Christ, "Suffering little children, and forbid them not to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." It has never occurred to us that there could be more than one meaning attached to this verse. In it Christ shows his care for the children, and indicates that even the little ones may believe on him, and he will receive them; that they are nearer the kingdom than any others, for all must become as little children before they can enter therein.

But now a new idea is presented. A little one has died; it is, as the writer says, "asleep in Jesus." In the popular mind, however, the Bible never means what it says, and when it says that the dead are "asleep," it is taken for granted that it means that they are alive and more acutely conscious than they ever were on earth. According to this writer, people "come to Jesus," only when they die.

Paraphrasing Matt. 19:14 to express the view thus taught, it would read, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to die," etc. No one can deny that this

is a legitimate rendering, according to popular notions. The idea expressed in the lines quoted is, Do not prevent the children from dying, for Jesus has invited them to come to him, and that is the only way they can get there. And then the inference might easily be drawn that it would be a pious deed to quietly help them off, or in other words, to kill them.

This is written with no irreverence, except for the false doctrine which makes such an interpretation of Scripture possible. To be sure, natural affection causes the majority of people to take care of the children as much as possible, and there is implanted in the natures of all an instinctive dread of death, which no amount of false teaching about the benefits which death confers can eradicate. Still there are instances where persons of weak minds have been led to destroy their children, in order that they might sooner enter upon the bliss of Heaven. And who that believes as the writer of that obituary notice does, could say that they were not right? Believing that the ten commandments are abolished, and that death "is but the voice which Jesus sends to call departing friends to his arms," why should they hesitate to enter upon a war of extermination, and slay all the righteous? We are glad that people are often more consistent in their practices than in their theories otherwise the scenes of the papal persecution would be outdone by an immolation from love of the victims.

We have no sympathy for a doctrine which makes Herod a benefactor of the race, and gives to Satan the key of Heaven. The word of God is pure, and the one who strictly follows it cannot be guilty of inconsistency either in faith or practice. But error is always inconsistent with itself, and the man who adopts one error, is driven to the acceptance of a hundred more. E. J. W.

**November 23, 1882**

**"Christian Advocate on Sabbath-Keeping" *The Signs of the Times* 8, 44.**

E. J. Waggoner

Our readers will remember that a little more than two years ago the editor of the SIGNS published a series of articles in review of a Sunday book by Dr. Benson. In that review the demerits of the book were plainly shown. At that time, it was stated that the book was not noticed on account of any strength of argument which it contained, but because it was endorsed by the leading men in the Methodist denomination on this coast. The book itself was one of the weakest things ever put into print; its assertions had not enough of the semblance of reason to be dignified by the name of sophistries. The California *Christian Advocate* has been repeatedly called on to defend the obviously untrue statements of that book, together with another Sunday book, or else to cease circulating them; but it has contented itself with an occasional advertisement of the book, and wisely refrained from attempting to substantiate any of its assertions. But at last it has spoken, and here's what it says:-

"Our friend who wishes something on the Sabbath day, will find Dr. Benson's little work very good."



We do not know that we can seriously dissent from this statement. We must judge of the value of a thing by the use for which it is intended. An instrument that is of no use for one purpose, may be well adapted for another. A plow would be of no account as a vehicle for pleasure riding, but it is a very serviceable farming implement. So Dr. Benson's book is utterly useless for the purpose of showing the truth on the Sabbath question, or converting any one to Sunday observance; but it is as good as is required for satisfying those who are determined to keep Sunday, and want somebody to assure them that they are right. The Sunday side of the Sabbath question does not admit of Bible argument, and, consequently, assertions are all that can be brought to bear in its favor. Dr. Benson's book is profuse with these; therefore, we see no reason why it is not as good as could be desired. But the *Advocate* proceeds thus:-

"We wish to state two things: 1st. We believe it is impossible to show that in the latitude of Egypt, Sinai, or Palestine, Christians do not keep the original, identical Sabbath day as Moses and Joshua kept it."

We care very little for what the *Advocate* "believes," but would very much like to learn something about what it knows. We know and can prove that neither the Christian Sunday of Egypt, Sinai, or Palestine, nor those of any other century, who observe the first day of the week, keep the original, identical Sabbath day as Moses and Joshua what kept it. Will the *Advocate* undertake to prove that they do? It is a very easy way to pass the whole thing by, and say, "We believe it is impossible to show" that certain things are not so, but that does not begin to show that they are so. Moreover, the *Advocate* itself does not believe that the Christians of Egypt, Sinai, or Palestine, who keep the first day of the week, keep the original Sabbath that Moses kept. This can easily be shown. The latitude of these places is also that of California. Then if first-day Christians there keep the original Sabbath that Moses kept, the first-day Christians here must also keep the original Sabbath. The *Advocate's* statement concedes this. If that is so, what mean the sneers so frequently found in Dr. Benson's book and in the *Advocate*, against the Seventh-day Adventists for keeping the "Jewish Sabbath"? Moses was a Jew, and if they are keeping the same day that he did, they must be keeping the Jewish Sabbath, and we some other day.

Again, not long since the *Advocate* said in regard to Sunday, "We cannot sustain it before the people, if we claim its sanctity as a religious institution." In this we think it spoke the truth; but if Sunday be the original Sabbath day as kept by Moses, why cannot it be sustained as a religious institution? It must be the fault of its defenders, for the Bible abounds in evidence as to the sacredness of the original Sabbath day.

Once more, Christians of every latitude and nation, claim to keep the first day of the week in honor of Christ's resurrection. We agree with them that Christ rose on the first day of the week; but will they seriously claim that they are keeping the seventh day to commemorate any event that took place on the first? No; they all claim that the Sabbath was changed at that time from the seventh to the first day of the week. But on the day that Jesus lay in the tomb, the day immediately preceding his resurrection, the disciples rested, "according to the commandment." Luke 25:56. That was the original Sabbath day as kept by

Moses, and was the same day that Seventh-day Adventists keep. We can prove this in the following manner: The Jews, who made no change in their religious practices, but continued to observe the seventh day, observe the same day of the week that we do. Shortly after the resurrection they were scattered abroad, and are now found in every civilized land; but there is no disagreement as to the day of the week. The day that they keep is not the day that is kept by the majority of Christians. The Mohammedans observe Friday, not as a Sabbath, but as a festival day, and in Egypt and Palestine, they celebrate their day the day before the Jews celebrate their Sabbath. And the great body of so-called Christians, comprising the Catholic, Greek, and Protestant churches, unite in the observance of Sunday in honor, as they say, of Christ's resurrection, and there has never been any clashing between them and the Jews or the Mohammedans.

When Sunday-keepers make the claim that they are keeping the original seventh day, they virtually give up the whole argument. For it is equivalent to saying that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, the original seventh day, is the only true Sabbath, and is still binding; and since no one has ever proved that Sunday is the seventh day, and could not if they should try, all can see at once that they are standing on nothing. The assertion is made solely for the purpose of confusing the minds of those who are not well-informed on the subject, and who do not wish to take the trouble to think for themselves. But we will read farther:-

"2nd. To keep one and the same time all over the earth, for worship and rest, is a physical impossibility, and it is not now and never has been, and never can be so kept, and every intelligent man must and does know it. Therefore, God did not intend to make, and did not make, any law requiring exactly the same time to be kept by all."

"Who is this that darkeneth counseled by words without knowledge?" Who ever claimed that it was a possibility to keep one and the same time all over the earth? Not Seventh-day Adventists, we can assure him. But that it is possible to keep *the same day* in all parts of the earth, we know that and are assured of. Our knowledge is based upon reason and experience. We know that there are Sabbath-keepers in America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. We know people who have visited each of these countries, and have never met with any difficulty. Wherever they went they were agreed with the inhabitants as to the days of the week. Moreover, we never knew of anyone who found any difficulty. A trip from this country to Europe is as common a thing nowadays as a trip from New York to Chicago, but we never learn that those who go away keeping Sunday come back keeping some other day. Away back in the Dark Ages, before Columbus ventured across the Atlantic Ocean, when men thought that the earth was flat, and dared not go out of sight of land for fear they might never return, there would have been an excuse for people thinking that the same day could not be observed in all parts of the world; but for a person in this enlightened age, who has had the privilege of our common schools, who is old enough to vote, and who even presumes to talk on politics and religion,-for such a one to make the above the assertion, is the quintessence of silliness. We are inexpressibly thankful that our religion does not oblige us to make such inane claims in its defense.

We close with these propositions: God, who in the beginning created the heavens and the earth, made man. His intention was that man's descendants should inhabit, not one place merely, but the whole of the earth. Isa. 45:18; Acts 17:24-26. He also at the close of his creative work sanctified the seventh day as a rest-day for man. Gen. 2:2, 3. That is, he set it apart and made it holy, and commanded men to observe it. He formally repeated this commandment, together with others, on Sinai, twenty-five hundred years after creation. In neither place did he limit its application to any particular people or any particular locality. The other commandments are conceded on all sides to be of universal obligation. We can see no reason why the Sabbath commandment is not of universal obligation also; for it is nowhere stated that it was to be an exception. Besides, Paul, says that the law, in which this Sabbath commandment is contained, was made "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," etc. 1 Tim. 1:9, 10. He also says that "the Scripture hath concluded all under sin." Gal. 3:22. There is no spot on this earth where these sins are not committed. By these texts we think we are fully justified in saying that God did intend to make, and did make, a law requiring the same day-the seventh day-to be kept by all, the editor of the *Advocate* among the rest. When the *Advocate* quits dodging the point, and says squarely that God did not make any law requiring the same day to be kept by all, we have a few more propositions for its consideration. E. J. W.

**November 30, 1882**

**"How Readest Thou?" *The Signs of the Times* 8, 45.**

E. J. Waggoner

A correspondent of the *Sabbath Recorder* has asked that paper the question, "What is the difference between Seventh-day Baptists and Seventh-day Adventists?" The *Recorder* states the principal points of difference, but on two points it seems to misapprehend the position Adventists. In this article we will notice one of these points, because it is one which concerns all, and it involves the interpretation of the Scriptures. The *Recorder* says:-

"These different views grow, mainly, out of different means of interpreting the Scriptures. The Adventists interpret everything literally. The Seventh-day Baptists recognize the fact that Scripture language is often 'highly figure and must be interpreted accordingly.'"

As far as the last sentence is concerned, we are one with our Seventh-day Baptist brethren. We know that Scripture language is at times very highly figurative. No sane person who has ever read the Bible could think otherwise. For instance, the twelfth chapter of Revelation is plainly figurative. No one can suppose that that chapter is an account of a literal woman being pursued by a literal dragon, or that any literal dragon withdrew literal stars from Heaven with

his tail. But by reference to the book of Daniel we learn that beasts are used to represent earthly governments, Dan. 7:17; 8:20, 21; and when we come to the thirteenth of Revelation and find that the dragon gave to a certain beast his "power, and his seat, and great authority," Rev. 13:2, we cannot do otherwise than conclude that this dragon is also used to represent an earthly government. So also with the beast. We do not believe that a literal beast had a mouth speaking great things, and opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, or that any wild animal would pursue the saints of God in preference to sinners. These things plainly show that this beast represents a blasphemous, persecuting, earthly power.

Such instances of figurative language might be given infinitely, but these are sufficient to show that Seventh-day Adventists recognize the fact that the Bible does contain figurative of language. A more important consideration is, by what rule to interpret the Bible. This is not so difficult a matter as most people suppose. There is not a book of any importance in the English language, or in any other, that does not contain figures. There is not an individual who does not use figures in his daily conversation. Yet we have no difficulty in

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understanding them. Now we think that the Bible has the advantage of all the books in its use of figures, and for this reason: It is the language of inspiration, and, consequently, there is harmony throughout; its figures are never confused; but men are liable to change and often use figures entirely inappropriate. The Bible, then, may be understood as well as any other book. No one who believes that it is a revelation from God to man can doubt this; for it would be folly to give a communication that could not be understood. If it could not be understood, it would not be a revelation. The following simple rules of interpretation will guide to a correct understanding of the Scriptures:-

1. Accept a statement as literal, unless it is plainly figurative. If there is any absurdities in the statement when interpreted literally, or if it would not harmonize with other parts of Scripture, then it must be a figure.

2. Figures that are in common use must be interpreted as they would be in any other book; give them their most obvious meaning. Any word in the Bible has the same meaning that it has anywhere else, unless the sense requires that it should be understood as figurative.

3. When a figure is used, if its meaning is not obvious, an explanation will be found either in connection with it or in some other part of the Bible.

4. When we have found the correct meaning of a figure, or that which a symbol represents, we can substitute this meaning for that figure or symbol, and it will make good sense.

5. When we have the correct understanding of any passage, however figurative the language may be, it will not contradict any other part of the Bible, figurative or literal; there will be harmony throughout.

6. If after a prophecy is fulfilled we find that it corresponds in every particular with the events which our principles of interpretation would lead us to expect, then we may know that our rule is correct, and we may confidently apply the

same principles of interpretation to those parts of the prophecy which are yet to be fulfilled.

7. And most important of all, we must *believe* that the Bible is the word of God, and that as such it must be true in every particular, and, consequently, perfectly harmonious. This belief must be so strong that it amounts to absolute knowledge. Enough of the Bible has been fulfilled to demand such faith.

These rules will, we think, guide to a correct knowledge of the Scriptures. A few illustrations may be given. Thus: When it is stated that Job had seven thousand sheep, or that lambs were to be offered in sacrifice, we understand that literal sheep and lambs are meant. But when Christ said to Peter, "Feed my sheep, and "Feed my lambs," we have no difficulty in understanding that he desired Peter to have a care for his disciples, and to encourage and strengthen them. The fact that Christ calls himself the Shepherd, and his followers a flock, confirms this. When Daniel speaks of seeing a goat, Dan. 8:5, 8, we readily conclude from the context that a literal goat is not meant, and when we come to the 21st verse we find the explanation given. We read both in Daniel and in Revelation that the beast continued a certain number of days. We conclude that these are not literal days for two reasons. 1. They are used with reference to beasts, which are plainly declared to symbolize kingdoms. 2. The number of days indicated would, if literal, be an insignificant length of time for any kingdom to retain power, and the kingdoms there brought to view did actually exist for a much longer period. Having found the days to be symbolical, we search the Scriptures, and find that a day in prophetic language represents a year. Num. 14:33, 34; Eze. 4:6. We then read these days as years and find that they represent a reasonable length of time for a government to last; and when we consult history, we find that these nations did actually hold power a number of years equal to the number of days mentioned in the prophecy. Thus our chain of reasoning is complete and our mode of interpretation is established as correct beyond the shadow of a doubt.

And so we might go on in giving examples of interpretation. There are in the Bible many things "hard to be understood," but it is not impossible to understand them. "If any of the lack wisdom, let him ask of God, . . . and it shall be given him." Jas. 1:5. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." John 7:17. Unaided human reason cannot grasp the meaning of the Scriptures; but a sanctified judgment, one that is directed by the Spirit of God, can understand. See 1 Cor. 2:4-16. E. J. W.

**December 7, 1882**

**"Why Are They Not Seventh-day Adventists?" *The Signs of the Times*  
8, 46.**

E. J. Waggoner

This question arose not long since, after reading an article in a religious journal, in which the doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventists were characterized as "pernicious." Of course we did not admit for a moment that the doctrines are

pernicious, for in that case the above question would have been answered. The journal was an organ of the Methodist denomination, and we at once instituted a comparison between the leading points of faith held by the Adventists, and the views of the Methodists upon the same subject.

The distinctive features of the body of Seventh-day Adventists are indicated by the name. Believing that the whole law of God is still binding, they keep the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath, the day which God sanctified in the beginning, and gave a place in the fundamental law of his government. Gen. 2:2, 3; Ex. 20:8-11; and they are looking for the second coming of the Lord, according to his promise. John 14:1-3. These are the two great truths which make Seventh-day Adventists a separate body of believers. All other points of doctrine that are held by them will be found to depend directly upon these.

Without stopping to inquire what there is in these doctrines that is injurious, we at once turned to the Discipline of the Methodist Church to find if the Articles of Faith contained anything that would prevent a member of that church from keeping the Sabbath. Immediately our eye rested upon the following paragraph:-

"The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testament, everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only mediator between God and man, being both God and man. Wherefore they are not to be heard who feign that the Old Fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the law given from God by Moses, as touching ceremonies and rites, doth not bind Christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity be received in any commonwealth; *no Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral.*"

This is substantially the same as is found in the Creed of the Church of England, and is similar to that held by the Presbyterians and the principal Protestant denominations. Looking still farther to see just what the Methodist authorities meant by "the commandments which are called moral, we found the following comment of Dr. Clarke on Ex. 20:-

"It is worthy of remark that there is none of these commandments, *nor any part of one*, which can fairly be considered as merely ceremonial. All are moral, and consequently of everlasting obligation. . . . Through by the incarnation and death of Christ all the ceremonial law, which referred to him and his sacrifice, is necessarily abrogated; yet as none of these ten commandments refers to any thing properly ceremonial, therefore they are not abrogated. . . . Though Christ is said to have fulfilled the law for us, yet it is nowhere intimated in the Scripture that he has so fulfilled these TEN LAWS as if to exempt us from the necessity and privilege of being no idolaters, swearers, Sabbath-breakers, disobedient and cruel children, murderers, adulterers, thieves, and corrupt witnesses."

Again, Dr. Clarke in his comments on Matt. 5:17, paraphrases the verse thus: "I am not come to make the law of none effect-to dissolve the connection which subsists between its several parts, or the obligation men are under to have their lives regulated by its moral precepts."

One more quotation from Dr. Clarke will suffice to show the belief of the Methodists that the law of God is still binding on all men; it is from his comments on Rom. 7:13:-

"Thus it appears that man cannot have a true notion of sin, but by means of the law of God. For this, I have already given sufficient reason in the preceding notes. And it was one design of the law to show the abominable and destructive nature of sin, as well as to be a rule of life. It would be almost impossible for a man to have that just notion of the demerits of sin, so as to produce repentance, or to see the nature and necessity of the death of Christ, if the law were not applied to his conscience by the light of the Holy Spirit; it is then alone that he sees himself to be carnal, and sold under sin; and that the law and commandment are holy, just, and good. And let it be observed that the law did not answer this end merely among the Jews, in the days of the apostles; it is just as necessary to the Gentiles, to the present hour. Nor do we find that true repentance takes place where the moral law is not preached and enforced. Those who preach only the gospel to sinners, at best, only heal the hurt of the daughter of my people but slightly. The law, therefore, is the grand instrument in the hands of a faithful minister, to alarm and awaken sinners."

These testimonies are sufficient, although many more might be given. They show that true Methodism teaches perfect obedience to the whole law of God. And when in that law we read, "The *seventh day* is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; *in it thou shalt not do any work*," we cannot avoid the conclusion that a Methodist who is consistent with his profession of faith must be an observer of the seventh-day Sabbath; it is absolutely irresistible. A man who was well versed in the Scriptures, and also in the doctrines of the Methodist Church, having been a local preacher in that denomination for many years, one said to us, "A consistent Methodist must be a Sabbath-keeper. I have known that the seventh day is the Sabbath since I was a boy, and I have always held that we Methodists were not consistent with our profession." Not long after that he decided to be "a consistent Methodist," as he expressed it, but he soon found out that this involved his leaving the church, which he did. In order to fulfill the vows which he took when he joined the church, and which he had broken for many years, he had to leave the church. A strange affair, truly.

We give one testimony from Dr. Barnes, a Presbyterian, to show that the Methodists are not alone in this dilemma. In his comments on Matt. 5:18, he says:-

"The moral law as far such as grow out of the *nature of things*, and which cannot, therefore, be changed-such is the duty of loving God and his creatures. These can never be abolished, as it can never be made right to hate God, or to hate our fellow-men. Of this kind are the ten commandments, and these our Saviour has neither abolished nor superceded."

And now a few words as to the second point-the Second advent of Christ. Article 3 of the M. E. Church says:-

"Christ did truly rise again from the dead, and. . . he ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth until he return to judge all men at the last day."

Dr. Clarke, on 1 Thess. 4:16, says:-

"*The Lord himself!*-That is, Jesus Christ shall descend from Heaven; shall, in like manner as he was seen by his disciples to ascend; *i.e.*, in his human form;

but now infinitely more glorious, for thousands of thousands shall minister unto him; and thousand

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times ten thousand shall stand before him; for the Son of man shall come on the throne of his glory; but who may abide the day of his coming, or stand when he appeareth?"

Dr. Barnes on John 14:2, 3, says:-

"*'I go to prepare a place for you.'* By his *going* is meant his death and ascent to Heaven. The figure is here taken from one who is on a journey, who goes before his companions to provide a place to lodge in, and to take the necessary preparations for their entertainment. It evidently means that he, by the work which he has yet to perform in Heaven, would secure their admission there, and obtain for them the blessings of eternal life. That work would consist mainly in his intercession. . . . *'Ye may be also.'* This was language eminently fitted to comfort them. Though about to leave them, yet he would not always be absent. He would come again at the day of Judgment and gather all his friends to himself, and they should be ever with him."

See also Dr. Barnes' notes on 1 Thess. 4:14-16, where unequivocal testimony is given on this subject. Indeed, there is scarcely any doctrine more universally held than that of Christ's second coming. There is good reason for this, for there is no truth that is more prominent in the Scriptures. We do not hear it preached very often nowadays, except by a few, but we find it in the writings of all denominations. If we should quote all that has been said and written on the subject, it would fill volumes of the SIGNS. It is very evident that the majority of Protestants, if they were consistent with their profession, would be Seventh-day Adventists. That people are not a sect who are teaching some new thing, some wicked heresy, but they are those who are endeavoring to conform to the original faith. Since, then, the fundamental truths which they hold are those that are taught by the leading men in all Protestant denominations, why are not all Seventh-day Adventists?

But it may be urged: You teach that the soul is not immortal; that it sleeps between death and the resurrection; that it receives immortality only through Christ; and that none go to heaven at death. That is true, but what is there pernicious in that? Does it not necessarily follow from a belief in the second coming of Christ? Read also the testimonies quoted above. The object of Christ's coming is to "judge the quick and the dead;" can any hope to go to Heaven before they are judged? He has gone to prepare a place for his followers, John 14:2; would it not be presumptuous to think of going to Heaven before the place is prepared? He said that he would return again, and receive us to himself; how can we get there before he does come for us? Paul says that it is only by his returning that we are able to be for ever with him. A belief in the second coming of Christ, according to the Scriptures, necessarily involves the belief that men do not receive their reward at death. Those who hold the former and reject the latter, are inconsistent. But that all may see that we do not hold this view alone, we quote only one testimony from Dr. Barnes on 1 Thess. 4:14:-



*"Which sleep in Jesus." A most beautiful expression. . . . They do not 'sleep' in heathenism, or in infidelity, or in the gloom of atheism-but in the blessed hope which Jesus has imparted. They lie, as he did, in the tomb-free from pain and sorrow, and with the certainty of being raised up again. When, therefore, we think of the death of the saints, let us think of what Jesus was in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea. Such is the sleep of our pious friends in the grave; such will be our own when we die."*

It is true that Dr. Barnes says other things contrary to this point, but that does not invalidate this testimony, nor the plain declaration of Scripture. Many good men have held views utterly at variance with the Scriptures and have died in their erroneous belief. Their minds had not been drawn out to fully grasp certain points. But it does not follow that men who have the light, or have the chance to have it, can be saved on account of lack of knowledge. And so the question still remains, Why are they not Seventh-day Adventists? Why do not the churches live up to their published teachings on the law of God, and await with joy the second coming of their Redeemer? Is it because as Dr. Clarke says, that these things have not been applied to their consciences by the Holy Spirit? We will not presume to answer the question; but we will still continue to earnestly pray that all the honest, who have not been enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and all those who are resisting its leading, may be found when the Saviour returns, keeping the "commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." E. J. W.

**December 14, 1882**

***"Why It Is" The Signs of the Times 8, 47.***

E. J. Waggoner

A man who has been out in a very dark night finds it impossible to see objects distinctly, if he suddenly enters a well-lighted room. It would be just as well, yes, even better, for him if the room were at first only partially lighted, for then his eyes would the sooner accommodate themselves to the changed conditions. So also, a man who has been in a very deep well, or a cave, cannot see when he suddenly finds himself in the blazing sunlight. Everything at first appears in a haze, then the outlines of forms begin to be seen, and finally everything stands out in full relief.

The same principle holds good in other things. If you should place a work on geometry in the hands of an Indian just from the plains, you could not expect him to understand it. Its figures would convey no meaning whatever to him. Or if you should place a Greek Testament in the hands of a bright Sabbath-school scholar, it would be unintelligible to him, although he might be able to read the English language with ease. But give him a few years' time, and he would be able to read the Greek. Yet he would not read it readily at first. He would learn the letters, then certain forms and rules, and then he would stumblingly pick out the meaning of a simple sentence. Even if a book were in a child's own language, and he were unable to read, he would have to acquire a knowledge of it gradually. And so in everything; all knowledge is gradually acquired.

Now let us apply this principle to another case. We claim that the Bible very plainly teaches that the seventh day is the Sabbath, and that no other day is, or can be, the Sabbath of the Lord. But the question comes up, Why did not all the good of past ages believe and teach thus, if it is Bible doctrine? Why did not the Reformers keep the Sabbath? The question is already answered. For centuries the Catholic Church had had supreme sway. Its policy was to keep men in ignorance, especially of the Bible; that was a proscribed book. Wherever one was found, it was burned by the priest, and the possessor treated as a heretic. The priests themselves knew nothing of the Bible. Even the cardinals and archbishops, the men in highest position in the church, were ignorant of its teachings. They were taught to look upon it as a vile book, and to look to the church for their spiritual knowledge.

Among the common people the ignorance was of course still greater. There were very few who had ever seen a Bible. If they had seen one, the most of them would have spurned it as a loathsome thing, whose very touch would contaminate. Had they ventured to open its pages, it would have conveyed no more to them than if it were blank, for the Bible had not been translated into the language of the common people. The small portions of the Bible that the church allowed the priests to have, were written in Latin. And even if the Bible had been translated, to thousands it would still have been a blank; for where there is ignorance of the Bible, there is ignorance of the deepest kind. Very few of the people could read; many even of the nobles and princes could not; there was no incentive for them to do so. This was the night, the darkest part of the night; and the darkness, like that of Egypt, could indeed be felt.

But night does not always last. God's Spirit was at work in the hearts of men, and that always brings light. There were men who had all the wisdom that schools could bestow. They had been moved to acquire this knowledge by a desire to benefit their fellowmen. And yet in regard to the Bible they were as ignorant as the poorest peasant. But they were anxious to serve God, and Christ says that "if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." And so these men found the Bible, and, unmoved by the threats of bishops and popes, they translated it and studied it.

The Reformation gave the Bible to the people; but they could not grasp all its truth at once. Its simplest doctrines were so directly opposed to the teachings of the church, that it took a long time for their minds to comprehend them. The one great point then needed, was to make men understand that the Pope had no power to forgive sin, or to give men license to sin, or to remit the punishment due to sin; works of penance would not suffice to gain the favor of God. "The just shall live by faith," was the watchword of the Reformation. People must first learn to believe that the Bible, not the Pope, could alone point out the way of life.

Some of the Reformers had glimpses of still further truth, but not all. The Reformation had only just begun when Luther and his fellow-laborers died. Many grievous papal errors still existed. Other men followed them, who were moved by the same spirit, and now the light began to dawn more brightly, and more and more of the Bible was made clear to men. They had become somewhat accustomed to its rays of light. Some rested content with the little light they had

received, and refused to receive any more. But others looked still farther, and were rewarded by finding new treasures. And now a great flood of light shines forth from the sacred page, and men are beginning to endure the sight. But this could not have been done at once, any more than men who have been long confined in a dark dungeon could look at once upon the sun at noonday. And this answers the question, "Why were these things not found out before?" E. J. W.

**December 21, 1882**

**"Second Coming of Christ.óls it Near?" *The Signs of the Times* 8, 48.**

E. J. Waggoner

Not long since a religious journal, in stating some of the things believed by Seventh-day Adventists, said: "The Adventists believe that the coming of Christ will be personal and visible, and may occur at any moment." The first part of this statement is correct, but as far as Seventh-day Adventists are concerned, the latter part is a mistake. We believe that Christ's coming will be literal; that he will appear in person in the clouds, with power and glory. In the face of such texts as Acts 1:9-11, and Rev. 1:7, and many others, we cannot believe otherwise. We also believe that his coming is very near; the signs given in Matt. 24 have been fulfilled, and Christ said that when all these things should be seen, we might know that his coming was near, even at the doors, just as surely as the near approach of summer is indicated by the putting forth of leaves in the spring.

While we know that Christ's coming is near, we are prevented from setting any time for that event, by the statement, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man." Those who professed to be able to locate the time are assuming the possession of knowledge which God has expressly declared is not revealed to man. Man has a right to search into anything concerning which God has spoken, but he need not concern himself about those things which God has not made known, or has said cannot be known. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever." Deut. 29:29.

But although the last prophecy relating to time has long since been fulfilled, there are certain things yet to transpire before the coming of the Lord. By tracing down the lines of prophecy, we can easily tell what yet remains to be accomplished. All the particulars given in Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great image have been fulfilled, except the last; the stone has yet to smite the image on the feet, and grind all to powder. The same is true of Daniel's vision related in chapter 7. The four kingdoms indicated by the lion, the bear, the goat, and the dreadful and terrible beast, have passed away. The fourth kingdom was divided into ten, and the little horn, the papacy, has come up and run its career of bloodshed, lawlessness, and blasphemy. His dominion has been taken away, "to consume and to destroy it unto the end." Verse 26. All of that prophecy that now remains to be fulfilled is that the beast should be destroyed, and his body given to the burning flame, and that "the kingdom and dominion and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the

Most High." The 2300 days of Dan. 8, at the close of which the Sanctuary was to be cleansed, expired in 1844. Nothing of that chapter remains yet to be fulfilled except the great consummation of all things.

As far as these prophecies are concerned, we might look for the coming of Christ at any minute; but there is one point in the line of prophecy, contained in Rev. 12-14, that has not yet been fulfilled. We can easily traced it out. All commentators are agreed that the great dragon of Rev. 12 symbolizes pagan Rome; and the leopard beast to whom "he gave his power and his seat and a great authority" Rev. 13:2, represents Papal Rome. These, as has been seen, have had their day. Then "another beast" "coming up out of the earth." To those who have carefully traced the prophecy down to this point, the conclusion is irresistible that this beast represents of our own country, the United States of America. For a full and detailed exposition of this prophecy, see "Thoughts on Revelation," and "The United States in the Light of Prophecy," published at the office of the SIGNS.

Of this beast it was said that it should make an image to the first beast. This we understand can be done in no other way than by bringing about such a state of things that certain ecclesiastical dogmas shall be upheld, and their observance enforced, by the secular government. This state of things is contemplated by the National Reform Association, which is working for "such a Religious Amendment to the Constitution of the United States as will indicate that this is a Christian nation, and place all Christian laws, institutions, and usages on an undeniably legal basis in the very Charter of the Government." The enforced observance of Sunday as the Sabbath is the main point hoped for by the adoption of this amendment the prophecy plainly indicates that this will yet be accomplished, and that before the coming of the Lord men will actually be persecuted for rendering obedience to the law of God. The spirit to do this now exists, and the power will not be long delayed. The National Reform Association numbers among its members some of the most influential clergymen, statesmen, and jurists in the land, and its ranks are rapidly filling. The Sunday question is beginning to occupy a prominent place in politics; and although it has met with some rebuffs, these only make its friends the more determined. The gigantic proportions which this matter has assumed within a few years, and especially within the last, show that a few years at most will suffice to bring it to completion. When that takes place, the world will have been fully warned, and the harvest of the earth will be reaped. Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43; Rev. 14:9-15.

Here, then, is where we stand. We are not momentarily expecting the coming of the Lord, for something still remains to be done. We cannot be deceived by those who set time, because no one can tell how long it will take for the image to be fully set up. Yet we know that it is just at the door, on the threshold, so that the removing of a very thin barrier will cause it to burst on our sight. We have no time to spend in idle conjectures. A work is given us to do, which we must faithfully perform, with watchfulness and prayer, that we may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and stand before the Son of Man. E. J. W.

## ***The Signs of the Times, Vol. 9 (1883)***

**January 11, 1883**

### **"Living Beneath Our Privileges" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 2.**

E. J. Waggoner

"I am sorry that I live so far beneath my privileges." How often we hear a testimony similar to this. The phrase has become a stereotyped one, and like all stereotyped phrases, is used without thought as to its meaning. In the first place what are these "privileges"? It is the Christians privilege to "be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." We may "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." We may cast all our care upon God, knowing that he cares for us. 1 Pet. 5:7. We may "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." All who are weary and heavy laden and have the privilege of coming to Christ, and the promise of rest if they do so. It is our privilege to "taste and see that the Lord is good." These and a multitude of similar things are not only privileges, but they are the duties.

Now if we do not enjoy these privileges whose fault is it? These blessings are offered to us; we are invited, yes, urged, to accept of them. If we say we are sorry that we do not possess them, do we tell the truth? If we really wanted them, would we not have them? If we should go out on the street and offer a boy a handful of coin, and he should stand and bewail his poverty, and tell how sorry he was that he had no money, while he made no offer to accept the gold in our outstretched hand, would we believe his sincerity? How long would it be before we would turn away from him, and put the money in our pocket? We would not stand long begging him to accept a gift at our hands.

Well, this is just the way it is between us and Christ. He offers us pardon and rest, and help for every trial, and pleads with us to accept it; and we stand and tell how weak we are, and how sorry we are that we are living so far beneath our privileges. Are we sorry? If we were, would we not make use of those privileges without any delay?

Is it not wonderful that the Lord does not turn away from us, and leave us alone? It is well for us that God is more longsuffering than man is. His patience and forbearance are beyond all measure. And yet these offers will not always last. Hear what he says: "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me." That will be a terrible time; but what else ought we to expect, if we do not, "live up to our privileges."

Let us not be unreasonable. It is not a question of whether we can overcome, but whether we will overcome. There is no merit in being continually in the

Slough of Despond, or of languishing in Doubting Castle, and much of our so-called confessions of our shortcomings and weaknesses, are not manifestations of humility, but of culpable negligence. Christ says, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," and "my grace is sufficient for thee." Let us not say by our actions that we do not believe him. E. J. W.

**January 18, 1883**

**"The Sabbath-School" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 3.**

E. J. Waggoner

**Notes on Sabbath-school Lesson for January 27.**

As the lesson for this week is a review of the whole book of Genesis, it is evident that only a few points can be touched upon. The great point to be kept in mind is the plan that runs through the whole history. This will be spoken of more fully hereafter. One thing that is worthy of mention in passing is

### **THE DAYS OF CREATION WEEK**

Several years ago it was thought to be nothing less than rank heresy to deny that these days or any other than literal twenty-four-hour days. Now, however, he who ventures to intimate that they were literal days is looked upon as an ignoramus. Very recently we saw the statement in one of the leading religious journals, that no one whose opinion is worth anything believes the old theory. But for all this, we hold unflinchingly to the fact that the days were literal days. We believe that this is really a vital point, and not a mere matter of opinion. Once admit that these days were long periods, and the way is open for a disbelief in the entire Bible; for if this part of the Bible does not mean what it seems to mean, what warrant have we for thinking that any of the Bible means what it says?

Suppose the days to have been equal to one thousand of our years. Now it is evident that the seventh day of the creation week was of the same nature as the other six. If not, then the case is worse than ever, for there is nothing said by which we can infer that there was any difference. But on the seventh day God rested, and afterwards, because of his rest, he blessed it, and set it apart for man's observance. See Gen. 2:2, 3; Ex. 20:8-11. How absurd to command man to keep holy a day a thousand years long.

It is sometimes urged in favor of the popular view, that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years." Exactly so; God is not obliged to have just so much time in which to perform his acts. He could create the world in one day as well as in a thousand years. One would be no more wonderful than the other, for the simple act of creation itself is something that man cannot comprehend. The psalmist says, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." "For he spake and it was (done); he commanded and it stood fast." This describes the work of creation. God did not speak and set forces in motion that after the lapse of ages would result in the

formation of our world; but at his word everything came into existence perfect and good.

As has been said, the works of God are infinite. The mind of man can find ample scope in contemplating them. And it is proper, and pleasing to God, that we should think upon his works, for the psalmist says, "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein." "He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered." Ps. 111:2, 4. But if men were constantly engaged in their own affairs, their minds would not be out upon God and his work. In order, therefore, that man might have an uninterrupted period for meditation, God gave him

## **THE SABBATH**

This institution was not an arbitrary unfair, given simply for God's pleasure, that he might be remembered, but was given because men needed it. God can exist without us, but we cannot exist without God. The Sabbath was a necessity of man's nature, therefore God made it for him. See Mark 2:27. But it is not for men to use as he may see fit. It is his to use to the glory of God, and only by so doing we can he get the benefit from it. All the commandments are for man. It is absolutely necessary to his happiness that he should refrain from murder, theft, etc. It is in this sense that the Sabbath was made for man. Only by keeping all of God's commandments can men attain to the highest possible state of enjoyment both here and hereafter.

It is not in the province of these brief notes to say anything about the perpetuity of the Sabbath. The natural conclusion of any unbiased person would be that the Sabbath is of perpetual obligation. If it was necessary for man six thousand years ago, it is necessary now. If there was danger of forgetting God then, there is a thousand-fold more danger now. And it is "The day of the Sabbath" that is to be kept. No other day but the seventh day can be the Sabbath, for upon no other day did God rest and pronounce a blessing, and no other day was sanctified. It is not true, then, that all days are alike, and that any day will do for a memorial. All days are not alike; for one day in the week has been blessed and sanctified, made holy and set apart from the rest. It is a poor excuse for anyone to say that he can see no difference. God expects us to make a difference between the holy and the profane. Read what he says about it, and the consequences of not doing so, in Ezekiel 22:26-31.

## **THE RESURRECTION**

Not only is the resurrection taught in the New Testament, but it was understood centuries before that book was written. When Abraham was called upon to sacrifice his only son, the one in whose name, it had been said, his seed should be called, there was no natural probability that the promise could ever be fulfilled. But Abraham, like Paul, knew whom he had believed. The reason for his great faith is found in the fact that he knew that God possessed all power, and was able to raise Jesus from the dead. He had received his son by a miracle,

and he knew that God was able to work another. The "friend of God" was not above believing in miracles. Perhaps if there were more nowadays who held that relation to God a belief in miracles would be more general. E. J. W.

### **"The Resurrection" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 3.**

E. J. Waggoner

In a Spiritualist lecture recently delivered in Oakland, by a distinguished "Professor," the following statement is reported to have been made: "The word resurrection is not found in the Greek Testament." This statement would doubtless be received by some with pleasure, as it would seem to show that our Bible is unreliable, and by others with surprise. It will no doubt have the effect over those who heard or read it, which the lecturer intended it should have-to weaken their faith in the inspired record.

Now instead of denying this assertion, we are prepared to make another one still more astounding: The word "God" is nowhere found in the Greek Testament! Neither is any other English word found in the Greek Testament; if they were, it would be an English Testament instead of a Greek Testament. But the Greek word *theos*, meaning "God," is found in the Greek Testament; and so also is the word *anastasis*, which means "a making to stand up," "a restoration," "awakening," "resurrection;" and this "Professor" Phelps knew very well, providing he has any knowledge of the Greek, or of the New Testament, the latter of which, at least, we very much doubt.

Right in this connection it is proper to mention a somewhat similar statement recently made by the *Christian Union*. A correspondent of that paper quoted a benediction which is sometimes used: "The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul and body unto everlasting life," and asked, "If man's body is mortal, from what is it preserved?" the reply was that this benediction "probably was connected with the old-time faith and the literal resurrection of the body; a faith which, in our judgment, is inconsistent with the teaching of the New Testament."

Turning our attention for a short time to the New Testament itself, we shall seek not only that the judgment of the *Christian Union* is at fault, but that the Greek Testament teaches the doctrine of the literal resurrection of the dead even more strongly than does the English version. A few texts will suffice to show this.

In Luke 20:27-38 we have the record of the question which the Sadducees put to Christ, and his answer. Disbelieving the resurrection, and wishing to entangle Christ with their sophistry, they stated to him the hypothetical case of a woman who had married in succession seven brothers, each of whom had died, the death of the last one being followed by the death of the woman herself. The question was, "In the resurrection whose wife of them is she?" Now notice; the question had to do with people who were dead; but not those who were living under different conditions. The Sadducees believe that when men died they absolutely ceased to exist for ever. But the further clause of Christ's answer recognized the fact that these dead ones shall live again. "But they which shall



be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead," etc.; literally, "The awakening of the dead ones."

Again, when Peter and John were preaching in the temple, "the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead." Acts 4:1, 2; literally, 'the raising up or wakening of the dead.' Those priest and Sadduces have their counterparts among the religious teachers of to-day. They do not like to hear of a resurrection through Christ; that the eternal life can be obtained only through Christ. Professing great love and reverence for Christ, even to observing the day of his resurrection, they refuse to allow that he alone has the power which he gained by that resurrection. They are very zealous in honoring him in a way which he has not asked them to, but deny that which constitutes his badge of authority,-the ability to give to those who are dead. See John 5:25-29.

Paul warned Timothy against profane and vain babblings, and cited as a specimen the words of Hymenaeus and Philetus, whose words, said he, "will eat as doth a canker." The particular profane and vain babbling in their case was that they had erred concerning the truth, "saying that the resurrection is passed already." If he used such language in reference to those who claimed that the resurrection was in the past, what would he have said of those who should claim that the doctrine of the resurrection is a myth, with no foundation in fact? And Paul, be it remembered, did not believe in the spiritual resurrection which should consist in taking something already alive, and pass it along to a higher sphere. He believed in a literal resurrection of the body; for he says: "For our conversation [citizenship] is in Heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Phil. 3:20, 21. Even David, who lived so long before the nineteenth century that his ideas are commonly supposed to have been very crude, seems to have had the same idea of the resurrection that Paul had, for he said, "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness."

At a future time we will consider other texts that teach a resurrection, and will note more particularly how in every instance they convey the idea that the dead are asleep and unconscious, by saying that they shall awake; and that they are in the earth beneath and not in the heaven above, by the use of the term "raising from the dead." We know, however, that these plain texts will not have any weight with a large majority, for the lecturer truly said, "The literal of the Bible is not in harmony with the spirit of the present age." This is about the only real truth which the lecture contained; and this was anticipated centuries ago by Paul, who said, "The natural man not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." E. J. W.

**January 25, 1883**

**"The Sabbath-School. God's Purpose in Dealing with Pharaoh" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 4.**

E. J. Waggoner

Thoughts on Review Lesson for Feb. 3.

**GOD'S PURPOSE IN DEALING WITH PHARAOH**

Those who are disposed to cavil, and make a great deal of capital out of Ex. 9: 15, 16: "For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth. And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth." One who is not predisposed to find fault with the Bible, will have little difficulty with this passage as it stands; but the best critics, among whom is Dr. Clarke, tell us that our translation does not convey the idea of the original. As Dr. Clarke says, God did not bring a pestilence upon Egypt, although the first-born were slain; nor was Pharaoh cut off from the earth at that time. The true meaning is said to be expressed by these words: "For now indeed had I stretched forth my hand and smitten thee and thy people with the pestilence, then hadst thou been cut off from the earth. And in very deed for this cause have I made thee to stand [allowed thee to live until the present time], for to show in thee my power," etc.

This relieves the subject of all difficulty, and makes the passage harmonize with the context. In verse 13, God tells Moses to command Pharaoh to lead his people go. If he refuses, he says that he will send all his plagues upon him and upon his servants upon his people. Verse 14. In order that he may not think lightly of the judgments of God, or that he has already exhausted his power, God tells Pharaoh that if he had so ordered it, he would have been cut off from the earth. And then he assures him that it is only an act of mercy that his life has been spared. God might have destroyed Pharaoh at the very outset, and delivered Israel at once; but that, to short-sighted man, would have appeared to be an act of unwarranted cruelty. Instead of this, he allowed Pharaoh to show out his real character, and so vindicated his course, and at the same time displayed his wonderful power.

**THE HARDENING OF PHARAOH'S HEART**

"And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh and he hearkened not unto them." With what avidity skeptics seize upon this passage! "If the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, he was not to blame for what he did, and the Lord was arbitrary and cruel to punish him for what he could not help." Thus they will talk, and having once satisfied themselves that God is a hard taskmaster, and a cruel tyrant, they feel justified in refusing to serve him. But before we jump at such a conclusion, let us see just how it happen that Pharaoh's heart was made hard.

Notice first the character of the king. He was ungrateful, as shown by the statement that he "knew not Joseph." This does not mean that he was not familiar with Joseph's history, and what he had done for Egypt; but that he cared nothing for him. The fact that Joseph had saved all Egypt from starvation, did not seem to the king to be any reason why he should befriend Joseph's people. This was a nature upon which kindness had no softening effect. His treatment of the Israelites shows that he was selfish, cruel, and vindictive, and utterly regardless of human life. He had grown insolent and haughty, and when the demand was made upon him to let Israel go, he replied, "I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." Then plagues were sent upon him. When the frogs covered the land, and the magician's could not remove them, he relented, and promised that if they were taken away, he would let the people go. He was taken at his word, but what was the result? "But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them." Ex. 8:15.

Again another plague was sent, but he remained stubborn. Then swarms of flies filled their houses, so that everything was corrupted. This induced the king to say, "I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness." So Moses entreated the Lord, and the flies were removed at the time appointed; but the result was the same as before. The record says: "And the Lord did according to the word of Moses; and he removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from this his servants, and from his people; there remained not one. And *Pharaoh hardened his heart* at this time also, neither would he let the people go." Chap. 8:31, 32.

Yet again, after the cattle had been killed by the murrian, and boils, and hail; when the terrible storm of thunder and hail and fire had devastated the land, Pharaoh was alarmed. Sending for Moses and Aaron, he said, "I have sinned this time; the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Intreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and he shall stay no longer." Chap. 9:27, 28. As before Moses set a time for the removal of the plague and the result is stated in verses 34, 35 thus: "And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children of Israel go."

Now we can see just how it was that the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart. He did it by his manifestations of mercy. The king was very humble in the face of death, but as soon as the cause of fear was removed, he became stubborn. Had he not been so willful, the mercy of the Lord would have moved him to repentance; but he was one of those persons who think that an exhibition of kindness is a manifestation of weakness. Having nothing like mercy or kindness in his own nature, he was unable to appreciate it in others.

Theodoret very aptly says: "The sun by the action of the heat makes wax moist, and mud dry, pardoning the one while it softens the other, by the same operations producing exactly opposite results; thus from the long-suffering of God some derive benefit, and others harmed, some are softened while others are hardened." Numerous cases, besides that of Pharaoh, might be cited to further illustrate this. The same words and actions of Christ that bound his

disciples closer to him and gave him many devoted followers, hardened the hearts of the wicked priests, and moved them to kill him. It will ever be found the case that when a man falls, he falls on the side of his natural inclination.

### **A LESSON OF TRUST**

The Israelites were commanded to gather of the manna "an omer for every man." This was sufficient for the wants of one day, and as they were to "go out and gather a certain rate every day," it would have been useless to take any more, even if it would have kept. But the people were not content to follow the Lord's direction; some gathered more than the required amount. They doubtless reasoned thus: "It is true that this manna is promised every day, but there may come a time when it will fail, and it is no more than prudent to prepare for such a time, while we have abundance." By gathering more than the specified quantity, more than they could use during the day, they showed their lack of faith in God's promise. They thought that they could provide for themselves better than God could.

But their planning prove to be useless, for "when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack." Thus there was an equality. During their sojourn in the wilderness, God wished to have his people learn to trust him.

As we look back on this incident, the course of the Israelites seems foolish; but we will not have to search far in order to find its counterpart. Paul makes their case the text for a lesson in giving. He desires that there should be an equality, that all should give in the same proportion. Then he quotes, "He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack." God has promised to care for each one of his children; to give them their bread day by day, if we gather millions, we can have no more than our daily sustenance, and if we are in the depths of poverty, God is able to provide for our daily wants. Are we not, then, even more culpable than were the Israelites, if we refuse to return to God his rightful portion of our means? God is testing us just as he did them, but how many of us prove to be dull scholars. We have more faith in ourselves than we have in God.

### **THE MURMURINGS OF ISRAEL**

As we look at the wanderings of this people, the most prominent thing seems to be their murmuring disposition, and lack of faith. We can hardly realize how they could so easily forget God. Through all the fearful plagues that had been visited upon the Egyptians, they had been miraculously preserved; yet no sooner are they brought into a difficult place by the sea than they complain. They were taken through the Red Sea on dry ground while the pursuing Egyptians were drowned. This raised their spirits once more, and they joined with Moses in singing that wonderful song of deliverance, found in the 15th chapter of Exodus; yet within three days they were murmuring because the water was bitter. Why could they not remember that He who could divide the Red Sea, could provide

water to drink? Water was miraculously provided, but in a few days their stock of provision ran low, and again they murmured. They even wished themselves back in their former bondage. Again their wants were supplied; bread was furnished, and a series of miracles was begun, that lasted for forty years, yet it seems to have made but little impression on them. In a short time they came to Rephidim, and here their complaints were renewed, the same as before. Because there was no water at hand, they were about to stone Moses. The former miraculous provision of water seems to have been utterly forgotten.

Now all this was extremely wicked. They were tempting God, and there can be no excuse for their course. But while we justly condemn their actions, let us see if we are not condemning ourselves. Human nature has not changed much since that time. We have received blessings innumerable from the hand of God. We can truly say with the psalmist that "goodness and mercy have followed this all the days of our life." Israel had a standing manifestation of God's power and goodness in the manna, which was furnished fresh every day. But it is just as true in our case that the mercies of the Lord are "new every morning." And yet we murmur and become discouraged at everything that crosses us. If discouragements come we, like the Israelites, are tempted to turn back, and imagine that we cannot gain the promised land. It is doubtful if we possess any more faith than they did.

We can easily see how much better it would have been for the Israelites if they had been grateful to God for his favors, and had trusted him in times of need. It is well that we are able to do this, for the apostle says, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." 1 Cor. 10:11. If we can see wherein they erred, let us see to it that we do not follow their course. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

### **THE FLIGHT FROM EGYPT. ITS MEMORIAL**

It is claimed by many that the Sabbath commemorates the flight from Egypt. They argue thus, because in Deut. 5:15 their deliverance from Egypt is noted as a thing for which the Israelites should be grateful, and an additional reason why they should remember his commandments. But the fourth commandment itself shows what the Sabbath is intended to commemorate, and no hint of the flight from Egypt is given. That claim is so palpably absurd that it must disappear upon the slightest candid investigation. It may not, however, be amiss to notice Ex. 12:41, 42, in this connection. "And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt. *It is a night to be much observed* unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations." The people fled in the night; and the Passover, which was the true memorial of their deliverance (See Ex. 12:26-28), was celebrated in the night. Ex. 12:6-10; Deut. 16:6. God's memorials are always fitting and appropriate; when man attempts to improve upon God's plan, he always makes confusion. E. J. W.

## **"What They Propose to Do" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 4.**

E. J. Waggoner

The effect which is the proposed religious amendment to the Constitution of the United States is intended to produce is very clearly shown in the last number of the *Christian Statesman*. A clergyman who is engaged in the work of the National Reform Association, visited Watrousville, Michigan. At the close of the lecture opportunity was given for questions, when a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church of that place, asked how the proposed religious amendment would affect Seventh-day Adventists. The reply was: "Just as existing Sabbath [Sunday] laws affect them in States where the first day of the week alone is recognized as the civil Sabbath."

Now we do not exactly believe this, and for this reason: Sunday laws are very rarely enforced in those States where they already exist, as in California, for instance; consequently Seventh-day Adventists are not at present materially affected by them. But the friends of National Reform (as it is called) do not contemplate such a state of things when they secure the amendment for which they are working. They are not children, and will not be satisfied with the pretense of a law. What they contemplate is such an amendment to the Constitution of the United States as will give them authority to close all places of business on Sunday, stop the running of railroad trains, the carrying of mails, printing and delivery of newspapers, etc., on that day. In short, they desire to make of the Sunday a sabbath in the full sense of the word—a day of rest for all. This is what they claim to be working for. But no such a state of things exist now, consequently those who believe in resting on the Sabbath and laboring on Sunday, would be differently affected by the passage of the amendment.

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It is worth while to remember, however that existing State Sunday laws would affect Seventh-day Adventists, and other observers of the Sabbath, very seriously, if the friends of these laws were able to enforce them as they wish to. Those who are familiar with the persecutions in Pennsylvania, under the Sunday Law of 1794, and with what was attempted last year in California, will have no difficulty in understanding just how "existing Sabbath laws affect them in States where the first day of the week alone is recognized as the civil Sabbath."

But the animus of the movement is shown by the next question and answer. We quote:-

"Another said that if [the religious amendment] would lead to interference with liberty to worship according to the dictates of conscience. To this it was answered: 'No. But unless a small minority were to enjoy exceptional privileges, it would interfere with work on the Lord's day.'"

Just so. And since they do not propose to grant "exceptional privileges," the "small minority" who keep the seventh day, must refrain from laboring on Sunday. Still religious liberty will not be interfered with! They virtually say, "We have no particular objections to your observance of the seventh day; indeed, if you do so desire, and can make a living, you may rest on Monday and Tuesday and Thursday and Friday as well, *but you must rest on Sunday*." Everybody is at

liberty to do just as he pleases, provided he does not wish to do anything contrary to the practice of the majority. This is religious liberty with a vengeance. The pope of Rome would grant that much.

Let us take a similar case as an illustration. Suppose Christianity were entirely unknown in China, as it was only a few years ago. A little colony of Englishmen and Americans, attracted by the climate and by the superior facilities offered for their business, locate there. China has been represented to them as a land of religious liberty, or every man is free to worship as his conscience may dictate. After they have been there a few weeks they are brought before the officers of justice and accused of violating the laws of the empire. They ask wherein they have erred, and are told that they have neglected the worship of Joss; that they have never been seen in any temple; and that they have been known to speak irreverently of the gods of wood. The strangers reply that they worship the God that made the heavens and the earth-the one whose name is Joe. But they are told that that God is not recognized in China. "The majority of our people," say the officers, "worship these gods which you see. We have therefore made a law that all people in this country must worship them also. You can readily see that no exception can be made in your case, since you are so small a minority that you cannot help yourselves. But our laws do not interfere with the religious liberty of anybody. You are not prohibited from worshiping your God, but you *must* worship ours or else your heads will be the forfeit." Just this state of things has existed in many countries, and does exist even yet; but those countries have been called despotisms, and places where there was no freedom of conscience. And this is no exaggerated picture of what will happen in this country when the National Reform Association accomplishes its object. All unprejudiced lovers of true liberty will agree that such a movement is not only opposed to the principles of our government but to the spirit of true Christianity.

This idea that the majority must rule is a most pernicious one, if carried out to its fullest extent. It is opposed to the spirit of the gospel. The Bible gives no warrant for it. It is true that Peter exhorts the younger to be subject to the elder, but he also says, "Yea, all to be subject to one another." This is far different from the majority ruling the minority. The idea that might makes right, which is only another way of saying that the majority must rule, has not the least foundation in the Bible.

According to our friends of the National Reform Association, Elijah was simply a headstrong fanatic, and Paul was indeed a "pestilent fellow." Both advocated ideas that were held by but a small minority, and were opposed to the established religion.

According to the theory that the majority ought to rule, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego richly deserved the punishment that was threatened them for standing out against all law of the land, and should have been left to their fate. Their answer, "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter," and "Be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up," was simply a manifestation of impudent stubbornness. But we have not been accustomed to regarded it so.

When Peter and John "preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead," they were acting contrary to the will of the majority. The State religion was utterly opposed to the doctrine which they taught, yet they persisted in their course even after being threatened and warned not to do so. Their reply to the rulers was this: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." This noble reply has been admired by Christians of every generation, and even those who to-day plead for a State religion and the rule of the majority, will contend that the apostles were justified in their action. And we, although far inferior to them, may yet follow their example. We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard, and practice that which God has commanded; and though "the rulers take counsel together against the Lord," and against his holy law, we pray that we may have strength to humbly answer, "We ought to obey God rather than men." E. J. W.

#### **"A Specimen of Religious Intolerance" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 4.**

E. J. Waggoner

Father O'Connor, the ex-priest who is delivering anti-catholic lectures in different portions of the United States, attempted to lecture in Zanesville, O., last week, but was not allowed to do so. Here is the newspaper account of the affair:-

"Before the lecturer arrived, fully 1,500 were present. The assemblage seemed orderly enough, but the instant O'Connor appeared on the stage he was greeted with a shower of stones, rotten eggs, etc. confusion reigned. O'Connor hastily jumped into an ante-room and locked the door. When men screamed, and it was at first thought a general riot would ensue, when the Protestants in the house would have suffered fearfully, as the opposition was greatly in the majority. O'Connor's assailants were about to leave the hall, when somebody suggested a coat of tar and feathers, and were about to carry out their threat, when a detachment of police arrived on the scene and arrested O'Connor, there is great excitement over the affair. No arrests were made, the three daily papers, two morning and one evening, are afraid to publish the names or give particulars of the affair, as the Catholic element is largely in the ascendancy."

When such a scene as this can take place in America, it is unnecessary to go back to the Dark Ages as examples of Catholic bigotry and persecution. It is an illustration of the saying that "The church never changes." The statement that the lecturer, after having been a target for stones, rotten eggs, etc., was the only person arrested, sounds almost like sarcasm. Let no one boast too loudly that this is a land of freedom, when of three newspapers not one dares comment on the outrage. The truth is that liberty can never exist where the Catholic Church is dominant, no matter where the place may be.

We anxiously look to see the *Christian Statesman's* unqualified indorsement of this suppression of free speech. Of course it may be expected to deprecate the violence, but the action was in harmony with the principles which it represents. In Zanesville, it is stated, "the Catholic element is largely in the ascendancy." Then, of course, they ought to have everything their own way.



Nobody has any right to follow the dictates of his own conscience unless he has backing enough, and the spirit, to enforce his claims. Such is, in reality, the spirit, not only of Catholicism, but of that party which is seeking to enforce the observance of Sunday, the distinguishing mark of Catholicism. Of the truth of this statement we had ample proof in the Sunday excitement that pervaded this State last year. The *Statesman* may, however, condemn the affair noted above, as it makes a great deal of difference whose ox is gored. E. J. W.

**February 1, 1883**

**"The Sabbath-School. The Charge to Joshua" *The Signs of the Times*  
9, 5.**

E. J. Waggoner

Notes on Lesson for Feb. 10.

### **THE CHARGE OF JOSHUA**

The number of times that the Lord tells Joshua to be strong and of a good courage is worthy of note. After telling him that he will be with him even as he was with Moses, and that he will not fail him, the Lord says, "Be strong and of a good courage," chapter 1:6; then follows the assurance that he shall divide the land among the Israelites. In the next verse he says again, "Only be thou strong and very courageous." Then follows an admonition to do according to all that was written in the law, and to meditate upon it day and night; and then exhortation is again given: "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed."

The Lord does not desire that his people should give way to discouragement. The same exhortation that was addressed to those who were about to enter into the earthly Canaan, is applicable to the Israel of God, who are striving for an inheritance in the heavenly Canaan. "Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed." Why not to be discouraged? Are we not weak? and is not our enemy powerful? Would it not be presumptuous in us to feel strong and confident? Yes; it would if we depended only on our own strength; but fortunately we have also the same promise that was made to Joshua. It is this: "For the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." And he has also said, "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." The Christian should ever realize this glorious truth: "The eternal God is my refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." Knowing this, how can he be discouraged? The apostles exhortation is, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Eph. 6:10.

### **HOLY THINGS**

It is sometimes claimed that there is no such thing as holy time; that is absurd to think that one day is really any better than another; that man can make any

day a holy Sabbath by resting upon it. It would be interesting to hear such ones explain Josh. 5:15. The case is similar to that of Moses at the burning bush. Joshua had seen the man standing by Jericho, and had learned that he was the "captain of the host of the Lord." "And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so." Now did the ground become holy because Joshua took off his shoes, or was it holy before? The answer is, It was holy before, for the Lord said so. Then it seems that there may be a difference between things of the same kind. There was no outward difference between the ground on which Joshua was standing and the ground in other places, yet there was a difference. One was holy, on account of the presence of the Lord, the other was not. The ground on which Joshua stood would have remained holy even if he had not removed his shoes. So it was with the Sabbath. The Lord has made it holy, and it will remain holy whether man regards it or not. The failure to discriminate between the holy and the profane is that which brings the judgments of God upon mankind.

### **THE DEFEAT AT AI**

In this case it was well shown how dependent the people were on God. When they trusted in themselves they failed. And what was the reason that God was not among them? Because there was sin among them. And by this we can learn the necessity of the church being pure as a whole. There was only one man in the camp of Israel that had transgressed, yet God withheld his presence from them. So a single individual in the church may, by his wrong course, defeat all the labors of those who would make advance moves. This also shows the necessity of maintaining strict church discipline. The sin of Achan was imputed to the entire camp, until the offender was searched out and punished. The record says, "But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing; for Achan. . . took of the accursed thing." Yet there is no evidence that anybody besides Achan was concerned in the theft, or knew of it. The Lord showed by this that he would have his people have a care for one another. We are each our brother's keeper. The Lord has said, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and shall not suffer sin upon him." Lev. 19:17. When the church, then, searches out the erring one, and rebukes him, it is doing that which is absolutely necessary to its own existence. Just as a man cannot be said to be sound if one of his limbs is diseased, so the church is not pure unless each individual member is walking orderly. And each person should also consider how much responsibility attaches to his course. By a wrong course he may involve many others in his own ruin; so true it is that "none of us liveth to himself."

### **THE MIRACLE AT GIBEON**

"Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun,

stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies." "So the sun stood still in the midst of the heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day." Some, in their eagerness to overthrow the Sabbath of the Lord, have found in this occurrence a loss of time. But there was no time lost. It was simply a lengthening of the day. If such a miracle should occur on the Sabbath, it would simply lengthen the Sabbath. Two days were not combined in one, but it was one long day. "And there was no day like that before it or after it."

Skeptics find an abundance of food for caviling in this miracle, as, indeed, they may in any. But the Bible student need not be troubled about it. To say that it could not occur, is in reality to deny that God is the creator of the heavens and the earth; for if God made the planets it is certain that he can control them. It is said that God instituted fixed laws by which they should be governed. Very true; but did he put those laws out of his own power? The maker of a threshing machine designs that it shall work according to a certain plan; yet he can stop the machine without altering the plan. One thing is certain: the universe did not create itself. Although the mind of man cannot conceive of its extent, nor fathom the laws by which it is governed, there must be a creator who is infinitely greater than the universe. "He taketh up the isles as a very little thing." It is evident that the Creator can do as he pleases with what he has created. If it is asked how it is possible that such a miracle could be performed without disarranging the whole planetary system, I would reply, "I do not know; I cannot imagine; If I could, it would cease to be a miracle." The disbelief in miracles arises from the fact that men are too proud to acknowledge that there is anything which they cannot understand. He who believes only what he can comprehend and explain, will have a very short creed. It is no shame for man to confess that he cannot by searching find out God. E. J. W.

### **"Unwarranted Modesty" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 5.**

E. J. Waggoner

The *Sunday-school Times* very justly says that it "requires character as well as courage to admit that one does not know what he is supposed to know-or what he supposes he is supposed to know." It then gives some instances of this trait of character, and says:-

"Yet, so rare is the courage and so rare is the character which prompts and justifies such answers as these, that it is too often a surprise when a man admits his ignorance on a point concerning which his opinion is sought. Just now there is widespread comment on President Woolsey's frequent confessions of inability to understand all the mysteries, or to solve all the perplexities, in the Bible text on which he is commenting week by week, and in the *Sunday-school Times*; and it is admitted on all sides that these frank confessions are a proof of his superiority. Never be afraid to say that you do not know-when you do not know."

With the last sentence we heartily agree. But with all respect to President Woolsey's superior ability-which is under question-we deny that proof of his superiority is found in his confession of inability to understand certain portions of

Scripture. We refer especially to one that was made in the *Times* of Sept. 2, 1882, where, in commenting on Mark 13:30 he said, "This passage is surrounded with very grave difficulties, which the Sunday-school expositor had better look boldly in the face and then pass on." The 28th and 29th verses of this chapter read thus: "Verily I say unto you, that this generation [the generation that should witness the fulfillment of the signs] shall not pass till all these things be done." Now we hold that the preceding verse is a positive command for us to know in regard to these things; and to claim ignorance under the circumstances is not a mark of superiority. It is a sin.

It is always well to be humble; but willing ignorance is not proof of humility. What would be thought of a Professor of mathematics who should say, "It is claimed by some that two and three are five, yet there are grave difficulties in regard to it, which the student should look boldly in the face, and then dodge; we must not be dogmatic." Everybody would say that he was unfit for his position. When a thing is plain, it is only an act of simple manliness to speak decidedly in regard to it. So in the case under consideration. Christ's language throughout the chapter is clear and plain. He briefly maps out the history of the world till the close of time, and gives certain signs which will immediately precede his coming. Then he says we may *know* that his coming is at hand. To say, then, that we do not know that it is near, is no assumption of superior wisdom, nor mark of egotism in those making the claim, but simple obedience to our Saviour's command.

The man in the parable, when asked why he had not on a wedding garment, was speechless. We would not care to meet our Lord with no other excuse for not being prepared than that we could not understand his directions. We very much fear that he would say, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge, I will also reject thee." In a case of this kind, it is not safe to make experiments.

But there is another side. The same individuals who are so fearful of appearing dogmatic on the subject of Christ's coming, seem never to be troubled with that fear in regard to another subject-the immortality of the soul. There is no doubt in their minds on that point. That the soul of man is immortal is held to be so certain that it is useless to argue it. Disbelief in that is considered synonymous with disbelief in the Bible and Christianity. And what is the ground of this positiveness? Simple inference. Nowhere in the Bible is the statement made that man is immortal, *i.e.*, undying, excepting in Gen. 3:4; and as that statement was made by Satan, the father of lies, it must be discounted about one hundred per cent. The Bible plainly states that "God only hath immortality," that if man obtains it he must "seek" for it; that it is the "gift of God" "through Jesus Christ our Lord," and that it will be bestowed only on the righteous, and at the coming of Christ. Yet in the face of all this, those who are not ashamed to confess their ignorance of a thing which Christ has commanded us to know, have no hesitancy in affirming that man is naturally immortal.

There is another point on which we would like to have our friends follow their own advice,—"Never be afraid to say that you do not know, when you do not know." It is in respect to the Sunday. Our "orthodox" friends feel very confident that the first day of the week is the Sabbath-so confident that they want to force

everybody to observe it, at least outwardly. Yet nowhere in the Bible is it stated that Sunday is the Sabbath. Nowhere is Sunday called by any other name than simply "the first day of the week." Nowhere is it stated that Christ or his apostles or anybody else ever observed that day. On the contrary it is expressly stated that the "seventh day is the Sabbath;" that that day must be kept holy, but that the other six, including the Sunday, are "working days;" that God did the greatest part of his creative work on the first day; the disciples of Jesus did work on that day, which they would not do on the Sabbath; and that Paul used it as an ordinary traveling day. Now as it is an impossibility for one to know that which is not true, would it not be the part of modesty, to say the least, for our friends to admit that they do not know that Sunday is the Sabbath?

We will not press the matter further. We admit that we do teach the doctrine of the second coming of the Lord with great confidence, but since the Bible alone is the ground of our confidence, we think we do well to be confident. To those who dare not speak with confidence on this point, but are very certain of the other points which we have mentioned, we quote the words of Paul. "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth." E. J. W.

### **"The Coming of the LordóWhy We Write About It" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 2.**

E. J. Waggoner

The following is from the *Christian Herald* (Disciple), of Monmouth, Oregon:-

"The SIGNS OF THE TIMES spent a good deal of its time in writing about the second advent of Christ, and talks as though nobody except the Seventh-day Adventists believes that Christ is ever coming again to this earth. The SIGNS ought to know that when it is trying to prove the second advent of our Saviour it is wasting its paper and ink. The truth is we are caring but little about the matter, for we simply accept the fact of his coming, and as to the *time*, we are not in the least concerned."

What has the *Herald* been doing, that it does not want to hear about the coming of the Lord? When a child manifests indifference in regard to the return of his father, who has been absent, it is generally attributable to one of two causes: Either the child has no love for his father, and does not desire to see him; or else he has been doing that which he knows to be wrong, and fears that he will receive the punishment which he richly deserves. Which one of these reasons applies in the present instance?

"The truth is we are caring but little about the matter," says the *Herald*. Well, that is just what we spend so much of our time writing and talking about it; and inasmuch as there are thousands of persons who are in the same condition that the *Herald* is, we think we cannot justly be accused of wasting our time. At any rate, we do not propose to stop. In fact, we dare not stop, for we have the following urgent command laid upon us: "Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land tremble." Joel 2:1. Why all this alarm? What need is there of any unusual demonstration? Answer: "For the day of the Lord, for it is nigh at hand; a day of darkness and of

gloominess, a day of clouds and a thick darkness." Surely there is reason enough to talk about it.

But, says the *Herald*, "we simply accept the fact of his coming, and as to the *time* we are not in the least concerned." Therefore it thinks that nothing more need be said. Now we are very well aware that almost all bodies of professed Christians accept the fact that Christ is coming; but that is not enough. The trouble is that they are content with the mere expression of their belief that he will come sometime, but are not particular as to *when* he comes, or, seemingly, as to whether he comes *at all*. Now the command is "blow ye the trumpet *in Zion, and* sound an alarm *in my holy mountain*." It is among God's professed followers that the alarm is to be made; those who nominally care anything about it. Is there not need enough for an alarm to be sounded, when even the "watchmen on the walls of Zion," hold their peace, and publicly profess that they care nothing about what is coming? The command is given to these watchman. "Go through, go through the gates: prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones, *lift up a standard* for the people. Behold the Lord hath proclaimed *unto the end of the world*. Say ye to the daughter of Zion. Behold, thy salvation; behold his reward is with him, and his work before him." But the watchmen refuse to lift up the standard, or to clear the way so that the people may walk in the law of the Lord, and thus be prepared for his coming. And this explains why they are not caring for his

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coming. To the command to "ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (Jer. 6:16), they have replied, "We will not walk therein." No wonder they do not want to hear of his coming.

Perhaps some one will say that we are straining a point, and that these "old paths," this "good way," in which they have said they would not walk is not the Law of the Lord. Then read what follows: "Hear, O earth; behold I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, *because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law*, but rejected it." Verse 19. But we will speak further on this point at another time.

The *Herald* says it is not caring about the coming of the Lord. Well, we *do* care about it, and for these very good reasons:-

1. *We shall then be with Christ*. He himself says, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there he may be also." John 14:2, 3. Paul also says, "For this we say unto you *by the word of the Lord*, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven* with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thess. 4:15-17. There is no other way than this that we can ever go to dwell with the Lord; therefore the coming of the Lord is to us a matter of considerable importance.

2. *We shall then be made like him.* "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that *when he shall appear, we shall be like him*, for we shall see him as he is." 1 Jno. 3:1, 2. "For our conversation [commonwealth] is in Heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Phil. 3:20, 21. Many persons pay a great deal of attention to the adorning of their bodies; but no amount of the earthly adorning can make them compare with Christ's glorious body. With the hope that this promise will soon be fulfilled, we can be content even if we are ill-favored now.

3. *We shall then receive a crown.* Peter exhorts those who are placed over the flock, to feed them, and says, "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, he shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not the way." 1 Pet. 5:4. And Paul also defines still more closely those who will receive this crown. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course. I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but *unto all them also that love his appearing*." 2 Tim. 4:7, 8. Then it appears that we must do something more than merely to admit that Christ is coming, if we obtain the crown; we must *love his appearing*. But what we love we think about; and "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Paul intimates that he loved the appearing of Christ; and that fact is evident from his writings, because he speaks of that more than of any other thing. Every letter that he wrote contains more or less reference to Christ's coming. Will the *Herald* say that he wasted his paper and ink? We have not said so much about it as Paul did, but we mean to do better in the future, and thus obey the command to "exhort one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." If we love his appearing more we should talk about it more, and try to induce others to love it also; and if everybody loved it, then surely we would talk about it more than ever; it would be an ever joyous topic of conversation.

4. *At Christ's coming we shall be made immortal.* Paul says in 1 Cor. 15:51-54, that at the sound of the last trump the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and the living shall be changed; that it is then that this corruptible will put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality. We long for that time to come.

Have we not good reason to care for our Lord's coming? Here we suffer pain; we are often obliged to confess that we are sick; on account of the weakness and feebleness of our mortal bodies, we are unable to do much that we would like to do. We lose our friends, and are often obliged to mourn. But when Jesus comes all this will cease. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." "He that testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly, Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus." E. J. W

## **"A Word to Missionary Workers" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 5.**

E. J. Waggoner

What would be thought of a minister of the gospel who did not pray before conducting a meeting or preaching a sermon; one who never prayed for the success of the work in which he was engaged, or who never made those under his care the subject of a special prayer? People would say of such an one that he was not very deeply interested in his work, and they would not be disappointed if it should be a failure. The successful minister not only prays for the success of his work in general, but the individual members of his congregation are the subjects of his daily secret prayer. He feels personally responsible for their salvation. Night and day they are upon his mind, and he is planning for their good; thinking how he can encourage those who believe, and how those yet unconverted may be reached in the best manner. It is expected that the minister of the gospel will do this; it is well known that if he does not do so, all the success that may attend his labor will be, in a measure, accidental.

Now the same thing will apply to the missionary worker who occupies a more limited field. When a member of the Missionary Society has received the names of persons to whom to send the SIGNS and other reading matter, he should feel that those individuals are his especial charge. He should feel in a measure responsible for their salvation. So far as his influence extends, his responsibility is just as great as that of the preacher. He should engage in the work with seriousness and earnestness. He should make it a subject of prayer. It is not enough to pray for the success of the missionary work in general; each individual must be the subject of earnest prayer; not once or twice but constantly. Try to feel the same interest in each that you would if he were present in person. When the missionary worker sends off his paper, laden with messages of truth, he should feel that he is in the position of one who is delivering a sermon to a congregation. True, he is not responsible, as is the preacher, for the words of the sermon, but he can pray, as the preacher does, that God's Spirit will accompany the word and impress it upon the hearts of those who receive. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build; except the Lord keep the city, the watchmen waketh but in vain." The truth may be clear and plain, and may be presented in a most forcible manner, yet it will fall lifeless to the ground unless God directs it to the heart. No one should think of attempting to write a letter on the subject of religion without first asking God to direct. We should realize that it is God's work, not our own, and we must endeavor to do it in his way. Work done in this way accomplishes double good; it will be blessed to the good of the one for whom it is done, and will strengthen the worker. But missionary work done in a listless manner, as quickly as possible, will certainly not strengthen the one who does it, and cannot be expected to accomplish much for anybody.

We are told to pray the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth more laborers into the field. We would not have been told to pray, if praying would do no good. If the work lags, may we not conclude that this injunction has not been heeded? And even when we do pray for laborers, is it not often the case that we



want somebody else to be raised up, while we do nothing? If all would pray earnestly for laborers, and then would go to work to do their part toward supplying the demand, how quickly the work might be done. Let us place ourselves in such a position that when we pray, we may say, "Here am I, send me." Depend upon it, the Lord will find employment for us all, and that which is just suited to our capacity. E. J. W.

**February 8, 1883**

**"Miracles" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 6.**

E. J. Waggoner

Last week we considered the subject of miracles very briefly, in connection with the one at Gibeon. It may not be amiss to say a few words more on the same subject. There is a growing disbelief in miracles, even among those who profess to believe the Bible. So common is this disbelief that one needs to have a well-defined position, and be firmly fixed in it, in order not to be affected. Not to deny the existence of miracles is to deny the truth of the Bible, for that is founded on miracles. The creation of the earth, the creation of man, the incarnation of Christ, his sacrifice for sins, -are all miracles.

But there is a tendency, and it is not confined to infidels, to explain the miracles recorded in the Bible, by the laws of nature, as commonly understood. It is claimed that God will not work contrary to the laws which he has ordained. That may be true; but who knows it? Who shall say that God is obliged to work always in a fixed course? Extraordinary occasions call for extraordinary action, and why may not God work in any way that he pleases?

Again, even if we admit that God must, or does, always work according to fixed laws, how does that help the matter? Who is there so presumptuous as to suppose that he understands all laws of nature? The term "laws of nature" is a convenient one to express what little we know of nature. Men formulate their observations of the properties of matter, and call the result the laws of nature. But it is not necessarily the laws of nature any more than a single section of the Constitution is the laws of the United States. There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in any man's philosophy.

It may be true that all miracles are performed in harmony with certain fixed laws, but not according to any laws within the scope of man's knowledge. Take for instance the miracle noted last week-the standing still of the sun and moon. Take a miracle in the lesson covered by this week's review-the one in which the prophet caused iron to swim. These were both contrary to any laws known to man. But both of these are surpassed by the creation of the earth, or the raising of a dead man to life. We cannot understand them; if we could they would not be miracles.

The existence of miracles is proved by the existence of God. If God exists, miracles must exist, for a being who did nothing but what could be fully comprehended by men, would be only a man, and not God. If there is a God, he must be infinitely superior to man, and consequently must perform acts infinitely

beyond man's comprehension. And on the other hand, the occurrence of miracles (things that are wonderful because they are unexplainable) proves the existence of a Being infinitely superior to man. And that such things do occur every day, no one in his senses will deny. The humble child of God is not troubled with speculations as to how miracles are performed. He accepts them as revealing the power of the God whom he worships. He can say, The One who created the universe; and still controls it, "upholding all things by the word of his power," who "hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand," who "taketh up the isles as a very little thing," and to whom the nations "are as a drop of a bucket,"-He is the God whom I worship. It is in accordance with his nature to do wonderful things. And this God has said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." E. J. W.

### **"The Nature of Jehu's Zeal" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 6.**

E. J. Waggoner

There is much in the character of Jehu to admire. He was active and energetic, one who never let the work in hand like. He was a driving, go-ahead man; one who in these days would doubtless be called, if engaged in trade, a successful businessman. When he was commissioned by the Lord to execute his judgment on the house of Ahab, he lost no time. Jehoram and Jezebel were quickly dispatched, together with all the sons and relatives of Ahab. As he was engaged in the work of the extermination, he met Jehonadab, to whom he said, "Come with me and see my zeal for the Lord." He knew that he was following the commandment of the Lord, and he seemed to take pride in it. He wanted others to see that he was not afraid to stand up for the truth, even though it was unpopular. So after slaying the remnant of Ahab's followers, he gathered the priests of Baal and destroyed them, and, so the record says, "destroyed Baal out of Israel."

All this was very praiseworthy. The Lord commended him for it, in these words: "Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in mine heart, by children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel." But unfortunately Jehu's zeal stopped too soon, or, rather, it was not of the right kind. We read: "But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart; for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin." His zeal for the Lord did not lead him to shun sin himself. He could rebuke and punish sin in others, but could not avoid it himself. When there was vigorous work to be done, when people could see, he was zealous; but when it came to the matter of walking in the law of the Lord with all his heart, with none but God to see, his zeal was gone.

How many there are like him. They can talk the truth glibly, and are ever ready to defend it. No matter how unpopular the truth is, they are not ashamed to uphold, and are ready to denounce those who differ. But as to living out the truth in their daily lives, at home and abroad, in private as well as in public, they are lacking. They seem to think that they can make up for personal sins by a vigorous denunciation of the sins of others. But God has not two sets of

workmen: one to watch and another to pray; or one to preach and another to work. One good quality will not make up for the absence of another. All must be combined in the same individual. He only is a man of God, who is "perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." E. J. W.

### **"Facts vs. Misrepresentations" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 6.**

E. J. Waggoner

EDITOR SIGNS OF THE TIMES-*Dear Brother*: I have before me the December number of the *Richmond Star*, a paper published monthly at Richmond, Ind., by Milton Wright, a preacher and, I believe, bishop of the church of the United Brethren in Christ. The motto of the paper is: "First pure; then peaceable."

On the first page is an article which I give below, and I wish to know if it is true. F. G. HARRIS.

### **"SABBATARIAN MISREPRESENTATIONS**

"Perhaps scarcely any class of Christian professors practice false quotation from authorities so much as Seventh-day Adventists. They have widely asserted that Dr. Mosheim states, in his celebrated "Church History," that it was by a decree of the Emperor Constantine in *the fourth century*, that the Christian day of worship was change from *the seventh day of the week to the first day of the week*. A few quotations from Dr. Mosheim's "Church History" will show that he testifies the very opposite from what he is represented by these Sabbatarians as doing.

"In the history of the *first century* of the church, chap. iv, sec. iv. Mr. Mosheim says:-

"All Christians were unanimous in setting apart the first day of the week, on which the triumphant Saviour arose from the dead, for the solemn celebration of public worship. This pious custom, which was derived from the example of the church at Jerusalem, was founded on the express appointment of the apostles, who consecrated that day to the same sacred purpose, and was observed universally throughout the Christian churches, as appears from the united testimony of the most credible writers. The seventh day of the week was also observed as a festival, not by Christians in general, but by such churches only as were composed of Jewish converts; nor did the other Christians censure this custom as criminal or unlawful.'

"Dr. Mosheim, in his history of the *second century* chap. iv. sec. says:-

"The first Christians assembled for the purpose of divine worship, in private houses, in caves, and in vaults where the dead were buried. Their meetings were on the first day of the week; and in some places they assembled on the seventh, which was celebrated by the Jews. Many also observed the fourth day of the week, on which Christ was betrayed, and the sixth, which was the day of his crucifixion.'

"Now after the foregoing most explicit testimonies concerning the *universal* observance of the *first day of the week* for Christian worship during the *first and second centuries*, Dr. Mosheim, in his history of the fourth century, uses the language which has been so misrepresented by Seventh-day Adventists. He says in his history of the fourth century, chap. iv. sec. v:-

"The first day of the week, which was the ordinary and stated time for the public assemblies of Christians, was in consequence of a peculiar law enacted by Constantine, observed with greater solemnity than it had formerly been.'

"How differed are these testimonies of the learned and judicious Dr. Mosheim from those stated by Seventh-day Adventists to deceive the unlearned and ignorant. It is a great injustice to avert a wise historian's testimony to just the opposite of what he has testified. It seems to be the work of 'those who love and make a lie.' [ED."

To the brother's inquiry we reply that the article is both true and false-principally false. Seventh-day Adventists do not claim that Mosheim states in his "Church History" or anywhere else, that the Sabbath was changed by the decree of Constantine. No such claim can be found in any of our writings. It will be noticed that the writer of the article does not attempt to substantiate his charge, by showing just where the false quotations may be found. It is very easy to make charges in a general matter, but an accusation, in order to be valid, must be backed up by proof. But of this he had none, and he is therefore guilty of what he charges upon us-misrepresentation.

Now as to the truth of his quotations. If the brother will take the pains, he will find them all in "The

History of the Sabbath and First Day of the Week," by Eld. J. N. Andrews, for sale at this office. (See advertisement in this issue.) This work, which is complete on this subject, contains these and many other quotations from first-day historians. In fact, all that is quoted from early writers in support of the Sunday, will be found in this book. Instead of claiming that the Sabbath was changed in consequence of Constantine's law, evidence is given to show that Sunday was kept long before his time.

It may not be amiss, in passing, to call attention to the first quotation from Mosheim, in which it is stated that "all Christians were unanimous in setting apart the first day of the week," etc. This passage is taken from McClaine's translation of Mosheim's History, and is always quoted by first-day writers, because it accords so nearly with what they wish to prove true. Now Dr. McClaine did not profess to give a strictly accurate translation of Mosheim. He himself says in his preface: "I have sometimes taken considerable liberties with my author, and followed the spirit of his narrative without adhering strictly to the letter; and have often *added a few sentences* to render an observation more striking, a fact more clear, a portrait more finished." That is, he has not hesitated to exaggerate what Mosheim really said, whenever he wished to do so. Other writers, not Sabbatarians, say that Dr. McClaine "has interwoven his own sentiments in such a manner with those of the original author, both in the notes and in the text, that it is impossible for a mere English reader to distinguish them; and in diverse

instances he has entirely contradicted him." In the translation of Dr. Murdock, who has given "a close, literal version," the passage is materially modified. Although Dr. Mosheim states that Sunday was observed in the first century, he does not state that "all Christians were unanimous" in so doing. As far as we are concerned, however, we are willing to let the passage stand as quoted. We mention it merely to show that first-day writers are not over-scrupulous as to the means they use to advance the interest of the Sunday. As for selves, we are anxious that the exact truth on this Sunday question should be given in every instance; for the more the truth shines upon it, the more clearly it is seen that there is no divine authority for Sunday-keeping.

And now what do Seventh-day Adventists claim in regard to Constantine's law? They claim, not that Sunday was not kept previous to its enactment, but that it was *the first law* ever given in favor of Sunday observance. And that we do not make this claim rashly, the following testimonies will prove:-

"It was Constantine the Great who first made a law for the proper observance of Sunday; and who, according to Eusebius, appointed it should be regularly celebrated throughout the Roman Empire."-*Encyclopedia Britannica, art. "Sunday."*

"Chambers' Encyclopedia," published by J. B. Lippincott & Co., under the heading "Sabbath," says:-

"But whatever may have been the opinion and practice of these early Christians in regard to cessation from labor on the Sunday, unquestionably the first law, either ecclesiastical or civil, by which the sabbatical observance of that day is known to have been ordained, is the edict of Constantine, 321 A.D."

There is no one who will presume to dispute these authorities. There is no one who can find any law for Sunday-keeping prior to this edict of Constantine. From these authors we learn that while many Christians did keep Sunday before Constantine's time, they did it voluntarily, and not on account of any law which had been given. From "Chambers' Encyclopedia," article "Sabbath," we quote as follows:-

"At what date the Sunday, or first day of the week, began to be generally used by Christians as a stated time for religious meetings, we have no definite information either in the New Testament or in the writings of the Fathers of the church. By none of the Fathers before the fourth century is it identified with the Sabbath, nor is the duty of observing it grounded by them either on the fourth commandment or on the precept for example of Jesus or his apostles, or on an anti-Mosaic Sabbath law promulgated to mankind at creation, and continuing in force after the coming of Christ."

If anyone wishes to verify this statement, he will find in a little work entitled, "Testimony of the Fathers Concerning the Sabbath and First Day of the Week," for sale at this office, every passage in the writings of the Fathers of the first three centuries, in which an allusion, or even a supposed allusion, is made to the Sabbath or first day.

Kitto, in his "Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature," in the article "Lord's Day," after noticing the text commonly produced in favor of Sunday observance, says:-

"Though in later times we find considerable reference to a sort of consecration of the day, it does not seem at any period of the ancient church, to have assumed the form of such an observance as some modern religious communities have contended for. Nor do these writers in any instance pretend to allege any divine command, or even apostolic practice, in support of it."

Now for another quotation from Mosheim. We are always pleased when it is brought forward in favor of Sunday observance. We give the passage as quoted by our reverend critic:-

"The first day of the week, which was the ordinary and stated time for the public assemblies of Christians, was in consequence of a peculiar law enacted by Constantine, observed with greater solemnity than it had formerly been."

That law of Constantine's reads as follows:-

"Let all the judges and town people, and the occupation of all trades, rest on the venerable day of the sun; but let those who are situated in the country, freely and at full liberty to attend to the business of agriculture; because it often happens that no other day is so fit for sowing corn or planting vines; lest the critical moment being let slip, men should lose the commodities granted them by Heaven."

If, as Mosheim states, the Sunday was, in consequence of this law, "observed with greater solemnity than it had formerly been," the reader may well wonder how much sacredness was attached to Sunday before this time. Not much, certainly. This statement of Mosheim is not of much use to the Sunday cause.

But our opponents will still say with a triumphant air: "Nevertheless the Sunday was kept by the expressed appointment of the apostles, or at least on account of their example." Why, how do you know that? "Because Mosheim says so." Very well, and how did Mosheim find it out? Did he live in the apostles' time? Did he confer with them? They will be compelled to answer that he did not; that he was a modern writer, born more than two hundred years after the discovery of America. How then did he learn what the apostles wrote? He had the New Testament, wherein their writings are contained. But we have the same, and so have our first-day friends; why then, instead of quoting from Mosheim that the apostles commanded the observance of Sunday, do they not go direct to the writings of the apostles, and point out the passage wherein such command is made? For the very reason that no such passage can be found, as they very well know.

But why does Mosheim say that Sunday observance was founded on the express appointment of the apostles, if it is not really so? For the same reason that many first-day theologians of the present time make reckless assertions which they cannot prove. He believed in Sunday sacredness, having been taught it from his youth. In his reading of early history he found that some Christians kept that day; and since he could find no commandment any where else for Sunday-keeping, he straightway concluded that the apostles themselves must have commanded it. If they did not, who did? Sure enough, who did?

We are not at all alarmed for the Sabbath, when told that Sunday was kept very soon after the apostles' time. We learn that the fourth day of the week and likewise the sixth was observed also. We learn also, according to Tertullian, that

the custom of praying for the dead was common in the second century, and that the invocation of saints, the superstitious use of images, the sign of the cross, etc., were common in the fourth century. Apostolic authority was claimed for all of these. Will our first-day friends accept them on this authority? Certainly not. And why not? "Because," they will tell you, "these things are forbidden in the Bible, and we find nothing in the writings of the apostles sanctioning them." Exactly; and so we say about the Sunday.

It matters not how early a custom was established, so long as it does not have the sanction of divine authority. We find that an abominable practice (1 Cor. 5:1) was prevalent among certain Christians, even while the apostles were yet alive; shall we therefore conclude that all Christians are in duty bound to do likewise? Assuredly not. Even among Christ's chosen twelve there was a thief, and yet we do not conclude from this fact that Christ sanctioned robbery. Paul knew that abuses would creep into the church, and warned the disciples against being led astray. Acts 20:29, 30. He stated that even in his day the "mystery of iniquity" was working, and the great apostasy had commenced. 2 Thess. 2:7. Let no one think it strange, then, that we find men in the early centuries adopting the Sunday festival, along with other heathen customs. Sin has always existed even within the professed church of God, and will continue to exist until He shall come "whose fan is in his hand," to "thoroughly purged his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner," and to "burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." E. J. W.

### **"Time of Christ's Resurrection" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 6.**

E. J. Waggoner

A friend in Oregon questions the correctness of a statement incidentally made in the Sabbath-school department of the SIGNS a few weeks ago, to the fact that Christ rested in the tomb on the Sabbath day, and rose on the morning of the first day of the week; and he asks, "Is there any Scripture evidence to prove that our Lord rose from the grave on the first day of the week?" To this we reply that we think there is. It is true that we are not told in so many words when the resurrection took place, but the evidence seems to be clear nevertheless. Jesus told his disciples several times that he would be crucified and rise again the third day. Matt 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; Mark 9:31; Luke 9:22, etc. Christ was crucified on Friday. This fact is plainly stated by Luke, who closes the account of the crucifixion and burial of Christ with these words: "And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath true on." Luke 23:54. Then he still further identifies the time by saying that the women who saw the burial, "returned, and prepared spices and ointments, and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment." Verse 56. Now it does not require any mathematical skill to determine that "the third day" could not by any possibility be earlier than the first day of the week following, and that it was not later, we know from the record. Therefore the first day of the week must have been the resurrection day.

Matt. 28:1 is quoted as proof that Christ rose on the Sabbath; but the statement here is simply (according to our version) that the women came to the sepulcher "in the end of the Sabbath." But the original of this passage allows

perfect harmony with Mark 16:1, which says that it was "when the Sabbath was past." These Scriptures have to do simply with the coming of the women to the tomb. They came very early on the first day of the week and found the grave empty; but the argument given above is, we think, conclusive as proving that the resurrection did not take place before the beginning of that first day.

"But," some will say, "this gives a stronger argument to the believers in Sunday observance." Not at all. The fact that Christ rose on the first day of the week has no more to do with the Sabbath question than with the doctrine of the temporal millennium. There is no commandment for the observance of the resurrection day; not even an intimation that that day was henceforth to be the Sabbath. From the time of the crucifixion onward, the disciples observed the Sabbath the same as before.

Whoever tries to prove that Christ did not rise on the first day a week, wastes his time, and strengthens those who are keeping Sunday in their determination to do so. Better far to admit at once that Christ rose on the first day of the week, and then show that Sabbath sacredness is not affected in the least by that fact. E. J. W.

**February 15, 1883**

**"A Lesson from as Ezra" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 7.**

E. J. Waggoner

In the action of Ezra as he was about to go up to Jerusalem to rebuild the city, there is a lesson for those who at the present time are asking the aid of civil authority in favor of Sunday observance. He had received permission from the king to go up to Jerusalem, and had gathered together a company of his people for that purpose. But the country to which they were to pass was hostile, and they were not men of war, and could not defend themselves. The king was well-disposed toward them, and would no doubt have given them a guard of soldiers if they had desired it. But Ezra would not ask help from the king; "for," said he, "I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and the horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way; because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him." Ezra knew that if he should ask for assistance, the king would think that the Lord was not with them, or else that they were afraid to trust him. So he proclaimed a fast, that they might afflict themselves before God, to seek of him the right way. Ezra 8:21. And the result is summed up in these words: "So we fasted and besought our God for this; and he was intreated of us."

If Ezra had not been convinced that he was doing the work of the Lord, he would not have trusted in the Lord, but would have asked the assistance of the king. In every instance where people ask for human protection in matters pertaining to religion, it is because there is a belief in their hearts that the Lord is not with them. If there was Bible evidence of the sacredness of Sunday, would its friends ask for a human law in its favor? Never. God has intrusted his truth to



men, for them to disseminate, but he has never authorized them to use carnal weapons in its behalf. The commission is to teach all nations; but it is not said that the disciples must force all nations to believe. If anything is really of God, all man has to do is to observe it, and teach it, calling on the Lord for help, and the Spirit of God will convict men of sin.

If the advocates of Sunday observance really believe that it is of God, let them teach it with all diligence, asking God to guide them. If it is of God, he will not let it suffer, but will vindicate his truth. But when they ask the aid of politicians, worldly men, these men will help them from worldly considerations, and not as a matter of religion. They will not believe that God is in the movement; but they will identify themselves with it, because they will expect to derive personal advantage from it. And this is the only consideration that will move politicians and men of the world; so that if the movement really were of God, it would be dishonored by such advocacy. God is able to take care of his own truth and people, without the aid of weak and sinful man. E. J. W.

### **"The Sure Word" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 7.**

E. J. Waggoner

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." 2 Peter 1:19.

The apostle is not comparing one prophecy with another, but he is comparing prophecy with something else. He does not say that we have one word of prophecy that is "more sure" than some other word, but that the word of prophecy is more sure than some other thing. What that other thing is we may learn from the context. In verses 16-18 he speaks of the certainty of Christ's coming, and the reason why he is so certain in regard to it. He says: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." The idea is this: At the transfiguration the apostles saw Christ just as he will appear when he comes in his glory. They also heard the voice of God from Heaven. So when they declared the coming of Christ, they did it on the evidence of both their eyes and their ears. This is accounted the best possible evidence; but Peter says that there is something that is more sure than this. What is it? It is the "sure word of prophecy." It is possible that a person's eyes or ears might deceive him, but there is no possibility of doubt in regard to the prophecy. And why not? Because it did not come "by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The prophecy, therefore, is as reliable as God himself. There are very few things in this life upon which we can depend implicitly; how gladly, then, we ought to receive this sure word, and how eagerly we ought to search it.

## THE OBJECT OF PROPHECY

As noted by Peter, the object of the sure word of prophecy is that we may be more certain in regard to Christ's coming, for that is the grand event to which all prophecy points. Christ's first advent was the basis of many prophecies, and it was the most momentous event since the creation of the world. Upon that coming the redemption of the whole human race depended; but even that with its attendant sacrifice would be lost to us if Christ were not to come the second time. Christ came and died that man might be redeemed, to reign with him forever; but those whom he has purchased cannot be with him unless, according to his promise, he comes again to redeem them to himself. There is no other way by which we can go to Heaven. So the redemption of the race depends fully as much upon Christ's second coming as upon the first. It is no wonder, then, that so much prophecy has been given in regard to so important an event. We will examine a little of it, and we shall see that the coming of our Lord is not so vague and indefinite a matter as some would have us believe.

## NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

This dream, related in the second chapter of Daniel, is familiar to every reader of the Bible. The circumstances attending it are such as would attract the attention of one who was reading merely for pleasure, for they are highly interesting. But our interest in the narrative is increased a thousand-fold when we learn the object and interpretation of the dream. The object of the dream is told in few words. Daniel said to the king, "There is a God in Heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar *what shall be in the latter days.*" Then it is for us far more than for Nebuchadnezzar.

The dream was as follows: A great image, bright in appearance and terrible in form, appeared to the king. Its head was of fine gold, its breast and arms and its feet of mingled clay and iron. While the king looked upon this image, a stone was cut out of the mountain without the aid of human hands. This stone smote the image upon the feet, and instantly the whole image was reduced to fine powder, and was blown away; but the stone immediately became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

The interpretation of the dream occupies but little more space. Daniel, after reminding the king that God has given him universal dominion, tells him that his kingdom is symbolized by the head of gold. The other three divisions of the image, the silver, the brass, and the iron, symbolize three other universal empires. The last one of these is to be divided into ten parts, as is indicated by the ten toes of the image, which shall be distinct from each other. And now comes the closing scene: "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 for ever.* Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to

the king *what shall come to pass hereafter*: and the dream is certain, and *the interpretation thereof sure*." Dan. 2:44, 45.

This dream with its interpretation was not given that men might be informed in regard to earthly kingdoms, but for the sole purpose of pointing out the fifth universal kingdom. Then we may know something in regard to the time of its setting up. Let us follow the connection. Babylon was conquered by the Medes and Persians, B.C. 538. Medo-Persia, then, was the empire symbolized by the breast and arms of silver. The Persian Empire in its turn gave away to the Greeks. This took place B.C. 321. Here we have three of the four kingdoms; and since there were to be but four universal, earthly monarchies, the fourth cannot be difficult to locate. There is no doubt but that Rome was symbolized by the iron part of the image. It was at the height of its power at the first advent of Christ, having fully completed the conquest of Greece half a century before. There is no disputing the fact that it was universal in its dominion, and Scripture proof of the fact is found in Luke 2:1. Now we have the four universal empires before us. Where shall we look for the setting up of the fifth. In the days of Christ? No; because Rome was then undivided. It could not be set up until the division of that empire into its ten parts, which was completed A.D. 457. The coming of Christ, and the setting up of his everlasting kingdom, is the next thing brought to our view. And this is in reality the next thing to be accomplished. Certain things must be done by powers that now exist, but when earthly governments again fall, their place will be taken by Christ's kingdom. Other prophecies corroborative of this, and more minute in detail, will be considered next week.

Now is not this a sure word of prophecy? Kingdoms have risen and fallen just as predicted by the prophet. He said that the ten divisions of the Roman Empire would seek to consolidate their power, but would be unsuccessful, and so it has been. Every attempt to unite the nations of Europe has ended in failure. And if the past has been fulfilled to the letter, we have the assurance that that which yet remains will as surely be fulfilled. Inspiration did not point out the length of time that these earthly kingdoms should exist, and it has not told when the heavenly kingdom will be set up, but we know it cannot be far distant. The divided state of the image has continued for 1,400 years, much longer than any other division. Other prophecies show more definitely that the end is very near. We learn from this that God's kingdom is as much a reality as any earthly kingdom, and that those whose interest is in earthly things can have no part in it. Are we fitting ourselves for citizenship in that glorious, everlasting kingdom? E. J. W.

### **"Staying Away from Sabbath-School" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 7.**

E. J. Waggoner

It is often the case that we hear persons give as a reason for not coming to Sabbath-school, "I didn't have my lesson." But this answer should not be dignified with the title of reason, for it is really a very poor excuse. It shows that the individual offering it does not realize the object of the school. We do not go to Sabbath-school to "show-off" our proficiency, as some people go to church to exhibit their fine clothes. We go to Sabbath-school in order to learn. We are all of

us ignorant, to a greater or less degree, of the truths contained in the Bible; we go to the Sabbath-school that we may become enlightened. To stay away from the school because we are ignorant, is as foolish as it would be to stay away from dinner because we are hungry. If we do not know the lesson, that is a great reason why we should attend the school. If it were possible for us to be perfectly familiar with the lesson, so that we could learn nothing more, there would be no special reason for us to attend, except for the sake of our example; we would not lose so much personally by staying away, but our absence might influence others to stay away also. But when we do not understand the lesson, and stay away, we have not only our example on the wrong side, but we suffer great loss ourselves.

It may be asked, "If the Sabbath-school is simply the place to learn, what is the use of studying the lesson at all?" Just this: The more we know of anything, the more we are able to learn, and the better able are we to appreciate what others have learned. If we have learned the lesson as well as we can by ourselves, we shall be in the best condition to learn from others; we will have an interest in what they say. If we know nothing of the lesson, we may learn but very little in regard to it during the Sabbath-school hour; but that little is vastly more than we should learn if we did not hear the recitation at all.

Let every Sabbath-school scholar, then, whether young or old, resolve that he will attend every Sabbath, both for the good which he may do, and for that which he may receive. E. J. W.

### **"Thoughts on the Twelfth Chapter of Hebrews" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 7.**

E. J. Waggoner

"Wherefore seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith."

The word "witnesses," in this text, conveys to many a wrong idea, or rather, many persons give it a meaning which does not belong to it in this place. A witness is one who testifies in a cause, from personal knowledge, and in this sense it is used here. This chapter is a continuation of the argument on faith, and the cloud or multitude of witnesses who are here spoken of, are the worthies whose deeds are recorded in chapter eleven. They are not "witnesses" in the sense that they are *looking on* to see us run the race, for all of them except Enoch died. Now of the dead it is said that "they know not anything," Eccl. 9:5; that in the day of their death "their thoughts perished." Ps. 146:4; and that they are not conscious of the elevation or disgrace of even their dearest relatives. Job 14:21. It is certain, then, that those of whom the apostle says that they "all died in faith," are not cognizant of any thing that is now taking place on this earth. How then are they "witnesses"? They have all run the race, and obtained great victories through faith; and by means of the sacred record their lives bear witness to the power of a firm, abiding faith. Of Abel it is said that "he being dead yet

speakeeth." So likewise all these worthies are standing by to cheer us on by their testimony as to the possibility of making the race a success.

One stanza of an excellent hymn that is based on this passage, is ruined because the writer of the hymn mistook the meaning of the word "witnesses." The stanza is this:-

"A cloud of witnesses around,  
Hold thee in full *survey*;  
Forget the steps already tried,  
And onward urge thy way."

But this is not true. These witnesses do not hold us in survey. They know nothing of our existence. In short, they know nothing at all, because they are dead.

"Seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses." The position of a small word in a sentence may make a great deal of difference. The word "also" is here out of its proper place. The text should read thus: "Wherefore seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, *let us also* lay aside every weight," etc. It is not true, as implied in the common version, that those in ancient times were compassed about with witnesses. The Bible was not written in their day, and they had no precedent for their faith. Noah had no example of those who had trusted in God before his time, and had been preserved. He had simply the word of God. There had been no rain on the earth, and if the philosophers of his day were like those of the present time, they doubtless said that such a thing was contrary to nature. Nevertheless he believed and obeyed the word of the Lord, and by so doing he "condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

Abraham was called out from heathen surroundings, and "went out, not knowing whither he went." He had not before him a long list of persons who had tested the promises of God, and found them sure. So far as we know he had never been associated with any one who worshiped the true God. Still he had evidence enough. He had "two immutable things," the promise and the oath of God. But we have in addition to these a great array of men "subject to like passions as we are," who gained glorious victory through faith in God. Since they accomplished such great victories through faith, let us be encouraged to do likewise. If they, who had so much less light and encouragement than we have, preserved thus manfully, what patience and faith and zeal ought we not to exhibit!

The apostle declares that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have a whole." Rom. 15:4. Now there is to us abundant ground of hope in the lives of the patriarchs. We seldom take all the encouragement from the record of their lives that we ought. We are apt to imagine that those men were composed of different stuff from what men are now, that there was something peculiar to their natures which gave them favor with God. But this is not so. Some sin or weakness appears in the life of nearly every one. Human nature was the same in their day that it is now. Wherein, then, was their strength? Simply in this: They were able to take God at his word. It is written, "Abraham believed

God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness." All the difference between them and us is that they believed implicitly, while we doubt. But it is just as easy for us to believe as it was for them; otherwise there would be no propriety in giving them as our example. Indeed it ought to be easier for us, since we have their lives as assurance that God is "a rewarder of them that diligently see him." If human nature is the same now that it was then, we have the assurance that God is the same also, and is just as ready to give us his aid in transforming ourselves that we may be made partakers of the divine nature. The lives of these worthies, and the exhortation of the apostle, were not written for nothing. Will we give them the attention that they deserve? E. J. W.

*(To be Continued.)*

### **"The Obedience of Saul" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 7.**

E. J. Waggoner

When Saul was sent to execute God's judgment against the Amalekites, the command given him was "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." 1 Sam. 15: 3. This order was explicit enough certainly, and could not be misunderstood. All will agree that disobedience to such a plain command could proceed from nothing else but willfulness. Saul set out upon his mission, and smote the Amalekites, gaining a great victory. He did not, however, follow strictly the directions given him, for we read. "But Saul and the people spared the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them; but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly." Did Saul obey orders? There can be but one answer: He went directly contrary to them. Should a modern officer obey the orders of his superior no better than Saul, he would immediately be court-marshaled and shot.

But how did Saul excuse himself for such conduct? Did he shrink from meeting the man of God, and say that the order could not be executed? No, he came boldly forward and said, "Blessed be thou of the Lord; I have performed the word of the Lord." What impudent assurance! No wonder the prophet asked in astonishment, "What meaneth this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" Saul had his reply ready, and said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed."

From these answers of Saul's it appears that he really thought that he had obeyed the Lord. He doubtless reasoned thus: "The Lord wants all the sheep and oxen destroyed; but the end will be accomplished just as well if we offer them a sacrifice, as it would if we should slaughter them where they are. By saving them for sacrifice we can fulfill the command of the Lord, and at the same time offer him acceptable worship." Now it is very evident that such reasoning is not reasoning, but sophistry. If the Lord had desired that those and all should be offered in sacrifice, he would have said so; and although the Lord delights in

sacrifice, he cannot accept that which is made at the expense of obedience to his commandments. Saul's course shows that he was blinded by self-will.

There is a great deal of obedience at the present time of the same nature as this that we have just considered. In a conversation which we once had with a lady in regard to the Sabbath, she admitted that the seventh day is the Sabbath, just as the commandment says, and that it has never changed by divine authority; "but," said she, "we keep the first day of the week in honor of Christ; and the Father has such great love for the Son that anything done in his honor will be accepted as obedience." Just think of it. The Father and the Son are one; yet God will overlook this obedience to his plainest commandment, if the person declares it to be his intention to honor the Son. Has Christ commanded the observance of the first day? No. Never. Has either one ever said that such observance would honor Christ? Such a thing was never even intimated. Has not God commanded men to keep the seventh day? Yes; and in the same commandment he has told them to work on six days. And Christ was one with the Father before the worlds were made, and was associated with him in that work; hence the commandments of the Father are also those of the Son. Then how can anybody possessing reasoned imagination that breaking the Sabbath and observing Sunday, is an act of honor either to the Father or to the Son? This question is beyond our power to answer.

Under this same head comes Joseph Cook's reason (?) for keeping Sunday. He once wrote an article for the *Christian Union* on "The Sunday Question," which began thus:-

"If it be asked what is the biblical authority for the observance of Sunday, my reply must be that the sermon on the mount, in my opinion, recognizes the moral spirit of the whole decalogue. The sermon on the Mount affirms that not one jot or tittle of the law shall pass away till all be fulfilled. That does not mean the ceremonial law, but the two great tables of the older dispensation. No one pretends that the law in the decalogue against theft is repealed by the New Testament, nor that against adultery."

Truly that is a reason worthy of Saul himself. "We keep Sunday, because the law enjoining the observance of the seventh day is still in force!" This reasoning goes beyond Saul, for he intended to obey the Lord, at some future time, and in his own way; but Mr. Cook intends to obey the Lord in his own way, which is by direct disobedience.

Let us use this reasoning in the case of the other commandment. The first commandment says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Now why may not the heathen who has professed to be converted to Christianity say, "If it be asked why I worship idols, my reply must be that the commandments are recognized by the New Testament as of full force. The spirit of that law enjoins worship, but since the object of worship is not specified, we are at liberty to worship what we please." Is there a sin common to mankind that may not be justified by such reasoning?

Or he might say, The Lord takes great pleasure in the things that he has made. When he had to finish the work of creation, he pronounced it very good; and the psalmist says: "The works of the Lord are great;" "His work is honorable

and glorious;" "He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered." Now, reasoning as in the first instance, the heathen might say, "It is true that the Lord has commanded us to worship him; but I worship the sun and moon in honor of God's creation; and God thinks so much of his works that he will accept the sun-worship as obedience to himself." Why should the heathen be condemned for breaking one commandment and the Christians be justified for breaking another, for the same reason?

Do men think that they can deceive the Lord by such sophistry, and cause him to think that disobedience is obedience? Do they imagine that they will convert the Lord to their way of thinking? or that he will withhold punishment out of respect to their persons? If they do, let them consider the case of Saul, and its consequences, and take warning. E. J. W.

**February 22, 1883**

**"Thoughts on the Twelfth Chapter of Hebrews" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 8.**

E. J. Waggoner

"Let us lay aside every weight." The apostle here takes the figure from the running course, where the contestant before starting in the race would lay aside every superfluous thing. Nothing was retained that would in the least hinder his progress. So we must lay aside everything that would hinder our progress in the divine life. These weights are of various kinds; some we have by nature, and others we voluntarily assume. Their number is legion, comprising every sin and evil tendency common to mankind. Barnes well says that "some very light objects, in themselves considered, become material and weighty encumbrances. Even a feather or a ring-such may be the fondness for these toys-may become such a weight that those who wear them will never make much progress toward the prize." The original signifies something that may be hooked or fastened on. Constant watchfulness, therefore, it is required on the part of the runner, lest, after he has laid aside a certain weight, Satan, who is ever on the alert, may fasten it on again.

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"And the sin which doth so easily beset us." In addition to the "weights," of which different people have different kinds, there is a constantly recurring sin, to which all are liable, and which not only hinders our progress, but effectually stops it. If we trace the connection between this chapter and the two preceding chapters, we cannot fail to see that the sin to which the apostle here refers is the sin of unbelief. Chapter 10 closes with these words: "Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." The eleventh begins with a definition of faith, and continues with notable examples of it, showing that without faith it is impossible to please God. Then comes the exhortation which we are now considering. Many suppose that by "the sin which doth so easily beset us," the apostle means some especial



sin to which different persons are liable, differing in different cases. So we hear of impatience as the besetting sin of one person, and covetousness as the besetting sin of another. But the apostle speaks of "*the* sin," and not of the *sin* which so easily besets us. It is a fact that may be demonstrated, that lack of faith is the greatest source of trouble with every person, manifesting itself, of course, in many different ways. Lack of faith keeps back thousands from being Christians, and causes many professed Christians to stumble and fall by the way.

The word which is rendered "easily beset," does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It properly means "surrounding," and has been defined, "easy to encircle." Tindal renders it, "the sin that hangeth on us." Bloomfield supposes that it means "the sin which especially winds around us and hinders our course," with reference to the long garments worn by the ancients, which, if not removed or fastened up, would wind around the legs of the runner, and cause him to fall. In harmony with this view is the exhortation given to "gird up the loins of your mind," meaning to have faith.

How few there are who believe with all their heart. But a belief that admits of a doubt is not faith. True faith is that condition into which not the slightest element of disbelief enters. Who has the faith of Abraham, or Noah, or Moses? We think we have faith because we assent to the most prominent doctrines of the Bible, or to what is known as the "Third Angel's Message." A simple belief that Jesus is the Son of God, and that all the ten commandments are still as binding as when they were given, will not save anybody. "The devil's believe and tremble," but their belief is not imputed to them for righteousness; they are devils still. Genuine faith in the Third Angel's Message is evinced by a practical reception of all the truths brought out by it. Among them may be mentioned the spirit of prophecy. One who does not believe in this is not a believer in the message, for it is one of the main points. Compare Rev. 12:19 with Rev. 19:10, etc. But this also involves a practical belief in true temperance, for that is a vital part of the Third Angel's Message. True temperance, or health reform, as it is termed, has been declared to bear the same relation to the last message that the right arm does to the body. Then if we do not believe and practice it, our faith is a crippled faith.

We may also show our lack of faith by neglecting to render to God his dues. Among nearly all denominations the tithing system is now recognized as the Bible plan of supporting those who labor in the cause of God. It is founded on the same principle as the Sabbath-the right of property. "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord;" and whoever uses that time for himself takes that to which he has no right. So also "the tithe is the Lord's," and whoever does not return it to him is guilty of robbery. Men who would scorn to defraud their neighbors of a dime, will systematically rob God, and think there is no wrong done. The Bible bears no uncertain testimony on this point. In astonishment the prophet says, by direct inspiration from God, "Will a man rob God?" Some one will say, No; a man cannot rob God. But listen: "Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and in offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation." Mal. 3:8, 9. Abraham did not do so, for he paid his tithes to the Lord's servant. Noah, in gratitude for his preservation, sacrificed not merely one-tenth, but one-seventh of his property. The neglect to

honor the Lord with our substance, and with the first-truths of all our increase, Prov. 3:9, is a most flagrant manifestation of unbelief. God makes his care for us, both temporal and spiritual, dependent on our remembering him; but if we do not thus honor him, we intimate that we have no faith in his ability or willingness to care for us, or else that we lightly esteemed his protection. E. J. W.

**March 1, 1883**

**"Thoughts on the Twelfth Chapter of Hebrews" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 9.**

E. J. Waggoner

*(Continued.)*

"And let us run with patience the race that is set before us." The word of here rendered "patience," has the added the idea of "perseverance." The same word in Rom. 2:7 is rendered "patient continuance." Not only must we "endure hardness" as good soldiers, but must persevere in so doing. "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." King Darius bore the highest testimony to Daniel's Christian character when he said, "O Daniel, the servant of the living God, is by God, whom thou servest *continually*, and able to deliver thee from the lions?" and it is very doubtful if Daniel would have been so miraculously preserved if his service had been a fitful one. The figure itself which the apostle introduces—that of a race—implies constant progress. No man who runs a race with any intention of winning, ever stops in the course; much less does he ever turn back. "No man having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." The idea of continuity is still brought to view. We are to look to Jesus, to the exclusion of all others. Greenfield gives the following definition to the word rendered "looking;" "to look steadfastly, to be old, *i.e.*, to look away from all other things and fix the view on a particular object." In the ancient races, the one who had charge of the contest sat at the goal which the runners were to touch, and held the prizes up to their view. The runners, eager to win, could not look at anything else. If they turned their heads to one side, they would be impeded just so much, and would be in danger of losing the race. So in the Christian race, he who loses sight of Jesus, is lost.

This expression, "looking unto Jesus," cannot be dwelt upon too much. People sometimes look at others for the purpose of finding fault. No one needs to be told that this is all wrong. But there is another way in which we look at our neighbors, that is almost as productive of bad results. We sometimes contrast ourselves with those whom we think are better than we are, and who doubtless are better. We say, "If such an one has fierce struggles, and finds himself yielding to temptation, there is no use for me to try to overcome." This reasoning would be in order, if we were obliged to trust in our neighbors for help, or to depend on ourselves. But to all the exhortation is given, "Look to Jesus." We are to look to him for "grace to help in time of need." We are saved, not through our natural

goodness, but by the blood of Christ, and that is free for all. He has no choice of persons to whom he shall impart his grace, his love is infinite, and therefore can reach the vilest sinner as easily as if to one whose life has apparently been upright. Abraham was called the "friend of God," not because his natural disposition was better than that of anybody else, but because he believed God; and Cain was rejected solely on account of his lack of faith. We have no business to look at ourselves or others, or to compare ourselves with others. We have only one on whom to fix our eyes; and this is the faith they gives us the victory. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Christ is the author of the faith. Not merely of our faith, as our version has it, but of faith in the abstract. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." There can be no faith except in Christ; confidence put in any other is not faith, but presumption. We cannot save ourselves; neither can any man, or any system of man's devising saved us. Christ is also the protector of the faith. This may mean that the faith in is with him; that all faith, as we have just said, is centered in him. It is he, also, who presents the prizes at the end of the race. When we see him as he is, then faith will be lost in sight. There will no longer be any occasion for faith, for, as the psalmist says, we shall be satisfied.

*(To be Continued.)*

**March 8, 1883**

**"Thoughts on the Twelfth Chapter of Hebrews" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 10.**

E. J. Waggoner

*(Continued.)*

"For consider him that endured such contradiction of the ascenders against himself, lest ye be wearied, and faint in your minds." The apostle has given us exhortation based upon the trials and victories of the men of old, and now he directs us to Him who is our pattern. This is the same as in the preceding verse, where we are exhorted to look steadfastly on Jesus. From these two verses we learn that we are to ever keep in mind Christ's sufferings, the "contradiction of sinners." No one else ever suffered as he did; all the trials of the ancient worthies cannot compare with the sufferings of our Lord. But how will it benefit us to consider these things? In many ways. First, we must remember that it was as a man that Christ endured the temptations of Satan, and the mockings and persecutions of his enemies. He took upon himself "the form of a servant;" in all things he was "made like unto his brethren." He came to show that it is possible for man to resist temptation, and to overcome. In his own strength? No; Christ was in constant communion with the Father, and was given strength from Heaven. But he exercised no greater privilege than we are permitted to enjoy. We may have constant communion with Heaven. The reason why Christ was made like us was that he might sympathize with us in our temptations; "that he might be

a merciful and faithful High Priest." "For in that he himself hath suffered been tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." Heb. 2:18. Here we have the assurance that he understands our case, and knows how to give the needed help. "All power is given unto me in Heaven and earth." Matt. 28:18. By this we know that he is abundantly able to help those who are in trouble; the same help which he himself received when he was subject to temptation, he is able to give to feeble mortals. See also Heb. 7:25, etc. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. 11:28. Here he invites us to come and get the benefit of that strength which he has received on our account. The burden from which he wishes to relieve us is the burden of sin; it is the "weight" which Paul exhorts us to lay aside in order that we may successfully run the race.

Besides the assurance that Christ's example gives us that we may overcome, a contemplation of what he endured, of the sacrifice that he made for us, will tend to make us more content with our lot. Compared with his sufferings, all that we may be called upon to undergo is nothing. When we complain of the hardness of the way, and murmur at trials and crosses, is it not because we have not been thinking upon "Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself"?

"Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." The commonly accepted idea of this is, that those to whom the apostle was speaking here have not endured such persecutions for their faith as did the martyrs; but it seems that there is a deeper meaning than this; that the apostle refers to Christ himself. I can do no better on this point than to quote the following from Barnes:-

"I find in none of the commentators what seems to me to be the true sense of this passage, and what gives an exquisite beauty to it-the allusion to the sufferings of the Saviour in the garden. The reasons which lead me to believe that there is such an allusion are briefly these: 1. The connection. The apostle is appealing to the example of the Saviour, and urging Christians to persevere amidst their trials by looking to him. Nothing would be more natural, in this connection, than to refer to that dark night when the severest conflict with temptation which he ever encountered, he so signally showed his own firmness of purpose, and the effect of resistance on his own bleeding body, and his signal victory, in the garden of Gethsemane. 2. The expression, 'striving against sin,' seems to demand the same interpretation. On the common interpretation, the solution would be merely to their resisting *persecution*; but here the allusion is to some struggle in their minds against *committing sin*. The apostle exhorts them to strive manfully and perseveringly against sin in every form, and especially against the sin of apostasy. To encourage them, he refers to the highest instance on record where there was a 'striving against sin'-the struggle of the Redeemer in the garden with the great enemy, who there made his most violent assault, and where the resistance of the Redeemer was so great as to force the blood through his pores."

Compared with this mighty struggle of our Saviour, how feeble are our efforts to resist the temptations that beset us. And it is evident that we are expected not to give up without making such a struggle, if it be necessary in order to gain the victory. If it were not so, the case would not have been brought forward as an example. Who, then, has any business to be discouraged? "But," you say, "I am

too great a sinner; I have tried and failed so many times." That is not to the point. Christ died to save sinners. The Bible was written for the benefit of sinners; and all the promises which it contains are for the encouragement of sinners. All that is asked of you is to strive to sin no more, implicitly accepting the strength which Christ is able and anxious to bestow. Cannot overcome! The path too narrow! The temptations and natural inclinations too strong! How do you know this? You have not yet "resisted unto blood, striving against sin." You have not fully tested the matter. You have no right to say that you cannot overcome until you have put forth as great efforts as did the Saviour; and if you thus resist you cannot fail, for "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scoureth every son whom he receiveth." The comment of Barnes on this text is excellent, and I quote it:-

"The word here rendered 'chastening,' *-paideia*-and in verses 6, 7, 8, and the word which occurs in verse 9, and rendered 'corrected' *paideutas*-does not refer to affliction in general, but to that kind of affliction which is designed to *correct* us for our faults, or which is of the nature of *discipline*. The verb properly relates to the training up of a child-including instruction, counsel, discipline, and correction [see the use of the verb in Acts 7:22; 2 Tim. 2:25; Titus 2:12), and then especially discipline or correction for faults-to *correct*, *chastize*, *chasten*. 1 Cor. 11:32; 2 Cor. 6:9; Rev. 3:19. This is the meaning here; and the idea is not that God will afflict his people in general, but that if they wander away he will *correct* them for their faults. He will bring calamity upon them as a *punishment* for their offenses, and in order to bring them back to himself. He will not suffer them to wander away unrebuked, but will mercifully reclaim them, though by great sufferings. Affliction have many are objects, and produce many happy effects. That referred to here is, they are means of reclaiming the wandering and erring children of God, and are proofs of his paternal care and love."

It should be borne in mind, however, that God uses human instruments to perform his work. Men are employed to preach the everlasting gospel, and to direct the affairs connected with the church of God. If God chooses men to do his work, then he speaks through them, and these persons stand, as it were, in the place of God; they are his representatives. To rebel against their counsel or reproof, is to rebel against God. We see this illustrated in the case of Moses and the children of Israel.

But there are many who do not look at the matter in this light. If they are reproved, they make it a personal matter, and regard the reproof as persecution. Too many regard the church as a place of the enjoyment simply, and the service of God as a continual holiday. They mistake self-enjoyment for the enjoyment of religion, and think that they are enjoying much of the Spirit of God, because nothing happens to mar their complacency. As soon as something occurs, of the

nature to rouse them to a sense of responsibility, they are sure that something is wrong, and equally sure the fault is not with themselves.

An instance of this Spirit came under our observation some time ago. A member of the United Brethren Church was questioned rather closely by his pastor, as to his faithfulness in the performance of certain duties. The implied rebuke was not exactly welcomed, but it was well-deserved. But the self-righteous brother did not take kindly. In conversation with a friend soon afterwards, he expressed his determination to leave the church to which he belonged, and join the Methodists. Said he, "I want to go where I can feel at home and enjoy myself. I have not had real enjoyment since I belonged to this church." We thought that his estimate of the Methodist Church was anything but complementary.

If a person's sole object is to enjoy himself, why not leave the church altogether? If the state of feeling constitutes religion, then the unthinking the devotees of fashion and vice are truly pious. The devil does not trouble his servants; he is pleased to have them enjoy themselves. Not so the Lord. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." If we have wandered from the narrow path (and who is not in danger of stumbling?), we should rejoice that God does not leave us alone. It is an evidence that he loves us; that he has not cast us off as worthless branches. Is it wise to spurn the very proofs which God gives us of his love? No; rather let the language of Paul be ours: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or stored? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as if sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors for him that loved us." E. J. W.

**March 15, 1883**

**"Time of Christ's Resurrection.óQuestions" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 11.**

E. J. Waggoner

The following questions have been received from a subscriber who does not agree with the position taken in a short article a few weeks ago-that Christ rose from the grave on the first day of the week:-

"1. What are we to understand by Dan. 9:27: 'and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease'?"

The time mentioned in this chapter is prophetic time-one day standing for a year. The one week of verse 27 then, is seven years, and the seventy years, and the seventy weeks of verse 24 are 490 years. This period is divided into three portions-seven weeks, sixty-two weeks, and one week. The first two portions (sixty-nine weeks, 483 years) were to reach to the Messiah. Verse 25. They ended when Christ commenced his work as the Messiah, the Anointed, at his baptism. It was to this period that he referred when he went into Galilee proclaiming, "The time is fulfilled." Mark 1:15. But there yet remained one week (seven years) of the seventy weeks of years; and it was in the midst of this that

Christ was to be cut off, *i.e.*, crucified. In fulfillment of this, Christ was crucified just three and one-half years from his baptism. This is the interpretation given by all commentators; with it the prophecy is the strongest proof of the Messiahship of Christ; without it, the prophecy cannot be explained. We would ask our friend to give an explanation of this entire chapter, and tell us where the seventy weeks apply, if they are only 490 literal days. An attempt to prove from this chapter that Christ was crucified on Wednesday, will involve the person making it in hopeless confusion. For an explanation of this prophecy in detail, see "Thoughts on the Book of Daniel," for sale at this Office.

"Question is stated so obscurely that it is impossible to tell what is meant.

"3. Did the Passover that year come on fifth-day?"

It undoubtedly commenced at the close of the fifth day, or what we now term Thursday night. It was at this time that the Passover supper was eaten.

"4. Were their feast days ever termed Sabbaths? Lev. 23: 2."

Yes; read the remainder of Lev. 23, especially verse 32, and you can see for yourself.

"5. Could the women that saw where he was laid have had time to prepare spices before the weekly Sabbath, if it was sixth-day at sunset that he was laid in the tomb?"

"If it was sixth-day at sunset" that Christ was laid in the tomb, of course nothing could have been done after that before the beginning of the Sabbath, as it would have been already Sabbath. But where did you

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learn that it was sunset when the burial took place? The Bible does not intimate such a thing.

"6. Did not the earthquake happen at sunset (in the end of the Sabbath), the same time of day that he was laid in the grave? Matt. 28:1, 2."

No one can tell the time of the earthquake, since it is not revealed. The words, "In the end of the Sabbath," referred to the time when the women came to the sepulcher, and the earthquake had occurred when they made their visit. See margin of verse 2. Now are we to understand that the women came to the sepulcher on the Sabbath? Not if we have any regard for the harmony of Scripture, for the testimony of the most imminent critics. We regard it as beyond dispute that the accounts of this event as told by Matthew and Mark must agree. Mark says plainly that the visit of the women was "when the Sabbath was past." The best authorities translate Matt. 28:1 in harmony with this. This is done, not to strain the text to make it agree with a preconceived idea, but because it more clearly expresses the real meaning of the original. Thus Dr. Clarke says on this text: "*After the end of the week;*" this is the translation given by several eminent critics; and in this way the word *ophse* is used by the most eminent Greek writers." He quotes several passages from Greek authors, in which the word *ophse*, here translated "end," is used in the sense of "after." Campbell and McKnight's version of the text is, "Sabbath being over, and the first day of the week beginning to dawn." Dr. Barnes says, "The word *end* here means the same as *after* the Sabbath-that is, after the Sabbath was fully completed or finished."

We see then, from the combined testimony of the evangelists, that the visit to the sepulcher was made on the first day of the week; that Christ rose on the same day will be briefly shown in answer to the next question.

"7. Was Jonah three days and three nights in the whale's belly? If so, may we not conclude that Jesus was three whole days and nights in the heart of the earth?"

Yes; if you will first prove that Jonah was "three whole days and nights" in the whale's belly. You assume the very thing that ought to be proved in order to make your argument sound. But that *cannot* be proved, as the Bible makes no such assertion. It does say that "as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man the three days in the heart of the earth." Matt. 12:46. This gives us no more light than we had before; but by collating the texts which speak of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, we shall have an inspired comment on the expression, "three days and three nights." In addition to the one already quoted, we give the following:-

"From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go if unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again *the third day*." Matt. 16:21.

"And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him; and *the third day* he shall rise again." Matt. 20:17-19. See also chap. 17:23.

"And he began to teach them, that the Son of man, suffer many things, and the rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and *after three days* rise again." Mark 8:31. See also Mark 9:30, 31.

"Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted upon; and they shall scourge him, and put him to death; and *the third day* he shall rise again." Luke 18:31-33. See also chap. 9:22.

We have given all the different expressions used concerning this event. Remember that these texts are the language of our Lord himself, and that in all of them he is speaking of only the one thing. Now since we cannot allow that Jesus would contradict himself, or that he would state the case differently on one occasion from what he did on another, we must admit that the expressions, "three days and three nights," "after three days," and "the third day," all designate precisely the same period of time. Let this be borne in mind. Now one more text will show what Christ meant by the expression, "the third day." When told that Herod would kill him, he replied, "Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold I cast out devils, and I do curse to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected." Luke 13:32. This text cannot be made plainer by comment. No one would think that by it he meant to include more than a part of two days, with one whole day



intervening. But remember still that the expressions, "three days and three nights," and "after three days," are used of the same period of time.

One step more concludes this brief argument. Christ was crucified on Friday, and was buried toward the close of that day. We learn this from Luke 23:53, 54: "And he [Joseph] took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulcher that was soon in stone, where in never man before was laid. And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on." From verse 56 we learn that this was the weekly Sabbath, as it is distinguished as being the Sabbath of the commandment." See Ex. 20:8-11. Keeping in mind the fact that Christ was not to rise till *the third day*, we readily see that he could not have risen on the Sabbath, as that would have been only the second day. So we are forced to conclude that he rose on first-day; and this exactly fulfills his prediction, as we have already proved.

"8. Do not the Scriptures affirm that these things happened as he said before his crucifixion?"

Yes; see answer to question 7 for proof that they did.

"9. Do we gain or lose by compromising this question with our opponents?"

We always lose by compromising with the error, and we lose just as much, and even more, by denying a fact, no matter how important the truth which we are trying to sustain. Indeed, the greater the truth for which we are arguing, the more necessary is it that we make no false assumptions. Those who hold the view that our friend does, seem to think that it is impossible for an opponent to have *any* truth on his side. The Sabbath cause is not strengthened by such an assumption. There is probably no error that has not some truth in its composition. The reason why so many err in regard to Bible doctrine is not because they hold to no truth, but because they draw false conclusions from the truth that they do hold. Now we must reject their error, but we must not with it throw away the truth. Deadly poison may be carried in a silver cup; but we need not throw away the cup in order to get rid of the poison. Many persons argue most zealously that the fourth commandment is still in force, and binding upon all men, and claim that it enjoins the observance of the first day of the week. Shall we, in order to refute their claim, deny the fourth commandment? By no means; we simply show that their conclusion is unwarranted from their premises. So in regard to the question before us. First-day keepers, driven to extremities for a warrant for their practice, claim that the fact that Jesus rose on the first day of the week sanctifies that day. But their conclusion is unsound, for it has nothing to support it. The resurrection of Christ had no effect whatever on the Sunday. If anyone tells us that it did, we shall simply ask him to give us Bible proof of the fact. If he had risen on Sabbath it would not have added one whit to the sacredness of that day.

It is strange that our friends cannot see that by attempting to prove that Christ rose on Sabbath instead of on Sunday, they virtually admit that first-day keepers are correct in their argument. It is they, and not we, who are compromising with our opponents. By the course which they pursue, they proclaim their belief that the day on which Christ rose became in consequence of that action, the Sabbath. Now as you cannot convince a Sunday-keeper, or indeed anybody who carefully considers the matter, that Christ did not rise on Sunday, you lose all power to

convince them that the seventh day is the Sabbath. You can do nothing further with them.

These questions might have been considered at much greater length. If all the conflicting opinions had been given, one issue of the SIGNS would not have contained them. But, having considered them all, we have tried to state as clearly and briefly as possible the view that harmonizes with the Bible narrative. We have treated the subject at some greater length, not because we think the subject itself worthy of such consideration, but because we know that Sabbath truth is in danger of being brought into disrepute by the injudicious course of some of its friends. Truth differs from error in that it does not depend on technicalities. We are not obliged to resort to "doubtful disputations" in support of the Sabbath. God has spoken plainly in regard to it; and we can find no stronger evidence than the unchanging word of God. The Sunday lacks the support, as can be easily shown. God has made ample provision for the support of his truth; we do not need to manufacture evidence. It is a trick of the enemy to cause those who would defend the truth, to turn aside from the main point and discuss unimportant questions. Do not be thus deceived. We have an important truth to present to the world. Let us do it faithfully and understandingly, using the arguments that God has provided for us, and not those which the enemy would put into our hands. E. J. W.

**March 22, 1883**

**"The Complete Evidence for Sunday-keeping" *The Signs of the Times*  
9, 12.**

E. J. Waggoner

It is often the case when our ministers present the truth of the Sabbath question in a place where it has not before been preached, that they are met with this rejoinder from those who cannot but admit that their argument is sound, "That is *your* side of the question; now we want to hear our ministers present *their* side, and perhaps your position will not appear so strong; we want to hear both sides of the question." The desire to hear both sides of any subject is commendable, and our ministers usually gratify this desire by giving all the Sunday arguments themselves. But this often does not satisfy. The people want to hear the Sunday case presented by its own friends, so that they can feel assured that it is done in the best possible manner.

We have in our hands that which will certainly satisfy these anxious ones. It is nothing less than "the fullest authority" for Sunday-keeping. This means both that it is all the authority there is, and all that is needed. We advise all who have to meet the objection stated above, to carry this summary of the Sunday case with them, as it will be of value. Then they can give "the other side" as stated by one of its strongest supporters. The statement is found in the "Dictionary of the Bible," by Philip Schaff, D. D., LL. D., Professor in the Union Theological Seminary, New York, and one of the members of the International Revision Committee. So it is

no novice whose testimony we are giving, but one eminently qualified to present the case fairly. Here it is:-

"The Christian Church keeps the first day of the week, which celebrates the close of the spirituals creation just as the last day celebrated the close of the physical creation. We have the fullest warrant for this change. Upon the first day of the week Christ arose from the dead. We find the disciples, before the ascension, assembled on that day, and Jesus appeared to them. John 20:26. According to tradition, which is confirmed by every probability, the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost was on Sunday. Paul preached at Troas on the first day of the week-evidently, among those Christians, the day of religious service. Acts 20:7. Paul tells the Corinthians every one is to lay by him in store upon the first day of the week as he is prospered. 1 Cor. 16:2. It was upon the Lord's day-and by this name he calls it-that John on Patmos saw through the opened door into Heaven. Rev. 1:10."

We agree with the author that this is "the fullest warrant" for the change, in as much as it is all that can be produced; but we think even many observers of the Sunday, when they think seriously of the matter, will decide that the "warrant" is not full enough to warrant any one in putting confidence in it as the command of God. "Warrant" is defined by Webster as follows: "That which warrants or authorizes; a commission giving authority, or justify the doing of anything; an act, instrument, or obligation, by which one person authorizes another to do something which he has not otherwise a right to do." But it would puzzle the most acute lawyer to discover in the above simple statements anything having the nature of a commission, or act authorizing anybody to keep Sunday. If we may venture to criticize so great a man, we will examine the items of his statement one by one.

First. "Upon the first day of the week Christ arose from the dead." True, and we may also add that he was crucified on Friday. Both are interesting items of information, and that is all. His resurrection on first-day no more makes it the Sabbath than his crucifixion on sixth-day makes that they one. To make it a "warrant" for Sunday-keeping, a statement, or commandment to that effect is needed, from one having authority to issue commands. The changed commandment would necessarily read something like this: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, having first rested on the first day, for the first day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work. . . . For Christ rose from the dead on the first day; wherefore the Lord blessed the first day and hallowed it." It would not do to say, as the commandment does, that he blessed the Sabbath day, for since the first day had never been rested upon, it was not a Sabbath. But, no such commandment exists; not even a reference to it. And by the way, is it not singular that none of the apostles refer to the day of Christ's resurrection? They speak of his resurrection, and of the hope that we have through it; but they had not learned that the time of the event was of any significance whatever. That was reserved for men of more modern times.

Second, "We find the disciples, before his ascension, assembled on that day, and Jesus appeared to them." Admitted; but where is the "warrant"? We may add

that they were also assembled on Thursday, the day of his ascension, and Jesus met with them and blessed them. Did that make the fifth day the Sabbath? It does, if all that was required to make a Sabbath was for Jesus to meet with his disciples. There is precisely as much warrant in the Bible for keeping first day as there is for keeping Sunday.

Third, "According to tradition, the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost was on Sunday." And so our "warrant" depends on tradition after all. This would hardly be accepted as evidence in court. Moreover the tradition is not unquestioned, for many eminent commentators claim that Pentecost came that year on Monday; others claim that it was Sabbath. And most of all, it is of no earthly consequence on what day it came, since the day is not mentioned, and no intimation is given that it was henceforth to be a Sabbath. In order to furnish even a inferential evidence that it was to be a Sabbath, our friends must prove (1) that the day was Sunday; (2) that the Holy Ghost always was manifest upon Sunday; (3) that it never came upon any other day; and (4) that the outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon a company of people sanctifies the day on which it occurs. But none of these things can be proven, and if they could, the important thing-a commandment-would be lacking.

Fourth, "Paul preached at Troas on the first day of the week." True; and we also find that the inspired apostles, fresh from the baptism of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost, continued "daily with one accord in the temple," and that the Lord added souls to the church "daily." What an array of sabbaths there are for which we have "the fullest warrant."

But the Doctor says that this day was "*evidently* among those Christians the day of religious service." That means that the fact that the church at Troas kept Sunday is evident, easily to be seen, plainly manifest, obvious, clear to the understanding, notorious. But such is not the case, since there is no evidence that they had ever met together on the first day before, or ever did again. Nevertheless, Paul preached on a Sunday once, and if that doesn't make it the Sabbath, what would? Sure enough. Since Paul's action is to decide the case, let us examine it further. In Acts 13 we are told that Paul preached at Antioch on the Sabbath day; that he also preached on "the next Sabbath day." We also read in Acts 17:2 that at Thessalonica "Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures." Also that at Corinth "he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath day, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks." Acts 18:4. Is it not singular that our friends forget to mention these instances when they cite Paul's single sermon on the first day of the week as authority for the sanctification of that day? But we pass on, for we find no "warrant" here.

Fifth, "Paul tells the Corinthians that every one is to lay by him in store upon the first day of the week, as he is prospered." This laying by in store, was to be done at home, *i.e.*, each individual was to look over his accounts and deposit, in a drawer set apart for that purpose, a portion of the earnings of the preceding week. See Barnes, Scott, and others. So it seems that even business transactions make the day sacred. Or, perhaps the day is sacred to the

transaction of business. At any rate we look in vain at this simple statement for any command to keep Sunday.

6. "It was upon the Lord's day that John on Patmos saw through the open door into Heaven." Well, and what day of the week was that? "Oh, we have decided that it was Sunday. To be sure it was never before called the Lord's day, and the seventh day was so called; but that makes the difference. We are bound to keep Sunday, and want some warrant for it, so we call it the Lord's day. What! you want proof that John applied the title Lord's day to Sunday? Don't we do it? What further proof do you want?" Such, in substance, is the Sunday argument from Rev. 1:10.

We have analyzed our learned author's statement, and find no "warrant" at all. In the whole of it there is nothing which can be construed into a commission, or an act giving authority. If it had been

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previously declared to be wrong to keep Sunday as a Sabbath (as it really is in the fourth commandment), no one could gather from this summary anything that would justify him in so doing; but that, according to Webster, is what is required in order to constitute a "warrant." Such is the foundation on which the Sunday rests. Our only apology for taking up so much space with this matter is that it is confessedly all the argument which our Sunday friends have, according to the best authority in the United States. As we pause, it seems like a waste of time to review such "arguments," yet they are gravely put forth by a man who is doubtless not excelled in learning by any man in the country, and they are firmly relied on by thousands of intelligent and well-meaning persons. What is it that has so blinded the minds of the people? Dr. Schaff concludes his summary of evidence thus:-

"The first day of the week is there for the Christian Sabbath, the day of rest and worship." So he rests his case fully upon the evidence presented. He continues, "And God has further confirmed the change by giving it his blessing, as he blessed the sabbath of creation week." Where did he learn this? Where is it stated of the first day, as it is of the seventh, that God blessed it and hallowed it? Nowhere. Elihu, the friend of Job, said, "Great men are not always wise;" and we are reluctantly forced to add the statement that great men are not always honest. We do not take pleasure in speaking of the weakness or fault of any one, but we do take pleasure in being able to show that the Sunday Sabbath rests on simple assertions, and that the only one of these assertions which would in any way affect the nature of the day, is wholly false. It is in this way that the commandment of God has been made of none effect. We refer our readers to Eze. 22:26-31, quoting only verse 26, and leave them to make the application for themselves: "And her prophets have daubed with on tempered mortar, seen vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord God, when the Lord hath not spoken." May the Lord give the people a willingness to look for themselves, and see what the Lord really has spoken. E. J. W.

**April 5, 1883**

## **"Is It a Violation of the Sabbath?" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 14.**

E. J. Waggoner

From a gentleman in Iowa what we have received the following:-

"Several of my Adventist neighbors claim to conform to all the teachings of Bible, and still they tend to a great many horses, cattle, and hogs, and hitch up and drive their horses some nine miles to meeting on Saturday; I claim that every one of these acts is in direct violation of passages and the Bible. I refer to the fourth commandment, Ex. 23:12; 31:15, etc. F. C."

In answering this we will leave the hogs out of the question, and consider the stock merely as horses and cattle,—animals that are useful to man. The hog was an unclean animal long before the time of Moses, and his nature remains the same under the gospel dispensation. Man may be purified by the gospel; the hog never can. He is simply a scavenger, and should no more be raised and eaten than should the vulture or the buzzard. If the Sabbath is ever desecrated by the care of animals, it is certainly done when that care is bestowed upon the filthy swine.

But, hogs aside, is it a violation of the Sabbath to take care of stock on that day? The answering of another question will go far toward settling this. Is it right to keep stock at all? Most certainly it is, will be the reply of everybody. The commandment itself recognizes that cattle will be kept. They are necessary to man's existence. Then we answer that the person who has such a Pharisaic regard for the Sabbath that he will let the dumb brutes which are dependent on him suffer for food and water, would do well to "go and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." The Scribes and Pharisees accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath, because he healed the sick on that day; but he showed them, Luke 13:11-17, that to relieve the sick of their infirmities was as proper as to lead their dumb animals to water in order that they might not suffer. Both are acts of mercy, and as such may be done on the Sabbath-day, upon which it is lawful to do good.

Of course judgment must be used. We have simply stated the bare fact that it is proper to care for stock on the Sabbath. But we are aware that unnecessary work is performed on the Sabbath; many things are done that might have been provided for the day before; but this does not disprove the truth of our statement.

Now as to hitching up a team and driving to meeting. Whether or not this is a violation of the commandment depends on the purpose for which we go to meeting. The commandment says of "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all *thy* work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work." It forbids the doing of *any work*, and yet, by the express command of God, the priest did manual labor on the Sabbath-day, in preparing in changing the showbread, and making extra offerings, and were of course blameless. See Lev. 24:5-8; Num. 28:9, 10; Matt. 12:5. Why were they blameless? Because they were doing the Lord's work. Then we learn that when the commandment says that we shall not do any work it means that we shall not do our own work. So if we go to meeting simply for a pleasant drive, or to exchange gossip with acquaintances whom we cannot conveniently meet on any other day, it is

undoubtedly a sin; but if we go to worship God, it is pleasing to him. This will answer the objection on Ex. 23:12. If men may do certain work (the Lord's work) on the Sabbath without violating the commandment, then it is evident that they may use their beasts whenever it is necessary to the accomplishment of that work.

"It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath-day." This means not merely that we are permitted to do good on the Sabbath-day, but that we are under obligation to do so; "lawful" means, "conformable to law; constituted by law." If we do not too good on the Sabbath-day, then we are Sabbath-breakers. To lie in bed the greater part for the whole of the Sabbath, unless on account sickness or to lazily lounge about the house, is most emphatically a violation of the fourth commandment.

We do not know our friend's religious opinions, but we judge him to be one who does not keep the Sabbath, and who seeks to justify himself in his course by magnifying the real or imaginary faults of others. This is a very frequently done. But if this be his position he has condemned himself, for if he means what he says when he criticizes the action of his neighbors, he believes that the Bible teaches the observance of the seventh day. Then we would tell him in all kindness that their misdeeds will not justify him. If his neighbors are doing wrong, that will not excuse him for doing wrong too. If his neighbors do violate the Sabbath, that will not take away a particle of his guilt if he breaks it also. His only course is to set them an example of well-doing. But let him be careful not to base his action on a distorted view of a single passage. The Bible is not divided against itself, and no one can go astray who follows its teachings as a whole. As the gospel is of no force without the law, so the law cannot be understood without the gospel. "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh" both in the Old Testament and in the New. E. J. W.

**April 12, 1883**

**"The Sabbath-School. Acts 1:11-26; 2:1-21. Pentecost" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 15.**

E. J. Waggoner

### **Pentecost**

This was one of the three feasts of the Jews, at which all the males were required to appear before the Lord, at the place of the sanctuary. Ex. 23:14, 17; Deut. 16:16. The name is the English form of the Greek word *pentekostos*, meaning *fiftieth*. The feast received this name because it was celebrated on the fiftieth day from the second day of the Passover. It was also called "the feast of weeks." Ex. 34:22; Deut. 16:10. The particulars in regard to the time and object of this feast, and the ceremonies connected with it, are given in Lev. 23:15-21; but in order to understand it thoroughly it must be studied in connection with the Passover, the time from which the fifty days are reckoned. And since some have

a difficulty in tracing this connection, from a misunderstanding of the use of the word "Sabbath" in this chapter, we will refer to the points in regard to these two feasts.

1. The Passover commenced at the close of the fourteenth day of the first month. Lev. 23:5; at this time the paschal lamb was slain. Ex. 12:6.

2. The feast of unleavened bread commenced the next morning, the fifteenth day of the first month, and continued seven days. Lev. 23:6; Ex. 12:15, 18, 19.

3. This first day of unleavened bread was to be a holy convocation, and which no servile work was to be done. Lev. 23:6, 7; Ex. 12:15, 16. It was a sabbath (a rest) because they did no work in it; but it was entirely distinct from the weekly "Sabbath of Lord" (Lev. 23:38), for it came only once a year, and on a fixed day of the month, and consequently would not fall on the same day of the week for two years in succession. The people were also allowed to prepare food upon this annual sabbath, a thing which they were forbidden to do on the weekly Sabbath. Compare Ex. 12:16 with Ex. 16:23, etc.

4. On the second day of unleavened bread, the day following the "holy convocation," the priest waved a sheaf of the first-fruits of the harmless, before the Lord. Lev. 23:10, 11.

5. It was from this second day of the feast-"the morrow after the Sabbath"-that the fifty days were counted.

From these points will be readily seen that the feast of Pentecost was a movable feast, being celebrated each year on a different day of the week from what was the year before. It will also be seen that Pentecost fell on the same day of the week as the second day of unleavened bread, but fifty days later. So when the fourteenth day of the first month fell on Monday, the Passover sabbath would come on Tuesday. Wednesday would be the second day of the feast-"the morrow after the Sabbath"-and Pentecost would come on Wednesday, fifty days later. Thus, knowing what day of the week the Passover began in any given year, any one can tell on what day of the week Pentecost came up that same year.

To avoid all confusion, it should be remembered that the word "sabbath," in Lev. 23:15, 16, is used with two different significations. In the first instance, where we read, "the morrow after the Sabbath," the Passover sabbath is referred to-the first day of unleavened bread. In the second instance, where it says, "seven sabbaths shall be complete," the word means "week," viz., "seven *weeks* shall be complete." On this passage, Gesenius, in his Hebrew Lexicon, says: "Sometimes a *sabbath* is nearly equivalent to a *week*." Then he quotes verse 16, and says: "Here the *seven complete sabbaths* are parallel to the *seven weeks* of Deut. 16:9."

First-day writers give as one of their chief reasons for Sunday observance the supposed fact that the Pentecost of our lesson came on the first day of the week. Whether it did or not is a matter of no special importance, and we will not take space to discuss the question. There is, and doubtless always will be, a difference of opinion in regard to it, because there is a disagreement as to the time when the Passover commenced that year. Some claim that the lamb was slain on Thursday night, thus making Friday the first day of the feast, in which case Pentecost would have occurred on Sabbath. Others claim that Friday was



the fourteenth day of the month, the proper time for slaying the lamb, in which case Pentecost would have fallen on Sunday. If any one is curious to form an opinion for himself, let him decide from the Bible account, on what day the Passover began, and count forward. If it could be prove that it fell on Saturday, it would not add one whit to the sacredness of that day. The Sabbath depends on no such inference for its sacredness, but on the direct commandment of God. If it fell on Sunday, that day gains nothing by it, in the utter absence of any Scripture testimony for Sunday sacredness. After giving different opinions as to when this Pentecost came, Dr. Barnes says: "It is impossible to determine the truth on this subject. Nor is it of much importance." And this is the truth. Rev. C. H. Parkhurst, commenting on this point, artlessly says: "There is not an agreement of opinion as to whether the Pentecost of our chapter fell on Saturday for on Sunday. There is in the church an old tradition that it fell on Sunday. It certainly would be pleasant to suppose that such was the case." Before any argument for Sunday observance can be reasonably based on the Pentecost, it must first be proved beyond a doubt that Pentecost fell on Sunday, and then it must be shown from the Bible that the descent of the Holy Ghost made the day on which it occurred a holy day. As neither of these can be shown, the sacredness of Sunday exists only in the imagination of its devotees.

Among the multitude that assemble on the day of Pentecost there were two classes of hearers placed in strong contrast. First, there were "devout men;" men who were not merely pious, but were thoughtful, cautious, and circumspect. They were full of reverence toward God, and desirous of serving him; yet they would not jump at conclusions. When they served the Lord they did it understandingly. So when they saw the wonderful manifestations of the Holy Spirit, they inquired, "What meaneth this?" there was in this question nothing of ridicule or of obstinate doubt; but there was a spirit of earnest seeking for truth. There can be no question but that they were among the three thousand converts, for the Saviour said, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine."

But "others mocking said, these men are full of new wine." These persons are fairly represented by the seed sown by the wayside. Matt. 13:4, 19. Satan caught away the seed almost before it fell on the hard ground of their hearts. They were unthinking persons, whose strongest argument was a coarse jest. Their representatives are very numerous to-day. They oftener frequent barrooms than churches. Sometimes like Ingersoll, they are found in high positions, but they rarely lose the characteristics of their class. They have little influence over sober, thoughtful, intelligent people; yet they are active agents for Satan, for there is a large class who are deceived by them, thinking that their light, flippant way of treating things is a mark of superior wisdom. They themselves imagine that they have a logical mind, too great to stoop to entertain for a moment so foolish a thing as religion.

To carefully and candidly weigh a matter is a mark of a truly great mind. When a man stoops to ridicule and cast slurs upon that which he does not understand, he stamps himself at once as a man of feeble intellect.

There are some points in the portion of the prophecy of Joel quoted by Peter, that are worthy of note. It proves conclusively that we are living in the last days,

for if it was in the last days when Peter was preaching, how much more applicable must the term be now? The "last days" may include many days before the last day; that we are now in the very last days may be learned from other Scriptures.

It proves also that the gifts of the Spirit will be manifested, to a greater or less degree, even until the end of time; for the "last days" must include the last day. If it is true, as some claim, these peculiar manifestations of the Spirit ceased at the death of the apostles, then the Scripture has failed; but "the Scripture cannot be broken," we may still look for the out-pouring of the Spirit.

We must then expect prophesying and visions even until the end; and this is just what Paul brings to view in Eph. 4:8-13. It is not said that everyone shall prophesy, or see visions, or dream dreams, but the Spirit will operate this way upon some, "till we all come into the unity of the faith." There will always be many, as there were then, who will jeer and ridicule; but the "devout," candid persons will search to know what these things mean.

Others *mocking* said, "These men are full of new wine." There is a difference of opinion among authorities as to whether or not this "new wine" was intoxicating. Those who claim that it was, seem to derive their argument from Peter's defense-that they were not drunk. If it were true that the wine mentioned was of an intoxicating nature, the charge of drunkenness was most successfully refuted by Peter; for (1) it was not customary to be drunk in the daytime. See 1 Thess. 5:7; and (2) it was a regular practice with the Jews not to eat or drink *anything* until after the third hour of the day, on the Sabbath, and on all festival occasions. Sometimes they abstained from food and drink even till noon. So then it was impossible that they were drunk.

But the weight of evidence favors the idea that the wine of which they spoke was the unfermented juice of the grape. See article on page 177.

But if the "new wine" was not intoxicating wherein lay the force of the charge? Bear in mind that no formal charge of drunkenness was made against the disciples. "Others *mocking* said," etc. The original word occurs but in one other place in the New Testament, Acts 17:32. It means, to jest, to joke, to jeer, to ridicule, to laugh at. In this case the ridicule consisted, as Prof. Isaac Hall says, in the implication that the new wine would be too much for the weak heads that were turned with the new doctrine. The Syriac version favors this view, rendering the passage thus: "Others however ridiculed them, saying: They have drunken new wine, and are intoxicated." This would indeed be ridicule; but if we understand that they really charged the disciples with being drunk, then it ceases to be ridicule, and becomes a serious matter, especially as this was a solemn feast-day. But there is no reason to suppose that these persons meant to make any charge against the disciples; they were merely light-headed fellows who were unable to resist the temptation to a joke, in order that they might laugh at their own cheap wit.

Why, then, did Peter proceed to gravely refute the implied charge? Why did he not pass it by, or treat it as a joke? Because he was "filled with the Holy Ghost," and it did not become him to answer a fool according to his folly. The time was too solemn for jesting. Besides, the merest jest is often taken in

earnest, and repeated as a fact. Their words might reach some who were not present, and seriously prejudice them against the apostles' work. So with becoming dignity, Peter settles the matter beyond dispute, and then goes on with his discourse. Preachers in modern times, who are handling sacred themes, may safely follow Peter's example on this occasion. E. J. W.

### **"Establishment of the Sabbath" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 15.**

E. J. Waggoner

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." Ex. 20:8-11.

If there were no other facts given concerning the Sabbath than those contained in the above commandment, we would still have everything that is needed to guide us to its proper observance. Indeed, since it is the law on the subject, we should expect as much, even without reading it, for a law concerning anything must contain within itself all the affirmation necessary to enable one to obey it understandingly. This is the case with the other precepts of the decalogue. They are explicit, allowing no chance for differences of opinion. The only difference between the fourth commandment and the rest is that it is more full and explicit than any of them.

But the wise man has truly said, "God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions;" and for no purpose have "inventions" been more persistently sought out than for the purpose of the evading the plain import of this fourth commandment. Many are not satisfied with the simple reading of the law, vainly thinking that somewhere in the record of God's dealings with men, they will find that which will warrant them in disregarding his spoken word. It therefore is necessary to consider everything that has a bearing on the subject.

It is evident that a law can never mean anything more or less than it did when first pronounced. If the conditions on which the law is based change, or the will of the law-giver changes concerning these conditions, then the law itself may be changed; but such change must be clearly indicated. The terms of the law must be changed, for another law enacted with the express declaration that it is to supersede the first. Until this is done, the original law remains in full force, even though the will of the law-making power should change; for how can the people know the will of the power having authority, unless that will is plainly expressed?

Again, if any change in a law is made, the new law must not only be expressed in as clear language as the old, but it must be as widely circulated. All who are subject to the law and are expected to keep it, must be informed of the change, or else they cannot keep it. To punish a person for the violation of a law with which he had been allowed to become familiar, would be an act of injustice. God does not so deal with his creatures. In every instance when the execution of

his judgments is recorded, we are plainly informed as to the command which was violated; and a penalty is never threatened in the Bible without an explicit statement being made of what course of action will make one liable to that penalty. With these statements, we proceed to dissect, as it were, the Sabbath law, to see if it really means what it appears to; and we will also see if it has in any way been modified, or been superseded by another law.

It is evident from the reading of the fourth commandment that the Sabbath did not originate at Sinai, for we are referred to the creation of the earth, and told that at the conclusion of that work God "blessed" and "hallowed" the Sabbath day. It must, therefore, have been in existence at that time; a thing that has no existence cannot be blessed, neither can it be hallowed.

This will be still more evident when we consider the meaning of the word "hallow." Webster defines it thus: "To make holy; to set apart for holy or religious use; to consecrate." The word in the original is defined similarly. It is the same word that is rendered "sanctified" in Gen. 2:3, and "appoint" in Joshua 20:7. The fourth commandment, then, tells us plainly that God commanded the Sabbath to be kept holy in the beginning.

Turning to the first chapter of Genesis we read the record of the first six days of time, in which the heavens and the earth, and all that they contain, were created, the work of each day being specified. At the close of the sixth day God looked over the whole of his creation "and behold, it was a very good." He was satisfied with his work, because it was perfect. The record continues:-

"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." Gen. 2:1-3.

We have here the record of the first Sabbath commandment. That in Ex. 20:8-11 is the same in every respect, being simply a renewal of the commandment as given at creation. In the institution of the Sabbath there was a three-fold act on the part of God. First, he rested on the seventh day. This made that day Sabbath, for Sabbath means rest. Because the Lord rested, it is called the Sabbath, or rest, of the Lord. But this act did not place man under any obligation to rest on that day. If the record stopped here, we would have no interest in it except as a matter of history. Second, God pronounced a blessing upon the day. It was thus exalted above other days in that it was a Sabbath, and blessed; still these two acts were not sufficient to make its observance obligatory on man. Third, he sanctified the day, that is, set it apart for holy or religious use: he appointed that it should be regarded holy. This was the crowning act which placed man under obligation to keep it.

Let it be remembered that it required these three acts to institute the Sabbath in the beginning. It certainly can take nothing less to institute a new Sabbath, should there be such a thing; and therefore whenever we find men claiming that some other day is entitled to recognition as the true Sabbath, we have only to apply these tests: Did God ever rest upon it? Did he ever pronounce a blessing upon it? Did he ever pronounce it holy, and set it apart for sacred observance? If

these three questions in regard to any other day cannot be truthfully answered by a simple affirmation, then that day does not approach in honor and sacredness to the original Sabbath of the Lord. Man may rest upon any other day, and that day will thus become his rest, or sabbath; but man cannot pronounce a blessing upon the day, thus elevating it above other days, neither can he sanctify the day; he cannot make it holy, and he has no right to command anybody else to rest upon it. And since there is no record that God ever did these three things for any other day than the seventh, that day stands alone, distinguished above all other days as being the Sabbath of the Lord. E. J. W.

**April 19, 1883**

**"Extent of the Sabbath Commandment" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 16.**

E. J. Waggoner

Although there is no indication either in the Sabbath commandment as spoken from Mount Sinai, or as recorded in Gen. 2:1-3, the fact that many claim that it was limited in its application, makes it necessary for us to consider the question. For whom was the Sabbath sanctified? or, in other words, who were commanded to keep the Sabbath holy? When we consider that the day was sanctified, *i.e.*, appointed or commanded, in Eden, there can be but one answer: The commandment was given to those then living. It is not possible that it could have been otherwise; that the account here is anticipative, and that the Sabbath was then sanctified for the use of some future generation. For to every command there must be two parties: the *one* commanding and the *one* commanded. A command cannot be made unless some one is present to receive it. In this case God issued the command, and Adam and Eve were the ones to whom it was directed. But they represent all who should afterward live upon the earth. See Gen. 3:20. It follows, then, that the Sabbath commandment embraces the whole world; all who have descended from Adam and Eve.

In harmony with this conclusion we have the words of our Saviour, in Mark 2:27: "The Sabbath was made for man," this can be nothing less than the whole human race, for the word "man," when used without any limiting word, means "mankind; the totality of men." When the word is limited it means man to the exclusion of women; and no one will claim that women are not under obligation to keep the Sabbath, to whatever race or class of people the commandment is directed. No one will be found old enough to claim that the word "man" has a different meaning from what it has in Gen. 1:27; 2:7.

This being the case, it is manifestly improper to speak of the Sabbath as the "Jewish Sabbath," for it belongs to no special class of men. It belongs to no man at all, but is the property of God; he claims it as his own. See commandment, also Isa. 58:13, etc. If men, regardless of the commandment, choose to rest on some other day, they may call it *their* Sabbath, or give it the name they please; but the Bible speaks of only *one* Sabbath, and that is the one that the Lord claims as his own; to apply to that day any other term than that which the Lord gave it, is sacrilege.

We see that the commandment as given at creation and renewed on Sinai furnishes no warrant whatever to the idea that the Sabbath was to be local, or was given simply to the Jews. Not only this, but even in the Old Testament it is expressly stated that the Sabbath was not designed for the Jews alone. Thus we read: "Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil. . . . Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people." Isaiah 56:2, 6, 7.

The position of the commandment in the law of God is also enough of itself to convince any one that it is binding upon all men. Even profane persons will admit that it is wrong to take God's name in vain; and then claim that there is any privileged class who may swear with impunity. The fifth commandment is almost universally disregarded, yet no one thinks of asserting that its obligation does not extend to all mankind. The sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth are admitted to be of universal obligation, yet they are no more emphatic than the fourth, and the penalty for disregarding them is no more severe than that for violating the Sabbath commandment.

It is true that the Sabbath rests solely on the commandment. This is urged by some as an objection. They say that it was always wrong to kill or to steal, but was not always wrong to break the Sabbath, since the Sabbath did not always exist. As they claim that the Sabbath is not moral. To this we reply (1) That the Sabbath has existed ever since day and night existed; (2) That God has always been the Supreme Being, and it has always been wrong to disobey him. Therefore whenever he issues a command it is man's moral duty to obey. (3) The Lord claims the Sabbath as his own; he calls it "my holy day;" he has set bounds about it, and forbidden man to trespass upon it, he warns us not to venture to take it for our own use. Now if we violate this commandment, we take that which is not our own, and are guilty of that, a thing which is admitted by all to be immoral. Many other proofs might be adduced to show the morality of the fourth commandment.

There are some who, to get rid of the Sabbath, make the bold claim that none of the law is binding; that it is all done away, and that Christians are under no obligation to law. With such we have nothing to do at present. Even they bear witness to the fact that the fourth commandment is of as much importance as any of the ten, because they plainly see that in order to get rid of it they have to throw all away. The fact that law is a unit, that it stands complete as a whole, and cannot be divided, will be noticed hereafter.

But although "the Sabbath was made for man," it does not thereby become his property, to do with as he pleases. It was made for his use, not for his abuse. Paul, in 1 Cor. 11:9, says that the woman was made for the man. He does not mean that she was made to be the slave of man, who could be taken or put away at his pleasure, as in heathen lands, but that she was made as a help, a blessing

to man. So the Sabbath was made *for* man, *i.e.*, not against him; it was designed to aid him both spiritually and physically. A farmer who has hired servants may, in order to lighten their labor, buy certain tools for them. But no one would suppose that the servants would have any right to sell those tools which their employer had thus purchased. All would understand that he bought them for the servants to *use*, and to use in his service only. On this subject the "Speakers Commentary" uses the following forcible language:-

"On what principle of legislation can be maintained that, because laws are imposed by the ruler for the benefit of the subject, therefore they may be dispensed with by the subject at his own convenience? This is utterly untenable as regards all laws of man; still more as regards the laws of God." E. J. W.

### **"Faith and Presumption" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 16.**

E. J. Waggoner

A religious journal thinks that the following by a Sunday-school boy is the best definition of faith that it ever saw:-

"As near as I can make out, it is feeling perfectly sure of a thing when you have nothing to back it up."

But that is not a definition of faith at all. It is more nearly a definition of presumption; in fact, it is an exact definition of presumption. We have known persons to whom the truth of the Sabbath question had been presented, and who had tried in vain to find even an excuse in the Bible for Sunday-keeping, to settle down complacently into their old habits, expressing their firm faith that God would not punish them, because they had so much love for him. Now their condition is exactly expressed by the above definition; they felt perfectly sure of a thing when they had nothing to back to give up. They were positive that Sunday is the Sabbath, although they could not bring a scrap of evidence to support their belief. They had strong faith that God would not punish them for violating his law, although he has plainly declared to the contrary. They had no faith at all; they were simply presumptuous.

No doubt the man whose case is recorded in the sixteenth chapter of Numbers felt "fully assured" that he was all right. He did not believe that God was going to punish a man for so small a thing as picking up a few sticks on the Sabbath-day. He had too much faith in God and his goodness to think he would do such a thing. And yet his case is left on record as a typical case of presumption.

But "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the *evidence* of things not seen." That is the inspired definition of faith. It cannot be that our contemporary ever read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. There can be no faith without evidence. The Christian religion requires the exercise of less credulity than any other system of religion known. There are no men on earth who are so "perfectly sure" of a thing when they have "nothing to back it up" as modern infidels. They are always positive in their opinions, while at the same time they have literally "nothing" upon which to base them. According to the definition given, infidels would be men of the greatest faith; but they are simply terribly presumptuous.

We repeat, there can be no faith without evidence. The Christian may have the "full assurance of faith," and he has no lack of matter with which to "back up" his belief. We believe that there is a God, all nature declares the fact. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." The "invisible things" of God, *i.e.*, "his eternal power and Godhead," are clearly seen from the things that he has made.

We believe the Bible to be the true word of God, because the prophecies bear, beyond all cavil, the mark of inspiration, and their fulfillment cannot be denied. But the Bible is so harmonious, and all its parts are so closely interwoven that it all stands or falls together. Nothing within the range of human reason is so easily demonstrated, as that the Bible is what it purports to be, -one inspired word of God.

We can then rely on the testimony of the Bible as on first principles. So when it assures us that the Lord will come the second time, and that his coming is near, we know it; and we can point to the evidence. And when we are told that in order to enter into life we must keep the commandments, we dare not presume upon God's mercy by walking in a way which he has declared leads to death. We must confess to having so little faith that we cannot feel perfectly sure of a thing when there is nothing to back it up.

It is true that the Christian often seems, to the outside observer, to be walking blindly; to be accepting things as true, without having any evidence. But this is only seeming. It seems so because the skeptic looks at things from a different standpoint. A picture will often present a vastly different appearance when viewed in one position, from what it does to a person standing somewhere else. So there are things connected with God and his truth which worldlings can never understand. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Many things that appear perfectly reasonable to the Christian, and for which a perfectly logical reason can be given, are foolishness to the skeptic. It is as true now as ever, that "if any man will to do His will, he shall *know* of the doctrine." There is no guess-work about the religion of the Bible. E. J. W.

**April 26, 1883**

**"Comment on 2 Thess. 2:9" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 17.**

E. J. Waggoner

A question has been raised in regard to a statement on page 170, No. 15, of the present volume of the SIGNS, on 2 Thess. 2:9. The statement was: "In Paul's second epistle to the Thessalonians, he exhorts to be on guard, and not depart from the faith. He speaks of Christ's coming as an event to immediately follow the work of Satan in Spiritualism, in these words: 'Even him who's coming is after the working of safe and with all power and signs and lying wonders,'" etc. the objection is that the word "after," in this verse, does not convey the idea of time, but of matter, and that it means "according to," as it reads in the Revised Version.



In this case the "coming" in verse nine would refer to the Man of Sin; and the verse, instead of making a point in regard to Christ's coming, would simply teach that the work of the Man of Sin would be characterized by the spirit of Satan. We think it can be clearly proved that this verse refers to the time of Christ's coming, and not to the manner in which the Man of Sin does his work. The argument will consist of two points: First, that the word here translated "after," is often used with reference to time, and second, that the context requires that it should be so used in this passage.

It will be no news to state that one word often has a variety of meanings. This is not peculiar to the Greek or Latin; any one who is not aware of it, will need only to consult Webster's Dictionary to find that it is true of the English language. This very word "after" is a case in point. It is used, as in Acts 13:22, to express conformity with, in the sense of "according;" it is used to express difference in location, as, The books are placed one after another; also to indicate movement towards any object, as, The constable is after the thief; and it is very commonly used to express difference in time. No one has any difficulty in determining

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from the general tenor of the passage with which meaning is employed.

The word "after" in this case is from the Greek preposition *kata* (*kata*), which is used, in different constructions with a variety of meanings. It is often used to denote likeness, similarity, conformity with; but it is not true, as is intimated by those who claim that it should be so used here, that it never expresses time. We quote from the Lexicons those definitions of its use in the same construction as in the verse under consideration.

"VII. Of periods of time, throughout, during, for, *kata ton palemon* (*kata tou polemon*), during the war. *Kata Amansin* (*kata Amansin*), about the time of Amasis."-*Liddell and Scott*.

"(25) In definitions of time, during, *kata ton polemon*, at the time of the war."-*Pickering*.

"2. Of time, *i.e.*, a period of time *throughout, during, in, or at* which anything takes place."-*Robinson*.

Of the corresponding word in the Vulgate. "Andrews' Latin Lexicon" says: "In time or succession, *immediately after, after, next to*. (Quite classical.)"

Following are some of the instances of the use of the word in the Bible, to express the idea of time:-

"Now *at* that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired." Mark 15:6.

"Now *about* that time Herod the king stretched forth his hand to vex certain of the church." Acts 12:1.

"And *at* midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God." Acts 16:28. See also Acts 27:27.

"And the same time there arose no small stir about that way." Acts 19:23.

"For this is the word of promise. *At* this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son." Rom. 9:9.

"*Upon* the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store as God have prospered him." 1 Cor. 16:2.

"Thou, Lord, *in* the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth." Heb. 1:10.

We have now only to see if the word is used in this sense here. If we trace Paul's argument through, we shall see that *time* is the thing. In the fourth chapter of the first epistle he speaks of those who are asleep, and says that they shall be raised when Christ comes. In the fifth chapter he says, "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief;" the brethren know of the times and the seasons. Again in the first chapter of his second letter, he refers to the second coming of Christ, and tells (verses 7-9) what shall then take place. Then he proceeds, in the second chapter, to correct the idea that some seem to have gained, that the day of the Lord was at that time near at hand. Before that day should come, he said, there would be a falling away, and the Man of Sin would be revealed. In verses 3, 4 he fully describes the nature of that power, and its manner of working, and says that it will continue until the Lord shall consume it with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy it with the brightness of his coming. Then, with the idea of Christ's coming still uppermost, and the reference to it fresh from his pen, he says, "Whose coming is after [or, at the time of] the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." It must be evident to all that the word "coming" in verse nine refers to the same thing as the same word in verse 8, viz., the second advent of Christ; so the word "after" must refer to time, for the apostle would not say that the coming of Christ is according to the working of Satan.

That the connection between verses 8 and 9 is very close will be clearly seen when we understand that the words "even him" form no part of the original. They were supplied by the translators, for no reason except that they thought that the reference was to the Man of Sin, and wished to make that idea appear. There is absolutely nothing in the Greek, from which the words "even him" could be translated. Let anyone read these verses 8 and 9, leaving out these two supplied words, and he will at once see that the ninth verse refers to the time of Christ's coming. Thus: "And then shall that Wicked be revealed whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of is coming; who's coming is after [at the time of or next to] the working of Satan and with all power and signs and lying wonders." Or, to make the case still plainer, instead of repeating the noun, substitute the appropriate pronoun in its stead, and it would then read, "Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming, *which* is after the working of Satan," etc. The apostle is simply carrying out the idea with which he started, and states an additional factor in regard to the time of Christ's coming.

As corroborative proof we refer to Matt. 24:24, 27. The Lord there says that just before the second advent "there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." This harmonizes exactly with 2 Thess. 2:8-10.

Again, the thirteenth of Revelation brings to view a work which will immediately precede the second coming of Christ. It is the last great effort of Satan against God's Government. The case is precisely the same as that in 2 Thess. 2. An attempt is to be made to enforce the mark of the beast (this beast in 2 Thess. 2, is called the Man of Sin) upon all men. To aid in the accomplishment

of his designs, Satan brings to bear his masterpiece of deception,-Spiritualism-as shown in verses 13, 14, working wonderful miracles in order to beguile men into accepting a lie as the truth. Compare with this 2 Thess. 2:10-12. So wonderful are his miracles that, as Christ says, if it were possible, even the people of God would be deceived. But this is not possible; the conflict will be sharp and short: the decision between truth and error will be quickly made in the minds of men; and the Lord will quickly come to reward his own.

One more text: In Rev.16 we have the same deceptive work brought to view, and, as already seen, it immediately precedes the coming of the Lord. "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs, out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirit of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief." Rev. 16:13-15.

All these passages harmonize and show that the coming of the Lord will be the next thing after Satan has performed these deceiving miracles, which have not as yet taken place, but which cannot be far in the future. Thus the rise and progress of modern spiritualism is a most interesting study for those who are looking for their Lord's return, since the rapidity with which that delusion spreads shows beyond a doubt that the great day of the Lord is at hand. E. J. W.

**May 10, 1883**

**"The Sabbath-School. Acts, Chapter 5" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 18.**

E. J. Waggoner

**LESSON FOR THE PACIFIC COAST - MAY 19. ACTS, CHAPTER 5.**

Daily reading in Connection with the Lesson.

### **NOTES ON THE LESSON**

There are probably very few who really comprehend the crime for which Ananias and Sapphira were punished. It has been customary to refer to them and to their punishment as an example of what an awful thing it is to lie, and of the terrible consequence of lying. Now while it is impossible to exaggerate or even to fully comprehend how heinous a sin lying is. It is a fact that simply lying is not the sin for which these unfortunate persons suffered. Their sin was hypocrisy of the worst kind. They wished to have a reputation for generosity and benevolence, without the necessary self-denial. In the high priest's palace, Peter himself had told an open lie, and had added profanity to his lying. In his case it was unpremeditated; he fell under the temptation almost before he was aware of it.

But in this case there was design; Ananias and his wife had agreed together to practice this deception, and they dared to persist in it even in the place of solemn prayer. They lied to the Holy Ghost. If Peter had not questioned them,

they would have simply handed in a part of the money and said nothing; but there sin would have been the same. Their lying words to Peter were wicked, but the enormity of their crime consisted in their desire to appear better than they really were. From this we may learn how God regards the hypocrite. There are many ways in which we act the same part. God does not punish every case of this sin as he did in this instance, but he takes notice of it none the less, and at the last day, "will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts." 1 Cor. 4:5.

But even hypocrisy was not the whole of their crime. The text says they "kept back" part of the price of the land. The original word occurs elsewhere but once in the New Testament, Titus 2:10, where it is rendered "purloining." Greenfield defines it, "to keep back anything unlawfully, secrete, purloined, and embezzle." The case, then, was this: It was understood that those who at that time sold property, did it not for gain, but for benevolent purposes. Whether they had made a formal vow or not, the act of selling the land was evidence of at least an outward consecration of it to the cause of God. And yet so lightly did they regard their vow that they dared to appropriate a portion of the property to their own use. But this was simply stealing, for as soon as the decision was made to devote the proceeds of the sale to the cause, the land belonged to God. Then we may also learn from this how serious a matter it is to vow to the Lord and then neglect to pay our vows. It is a terrible thing to refuse to help support God's cause, but it is still worse to vow and not pay. No wonder the question is asked in astonishment, "Will a man rob God?" Let each one ask himself this question.

The signal manifestation of the wrath of God upon the dissemblers was a check which Infinite Wisdom knew was needed. The church would have been disgraced, if, in the rapid increase of professed Christians, there were persons professing to serve God, but worshiping mammon. There are many Ananiases and Sapphiras in our day, whom Satan tempts to dissemble because of their love of money. By various plans and the excuses they withhold from the treasury of God the means entrusted to them for the advancement of the cause of God. Should the punishment of Ananias and Sapphira be visited upon this class there would be many dead bodies in our churches requiring burial. -*Spirit of Prophecy*.

"And of the rest durst no man join himself to them, but the people magnified them." Verse 13. This passage is rather obscure, and various fanciful opinions are given by different commentators in regard to it. The following seems to us the most reasonable explanation of it: There is a contrast between "the rest" and "the people," the former term being used with reference to the wealthy class, to which Ananias evidently belonged, and the latter term being applied to the common people. We learn from this verse, then, that the judgment upon Ananias and Sapphira accomplished just what was intended,-it kept the young church free from those who would use its growing popularity as a means of gaining honor for themselves. The church of God was never intended to be used as a means of gaining access to "good society."

"Ye intend to bring this man's blood upon us." These wicked rulers had no fear of God before their eyes, but they feared the people. Verse 26 says, "They fear the people lest they should have been stoned." The people had been healed

in the name of Jesus; but every sermon of the apostle showed that the Jewish rulers had crucified him. The rulers did not by these words intend to deny that they had put Jesus to death; they simply showed that they feared the consequences if the people should have the matter set before them in its true light.

"We ought to obey God rather than men." This is a truth which is recognized by all, and acted upon by but few. A writer in the *Christian at Work* truly says: "In all human things it is our duty to be submissive, as Paul shows, to the government under which we live; but in divine things, where God speaks and his voice is against the decree of government, we are justified in disobedience." But who cares to disobey a decree of men, that he may obey God? There are few, but the majority of those who read of and approve the apostle's course, dare not take their stand upon an unpopular truth, against which there is no positive law. The most weighty excuse that can be urged against the keeping of the Sabbath of the Lord is that it is peculiar and inconvenient. It is easier to approve of the good deeds of men in past ages than it is to follow their example. But if we approve of their course, we condemn ourselves if we do not do likewise.

"But," some will say, "we are commanded to be 'subject unto the higher powers,' and are told that 'whosoever resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God;'" so then, if the Government should command us to observe the first day of the week, it would be our duty as good citizens to obey." But the example of Peter and John, of Paul himself, of Daniel and the three Hebrew children, is sufficient to teach us that Paul in Rom. 13 refers simply to ordinary, human affairs, and not to matters of conscience, for which a person is answerable to God alone. The saying, "The voice of the people is the voice of God," is one of Satan's lies; "The carnal mind is enmity against God."

While we cannot obey earthly governments when they come in conflict with the law of God, we need not resist them. This point is well put by Dr. Lyman Abbott, as follows:-

"The church may impose the creed or the ritual against which the conscientious judgment of the individual revolts; the State may call upon the Quaker to bear arms in war; and thus not merely the opinion or taste of the individual, but his conscience, may be brought into collision with the judgment or even the conscience of the community or the family. What then? The answer of the Scriptures to this question is plainly *submission, but not obedience*. The individual is not even then to set the community at defiance by resistance; neither is he to yield to the community by acquiescence. He is simply to disobey the law, act on his own conscience, and accept the consequences. Thus Daniel, forbidden to pray, raised no revolts against the palpably unjust decree, but prayed and bore the penalty. Thus the apostles, forbidden to preach, organized no resistance to the probably illegal decree of the Sanhedrin-for freedom of speech was a constitutional right in the Jewish Commonwealth-but went on with their preaching and submitted to arrest and trial."

"And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name." The apostles had been beaten-a punishment that carries with it more disgrace than anything else. And yet they

rejoiced. As we study the lesson, it is easy for us to see why they should rejoice; but how would it be if we were in similar circumstances? If we think that we would do as they did, we can easily test the matter. If we endure the little trials that befall us, uncomplainingly; if we are patient under abuse or ridicule, then it may be that we could rejoice in persecutions. It is not a hardship, but a privilege, for the Christian to suffer for Christ. It is accounted as much a blessing as it is to be allowed to believe on him. Phil. 1:29. See also 1 Thess. 3:3; 2 Tim. 2:12; Matt. 5:10-12. E. J. W.

### **"Visit to Healdsburg" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 18.**

E. J. Waggoner

The meeting at this place was in many respects one of the most important that has ever been held in the State. Many advanced steps were taken; and the plans adopted, if properly carried out, cannot fail to have an influence on the cause for good, until the close of time. These things will appear more fully in the official reports of the business meetings, and in special report. We design to simply speak of the general features of the meeting, and give some items in regard to the work here, in which all our people on the coast have, or should have, an interest.

Friday afternoon was devoted to a meeting of the stockholders of the College. On entering the building we were struck with the floral decorations of the school-room. The busy hands of students had been at work, and the doors, chandeliers, rostrum, organ, and clock had been neatly ornamented with roses and evergreens. We are pleased with this, not so much for the decoration itself, as for the evidence it afforded that the students have a love for the school-room, which can only come from a love of the studies there pursued.

The favorable impression thus received was deepened by a brief visit to the school on Monday. About ninety students were present, and quiet study seemed to be the order of the day. The professors have naturally felt a little discouragement because as yet there are no students in the higher branches; but we could see no reason for discouragement. The recitations showed that the students have already received a discipline of mind that will not readily be lost; they are forming correct habits of study, which is the essential thing. These things would be more readily noticed by a visitor than by one closely connected with the school. We can most heartily recommend the Healdsburg College; and we feel assured that the improvements and contemplation by the professors, who are devoted to the work, will add a hundred-fold to its usefulness. Opportunities for mental and spiritual culture are here afforded, which it would be a sin for our people to neglect.

We were much pleased to note the interest manifested in the Sabbath-school. This is now the second school in size in the State, and with the influx of students will doubtless soon be the first. The school will be, from the nature of the case, the most important school in the State. An increase in numbers will bring increased responsibility in far greater measure than in ordinary cases, for as the students go to their homes, the influence of the school will be felt on all the

schools on the coast. We believe that the officers of the school realize this responsibility, and will do all in their power to make the school what should be. We hope that all who attend will second their efforts.

There has been a vast improvement in this school since we were there last. The organization of the school is good, and there seemed to be a feeling of harmony present. At the teachers' meeting Monday evening twenty-one of the twenty-five teachers were present, and a good degree of interest was manifested. So long as an interest is kept up in the teachers' meeting the school cannot fail to prosper. But it should not be forgotten that united prayer is one great object of this meeting.

There is but one thing now lacking, and that, unfortunately, is not peculiar to the school. The same lack exists in Oakland, and we believe it exists in all our schools, and among our people generally. There is a lack of appreciation of the importance of the Sabbath-school work as supporting discipline of mind and a thorough education, in the things of God. There is a lack of thoroughness in Bible study. The Sabbath-school has been regarded as different from the day-school, and that it was not expected that the lesson should be learned *perfectly*. There has been such an apparent fear of formalism, and a desire to be able to generalize and state things in our own language, that we have neglected that accurate knowledge of the Bible which alone can enable us to generalize. The particular is before the general. Before we venture to state a Bible event or truth in our own words, we must be familiar with the words of the sacred text; then, if necessary we can paraphrase. But the instances where it is necessary or proper to change the expression in the least, in order to convey its exact meaning, are more rare than is commonly supposed.

This thoroughness of work depends on the individual members of the schools. The officers and teachers cannot demand a perfect recitation, as they would in ordinary schools, however much they may desire the result; but if each member of the school will realize the importance of being able to think and talk in the language of the Bible, especially in these last days, our schools will be improved a thousand-fold.

The sermons during the meetings were by Elder Haskell, Elder Waggoner, and Sister White. They were all of a practical nature, designed to show us the necessities of our present position. Sister White's two sermons were mainly on the subject of the atonement, especially Christ's closing work in the heavenly sanctuary. Christ will soon cease his pleading, and probation will close for all mankind. We know not how soon our individual cases may come up for decision. As on the typical day of atonement the people were to afflict their souls, so in this most important time, there should be an absence of lightness and frivolity, and, in their stead, the searching of heart and entire consecration to the work. The cause of God is all-important, and we should learn to attend to its once in preference to our own work or pleasure.

Elder Waggoner spoke Sabbath afternoon from the fifth chapter of Peter's first epistle. We are commanded to be sober and vigilant, because the devil as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. The inference is plain that those who are not thus watchful will be devoured. We are helped in this by

casting all our care on God, who cares for us. Too often we feel great confidence in God in times of comparative safety, but foolishly attempt to care for ourselves when we see trouble and danger. He dwelt much on the text, "Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility." A failure to comply with this injunction is because of all the church difficulties that exist. Many persons quit the service of God because of some grievance, oftener imaginary than real, which they have received from their brethren. The wickedness and absurdities of such a course was vividly illustrated as follows: "I have a father who is kind and loving, lavishing on me every gift that heart could desire. Nothing that is good is withheld from me. He studies my needs, and anticipates my slightest want. But I have a brother who is selfish, and who slights and even abuses me, contrary to my father's will. Now because of this petty slight from my brother, I will turn my good father out of doors, and refuse to have anything more to do with him!" We believe that many made a profitable application of this sermon to themselves.

Friday afternoon Elder Haskell spoke briefly of the Waldenses, whom he visited on his recent trip to Europe. He spoke of the persecutions which they had suffered for their unswerving devotion to the truth of the Bible. Their children were instructed from the Bible, and were taught to love it. The Bible was their text-book, and their characters were molded by it. The result is seen in their descendants, who are characterized by a sturdy simplicity and uprightness that is in marked contrast to the morality that prevails in Southern Italy, where Catholicism has borne sway, and the Bible is almost an unknown book. These people are already to receive the whole truth of God, but where are the men who have the knowledge, the missionary zeal, and enough of the Spirit of sacrifice to go and instruct them in the way of life? A strong appeal was made, and both speaker and congregation were deeply affected. His sermon Sunday morning was on the subject of faith applied especially to labor in the cause of God.

These plain testimonies and earnest appeals were not without effect. As one brother remarked, "Any one who could go through these meetings and not be stirred with a desire to labor in God's cause, is in a hard case." Eight or ten students volunteered to spend their vacation in the missionary field, in active service. With most of them this is their first attempt. Others, who are not able to go into the field, will engage in the work at home. If the students spend their vacation in earnest, conscientious labor, they will not only be a great blessing to the cause in this State, but their own souls will be watered, and they will enter upon the work of the next college year with clearer minds and enlarged ideas, much better prepared than now to profit by the instruction which they will receive. We hope to soon see the number of earnest missionary workers who shall go out from the college largely increased. E. J. W.

**May 17, 1883**

**"The Sabbath-School. Advantages of Bible Study" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 19.**

E. J. Waggoner



## Advantages of Bible Study

One great benefit to be derived from the study of the Bible is mentioned by Paul, when he says 2 Timothy, "from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make the wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." This is why the Bible was given. It is the revelation of God's will to man. Nowhere else can man learn his duty to God and his fellow-men. Those nations that have not the Bible are sunk in degradation and crime. In ancient Greece and Rome, although there was culture and wisdom of a certain kind, which are the admiration of the world to-day, the greatest crimes were openly committed, and even protected by the laws. There is nothing that will teach men what they ought to do in order to live happily and peaceably here, and worthy of a life hereafter, except the Bible.

And the Bible is a complete rule of faith. As Paul further says, it "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be *perfect, thoroughly furnished* unto all good works." It contains, then, all that is absolutely necessary to be understood by mankind. A little thought will convince anyone that this is so. All will agree, in answer to our Saviour's question, that it will profit a man nothing to gain the whole world and lose his soul. All the wealth, honor, and wisdom that this world affords, cannot for a moment be compared with that which eternity offers. A man may have all that this world can give, yet if he is not "wise unto salvation," he loses it all, and is as though he had never acquired anything. But though he be destitute of worldly riches, and ignorant of the things which the world calls wisdom, if he only has the "wisdom that comes from above" (James 3:17) he will finally be admitted into "a better country," where, with unclouded intellect, and the angels of God for teachers, he can in a few years learn more than his unbelieving neighbor did in a life-time. And then he has a whole eternity before him, in which to explore new fields, and increase in knowledge.

It is only through the Bible that we learn of Christ, without whom we cannot hope for eternal life. The Bible is the instrument through which the Holy Spirit works, and guides us into the ways of truth and knowledge. It is the Bible alone that teaches us the fear of God,- which the wise man tells us is the beginning, or rather, the principal part, of knowledge. Surely, then, the Bible, of all books, is the one that should be the most studied. The only reason why we study it so little, is because we underestimate "the things that God hath prepared for them that love him," and which can be gained only by careful study of, and obedience to, his word; we appreciate the things that we see, more than those which are unseen. If we could obtain a glimpse of the glories of Heaven, I believe we would take the course necessary to gain it, even at the expense of everything else.

But this is not all the benefit we gain from the study of the Bible. We do not mean that anything more or better can be gained than that of which we have just spoken, but that we do not have to wait till we get to Heaven, before we begin to reap the benefit of Bible study. The apostle Paul says of godliness that it "is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which

is to come." So the Bible, besides showing us the way to eternal life, gives wisdom and a culture that can be obtained from no other book in the world. The psalmist says: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a *good understanding* have all they that do his commandments." This also is susceptible to proof, as we shall show.

What is education? It is simply the development of the mind. Webster says: "Education is properly to draw forth, and implies not so much the communication of knowledge, as the discipline of the intellect, the establishment of the principles, and the regulation of the heart." To educate is "to lead out and train the mental powers." According to this, any one can get a thorough education from the Bible alone. Children go to school, and men go to college, not for the few facts that they may learn, but for that development of mind that will enable them to think correctly, and to reason soundly, and to judge correctly of things. In order to gain this, years are spent in the study of what is called the classics-the productions of the great minds of earth. By closely studying these models, the student almost unconsciously makes them his own. By unraveling the deep sayings of the wise men, he becomes able to think deeply for himself. By daily reading the writings of the best authors, he learns how to use language, and acquires a good style of expression. Continued application increases his ability to receive ideas and make them his own, and to think for himself; it expands his mind; in other words he is educated. A man who has the will to apply himself in this manner may become as truly educated as though he had every advantage of the schools.

But will the study of the Bible furnish this culture of mind? It certainly will, and more. Let us reason upon it. Sin has brought disease and death into the world, and causes not only physical ailments, but mental weakness. Mankind has degenerated mentally as well as physically. The men from whose writings thousands gain their mental discipline, were weakened mortals. They were subject to the curse. Although we speak of them as having "giant intellects," they were dwarfs beside what they would have been had their ancestors never transgressed moral or physical laws. Many of them were themselves wicked men, men who were slaves to their appetites and passions. And yet from these men the culture of the world is derived.

Now consider the Bible. It was not written by sinful men, but "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Pet. 1:19. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." God is the source of all knowledge. These men of whom we have spoken were dependent upon God even for the mind with which they acquired their wisdom. Now is it possible that we can obtain more education from them than from the Fountain-head? Most assuredly not. Peter says that the Spirit of Christ was in the men who wrote the Bible, and that even angels desire to look into the things that were revealed to them. Surely, the Bible contains enough to draw out the mind of man to an unlimited extent. We repeat, then, without any fear of successful contradiction, that if a man were to study no other book but the Bible, and would apply himself to it as closely as men do to their ordinary studies, he would have a discipline of mind far greater than those would have who took the ordinary course of study.

In the Bible we have many varieties of style, as the Spirit worked through different minds. A complete code of laws is open to the student. All human laws are derived from this source. If we wish to develop the reasoning faculties, Paul's epistles afford an ample field. If we wish to cultivate the memory, there is an abundance of history for us to learn. In short, whatever we desire in the line of knowledge may be found in the Book of books.

This mental culture is not the primary object of studying the word of God. The Bible was given that we might learn God's will; but in studying to learn that which is of the greatest importance, we necessarily acquire that for which so many in the world strive, often in vain. And thus it is that God withholds no good thing from them that walk uprightly. If we seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, all things necessary will be added unto us. We serve ourselves best by serving God.

Let no one, then, complain of meagre opportunities, or waste of time in vainly wishing for knowledge. If we wish to obtain treasures we must dig for them. All have the Bible. It is God's gift to man. It was not designed for a few favored ones, but for all. Its pages are open to all. And here the unlearned man may be on a level with his more favored neighbor, if he only has sincere love for its Author; for "if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." And help is given that the ordinary student knows nothing of. "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."

In conclusion, it is not merely our privileged to avail ourselves of the wisdom and a culture which the Bible affords, but it is an imperative duty. We are commanded to "search the Scriptures." Every individual must arm himself with "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." And this is the object of the Sabbath-school, to educate us in the things of God. The lessons given us there to study, form a nucleus around which we may gather vast stores of Biblical knowledge. How many are there who think that the Sabbath-school as well as the day school affords opportunity for mental training? There are possibilities in the Sabbath-school of which few of us have even dreamed. May God help us to avail ourselves of them in so faithful a manner that they will not condemn us in the final day of accounts. E. J. W.

### **"Baptism.óA Review" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 19.**

E. J. Waggoner

A correspondent in the East sends us a copy of the *Christian Intelligencer* of April 11th. with the request that we notice an article which it contains, entitled, "The Mode of Baptism," as it has troubled some honest investigators. We accordingly quote the principal part of the article and notice its statements in detail.

The writer begins by expressing his regret that a certain writer of Sunday-school notes "should seem to countenance the idea that Philip baptized the eunuch by immersion, as is done in his remarks on Acts 8:38, where 'into the

water' is emphasized by being printed in italics, and within quotation marks." He then says:-

"The Greek preposition *eis* signifies motion toward, and never indicates the actual going into a place unless it is repeated, once in composition with the verb, and *once* governing the noun. When Peter and John ran together to the sepulcher, after our Lord's resurrection, John outran Peter, and came first to the sepulcher, *eis to mnemeion*, yet when he not in, *ou mentoi eiselthen*. The phrase, if completed, would read *ou mentoi eiselthen eis to mnemeion*, as it does when Peter is described when arriving, and actually going into the sepulcher, *kai eiselthen eis to mnemeion*.

"The same remark applies to the preposition *ek*, which signifies motion from, and never indicates actual coming from within a place, unless it is repeated, as before noted, in composition with the verb, as well as governing the noun. Here also a single example may suffice. Luke 4:22, 'the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth,' *tois ekporeuomenois ek tou stomatos autou*. This form of expression is invariable.

"Now in the account of the baptism of the eunuch by Philip, if Luke had meant that they actually went into the water, still more that they went under the water, he would have twice used the preposition *eis*. But he does not. The phrase is *katebesan eis to hudor*, the exact meaning of which is they went down to the water. So if it had been meant that they actually came out of the water, the phrase would have been *exebesan ek tou hudatos*. But it is not. It is *anebesan ek tou hudatos*, and means exactly they came up, or back, from the water. The Revision, with all its pretensions to scholarship, has failed to note this point."

There is but one fault that can be found with this criticism, and that is that it is not true. There is an old saying that "one swallow does not make a spring." The author of the above should have remembered this and pushed his investigation is further, before he made such sweeping assertions. Because a thing occurs in a certain way once, we are not justified in saying that it will be so every time. That is the most foolish kind of reasoning. It is as if a man who had never before seen a horse, should see a span of white horses, and should then stoutly maintain that all horses are white. This is just the condition of the writer of this article: he has found that sometimes the preposition is repeated when motion *into* or *out of* a place is meant, and makes the rash assertion that "this form of expression is invariable." We shall see. If it can be shown that *eis*

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unrepeated ever indicates "the actual going into a place," then his whole argument, or assumption, falls to the ground. Turning to the lexicons we find the following in reference to the preposition *eis*:-

"The radical signification is, direction toward, motion to, into, for all on; into;" etc.-*Pickering*.

"1. Of Place. Which is the primary and most frequent use, *into*, *to*, viz.:-

"(a) After verbs implying motion of any kind, *into*, or also *to*, *towards*, *upon* any place or object."-*Robinson*.

"Preposition. *On*, *into*, *upon*," etc.-*Greenfield*.

"Direction towards, motion to, on, or into. . . . In composition *eis* retains its chief signification, *into*."-Liddel & Scott.

These definitions from standard authorities are alone sufficient to settle the matter; but to make assurance doubly sure, we will quote a few examples. In all the following instances the construction is precisely the same as in Acts 8:38; the preposition occurs but once, and is not compounded with the verb:-

Matt. 2:11: *Kai eithontes eis oikian*, "and when they were come *into the house*."

Matt. 2:12: *Anechorecesan eis teen choran autou*, "they departed *into their own country*."

Matt. 2:14: *Anechorecesan eis Aiguptou*, "they departed *into Egypt*." Our critic would have us read in this instance, "he went toward, or near to, Egypt."

Matt. 2:22: *Anchorecesan eis ta meree tees Galilaias*, "he turned aside *into the parts of Galilee*."

In this last instance let us try our author's statement that *eis* unrepeated always means "toward," and never "into," and see how it will work. We would then have it, "he turned aside *toward* Galilee," did not go into it. This is another point which "the Revision, with all its pretensions to scholarship has failed to note." But, unfortunately for the *newest* version, the next verse says that "he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth," which is a long distance inside the borders of Galilee.

Passing by many similar instances, we come to Matt. 8:31, 32, another good text on which to test the definition of our new lexicographer. In the sentence, "If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away *into the herd of swine*," the preposition *eis* occurs but once. Perhaps, however, it will be claimed that the demons did not actually go *into* the swine, but went *toward* them, and drove them along toward the sea. Very well, we will try the next verse, and see how it fared with the swine. We read, "and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down to a steep place *into the sea*." The Greek is, *ormeesen eis teen thalassan*, the preposition occurring but once. Then according to the *newest* version, we must understand that the swine simply ran *toward* the sea, but did not go *into* it. The only trouble with this explanation is that the next clause says that "they perished in the waters." Then they must have gone *into* the water, after all. We are strongly reminded of the proverb: "The legs of the lame are not equal." Prov. 26:7, *first clause, only*.

If the reader wishes to examine other texts where *eis* is used alone, he can try the following, and see if he thinks that "toward," or "near to," would improve the sense: Matt. 4:1, 12; 5:25, 29, 30; 9:1; 12:9; 13:36, 47, 54; 14:22; Acts 22:4, 10, 11, 25, 24; 1 Pet. 3:22, and many other passages.

Now for the other preposition. We have seen that Philip and the eunuch could go *into* the water, even though though the narrative contains only one preposition. But having seen them in the water, we shall be obliged to leave them there, if it is true that *ek* never means "out of" unless it also occurs twice. Again we refer to the lexicons to settle the matter. Of the preposition *ek* we read:-

"1. Of motion *out of, forth, from the forth or out of*. . . with all verbs of motion such as express *taking away, separating*."-Liddel & Scott.

"Its primary signification is from, and out of, away from. . . from among, etc."-*Pickering*.

"A preposition governing the genitive, with the primary signification *out of, from, of*, spoken of such objects as before were *in* or *within* another, but are now separated from it. . . .

"1. Of PLACE, which is the primary and most frequent use, *out of, from*, viz.:

"(a) After verbs implying motion of any kind *out of*, or *from* any place or object."-*Robinson*.

Following are a few instances of its use. We give only the English, simply stating that in every case the preposition occurs but once, as in Acts 8:38.

Matt. 2:15: "*Out of* Egypt have I called my Son."

Matt. 24:17: "Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing *out of* his house."

Mark 9:7: "And a voice came *out of* the cloud."

John 4:54: "When he was come *out of* Judea into Galilee."

John 13:1: "When Jesus knew that his our was come that he should depart *out of* this world."

We quote again from the article:-

"But if it be admitted that the criticism on the use of the preposition, as above, is correct, it is impossible that the inspired writers should have had at all in their minds the idea of going into, or going under the water."

But it is not admitted, for the good reason that the criticism is no criticism at all; and so we say that it is not only possible but certain that the inspired writers had in their minds the idea both of going *into*, and going under, the water. Even so zealous an advocate of sprinkling as Dr. Clarke, admits that the eunuch was plunged under the water.

But it may be asked, "Since the preposition *eis* does sometimes mean 'toward,' as well as 'into,' is it not possible that it means 'toward' in Acts 8:38?" We reply, no; and for reasons that we shall proceed to give. If we did not know the meaning of the word "baptize," or if this were the only place where baptism was mentioned, we might allow the claim; for, let it be distinctly understood that we do not base the argument for immersion on the preposition in the Acts 8:38, or in any other place. That is only corroborative evidence; our direct proof is more to the point. And let it also be distinctly noted that the so-called argument for sprinkling is all of this nature; it is all negative. Even if the article that we have noticed were true, and allowing that Acts 8:38 should read "they went down to the water," and "came up from the water;" it would not prove that they did not also go in. The advocates of sprinkling, like our critic, labor hard to prove a point that would profit them nothing even if it were established.

In conclusion we offer a few points of direct evidence:-

1. Our Saviour did not coin the word "baptize;" it was in use before the time of his first advent.

2. When he used the word baptize, to indicate an ordinance in the church, he must have used it in the sense in which it was generally used; for if he had not, no one would have known what he meant, unless he had given a new definition, which he did not do.

3. The authors of the lexicons do not make the meaning of words to suit themselves; they simply tell the meaning with which the word is used. If it be a word from a so-called "dead language," the lexicons give the meaning which it had when that language was spoken.

4. The Greek lexicons define baptizo, of which baptize is the English form, untranslated, "to dip, to plunge," etc. Liddell & Scott give it, *to dip repeatedly, to dip under*, and give as examples of its use, "over head and ears in debt," "*overwhelmed* with questions."

5. The idea of sprinkling does not attach to the word at all, except as it is forced upon it in support of a practice inherited from the Catholic Church. Whenever the idea of sprinkling is conveyed, a different word is employed. Here we can say of a truth, "this form of expression is invariable."

6. The signification of the ordinance shows plainly the meaning of the word. Paul says: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ or baptized into his death? Therefore we are *buried with him by baptism*," etc. Rom. 6:3, 4. That is, we show our faith in the death and resurrection of Christ, and our determination to be dead to sin, and to live in newness of life, by being "buried" in water as a symbol of Christ's burial in the earth. Christ was completely hidden from sight in the tomb; so we must be completely submerged in the water, in order to have the symbol fit the reality.

7. This idea is established beyond cavil in the next verse: "For if we have been *planted together in the likeness of his death*, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." The text is too plain to need comment. A seed is not planted unless it is covered up. The disciples of Christ did not carelessly throw a few handfuls of earth on his body, but reverently laid it in the ground, completely covering it from view. Then unless we are likewise completely buried, planted, submerged in the watery grave, we are not in the likeness of Christ's death. Sprinkling has no likeness whatever to the burial and resurrection of Christ. And therefore it necessarily follows:-

7. That baptism is immersion and nothing else, and one who has not been immersed has not obeyed the command of Christ to be baptized. We are sure that this conclusion cannot be honestly evaded. We shall have more to say about the importance of this matter hereafter. E. J. W.

**May 24, 1883**

**"The Sabbath-School. Acts 6; 7:1-16" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 20.**

E. J. Waggoner

**LESSON FOR THE PACIFIC COAST-JUNE 2. ACTS 6; 7:1-16.**

### **Notes on the Lesson**

"There arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration."-We should not confound

"Grecians" with "Greeks;" a distinction is made between them in the Bible. The latter term applies to those who were natives of Greece; it is used also as synonymous with Gentile. Rom. 1:16. The former term is used to designate those Jews who lived in foreign countries, and spoke the Greek language. The word occurs but two other places in the New Testament-Acts 9:29, and 11:20. In the latter instance the preceding verse clearly shows that this distinction is made.

The Assyrian and Babylonian captivity had scattered the Jews into various countries. Alexander, it will be remembered, settled many of them in Egypt. These spoke the Greek language, and it was for their use that the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament, was made. The Revised Version gives them their proper title-"Grecian Jews."

Between the native and foreign Jews there would naturally exist some of that jealousy that existed between Jews and Gentiles. This adds force to the statement in the second chapter, that "all that believed were together," and in the fourth chapter that "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul." The religion of Christ had broken down all sectional differences; and all classes, both native and foreign Jews, rich and poor, were as one in the belief in a crucified and risen Saviour.

"The daily ministration" refers to the daily distribution to the poor, for the common fund. Up to this time the apostles had had charge of this business, Acts 4:37, although we cannot suppose that they attended to it in person, as in that case they could hardly have had time for anything else. The fact that the murmuring was against the "Hebrews" instead of against the apostles, shows that others were deputed to do the work. The "neglect" of which the Grecians complained might have happened in one of two ways: The national jealousy between the two parties may have caused some partiality to be shown, perhaps not from deliberate design, but from long habit. But it is probable that this neglect was unintentional. The number of Grecian Jews must have been small in comparison with the natives of Judea, and their widows would be easily overlooked. The fact that they spoke a different language would add to their natural timidity, and would prevent them from coming forward to claim that which was their due. This unintentional neglect of their widows was quickly noticed by the Grecians, and they began to complain. This murmuring would soon have caused a division in the church, if left unchecked. The apostles did not claim the power to "lord it" over the believers, but called "the multitude of the disciples together," and proposed a remedy for the difficulty. They were not willing that there should be even the appearance of injustice to any one.

"It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables."-The apostles did not intimate that it was inconsistent with their dignity for them to perform this service. They were not above even physical labor, and they remembered the words of Christ, "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." But they saw that the care of these matters would detract from their usefulness as ministers of the word. There were others who could do this work, who did not have the important work of preaching to do. The minister of the gospel has to do



with high and exalted themes; and while he should be willing to perform any service, he should not allow a round of petty cares to distract his mind.

The seven who were chosen to have the charge of this business are usually termed "deacons," although they are not called by that name in the Bible, but are designated as "the seven," Acts 21:8. And it is worthy of note that in the Greek there is no verbal difference between the "ministration" that was daily, and the "ministry" of the word. Both words are from the same Greek word, the one from which we get our word deacon; it means an "attendant" or "waiter." The "twelve" and the "seven" had different duties to perform, but both were servants. And so well did the new arrangement work, so well did both classes serve, that "the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."

It is worth our while also to notice the order of the work which the apostles laid out for themselves: "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." First they would get from God, and then they would give to men. They felt the need of constant prayer in connection with their teaching. They had been filled with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, but that would not suffice for all time. They had a daily work to do, and needed to be continually filled with the Spirit; but as the Spirit was given at Pentecost only in answer to fervent and united prayer, so it was necessary that they should "pray always," in order to keep it with them. And if this was necessary for them, how much more so for us! If the apostles could not teach without constant prayer, what can be expected of the Sabbath-school teacher who does not "pray without ceasing"?

"The seven" were also men of prayer, for they were "full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." Their business was not merely to act as clerks, to distribute food and clothing, but to visit the poor, especially the sick and afflicted, and to give relief to them whenever it was in their power. Although all the seven were full of the Holy Ghost, Stephen had the pre-eminence in this respect. He was "full of faith and power." He had unbounded confidence in the willingness of God to answer prayer, and as a consequence, like Jacob he had "power with God." As he sought the afflicted ones, his heart was drawn out in sympathy for them, and by means of his faith and power, he performed by the miracles. From this we may learn that even those whose duty it is to "serve tables" may attain the greatest piety, and that God can work through any one, the only requisite being that he shall be "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost."

This work in which Stephen engaged naturally attracted much attention. As was the case when Peter and John healed the lame man, the people would naturally inquire by what power these miracles were done, and this gave Stephen an opportunity to teach the resurrection of Christ. The foreign Jews who still clung to their traditions "disputed" with him. This does not imply an angry dispute, but simply a discussion of the truth which Stephen taught. But Stephen spoke with wisdom from above, and the Spirit of God. This they could not answer. They were put to silence and forced to confess to themselves that Stephen was right. But there is always one resource left for those who are honestly beaten in argument yet are too set in their ways to yield to the truth, and that is treachery and force. This they used in the case of Stephen. First they "suborned men;" that

is they privately caused the idea to go forth that Stephen was a blasphemer. This they did, not by direct means, but in an underhanded manner, by perverting his doctrine. It is very easy to set an evil report afloat. This report stirred up "the people and the elders and the scribes" to bring Stephen before the Sanhedrin. Then to complete their work they hired false witnesses to testify against him. With their testimony before the bigoted members of the council, Stephen was virtually condemned to death before he had uttered a word.

Stephen's sermon, while it contained nothing that would show a spirit of fear, was admirably adapted to disprove the charges that were made against him. He spoke of God with the utmost reverence, and proceeded to rehearse the history of the Jewish nation, a history which no Jew ever tired of hearing. And here is a point worth noting, in regard to all these sermons; and that is the use the speakers made of the Old Testament. If they had been as fearful of seeming to indorse all that it said as some of our modern preachers are, they would have been in a bad condition, for they had nothing else from which to preach. Another thing worthy of note is that when these early teachers were put on trial for their lives, they invariably preached Jesus. Their own safety was a secondary matter with them.

Verse 5 of chapter seven is a very important one. Stephen has told how God called Abraham out of his own country to go into the land of Canaan, and that he finally came into it. But he says, "And he [God] gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on; yet he promise that he would give it to him for a possession, and to seek after him, when is that he had no child." God did not forget his promise to Abraham; and Abraham was not disappointed because he did not receive a land. It will not do to say that the promise was fulfilled in giving the land to his descendants, for the promise was that Abraham himself should inherit it; and besides, the land was never fully owned by the Jews. The subject is made plain when we read in Rom. 4:13 that it included not merely Palestine, but the world; that the "seed" to whom the promise was made was Christ (Gal. 3:16); and that if we are children of God, then we also are heirs. See also Gal. 3:29; James 2:5. Abraham did not expect to see the promise immediately fulfilled; he received the inheritance through faith. He looked forward to the time when the earth should be made new (Isa. 65:17); and we are to look forward to the same time for our reward. Till that time, if we are really heirs, we will be content to be merely "strangers and pilgrims on the earth." We expect that "all the earth will yet be filled with the glory of the Lord," and that the Lord will rule as "Governor among the nations;" but it will not be until he has dashed in pieces the wicked nations of the earth like a potter's vessel. The Lord will see to this part of the work himself, and will not ask any assistance from men, in the way of votes for political influence. E. J. W.

### **"The Day of the Sabbath" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 20.**

E. J. Waggoner

"Remember the Sabbath *day* to keep *holy*. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work; but THE SEVENTH DAY is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in IT

thou shalt not do any work; . . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested THE SEVENTH DAY; wherefore the Lord blessed *the* Sabbath day, and hallowed IT."

Language could not be framed so as to express more clearly the fact that the Sabbath of the Lord was permanently fixed upon a definite, specified day. The last charge to be brought against the fourth commandment is that of indefiniteness. If it is not definite, then language cannot be made to convey ideas.

But among the "inventions" that men have "sought out" is the theory that the commandment does not prescribe the observance of a certain day recurring at regular intervals, but that it enjoins the observance of one-seventh part of our time. The term "sought out" is fitly applied to this intervention, for no trace of this theory appears in the commandment. It was brought to light about two hundred years ago as the only alternative to those who wished to persuade themselves and others that they were keeping the commandment, while at the same time they were observing a day of their own choosing. But this is one of the thinnest disguises ever invented. It is a very easy matter to show its absurdity, as we will demonstrate. Notice carefully the following argument:-

If God sanctified an indefinite seventh part of time, he must of necessity have left it optional with man to choose which day he would keep; the only thing commanded with the rest; man could suit his own convenience as to time. It would then follow that whenever a man should choose to rest upon, *that* would be the portion of time sanctified; and thus the act of the Creator would be dependent on the act of the creature. But it is not at all consistent with the dignity of even a human lawgiver to make the meaning of his enactment contingent on the caprice of the people; much less would such a course reflect honor upon the Government of God.

But this is not the worst result that would naturally follow. If an indefinite seventh part of time were sanctified, then not only would it be left to men to choose the day for rest, but each individual would be at liberty to rest upon the day which might please his fancy. One man might take the seventh day, and another might take the fourth, and then, according to this theory, not one-seventh but two-sevenths of the time would be sanctified. Or, to suppose a case which would be very likely to happen if men should actually try to put their theory into practice, every day in the week might be kept by different individuals, and then it would appear that in the beginning God had sanctified or set apart *all* time! But in that case what would become of the theory that he sanctified only a seventh? We submit to any one that this is not a forced conclusion; if the conclusion is absurd, it simply proves that the theory in question is absurd.

But before men reach this point in their endeavors to evade the law of God, they usually recover their reasoning faculties to some extent, and say that it is necessary for all men to keep one and the same day. The exigencies of business require it. Then we ask, Who shall appoint the day? What man is there whose judgment all will follow? There is no man or class of men whose authority even if a majority of persons will acknowledge, so as to defer to it. In a case that is left open, every man is on an equality with every other. There is positively no way out

of this dilemma but to admit what the commandment plainly declares,-that God, in the beginning, decided definitely which day of the week should be observed. So we see that the one-seventh-part-of-time theory is an impossibility when reduced to practice. And even if it were possible for all men to agree upon some day of their own choosing, that day would be *their* sabbath and not the Sabbath of the Lord, which the commandment enjoins.

But some will still say, "Granting that a definite day was set apart, how can we tell which one it was?" This must be an easy question to answer, else it were useless to have a definite day appointed. The commandment says, "The seventh day is the Sabbath." Mark, *the* seventh day, not *a* seventh day. The seventh day of what? Not of the month, for that would not meet the demand for a rest after six days of labor. For the same reason it cannot mean the seventh day of the year. It must mean the seventh day of a period of time of which seven days is the sum. But this is the week; and we therefore are shut up to the conclusion that the commandment enjoins the observance of the seventh day of the week. The really candid, thoughtful person could not decide otherwise.

For further proof that the seventh day of the week is meant, read Luke 23:54-56; 24:1. The sacred historian after describing the crucifixion and burial of Christ, says, "And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath *true* on. And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulcher, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day *according to the commandment*." Now if we can find what day it was on which they rested, we shall know beyond all doubt which day is "the Sabbath day according to the commandment." The next verse says: "Now upon *the first day of the week*, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher, bringing the spices which they had prepared." To avoid any possibility of cavil, we turn to Mark 14:1, and there read that this visit took place "when the Sabbath was past." Luke, then, has given us in consecutive order the record of three days, as follows; Christ was crucified on "the preparation day;" the day following was the Sabbath, upon which the women rested "according to the commandment;" and the next day was *the first day of the week*. This proves unmistakably that the Sabbath of the commandment is the seventh day of the week. E. J. W.

### **"Contrasts That Do Not Exist" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 20.**

E. J. Waggoner

In a prominent religious journal of recent date, we find the following:-

"It is at once the peculiarity and the glory of the New Testament that it enunciates principles, not arbitrary laws. No Sabbath-day's journey is here laid out, which man may not exceed; his duties are not prescribed in rigid forms or gauged by a yard-stick. Instead, two underlying principles are laid down-love to God first, love to man next. On these two hang *all* the law and the prophets."

The meaning of the preceding paragraph, so far as it has any meaning, is that while the Old Testament binds men to the performance of special duties, the New Testament deals only in vague generalities, leaving men to draw their own

conclusions as to what they may and may not do. Such a view as this would commend itself quite readily to the world, who would not find it very difficult to conform to a religion that had no fixed rules. When the development of principles is left to men, there are few things which they may not be made to include.

But the references which are brought forward in proof of this assertion are very unfortunate. It is said of the New Testament that "no Sabbath-day's journey is there laid out, which men may not exceed;" by which it is implied that such a thing is marked out in the Old Testament. But the fact is that instead of a "Sabbath-day's journey which men may not exceed" being laid down in the Old Testament, such a thing is not mentioned. The term does not once occur in the Old Testament. The only place in the Bible in which it is found is in the New Testament, in Acts 1:12. So much for that attempt to depreciate the Old Testament.

Again, of the New Testament it is said that in it man's duties "are not prescribed in rigid forms, or gauged by a yard-stick. Instead, two underlying principles are laid down—love to God first, love to man next." What a pity it is that the one who wrote that did not read the Old Testament through at least once, before contrasting it with the New. Had he done so, he would have found in Deut. 6:5 these words: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." There is love to God in its fullest extent. Again in Lev. 19:18 he would read as follows: "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." How much that sounds like Testament language. We hope that none who despise the Old Testament will reject that text when they find that it is original in that book. For our part we do not know of any more appropriate motto to be hung up for constant reference. If a copy were in a conspicuous place in every house, and read carefully every day, it would improve the manners and customs of this world wonderfully.

Any attempt to find antagonism between the Old and New Testaments, will prove a failure. A house and its foundation are not more closely joined than they. In fact, that is just the relation they bear to each other. The Old Testament is the foundation; the New is the superstructure. There is not a principle laid down in the New Testament that is not in the Old. These statements about love to God and love to man are direct quotations from the Old Testament. See Luke 10:25-28. Our Saviour and the apostles quoted continually from it. Indeed, there was nothing else from which they could quote. If all the references to, and quotations from, the Old Testament were taken out of the New, there would be but little left. The New Testament is the Old Testament explained.

And now let us make a little investigation to see if it is true that simple principles alone are laid down in the New Testament; to see if it is true that the Old Testament contains only threatenings of judgments against sin, while the New has only mercy and love. In the preaching of the gospel we find a command at the very outset: "Repent and be baptized every one of you." This is as plain as anything could be. The decalogue itself is nearly all repeated, and instead of any of its provisions being made less definite, they are enlarged and made to appear more strict than ever.

And then as to the idea that the New Testament contains only love and mercy. The threats against the sinner are as terrible as any in the Old Testament. In Rom. 2 we read that God will render "unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil."

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Again Paul says that "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction." Some of the strongest threatenings in the Bible come from the lips of our Lord himself. In Rev. 14:9-12, which is the revelation of Jesus Christ (chap. 1:1), we read that they who worship the beast, and receive his mark, "shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb."

On the other hand, we find in the Old Testament some of the most tender expressions of mercy that are to be found in the Bible. Even in the decalogue itself we learn that God shows mercy to those that keep his commandments. What expression of love could be stronger than this: "Like as if a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him"? Again, "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting." Ps. 103:17. "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy." Ps. 103:8. Nehemiah says that he is "a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness." Neh. 9:17. And, finally, we have this broad principle laid down as the sum of all duty: "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. Here is as broad a principle as is found in the New Testament.

We do not exalt the Old Testament above the New, but we would place them on a level. They are one; and this is why we protest against decrying the Old. Undermine the confidence of the people in that, and reverence for the Bible and Bible truth will be a thing of the past. And it would not be to the glory of the New Testament if it could be proved that specific duties are not there prescribed. We need rigid rules, that our lives may be correct. When man is left to himself, he invariably goes wrong; now if the Bible dealt in vague terms, leaving us to interpret them to suit ourselves, we would be no better off than if we had no revelation at all. If we but have the principle of love to God in our hearts, we will love all his word, so that we can say with the psalmist: "Thy word is true *from the beginning*; and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth forever." E. J. W.

**May 31, 1883**

**"How to Study the Bible" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 21.**

E. J. Waggoner

We have already spoken of the benefits to be derived from Bible study; that by it we not only gain a knowledge of our duty, but strengthen the intellect. We

believe that this matter can scarcely be put in too strong a light. The Bible is not appreciated by any of us as it should be, and the reason why it is not is because it is not studied. It is a wonderful book. But a casual glance at the Bible, or the reading of one, two, or even five chapters a day, in a mechanical manner will not give us the insight into the Bible that we should have. It is not the quantity of ground that we cover in our reading, but the manner in which we do it, that makes us Bible students. Now the Bible itself tells us just how we should study it. In Deut. 6:5-9 we have directions as to our duty in regard to the Bible. We will quote it in full:-

"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might and these words which I commend thee this day, shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shall talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou and liest down, when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt break them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."

This is a complete model for Bible study. It was not intended to be local, for the Jews merely but is for all persons, in all time. Not that we are to wear phylacteries as the Jews did; this passage does not command that. The first part explains the last. The word of God is to be studied and meditated upon so much that it will have a controlling influence over every act that our hands perform. We should work so that all that we do will bear the impress of the word. Thus it will be for a sign upon our hands. In like manner the forehead stand for the mind, which is to be stored with the truths of God's word. They are ever to be before our eyes. But we wish to call a special attention to the 6th and 7th verses. We are commanded to talk of the word when we sit in the house, and when we walk by the way, and when we lie down, and when we rise up. Now how can this be done? Must we carry a Bible with us continually? That would be very inconvenient, and almost impossible. We could not use it while we were at work, nor in the night. The previous expression explains the whole thing: "And the words, which I command thee this day, shall be *in thine heart*." That is the secret of Bible knowledge. The Bible must be read so carefully that the words will be indelibly fixed in our mind. Then we can meditated upon them wherever we are, or whatever we are doing.

It used to be the custom to learn portions of the Bible "by heart," as it was called. Unfortunately it is one of the good practices that is going out of date. People are afraid of being formal. They are so afraid of having a mere intellectual knowledge of the Bible, that they run the risk of having no knowledge at all. We may make the study of the Scriptures a mechanical act, whatever way we study them, but committing portions of it to memory is no more liable to be a mechanical art than simply reading it.

And even if we do not sit down with the express purpose of learning a certain portion, if we read the Bible as much as we ought, and give earnest, prayerful heed to that which we read, it will become fixed in our minds almost unconsciously. And who can estimate the good that would result from such a course? The Bible becomes our constant companion. We can meditate upon the

word wherever we are. And by thinking upon it, and having our minds filled with it, evil thoughts will be crowded out. It is like being in the company of pure and good men. Such company molds us; we become like the company that we keep. If we have the Bible for our constant companion, as we may have, our characters will be molded by it. The Spirit of the Lord can then the more easily make impressions on our hearts, for it works through the word. And we cannot be influenced by the Bible unless we do make it our own, and become permeated by it. Nothing will atone for neglect of God's word. Shall we not, then, *search* the Scriptures, instead of hastily running through them? E. J. W.

### **"When Did They Worship" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 21.**

E. J. Waggoner

Much stress is laid by the advocates of Sunday observance, upon the statement made by some modern historians that the early Christians met for worship on the first day of the week. This argument is their stronghold; in fact, it is the only hold they have, for, as many of them will admit, the Bible does not command or authorize the observance of that day.

Now we do not regard it as the slightest consequence, as far as our duty is concerned, whether some of the early Christians met on Sunday or on Monday, or whether they refrained from meeting at all. We do not remember that the Bible sets up any men or set of men as patterns for the rest of mankind. In short, we depend for the knowledge of our duty upon what the Bible says, and not upon what some one did. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," says the prophet; and another inspired writer says that "there is none that doeth good; no, not one;" but we know that "the words of the Lord are pure words," and that man is to live by "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." There is no man who is not liable to err; the Bible alone is infallible. In regard to the Scriptures, we hold to the faith of the primitive Methodists, and the *published* beliefs of the later Methodists, that "whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." This is why we do not keep Sunday on the authority of tradition.

But this does not answer the question at the head of this article. If, therefore, we were asked to give a definite answer to the question, "Upon what day did the earliest Christians meet to worship?" We would say without hesitation that the Bible Christians worshiped, and kept holy, the seventh day of the week, commonly known as Saturday-the day which the Jews have observed since they existed as a nation. That there were some who did not keep the Bible Sabbath but yielded to the custom of the heathen around them, and partially observed Sunday, we have not the slightest doubt. There are always those who want to have religion popular; those who are glad to make themselves believe that what the majority does is right. It was in this way that Sunday observance was instituted; it is largely in this way that it is maintained.

We say that it would make no difference as far as our duty is concerned, whether some of the early Christians met on Sunday or not. So long as the Bible



says, "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work," we are under obligation to keep the seventh day. The fact that others do wrong will not justify us in a wrong course.

But we are far from believing that the apostles taught their converts, either Jewish or Gentile, to observe any other than the seventh day of the week. We derive this opinion from the Bible; but a little incidental testimony has lately come under our notice, that may be of interest to some. We were reading in Coneybeare and Howson's "Life and Epistles of Paul," the account of his labors at Corinth, as told in Acts 16:1-18. It will be remembered that when the Jews rejected Paul's teaching, he left them, and went to the Gentiles. Being driven out of the synagogue, "he entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshiped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue." Of this act the book above mentioned says:-

"Whatever we may surmise concerning the motive of this choice, certain consequences must have followed from the contiguity of the church and the synagogue, and some incident resulting from it may have suggested the mention of the fact. The Jewish and Christian congregations would often meet face to face in the street, and all the success of the gospel would become more palpable and conspicuous."

Mark well this sentence: "The Jewish and Christian congregations would often meet face to face in the street." Did the Jews congregate for worship? On the seventh day, as did everybody. So well settled is this fact that the seventh day is very commonly spoken of as the "Jewish Sabbath," or, to indicate the contempt felt for it, "The Old Jewish Sabbath." Then on what day must the Corinthian Christians have met for worship, in order to meet Jewish congregations face to face in the street? On the seventh day, of course. Here we have the opinion of these historians, themselves first-day men, as to the day on which Christians were accustomed to worship. To be sure the testimony is incidental, but it is all the more forcible on that account.

Our opponents usually say, when confronted with such texts as Acts 13: 42, 44; 16:13; 17:2, and 18:4, that the apostles preached on the Sabbath in order that they might reach the Jews, who assembled on that day. But in this case Paul had ceased to labor for the Jews, and was preaching only to the Gentiles, in the house of a Gentile.

"But," some one will now say, "this testimony that you have quoted is not Bible; it is only the opinion of fallible men." And is it the case, then, that testimony of men is good when it favors Sunday observance, and worthless when it is unfavorable to that custom? When men come to such a conclusion, testimony or argument is useless. We admit that the paragraph which we quote is only the opinion of a man, but it is the testimony of a man who is not a believer in the seventh-day Sabbath, and as such is entitled to far

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more credence than are the mere opinions of first-day men in favor of Sunday observance.

In conclusion we will briefly state a point from the Bible, which will prove that this opinion is correct; that Paul did worship on the seventh-day Sabbath.

Sometime after Paul's labors in Corinth, he returned to Jerusalem, where he was seized by the Jews, and put on trial for his life. He was accused of sedition, and of seeking to overthrow the customs of the Jews. In his reply he expressly stated (Acts 24:14), that he believed "all things which are written in the law and in the prophets." Then certainly he believed that the seventh day is the Sabbath, for that is a very prominent part of the law and the prophets. And Paul was not a man to act contrary to his belief. In a later discourse he said: "I have committed nothing against the people, or the customs of our fathers." One custom of the "fathers" among the Jews, was to keep the seventh-day Sabbath. Now when Paul says that he had done nothing contrary to those customs, who dare dispute his word, and say that he violated the Sabbath? We never lay any stress on "apostolic practice," nevertheless we are content to follow their practice in regard to Sabbath observance. E. J. W.

**June 7, 1883**

**"The Sabbath-School. Acts 8th Chapter" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 22.**

E. J. Waggoner

Lesson for the Pacific Coast-June 16. ACTS 8th Chapter.

Notes on the Lesson.

"And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem." The Revised Version has it, "And on that day," indicating that the martyrdom of Stephen was only the beginning of a general persecution. Like wild beasts, one taste of blood made the bigoted Jews clamorous for more. In fact, the language of the sacred historian implies the comparison of the maddened persecutors to wild beasts. Thus, at the close of Stephen's speech they "gnashed on him with their teeth," fit language to be applied to a wolf or a tiger. Again, in verse 3 it is said that Saul "made havoc of the church." Of this, Farrar says: "Literally, 'he was ravaging'-the church. No stronger metaphor could well have been used. It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, but in the Septuagint, and in classical Greek, is applied to the wild boars which uproot a vineyard. Not content with the visitation of the synagogue, he got the authority for an inquisitorial visit from house to house, and even from the sacred retirement of the Christian home he dragged not only men, but women, to judgment and to prison. So thorough was his search, and so deadly were its effects, that, in referring to it, the Christians of Damascus can only speak of Saul as "he that *devastated* in Jerusalem them that call on this name," using the strong word which is strictly applicable to an invading army which scathes a conquered country with fire and sword."

On account of this persecution the believers at Jerusalem "were scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria." In thus scattering they only obeyed the injunction of the Master, "But when they persecute you in this city, flee into another." Their religious principles would not allow them to resist, and nothing would be gained for the cause of God if they should remain and

submit to a wholesale massacre. We can even see the hand of Providence in allowing this persecution, for it was the means of spreading the truth throughout all the region. We have seen that the new converts were "of one heart and of one soul;" they loved one another's society, and since they were necessarily shut off in a great measure from outside associations, there was danger that they would become clannish, and settle down, content with having received the truth. But now they were driven out, and were given a fresh opportunity to prove the sincerity of their conversion by "preaching the word." Their persecutions did not quench their love of the truth. The wicked Jews thought to root out the heated religion of Jesus, but instead of that they caused the seed to be sown broadcast. Thus they proved that man "can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth."

They were all scattered, "except the apostles." It seems that God had worked for them still in Jerusalem. Christ had instructed them that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem," and they were not in haste to leave the city. We cannot tell why they stayed, or what they did, but we may be sure that they followed the leading of the Spirit of God.

"Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them." This Philip was one of the "seven" spoken of in chapter 6. In Acts 21:8 he is further distinguished as "Philip the evangelist." Some may query, how we know that the Philip who preached in Samaria, and who baptized the eunuch, was Philip the evangelist, and not Philip the apostle. The answer is easy: The apostles all remained in Jerusalem, many had embraced the truth at Samaria, and then they sent unto them Peter and John. Consequently, Philip the apostle must have also remained at Jerusalem.

"Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God they sent unto them Peter and John."-This verse alone disproves the Catholic assumption that Peter occupied the position of pope, taking the place of Christ as head of the church. Instead of that, he was subject to the decisions of the rest, going wherever the majority thought best. Nowhere in the Bible do we find any intimation that any one occupied a higher rank than the rest. The apostles did not even presume to dictate to the body of the church, as shown in chapter 5. And in this they simply acted in accordance with their own teaching, especially that of Peter himself, to take the oversight of the flock, not "as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock," and to "be subject one to another." 1 Peter 5:1-5.

The question is often asked, Is baptism a saving ordinance? If it is meant by this, Will baptism suffice to save a person, if he does nothing else? the answer must be, No. But if it is desired to know if baptism is necessary, the reply must be, Yes. If it were not necessary, it would not have been commanded. When the people inquired of the apostles, "What shall we do?" The answer was, "Repent, and be baptized." Christ said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." And from Philip's preaching to the eunuch we learn that we cannot preach Christ without teaching baptism. The record simply says that Philip began at the 53rd of Isaiah where the eunuch was reading, "and preached unto him Jesus."

That was all; yet as they went on their way, the eunuch cried out, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?"

The chapter which the eunuch was reading foretells in a vivid manner the trial and death of Jesus. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted." "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter." There is a force in this expression, for Christ was the antitypical lamb. "And he made his grave with the wicked." This shows the burial of Christ; and the following verses show a resurrection, and the final joy of Christ as he sees those who have been redeemed by his blood. From this we can get an idea of what kind of an act the eunuch had in mind when he asked to be baptized. It must have been something that would have been suggested by the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. But sprinkling bears no resemblance whatever to these things. And it would have required a great deal of ingenuity on the part of Philip to so preach Christ that sprinkling would be naturally suggested. But he could very easily show how we show faith in Christ, by being "buried with him in baptism," "planted" "in the likeness of his death."

For this kind of baptism, water was needed, not a few drops merely, but "much water." John 3:23. But for what is popularly known as baptism, only a few drops are required. In fact, we have seen the ceremony performed where it could not with any sort of propriety have been call sprinkling, since scarcely a drop of water was used; the administrator merely put his finger in a bowl that was supposed to contain water, and then touched the candidate's forehead. But the eunuch would have had an abundance of water with him for drinking, sufficient for any such performance, or even for veritable sprinkling, and it would not have been necessary for them to get out of the chariot.

"But this was a desert place, and there could not have been enough water there for immersion," it is sometimes objected. The word *ereemos* translated desert, means a wilderness, an uninhabited place, and not necessarily a barren country. An instance of its use is found in Matt. 14:13-19. The multitude were there with Jesus, and in a "desert place," yet they were commanded to "sit down on the grass," which proves that it was not a barren, sandy desert. As for the place in question, travelers say that on any route which they might have taken from Jerusalem to Gaza, there was an abundance of water.

One thought in connection with Philip's sermon to the eunuch should be impressed on the mind of every one who labors in the cause of God. And that is that it is just as important to preach to small congregations as to large ones. If a minister preaches to a large congregation, and only one is finally converted, he has accomplished no more than if he had preached to that one alone. Here was Philip, a man "full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom," capable of preaching to a "city congregation," yet he was sent off to preach to one man; and he went out into the wilderness without any hesitation, not knowing that he would find even that one man. But how great were the consequences. The eunuch "went on his way rejoicing" in the new light that he had received, and, like the other disciples, he must have preached the word to those whom he met. And thus the Ethiopians heard the truth. It might have been more gratifying to Philip's personal pride, if he had had any, to be sent on a mission to Ethiopia, but the result was

accomplished by this trip to the desert. Two of Christ's most instructive servants were preached to an audience of a single individual.

From the unenlightened Ethiopian, we may learn a lesson of diligence in the study of the word of God. He was a proselyte to the Jewish religion, and had been to worship in the place to which all Jews looked as the dwelling-place of God,-the temple at Jerusalem. The religion which he had adopted was a long step in advance of the superstition of his native country, still he felt that he was only a learner. He was searching the Scriptures, although they conveyed no meaning to his mind. But the promise is sure, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine," and Philip was sent to instruct him. But how many of us are there who would have been occupied as he was? How many are there who think to take the Bible with them on a journey, to read by the way? Yet this is what we are commanded to do. If the eunuch had not been reading the Bible, Philip would probably not have been sent to instruct him. Who can tell how many opportunities for receiving great light we may have missed, because we were not attentively spreading the word as we should. The Lord may not send any evangelist to our assistance, as he did to the eunuch, but his spirit is ever ready to enlighten us. What an encouragement this is for us to read even those portions of the Bible that are beyond our comprehension. E. J. W.

### **"The Bible Displaced by Tradition" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 22.**

E. J. Waggoner

In an editorial in the *Christian at Work*, a few weeks ago, there were some admissions in regard to the Sabbath that are too good to be passed by unnoticed. The article contrasts the former times with the present, claiming that precepts and customs that were good for people three thousand years ago are entirely out of place in this enlightened age. It deprecates the basing of moral duties to-day upon commands ever given when the world was in its infancy. Among other illustrations it uses the following:-

"Even our higher moralists have made failures in this direction. Thus some plant the observance of the Sabbath [Sunday] squarely on the fourth commandment, which was an explicit injunction to observe Saturday, and no other day, as 'a holy day unto the Lord.'"

Very good; that is what we have stoutly maintained, notwithstanding the fact that many religious teachers have labored hard to prove that the fourth commandment enjoins the observance of Sunday, or of any day which convenience may suggest. We are glad to have this frank expression of opinion from so able and influential a journal as the *Christian at Work*. Not that it adds anything to our faith, or tends to confirm us in our belief. When the Bible speaks as plainly on any point as it does on the observance of the seventh day of the week, we do not need anything additional. But the statement just quoted is good place against the assertions of those who claim to keep Sunday in obedience to the fourth commandment. A house divided against itself cannot stand; and when Sunday-keepers take such diametrically opposite positions in support of their pet

institution, it is a pretty good indication that the foundations of that institution are very shaky.

We leave those who believe in keeping Sunday, and at the same time believe the whole of the moral law is binding upon all men, to settle this question with the *Christian at Work*, while we pass on to another point, which clashes with the teachings of another class of professors. Some professed Christians claim that God has yielded to the wishes of wicked men so far as to abolish his holy law, and that none of it is now binding. They care not what the commandment teaches, since they do not believe that it is in force. They claim to follow the apostles. Here is something that will be of interest to such persons:-

"So some have tried to build the observance of Sunday upon apostolic command, or as the apostles gave no command on the matter at all."

Good again; we could not tell it any straighter ourself. We are glad also of this frank admission; it always does us good to find something in religious journals with which we can agree. But right here it may occur to some that the Sunday seems to be left out entirely. If not commanded in either the Old Testament or the New, where shall we find authority for its observance? The *Christian at Work* is equal to the occasion, and continues:-

"In the meantime, the fact that Sunday observance rests upon the custom of the early church, handed down through all the centuries-and which ought to be sufficient for every Christian-is lost sight of."

Where else, to be sure, should we look for authority for Sunday observance but to tradition, since the Bible is silent concerning it? We admire the honesty of those who do not attempt to make the Bible responsible for that which it condemns, but we are not satisfied with the reasons offered; for,

1. How do we know that it was the custom of the early church to observe Sunday, since the Bible is silent concerning it? There was no church before the one which was the result of the apostles' preaching; but the Bible gives us an account of that, and says nothing about Sunday observance, as the *C. at W.* admits; so, according to its own admission, the earliest church did not keep Sunday.

2. And further, Allowing that the early Christians did keep Sunday, where did they get their authority? Not from the commandment of God, nor from that of the apostles. They must have devised it in their own heart. But why must we follow their example? Where do we learn that they were set as examples for us? If they could do as they please, why may not we? Why should we follow the example of the early Christians who kept Sunday, any more than that of the earliest Christians, who kept the Sabbath of the Lord?

3. And, once more, If we are not to follow the plain teaching of the fourth commandment, why need we be so strict about obeying any of the other nine? Why may we not interpret any of them in as liberal a manner, or ignore them altogether, and do as we please in everything. If a minister of the gospel should blaspheme, or a deacon should systematically steal money from the church treasury, or a whole church should be guilty of violation of the seventh commandment, the *Christian at Work* would be one of the first to denounce such acts as sinful in the extreme; yet it will openly advise its readers to ignore the

fourth commandment entirely. What is the reason? Why is not the fourth commandment as sacred as the third, the seventh, for the eighth? Let those answer who can.

But we must notice one more admission. Here it is:-

"The truth is, so soon as we appeal to the *litera scripta* of the Bible, the Sabbatharians have the best of the argument."

We would like to have our good Presbyterian and Methodist and Baptist friends read that sentence several times, and then ask themselves the question, Shall we accept the Bible as our rule of faith and practice, or not? The Protestant rule is, "The Bible, and the Bible alone." Shall we change this, or shall we cease to call ourselves Protestants? If we retain only so much of the Bible as it suits our ideas, why keep any of it? Are the lives of mortal men to be taken as a standard by which to test the Bible, or is the Bible the rule by which men's actions are to be measured? If the latter, then it would seem absolutely necessary for us to follow the literal reading of the Scriptures.

The *Christian at Work* is professedly a Christian paper. Its proprietors and editors profess to be Christian men. It is run in the interest of a Christian denomination. Now where do they get their Christianity? Is it from the Koran, the Book of Mormon, or the daily newspaper? No, from the Bible. The Bible is the only place where Christianity is defined. Then what kind of Christianity will we have if we swing loose from the book? No Christianity at all. If we are not to take the *litera scripta* of the Bible in regard to the Sabbath, why should we take it in regard to the death and resurrection of Christ? May it not be that the passages that speak of those events do not mean what they say, or if they mean what they say, are of no consequence? But to claim that would be infidelity, says one. Ah! would it? Then pray tell what it is to say that the commandments of God may be set aside at pleasure?

But we believe the Bible, and propose to take it just as it reads. Even the *Christian at Work* will hardly say that is not safe to follow Bible teachings strictly. The Bible will not lead us astray. As long as we stick to the Bible we are on the safe side. But when we leave it, we are adrift. We do not know where to go. We do not know of any man who is not liable to sin, so we dare not follow the example of men. We dare not follow the impulses of our own heart, for "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." And besides, we read that God will bring into Judgment, those who walked in the ways of their own heart, and in the sight of their own eyes. Eccl. 11:9. And so we say again that we shall stick to the Bible, fully believing that man shall live by "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." E. J. W.

**June 21, 1883**

**"The Sabbath-School. Acts 9:1-22" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 24.**

E. J. Waggoner

## Lesson for Pacific Coast-June 30. Acts 9:1-22.

### Notes on the Lesson.

"And Saul, yet breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest."-Literally he was "breathing threatening and slaughter;" he was not merely uttering threats, as "breathing out" would seem to signify, but he was giving all his strength to the work of persecuting the disciples. He not only breathed out slaughter, but he breathed it in; with each threat, or act, of persecution, his zeal increased. That which we breathe pervades the entire system; so the spirit of persecution had taken entire possession of Saul; it was for that purpose that he lived. This shows how entirely he gave himself to what he thought was duty; it also helps us to realize what an apparently unpromising subject he was, of which to make a humble disciple.

What was it that transformed this relentless persecutor into an earnest, zealous Christian? A short sentence tells the whole story. He saw Jesus. It is not worth while to notice the discussions of commentators as to whether or not Saul did really see the Lord, except to wonder that such discussions ever could have taken place. Ananias said that the Lord appeared to him in the way, Acts 9:17, and he himself expressly says that he saw the Lord. 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8. But the high priest had also seen Jesus, and so had many of the Jews, yet they still remained unbelieving; the difference was that Saul was really desirous of serving God, all the others were not. One look at Christ was enough to show him his error, and turn all his energies in the opposite direction. There are many of us who profess to be honest in our desire to serve God, and yet we are not very active in the service. There is no such radical change visible in our lives, as was seen in Paul's. Why is this? Perhaps we have not seen Jesus. We have not let our eyes rest upon the perfect pattern. It is not because we have not the opportunity, but because we lacked the purpose. Could we see him in the sufferings and shame that he endured for us, perhaps we too might lose sight of self, and run with patient continuance the race that is set before us, steadfastly "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

From Paul's case we may learn what true conversion is. It is a direct turning around. His course after he had seen Jesus was exactly opposite to what it was before. His natural energy and zeal remained the same, but was turned into another channel. It would be a wonderful thing to see a stream that is rushing madly down the mountain-side, change its course, and flow in the opposite direction; but such a thing would be no more wonderful than is the change effected by the Spirit of God on the human heart. The daily life is the only test of conversion.

It must be remembered also that Paul was not a heathen nor an infidel. He was an honored member of the church-the one that God had specially designated as his own. Not only this, but he was one of the strictest in the performance of every duty. No doubt he would have scoffed at the idea that he needed conversion, yet he was ignorant of the essential element of true religion. May there not be many in our time who are in similar circumstances? The testing point now is the law of God, especially the fourth commandment. It is often said,



"What you say about the Sabbath cannot be true, or our ministers and learned men would have found it out and told us." Well, Saul was a leading man, familiar with the Bible, and he was ignorant of the truth; the high priest and his associates were the leaders in the church, the ministers of God, yet they harden their hearts against the truth. Is it any more to be wondered at that such a thing should happen now and then? The Bible says that just this state of things will exist in the last days. As it was then, so it is now, that the majority will continue to fight against the truth, instead of accepting and obeying and it.

As soon as Paul had become a disciple he commenced preaching. He had found the truth, and he lost no time in proclaiming it to others. He was not content to be a silent disciple, he must sound a note of warning. His preaching, also, was not apologetic. Neither the dread of persecution nor the fear of displeasing wealthy Jews, could hinder him from preaching the plain truth. And so he "preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God."

What Saul did not say is worth notice, as well as what he did say. He did not say, "It makes no difference what a man believes, if he is only sincere." There never was a more sincere man in the world than Paul, yet it made a great deal of difference what he believed. When he believed that the Christians were heretics, he persecuted them; but when he believed the truth, he strengthened them. He showed his sincerity by accepting the truth as soon as it was presented to him. He did not say, "Well my father and mother believed just as I do, and instructed me in this way; I cannot believe that they were wicked persons." This is a very common excuse for not obeying the commandments of God, but Paul was not desirous of shielding himself by an excuse. Neither did he say, "If it is true that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, why have not the wise men of our church and nation found it out? Gamaliel never taught any such thing, and I don't profess to be wiser than he. It is not for me to set myself up as knowing more than the elders of Israel." Who can imagine Saul using such words to the Lord? How absurd and childish such excuses would have sounded. Yet there are hundreds of professors who are not ashamed to make just such frivolous excuses for not keeping the Sabbath of the Lord. They would hardly think of making them if they were talking to the Lord in person, as Saul was. No one should offer an excuse now, that he would be ashamed to offer at the Judgment. The Lord hears these excuses now, just the same as though they were addressed to him, and those who make them will have to meet them at the last day. E. J. W.

**June 28, 1883**

**"The Sabbath-School. Acts 9:23-33; Gal. 1:13-18" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 25.**

E. J. Waggoner

Lesson for Pacific Coast-July 7. Acts 9:23-33; Gal. 1:13-18.  
Notes on the Lesson.

There is no one thing that shows the brevity of the Scripture narrative more clearly than the account of the period immediately following Saul's conversion, as given in the text. We read in Acts 9:22, 23, "But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ. And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him." Then follows his escape from Damascus, and his arrival at Jerusalem. Now in reading this account, the casual reader would suppose that Saul spent those "many days" in Damascus, teaching in the synagogues. It is only by an incidental remark in Paul's epistle to the Galatians, that we learn that the "many days" were three years, and that a part of this time (how much we do not know) was spent in Arabia. There is not the slightest discrepancy between Luke's history and the statement of Paul. Luke merely passes by this event, as he does many others, because it is not absolutely necessary to the object for which he wrote. He was not writing a minute history of Paul's life, any more than the evangelists professed to write a minute account of Christ's earthly ministry.

Prof. Wm. Green, of Princeton, in writing on the book of Joshua, and noticing how very brief history is, and what a small portion of Joshua's was life is recorded, makes the following general statement, which applies to all Bible history:-

"The sacred history is never merely an annalistic record. It traces the development of God's earthly kingdom, and the progress of his scheme of grace. Events, which have no bearing upon this theme, however interesting they might be from other points of view, do not come within the scope of the Bible narrative. The long residence of Israel and Egypt, and thirty-eight out of the forty years' wandering in the desert, contributed nothing to the purpose for which the history was written. The silence of the historian respecting them creates no gap or unaccountable break in the narrative. It clearly shows the steadfastness with which the plan adopted was adhered to."

It is necessary to bear this fact in mind in reading the Scriptures. If all did so, it would save much confusion. For instance, in the first and second chapters of Genesis we have the record of the creation, and the setting apart of the seventh day as the Sabbath. But the Sabbath is not mentioned again till we come to the sixteenth chapter of Exodus, a connection with the events that occurred twenty-five hundred years after the creation. Now we are not to conclude from this that the Sabbath was unknown during all that period. Such a conclusion would be the farthest from the truth. The sacred historian has this one object in: To trace briefly the history of God's people, and show the course that God took preserve a knowledge of himself in the earth. It must be remembered that these events were not jotted down as memoranda at the time of their occurrence; they were all written by one man, and although they cover so long a period of time, they are condensed into the smallest space; the entire history was doubtless written in a short space of time. The historian records the command, in Gen. 2:2, 3, to keep the Sabbath. When God gives a command, there is no other supposition but that it is to be, and will be, obeyed; so the writer hastens on, and again refers to the Sabbath when he reaches the point where it is again made the subject of legislation. The entire account may have been written, for aught we know, in a

few days, or even a few hours. It may not be out of place to state that, having recorded the command of God in regard to the Sabbath, the silence of the sacred narrative on this subject, for so long a period, is *prima facie* evidence that it was observed during all that period. So strong is this evidence that he who disputes it is bound to give a reason for his denial; but no reason can be given.

But to return to the immediate subject of the lesson. For what purpose did Saul go into Arabia? There are two opinions in regard to this question. Some think that he went to carry the gospel to the heathen in that region. The other it is that he went there for a season of quiet meditation and communion with God, before he entered upon his life-work; that it was at this time that he received some, at least, of those wonderful revelations of which he speaks. We regard the latter opinion as the only tenable one, for the following reason:-

1. It was not till after Saul's return to Jerusalem that he was set apart for the ministry to the Gentiles. The disciples did not yet fully comprehend the fact that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. It required a special vision from the Lord to overcome Peter's scruples against associating with the Gentiles, and it was only when he related the vision in full, and told how that, without the ordinary ceremony of laying on of hands, the Holy Ghost had been bestowed on them, that the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem were reconciled to his course. Now when we consider the feeling against Paul, on account of his work among the Gentiles, even after he had been ordained for that especial purpose, we cannot suppose that he would have been received if he had engaged in it before receiving his ordination.

2. The connection of which Paul mentions his visit into Arabia, throws much light on the object of that visit. He begins his letter to the Galatians, thus: "Paul, an apostle (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead)," etc. Again, in verses 11, 12, he says: "For I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." And then he says: "But when it pleased God. . . . to reveal his Son to me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James, the Lord's brother." And he still farther states that when he went into Syria and Cilicia, he was "unknown by face unto the churches of Judea."

Now what is the object of all the statements? Simply that he may establish his authority as a true apostle of Jesus Christ. The apostles were all men who accompanied Jesus from the beginning of his ministry, and were familiar with his teachings and practice. See Acts 1:21, 22. It was therefore necessary that Paul, to be equal with the other apostles, should be sent forth by the Lord himself, and not receive his knowledge of Christ at second hand. To show that this was the case, is the object of Paul in this first chapter of Galatians; and as positive proof, he states that after he was converted, instead of conferring with (*i.e.*, receiving

instruction from) flesh and blood, he went into Arabia. Surely the object of his visit could not be more clearly stated.

This fact is of interest, not merely as an item of history, but as showing the source of apostolic authority, and the value of apostolic practice. None of the apostles claim to have any power or authority of themselves. Paul especially repeats, again and again, that his teaching was not of himself, or of man, but of Christ. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord," is his declaration to the Thessalonians. The apostles were simply Christ's representatives, caring on the work as they had seen him do it. If they deviated from this in the least, they were culpable. Thus Paul says: "But though we, or an angel from Heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." As an evidence that the apostles were not infallible, we learn that Peter, was guilty of dissimulation, Gal. 2:11-14, and that Paul himself engaged in sharp contention with a fellow apostle, Acts 15:37-40. As Dr. Lyman Abbott says, "It is not the practice of the apostles, but their teaching, that we are to follow;" and we might add, as Paul himself did, that their teaching is of authority only because it agrees with that of Christ.

What then, we ask, becomes of the argument for Sunday observance, based upon a change which is pretended was made by the apostles? No one has yet had the boldness to claim that Christ ever kept Sunday, or ever taught its observance. It was his custom to worship on the Sabbath day. See Luke 4:16. Neither did he teach disregard for the Sabbath, but only for the senseless restrictions imposed by the Pharisees. On the contrary he taught his disciples to obey his commandments even as he obeyed his Father's commandments. John 15:10; and his and the Father's commandments were identical. John 12:49. Christ, then, taught, both by precept and practice, the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. Taking all these things into consideration, we find that apostolic license for Sunday-keeping resolves itself into this: Even if the apostles had commanded it, or practiced it themselves (which they did not do), such precept or practice would have had no authority whatever, since it would have been contrary to the teaching and practice of Christ. E. J. W.

**July 12, 1883**

**"The Sabbath-School. Acts 10:21-48; 11:1-18" *The Signs of the Times*  
9, 26.**

E. J. Waggoner

Lesson for the Pacific Coast-July 21. Acts 10:21-48; 11:1-18.

#### NOTES ON THE LESSON.

There is, in the minds of many, a strange misapprehension of the meaning of the vision which was given to Peter, Acts 10:9-16. They imagine that it meant that the distinction between clean and unclean beast was henceforth to be abolished. And that there is therefore nothing which it is not lawful to eat. Even so

renowned a commentator as Dr. Barnes fell into this error, although he taught that this was only the secondary meaning. He says:-

"In the Old Testament God made a distinction between clean and unclean animals. See Lev. 11:2-27; Deut.:3-20. This law remained in the Scriptures and Peter plead that he had never violated it, implying that he could not now violate it. . . . Between that law and the command which he now received in the vision, there was an apparent variation, and Peter naturally referred to the well-known and admitted written law. One design of the vision was to show him that that law was not to pass away. . . It was also true that the ceremonial law is of the Jews in regard to clean and unclean beasts was to pass away, though this was not directly taught in the vision."

This matter may be settled very easily, by finding out what idea of the vision conveyed to Peter. He undoubtedly had the full understanding of it, because he received his instruction from the Lord. Two days after the vision, when, in obedience to the divine command, Peter had gone to the house of Cornelius, he said to the company there assembled, "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call *any man* common or unclean."

The above statement is clear enough, but some claim, as Barnes does, that it means this and more. It may not be amiss to enter into a brief argument to show that the vision had not the slightest reference to the distinction between clean and unclean beast. In the first place, this distinction was not an arbitrary one, made at the time of the giving of the law, in order to separate between the Jews and Gentiles. The distinction existed from the beginning, in the nature of the animals. We find that beasts and fowls, both clean and unclean, went into the ark with Noah. This was several hundred years before the Jews existed as a nation. God had not yet called out anyone to be especially separate. There was nothing of a ceremonial nature in the distinction between clean and unclean animals. Afterward, when the children of Israel were brought out of Egypt, where every wrong practice prevailed, God told them what beasts and fowls were clean and what unclean, not as bringing about a new order of things, but as stating what already existed.

There is not the slightest evidence to show that God intended that this distinction should pass away. Indeed, it could not pass away unless a change were made in the nature of animals. Few would dare claim that this change has been effected. The voice said to Peter, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." It remains for those to believe that men are at full liberty to read everything, to show that this means that God had cleansed all unclean animals, so that they were free from all that would defiled.

There is still one more thought which shows the absurdity of the idea that we are combating. In the vessel that appeared to Peter there were "all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and of the air." It must have contained toads, lizards, owls, bats, vultures, and many offensive animals. Who believes that these are fit for food? But if the distinction between clean and unclean beast was done way, they must be.

It is belittling the work of Christ to make such claims as that which we have been considering. The plan of salvation takes in only the human race. The blood of Christ cleanses everyone who will accept it. There is no distinction of race or condition; all are invited to come. The grace of God extends to every human being, but not to the brute creation. Christ's sacrifice leaves them just where they were. But to mankind, the cry is, "Whosoever will, let him come." This truth was taught to Peter by the vision on the housetop. The matter was presented in the manner that it was because it would make the most vivid impression upon him in his famished condition.

"God is no respecter of persons." That is what Peter had learned by the vision which had been given to him. It was a great step in advance for Peter. Brought up to look upon all but the Jewish nation as outcasts who God despised, and with whom it was a disgrace to associate, he learned what Paul says, that "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." God does not think any more highly of a man that has great mental endowments, or abundant wealth, than he does of his more humble neighbor. Both are dependent on him for what they possess. Neither does God esteem or despise any man because of his race or color. He "hath made of one blood all nations of men," they are all his creatures, the objects of his care and grace.

A question that is quite a favorite with a certain class of theologians at the present day is, "What will be done with the heathen, who have not had a fair chance in this life?" They think this can be answered only in one way, viz., "They will be granted a probation after death." But we do not believe that the question is a proper one to ask. It implies that God is so partial and unjust as to place some men on probation, and then not give them a probation. According to Paul, Rom. 2:18-32, there are none who have not a fair chance in this life. He says that the heathen who know not God are without excuse, because "the invisible things of him," *i.e.*, "his eternal power and Godhead," are plainly manifest from the creation, that they may be learned from the things which he has made. And those who do not recognize their Creator, have become so because they "did not like to retain God in their knowledge," but chose to follow their own lewd desires. It is evident, then, that it would be a lowering of the dignity of God's Government, a compromising with sin, if such persons were allowed a second probation. Neither is there any probability that they would profit by such leniency. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Eccl. 8: 11. If men harden their hearts in this probation, a second probation would make them still more obdurate.

But there are those in heathen lands who do not give themselves up to sin. The law written on the heart may be in their cases very much abbreviated, yet they conscientiously live up to its teachings. Like Cornelius, they are conscious that their lives are imperfect, and they long for more light. Then, according to the promise of Christ, John 7: 17, they will receive the light. Every soul who has a heart to do right, will be given the opportunity to learn what is right. We may not be able to trace the providence of God, as in the case of Cornelius, if God will not suffer any believing soul to perish for lack of knowledge. The Judge of all the earth will do right.

"And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them." "They of the circumcision," were Jewish converts to Christianity; these of course constituted the bulk of the Christian church at that time, since the gospel had not before been preached to the Gentiles. With this explanation we can appreciate the force of the following comment by Dr. Barnes:-

"This is one of the circumstances which show conclusively that the apostles and early Christians did not regard Peter as having any particular *supremacy* over the church, or as being in any particular sense the *vicar* of Christ upon earth. If it he had been regarded as having the authority which the Roman Catholics claim for him, they would have submitted at once to what he had thought proper to do. But the primitive Christians had no such idea of his authority. This claim for Peter is not only opposed to this place, but to every part of the New Testament." E. J. W.

### **"Shunning Responsibility" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 26.**

E. J. Waggoner

What would be thought of the pastor of a church who would occasionally be absent from service on Sabbath morning without sending any excuse, or even letting the congregation know that he intended to be absent? Or, if a minister should make an appointment to preach on a certain evening, and then should stay away without informing anyone of his intended absence, how would he be regarded? The reply is at once that a man who would do such a thing, and repeat the offense, could not expect to retain the confidence of the people. They would justly feel that he had no appreciation for the responsibility resting upon him. His course would show that he was not a true minister-a servant of the church-but a server of self.

But how much worse would that be than for a Sabbath school teacher to absent himself from his class, without any real excuse, or without notifying anybody of his intended absence? The cases are exactly parallel. When the teacher consents to take charge of the class, he virtually pledges himself to be present every Sabbath and do his duty by it. He has no more right to be absent from the Sabbath-school than the pastor has to be away from church. The teacher who does so shows his unfitness for the work in which he is engaged, and should he not reform, ought not to be retained in his position.

Some teacher of this sort may say: "Well, I am willing to give up my class; let them fill my place with some one who can do better." What an admission! Willing to give up all responsibility, because it interferes with your convenience. Willing to do nothing, when you ought to, and by the practice of a little self-denial could, do a great deal. How much better it would be to say, "I am willing to do all I can; if I fail, it shall not be on account of lack of effort." You who are so humble that you don't want to occupy any position of responsibility; who are willing to let others do all the work, do imagine that you will take things so calmly when you see another coming forward to take your crown? Think of this. It is well to consider consequences. E. J. W.

## **"A Strange Thing" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 26.**

E. J. Waggoner

In the *S. S. Times*, in an article on the raising of Dorcas by Peter, Rev. Charles S. Robinson, D.D., says:

"Imagine Dorcas' surprise when she first opened her eyes. Here she was back in the world again. How stranger it is to discover that no one of those persons who were raised from the dead ever attempted to tell the story of what they saw or heard."

We wonder that more people do not look at it in this light. The grave is spoken of as that "undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveler returns," but as a matter of fact many have returned, yet none have ever opened their lips to relate what they heard or saw while dead. But if the dead are conscious, this is passing strange. If it be true that death is simply the separation of the soul from the body which has acted as a clog to it, restricting its free exercise, why is it that in those instances where the soul has been returned to its lodgment, no note is made of the wonderful things learned while it was permitted to expand unrestrained?

We say that it is indeed a wonderful that no revelations have been made of what is beyond, if, as the poet says, death is only transition, and the soul is more acutely conscious in death than it ever was during life; but we do not bring forward the fact that no such revelation has been made, as proof that the dead are not conscious. We have proof of a more satisfactory nature, which clears the subject of all doubt, and explains why those who have been raised from the dead were silent as to what transpired during that absence from among the living. The testimony is abundant, but we have space here for only the following:-

Those who are dead are asleep: "Consider and hear me, O Lord my God; lighten my eyes, lest I *sleep the sleep of death*." Ps. 13:3. "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so he giveth his beloved *sleep*." Ps. 127:9. "And many of them that *sleep* in the dust of the earth shall awake, some everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Dan. 12:2. "In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and *sleep a perpetual sleep*, and not wake, saith the Lord." Jer. 51:39. "For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." 1 Cor. 15:16-18. "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are *asleep*." "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which *sleep* in Jesus will God bring with him." 1 Thess. 4:13, 14.

People who are in a sound sleep are entirely unconscious of what is going on, and the Bible says that the dead are unconscious: "For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything." "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor the device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." Eccl. 9:5, 10. "But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up; so man lieth down, and riseth



not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." "His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them." Job 14:10-12, 21. "The dead praise not the Lord, neither indeed that go down into silence." Ps. 115:17. "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." Ps. 146:3, 4.

Many more texts might be added but these are sufficient for our purpose. They are direct statements of fact and need no explanation. There only two things that can be done with them: Either accept them as literally true, or reject them all together. But if we accept the Bible as the infallible word of God, we are not left to wonder why those who have been raised from the dead never told the story of what they saw or heard. They had none to tell. They were unconsciously sleeping, and were unable to take note of passing events. Then it is not a strange thing after all.

But there is one strange thing about this matter, and that is how, in the face of all these Bible texts, a Doctor of Divinity could write such a paragraph is that quoted at the beginning of this article. E. J. W.

**July 19, 1883**

**"The Policy of Romanism" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 27.**

E. J. Waggoner

It is doubtless well known that the American Bible Society and the Baptists are not in harmony; that the Baptists circulate the Scriptures by means of their own organizations, instead co-operating with the society. The cause of the disagreement is this: The only Bible in the Burmese language is that translated by Judson, and the American Bible Society, which professes to be undenominational, refuses to circulate this Bible, because the word "baptize" is rendered by a Burmese word signifying "immerse." Of course the Baptists were left with no alternative but to do their own distributing.

The *Christian Union*, commenting editorially on this affair, regrets the action taken by the American Bible Society, and says that it is plainly in the wrong. It thinks that the society should do all in its power to bring about a union, and should circulate the version which it now rejects. The following paragraph in this article states the case clearly, and makes an important admission:-

"There is a scholarly, an acceptable, an actually accepted version of Scripture in the language of the Burmese. This version is without competition, present for prospective. It is *the* Burmese Bible. At least for an indefinite time to come. The Burmese depend on it, on it alone, for their knowledge of the word of God. Such, on one side, is the state of the facts. But this Burmese version of Scripture renders the Greek word 'baptize,' with its cognates, by a vernacular equivalent meaning 'immerse.' No competent scholar will assert that this is an unscholarly rendering of the Greek original. This rendering, however, compels the Christian missionaries who do not practice immersion, and who, of course, do not teach immersion, to explain the terms involved. There is for such missionaries and

obvious disadvantage in this. Still, in spite of the disadvantaged, missionaries not Baptists do, as a matter of fact, use this version, making the necessary explanation."

It is generally admitted that no man was better qualified to make a scholarly translation of the Bible than Dr. Judson: In translating the Scriptures into the Burmese language, he rendered "baptize" by a word meaning "immerse," not on account of theological bias, but because as a scholar he could not do otherwise. Educated as a Presbyterian, all his prejudices were against the Baptists. On his voyage to India he employed his leisure time in studying the subject of baptism, both that he might satisfy himself as to the course which he should pursue in regard to the infants of those who might be converted under his labors, and that he might defend his views against the Baptist missionaries at Singapore, with whom he expected to spend a few months. The result of his careful study was that he rejected infant baptism and sprinkling of adults, and was himself baptized soon after his arrival in India. Of course his translation accorded with his view, and all his converts were immersed. In pursuing this course he occupied a position which no scholar will attempt to criticize.

And now what is the position of those who do not practice immersion, but who from necessity use Judson's Bible? The *Christian Union* says that they are compelled "to explain the terms involved." What kind of an explanation they could make that would be satisfactory to all parties, we cannot imagine. Here is the situation: (1) A Bible which says, "He that believeth and is immersed shall be saved." "Repent, and be immerse everyone of you in the name of Christ Jesus;" (2) Educated and acute heathen who well know the meaning of the terms used; and (3) Missionaries who do not believe in nor practice immersion, but who believe in sprinkling instead, yet who, as scholars, know that the translation is a correct one, and, in fact, the only correct translation that could be made. We fully agree with the *Christian Union*, that "there is for such missionaries an obvious disadvantage," in making "the necessary explanation." We would not care to be under such a necessity.

But the article contains still stronger testimony in favor of immersion. The editor says:-

"If the case were other than it is; if it were a question of antecedent instruction to translators what kind of versions to produce, the case might be different. We might, then, say, Let 'baptize' be transferred-that is, transliterated-into the heathen tongues, not translated at all. Missionaries of differing views on the subject of baptism could then use one and the same Bible, applying their several explanations of the terms transferred. This is the course pursued in both the New and the Old Versions of the Bible, and it is a wise one. But here is a version already in existence, already in possession, exclusive possession. It translates, indeed, instead of transliterating. But it translates truly enough, so far as lexicography goes. Nobody can deny that; nobody at least whose denial would weigh. Nay, if non-Baptist Burmese scholars were to make a new version of their own, and in that version translate the terms in question, such scholars would not render those terms in a manner to *contradict* the version already existing. The utmost that they could do would be to render those terms by words or phrases of

a general and indeterminate meaning. What would thus be gained? Why, against a version that gave what is certainly the general meaning of 'baptize,' there would be a version that did not give the meaning of that word at all. That is all."

Note first the latter portion of the above paragraph: "Nobody whose denial would weigh" can deny that "baptize" is correctly rendered "immerse." "If non-Baptist Burmese scholars were to make a new version of their own, and in that version translate the terms in question, such scholars would not render those terms in a manner to *contradict* the version already existing. The utmost that they could do would be to render those terms by words or phrases of a general or indeterminate meaning." But this, as the editor says, would be no translation at all. That is, we must either translate the Greek word "baptize" by "immerse," or else not translate it. Well, why not translate it? Because the great mass of professed Christians do not choose to practice immersion, as they admit that the Bible teaches, and they want to be left free to put their own construction on the term. We are obliged to say that we could not write a recommendation for honesty for those who take such a position.

The case is more serious than is commonly supposed. It involves the question whether or not the Bible shall be placed in the hands of the people, or whether they shall depend upon the priests and clergy for their knowledge of the Scriptures. If one word be not translated, why translate any of the Bible? If it is a wise thing to translate the Greek word "baptize," then why not transliterate the entire Bible? Then the New Testament in English, French, Italian, Spanish, etc., would consist merely of the Greek words of the text, but with the Roman letters instead of the Greek characters. For the inhabitants of Burmah, the Burmese characters which correspond to the Greek letters, would be used, and so in other languages. This would enable the people to renounce the words, but as they would not know their meaning the clergy could apply any meaning which suited their notions, and not be under the necessity of making embarrassing explanations. Then every body could make use of the Bible. The Spiritualist could teach that Eccl. 9:5, 6, 10; Job 14:21, and kindred passages mean that departed souls are conscious and able to communicate with their friends. The Mormon could teach that the seventh commandment requires every man to keep at least two women whom he shall call his wives. Even the atheist or the pantheist could quote the first commandment as meaning either that there is no God, or that there are millions. In short, there are no errors which might not be successfully promulgated on the authority of the Bible, because people who know no language but their own could not judge for themselves whether or not the facts were as represented. As far as the mass of people are concerned, the Bible would be just as valuable if it were written in hieroglyphics or senseless jargon; and for real use it would be as well to have no Bible at all, for that is what it really amounts to.

We have called this the policy of Romanism, and such it is. The policy of that church has ever been to keep the Bible out of the hands of the people. She says that they may read it in the original; but as comparatively few are able to do this, that amounts to a complete prohibition. By leaving it untranslated, the priests can teach whatever they please without fear of contradiction. The Protestant world

never tires of giving honor to Wickliffe, Luther, and Tyndale, for giving the Bible to the people in their own language, thus breaking the banns of Rome, yet it sanctions a course similar to that which the Catholic Church pursued; for it must be evident to all, that the difference between keeping the whole Bible from the people, and keeping a part of it from them, is only one of degree.

And this is the course that the *Christian Union* and with it all the so-called orthodox denominations, thinks is a wise one to pursue, at least in regard to the subject of baptism. We most heartily dissent. It is a very convenient subterfuge, and for that very reason it is not wise. Honesty is better than policy. If we are to take the Bible as our guide, let us have it just as it is. If it crosses our preconceived ideas, then let us change our own opinions and practices and make them accord with the standard. If any are determined to hold onto their own theories, or to tradition, in direct opposition to the Bible, let them do so on their own responsibility, and not use the authority of the Bible to back up that which it does not teach. If men do not believe what the Bible says, then let them cease quoting it as authority. "Every word of the Lord is pure;" and a practice which cannot stand when compared with the pure word as it came from the pen of inspiration, ought not to be adopted by men claiming to be Bible Christians. We fear that there are more persons than is commonly supposed, who are letting themselves liable to the penalties threatened in Rev. 22:18, 19. E. J. W.

**July 26, 1883**

**"The Sabbath-School. Acts 11:19-30; 12:1-20" *The Signs of the Times*  
9, 28.**

E. J. Waggoner

Lesson for the Pacific Coast-Aug. 4. Acts 11:19-30; 12:1-20.

#### NOTES ON THE LESSON.

"Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only." These, as we learn from Acts 8:1, 4, were lay members, for the apostles remained in Jerusalem. They could not refrain from telling the wondrous truths that they had learned. This is in accordance with our Saviour's injunction, "And let him that heareth say, Come." The proof of their fitness to preach is found in verse 21, "And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord." The enemies of the gospel thought they were crushing it out, when they drove the disciples away from Jerusalem, but instead of that they were causing it to spread. The enemies of the truth may rage, but God can cause even their wrath to praise him. Paul says, "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." 2 Cor. 13:8.

We may learn a lesson from the course of these disciples under persecution. When Christians are in trouble they are too liable to think that God has forgotten them; but these disciples did not stop to pity themselves, and mourn over their

hardships. And the results proved that God had an object in allowing this persecution to come upon them; he wanted to use them in his service. If they had murmured at their hard lot, how much they would have lost; they would not have been honored by God with the position in his service, and their selfishness might have resulted in the loss of many souls who, under the circumstances, received the truth at their hands. Who knows but that all who complain on account of trials lose just as much?

"And some. . . spake unto the Grecians." The Revised Version, following some of the best authorities, has "Greeks" instead of "Grecians." And this seems the most harmonious. The most of them confined their labors to the Jews, but others, having less national prejudice, or a clearer view of the scope of the gospel, preached to the Gentiles also. The following remarks of H. Clay Trumbull in the *Sunday-School Times*, are pertinent:-

"Christianity is sure to carry some men ahead of their age in the right direction. However the mass of those who are in the church may be bound by the common customs of the present, or by the blind traditions of the past, there will ever be more or less of radical and progressive reformers, who will do as others ought to do, instead of being content to do as others do do. From the days of the apostles this has been the way of moral and religious reforms; their beginning has been with the few extremists, rather than with the many, conservatists. So it was with modern missions, with the Sunday-school work, with the cause of temperance, and of anti-slavery, and of anti-church lotteries, and of anti-duelling; so it is with the progress of both religious and civil liberty; so it is with the now world-wide plan of uniform Bible study. So it is with prohibitory liquor legislation, with the battling of the anti-Chinese spirit, with the pressing of the anti-tobacco reform, and of the anti-church debt movement, and with a host of other good enterprises. Whatever may be the views or the practices of Christians generally, there are 'some' who have taken an advance position on these points, a position which they don't propose to yield for anything short of death, for the second coming of our Lord."

When tidings of these things reached the church at Jerusalem, "they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch." The object in sending our best was to assist and direct these disciples in their work. "As far as Antioch," indicates that he should follow up the work in the various places for the scattered ones had preached. The preaching to the Gentiles may have struck the church in Jerusalem as an irregularity that must be checked. But when Barnabas arrived at the field of labor, he found that he had only to exhort the new converts to continue in the way as they had begun. When he saw the grace of God he was glad. He had no feelings of envy because the Gentiles had received the word, or because some humble persons had been the instruments of their conversion, "For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith." The Bible never deals in flattery, and when it says of a man that he was good, means a great deal. The highest titles of honor that this world can bestow sink into insignificance in comparison with the words, "Thou good and faithful servant," when spoken by the King of glory.

"And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." On the reason why Antioch should have been the place where this term was first used, "Conneybeare and Howson's Life of Paul" says:-

"As new converts in vast numbers came in from the ranks of the Gentiles, the church began to lose its ancient appearance of a Jewish sect, and to stand out in relief as a great self-existent community in the face both of Jews and Gentiles. Hitherto it had been possible, and even natural, that the Christians should be considered-by the Jews themselves, and by the Gentiles whose notice they attracted-as only one among the many theological parties which prevailed in Jerusalem and in the Dispersion. But when the Gentiles began to listen to what was preached concerning Christ,-when they were united as brethren on equal terms, and admitted to baptism without the necessity of a previous circumcision,-when the Mosaic features of this society were lost in the wider character of the New Covenant,-then it became evident that these men were something more than the Pharisees or Sadducees, the Essenes or Herodians, or any other sect or party among the Jews. Thus a new term in the vocabulary of the human race came into existence at Antioch about the year 44. Thus Jews and Gentiles, who under the teaching of Paul believed that Jesus of Nazareth was the Saviour of the world, 'were first called Christians.'"

"Herod the King." It is not to be wondered at that many persons find it difficult to distinguish between the several Herods mentioned in the New Testament. In character they were all alike,-slaves of lost ambition, and monsters of cruelty. This Herod was Herod Agrippa I., grandson of Herod the Great, who ordered the massacre of the infants, and nephew of Herod Antipas, who caused John the Baptist to be beheaded, and father of Herod Agrippa II., called simply Agrippa, Acts 26. The Herod under consideration is designated as "Herod the King," because he was the first one since Herod the Great, who had ruled over Judea. On this, Paley, in his "Evidences" makes the following point:-

"The accuracy of our historian, or rather the unmeditated coincidence which truth of its own accord produces, is in this instance remarkable. There was no portion of time, for thirty years before, or ever afterwards, in which there was a king at Jerusalem, a person exercising that authority in Judea, to whom that title could be applied, except the last three years of this Herod's life, within which period the transaction recorded in the Acts is said to have taken place."

The death of James and the prospective death of Peter pleased the Jews. It seems that the church had lost some of that "favor with all the people," which they gained soon after the day of Pentecost. The reason for this may be found in the fact that they were making many converts, and necessarily showing the errors of the Jewish Church. However much of the favor of the world the people of God may gain on account of their upright course, they may be sure that in time they will lose it for the same reason. The purer the lives and doctrines of God's people, the more will they be heeded by the world, and an apostate church.

The antithesis in verses 4 and 5 of chapter 12 is worthy of notice. Peter was in prison with no prospect of coming forth until he was led to execution. He was constantly guarded by four soldiers, two of whom were in the cell with him, and two before the door. Added to this, he was chained to the two soldiers in the cell.

There was no use of trying to bribe the guard, for should they allow him to escape their lives would be forfeited. All this was done by Herod; "but prayer was made without ceasing of the church under God" for Peter.

The disciples had no power to draw the bolts of Peter's prison door, nor could they hope for any favor from the king, but they had a key that would admit them to the presence of the King of kings, before the weakest of whose messengers Herod's whole army was as nothing. Well was it for Peter that the church could do nothing but pray.

Although the disciples had been earnestly and persevering praying for Peter, they could not believe that their prayers were answered. We are not to suppose that they had been praying without any faith, but that they did not expect that their prayers would be answered in that manner. They may have expected that the Lord would so move Herod's heart that he would release Peter; at any rate it is evident that God did more for them than they had hoped. Their surprise, however, showed that they did not have that full faith that comes from an intimate acquaintance with God. It is as easy for him to do a great deed as a small one; nothing is too hard for him. Therefore we ought ask and expect great things from him.

"Then said they, It is his angel." Why the disciples should think that Peter's guardian angel should come to them, it is needless to inquire. In their surprise and excitement they themselves may not have been able to give a reason. But it is not out of place to state what the text does *not* mean. It does not mean "The angel Peter," as we have seen it misquoted. Some commentators say that it was the belief among the Jews at that time that departed souls of good men officiated as ministering angels. Whether or not some Jews believed this is of no consequence, for it is certain that the Bible Christians entertained no such belief. The fact that Protestant commentators can now believe such a theory, gives a clue to the rapid spread of modern Spiritualism.

Angels are not departed dead men. This may be proved (1) by the fact that "the dead know not anything," Eccl. 9:5; that "their thoughts perish," as soon as they die, Ps. 146:4; and that they know absolutely nothing about that which would concern them most if they were conscious, Job 14:21; Eccl. 9:6; and (2) by the fact that angels were in existence before any man had died, Gen. 3:24, and even before man was created, Job 38:4-7. Angels are a superior order of being, entirely distinct from man. And this distinction will remain throughout eternity, for saints will never become angels. The promise to the righteous is, that in the resurrection they shall be "equal unto the angels," and this of itself shows that they will never become the angels. Angels are now "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation;" and it was in this capacity that one of them rescued Peter from prison. E. J. W.

### **"Questions" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 28.**

E. J. Waggoner

Please answer through your paper the following questions:-

1. Do Seventh-day Adventists hold that the fact that God rested on the seventh day, and blessed it, and sanctified it, as *authority* for its observance among men?

2. Do they teach that the ten commandments were enjoined *by Moses*, or *through him* upon any beside the Hebrews and those who were circumcised as proselytes to their religion?

3. Do they teach that Christ enjoined the observance of the fourth commandment upon the Gentiles who became Christians? If so, cite their Scriptural authority.

ANSWER. 1. YES. Webster defines the word "sanctified" thus: "1. To make sacred or wholly; *to set apart to a holy for religious use; to consecrate by appropriate rites; to hallow. . . . 4. To impart sacredness, venerableness, inviolability, title to reverence and respect, or the like to; to secure from violation; to give sanction to.*" When therefore it is stated in Gen. 2:3, that God sanctified the seventh day, it means that he set it apart to a religious use, gave sanction to it; in other words, he commanded that men should observe it. The word "hallowed," found in the fourth commandment, is translated from the very same word that is rendered "sanctified" in Gen. 2:3. The fourth commandment introduces nothing new; it simply repeats the command to keep holy the Sabbath-day, refers to the events of the creation week, and states in closing that at that time God commanded the observance of the Sabbath. When God rested upon the seventh day, it became his Sabbath-day or rest-day; the blessing which he pronounced upon it made it superior to the other

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days of the week; the crowning act of sanctifying it made its observance obligatory on men.

2. The ten commandments were enjoined neither *by Moses* nor *through him*, but by the Creator himself. See Ex. 20:1, and onward. When Moses, at a later date repeated these commandments, he said, Deut. 5:22, "These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me."

Now as to the question, "Were the ten Commandments enjoined upon any beside the Hebrews and those who were circumcised as proselytes to their religion?" We answer, The commandments were for all men, irrespective of race or condition. Paul says 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." 1 Tim. 1:9, 10. Now read in Rom. 1:21-32 Paul's description of the heathen nations, and you will see that they did these very things, and that consequently the law was made for them. The law was not made for a righteous man but for sinners; but since there are none who are righteous, Rom. 3:9, 10, 23, the law must have been made for all.

Suppose we particularize in regard to the commandments. Would our friend claim that none but Jews were under obligation to worship the one true God to



the exclusion of all others? If so, then he must hold that the heathen committed no sin in worshiping the creature instead of the Creator. Were only the Jews forbidden to take God's name in vain? Did God design to allow all except the Jews to kill, commit adultery, steal, bear false witness, etc., at pleasure? Most assuredly not. The missionaries of all Christian denominations teach the heathen to avoid all these things, and they do so on the authority of the ten commandments alone. They recognize the truth of Paul's argument that the law was made for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews. The Jews, as a nation, did not exist till several hundred years after the flood, yet we find that before the flood murder, theft, adultery, were regarded as sins, and all the inhabitants of the earth were destroyed on account of those sins. We must conclude, therefore, that the law existed long before it was spoken upon Sinai; and that it was binding upon all the inhabitants of the earth. In the case of the Sabbath the evidence is very clear, for (1) As shown above, we are expressly told that the observance of the Sabbath was enjoined in Eden; (2) There was then but one man upon the face of the earth; then of course it was to Adam that the Sabbath commandment was given; but (3) Adam stood as the representative of the whole human family; therefore the Sabbath was given for the whole human family; and this agrees with our Saviour's words, "The Sabbath was made for man."

But now the question naturally arises, "If it was intended that the Gentiles should keep the law, why was it spoken only to the Jews at Sinai? It will not be out of place to consider this matter as briefly as possible. In the beginning God talked with man, and made known to him his will. It was his design that Adam should be the head of a race of sinless beings. But Adams sinned; having violated God's law, he was under sentence of death, but a plan was devised whereby he might escape the consequences of his sin. But as the population increased, sin increased until the whole world had gone astray from God, and the flood was sent to destroy all the inhabitants. Then Noah and his family alone remained to re-people the earth, and to them was intrusted the responsibility of keeping alive the knowledge of God. Again man was unfaithful to his trust, and soon the whole world was lost in idolatry. Only one family, that of Abraham, remained upright. Since he alone was loyal to God, he was chosen as the depository of God's law. God did not act arbitrarily, or use partiality, when he selected Abraham; he made himself known to him, because He alone wished to retain God in his knowledge, and he alone would command his household after him to keep the way of the Lord. Gen. 18:19. On account of Abraham's faithfulness, the promise was made to him that he should be a great nation, and that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed. See Gen. 12:2, 3.

Isaac and Jacob, and their families, were the singular ones of the time in which they live, in that they alone worshiped the true God. Jacob, or Israel, went into Egypt, and there his descendants became a great nation, the Israelites. While here there were so oppressed and hindered in their worship, that when God delivered them it was necessary to repeat his law to them. Why did he give them his law? Because they alone, of all the inhabitants of the earth, would receive it. Other people were not prohibited from learning of God, and of keeping

his law, but in conformity with God's promise to Abraham they were obliged to be adopted into the family of Abraham.

But the Jews were often unmindful of their obligation to God, and forgot him, until, on account of their stubborn rebellion, they were finally rejected as a nation. God would accept them as individuals, but as a nation they were deprived of the high honor of being the depositories of his law. What then? Did God change his plan, and violate his promise to Abraham? By no means. Read Rom. 2:28, 29: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." And Gal. 3:27, 29: "For as many of you as had been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. . . . And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." God did not cast off Israel, but simply ordained that the badge of citizenship should no more be outward circumcision, but circumcision of the heart, that is, a cutting off and putting away of the carnal mind, bringing it into subjection to God's law. All who would do this were to be enrolled as Israelites, and those who remained disobedient, even though they could trace their ancestry back to Abraham, were no longer counted as a part of Israel. See Rom. 2:28, 29; 9:6-8.

And so it is the Israelites still, and they alone, who are God's chosen people. As in the former dispensation, the Gentiles who accepted God and his law became a part of the literal Israel, and shared all their privileges, so now the Gentiles are exhorted to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, but in doing so they cease to be Gentiles and become Jews, apart of the true Israel. Those who do not become Israelites, have no part in the promises, since the promises were made to Israel, and to none other. Rom. 9:4.

3. This question has really been answered above. All who become Christians must keep the law and consequently the fourth commandment. Christ enjoined obedience to the law: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for *this is the law* and the prophets." Matt. 7:12. And he taught obedience not to a portion of the law only, but to the whole. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Matt. 5:17, 18. To the young ruler he said, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Matt. 19:17. Does any one say that these words were addressed to the Jews? We reply that Christ taught none directly except Jews. The gospel was not preached to the Gentiles until sometime after his ascension. But just before his ascension he commissioned his disciples to teach all nations and baptize them: "Teaching them," said he, "to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Matt. 28:20. All that Christ said was for all. He did not teach one thing for one class of hearers, and another thing for another class.

Did Christ, then, enjoin the observance of the fourth commandment? We reply, Yes. Upon Gentiles? Yes; upon all who desire to obtain eternal life. Christ, however, enjoined nothing upon his own authority. He commanded nothing new. "My doctrine," said he, "is not mine, but his that sent me." John 7:16. He came to

do, not his own will, but that his Father. It was not at all necessary that should reiterate the commandments. They had been given in the most formal and solemn manner, and, like all laws, must remain in full force until as formally repealed. Even if Christ did not mention the law at all, we would understand that it stood unchanged, but as above quoted, he declared in the most positive terms that it should never pass away. Christ and the Father are one, that is, there is the most perfect harmony in all their thoughts and actions. They were one in creating the world; one in giving and upholding the law; one in the plan of salvation. E. J. W.

**August 2, 1883**

**"The Honor Due to God" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 29.**

E. J. Waggoner

"And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live." Luke 10:25-28.

There are very many degrees of service which we may render to God, but there is only one that is acceptable to him, and that is undivided service. God requires that all the faculties both of body and mind shall be consecrated to him; he will accept nothing less. We are to regard ourselves and all our talents, both of mind and means, as belonging to him without reserve. It is a rare thing to find one who realizes the full extent of the claims that God makes upon us. Our minds have been so warped by selfishness that it is difficult to even conceive of such perfect service as the law requires, and much more so to do it. It should be the great object of every person to have his spiritual discernment so quickened that he may be able to comprehend the completeness of service that God requires of him. It could not be any more forcibly stated than it is in the text above quoted, but to understand and carry out all the details is the work of a life-time.

But it should be constantly borne in mind that God does not make this claim upon us arbitrarily, and without sufficient reason. He claims no more than is his just due. In Rev. 4:11 we find the basis of God's claim upon his creatures as follows:-

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

It is because God has created us that he has a right to our service. This fact is made very prominent in the Bible. Why should we serve Jehovah, rather than the gods which the heathen worship? Because God created us and all things that we enjoy, and they did not. Paul says: "There be gods many and lords many, but to us there is but one God, the father, of whom are all things, and we are in him." 1 Cor. 8:5, 6. The psalmist says: "Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord he is God; it is he that hath made

us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." Ps. 100:2, 3. If we had made ourselves, or could by our own aided efforts maintain our existence for a single moment, we would be under no obligation to any being; but since we are indebted to God not only for life, but for all that is necessary for its continuance, common gratitude requires us to render him all the service of which we are capable, for it is impossible for us to do as much for him as he is done for us.

Some may cavil at the expression, "Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created;" but such persons forget that what is for the pleasure of God, is for our highest good. They forget the possibilities of a life which he has given us; that is only preparatory to a life that shall never end, a life filled with joys of which it is impossible for the mind of man to conceive. It is the Father's "good pleasure" to give us the kingdom that shall have no end. The service of which the lawyer spoke, and of which Christ approved, is summed up in one word, "godliness," and of this Paul says that it 'is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.' 1 Tim. 4:8. It is only because men lose sight of what God is doing and propose to do for them, that they refuse to render him the service which is his due.

But love to God must be expressed in some tangible form. The love that consists merely of a dreamy sentimentality, and indefinable "good feeling" that is dissipated by a call to the performance of some duty, comes far short of the love that will win eternal life. True love consists in doing, not in simple feeling; and words and protestations of affection are of little value unless accompanied by corresponding deeds. Said the Saviour: "If ye love, keep my commandments." John 14:15. And again: "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Luke 7:46. The apostle John also says: "And hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." 1 John 2:3; also, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." 1 John 5:3. When the lawyer quoted, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," etc., the Saviour replied, "thou hast answered right; this *do* and thou shalt live." There is something for us to *do* as well as to *feel*. A person can no more love God and fail to manifest it by deeds, than he can live without breathing.

But before we can manifest our love to God by deeds, we must know what would please him; and he has therefore specified the ways by which he would have men express their love for him, so that they can have no excuse for taking a course of which God disapproves, under the impression that they are pleasing him. Following are two of the ways in which we may honor God and show our love for him:-

1. 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, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Isa. 58:13, 14.

By these two texts we see that God requires us to devote to him a portion of both our time and our means. Of our time he requires one-seventh; of our means one-tenth. We shall proceed to show that these requirements are exactly similar; that the same reasons exist for each; that both are explicit and unconditional; and that the same degree of guilt attaches to the neglect of one as to the other. In comparing them we shall give a few leading facts in regard to the Sabbath, and then consider the tithe in its various relations.

## **THE SABBATH**

1. It is based on the right of property. Our time, as well as ourselves, belongs to God; but he reserves only one-seventh for himself, leaving the rest to us. We may devote a part of the six days to him, and we ought to, but we are not allowed to appropriate any portion of the seventh to our own use. Of it God says that it "is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God;" he calls it "my holy day." It is obvious, then, that if we should appropriate any of this time to our own use, we would be guilty of theft. When the people violated the Sabbath, God said that he was "profaned among them." Eze. 22:26. That being said he was robbed of his honor, and treated with contempt.

2. The Sabbath existed prior to the Jewish dispensation. There is nothing in it of a ceremonial nature. God claimed it as his own in the beginning. See Gen. 2:2, 3.

3. Since the Sabbath existed before and during the Jewish dispensation, it cannot have been affected by the close of that dispensation, and hence must exist to-day in as full force as in the beginning. This is what we would naturally expect, and we have direct testimony to that effect. Our Saviour positively affirmed that not one jot or one tittle of the law should pass away. Matt. 5:17-19. He kept the Sabbath himself, Luke 4:16; John 15:10; and showed that his true disciples would be keeping it at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, nearly forty years after the Jewish dispensation closed. Matt. 24:20. We have already referred to Eze. 22:26; if it were necessary, we could easily show that this chapter has reference to the last days,-our own time. The Lord says: "Thou hast despised my holy things, and hast profaned my Sabbaths." Verse 8; but the Sabbath could not be profane by wicked men, if it were not sacred; therefore it exists as sacred time in the last days.

## **THE TITHE**

The above propositions hold good in regard to the tithe.

1. It also is based on the right of property. God created all things; they are his. The psalmist says: "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." Ps. 24:1. Again the Lord speaks for his servant: "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills,

I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine, and the fullness thereof."

Ps. 50:10-12. "The silver is mine, and the gold is mined, saith the Lord of hosts." Haggai 2:8. We may gain some of this world's goods for ourselves, but it is God who gives us power to get wealth. Deut. 8:18; it is he that "giveth us *all things* richly to enjoy." 1 Tim. 6:17. Without God, we could not exist a single moment; we are utterly dependent on him for "life, and breath, and all things."

But, as with time, so with property, God has reserved a portion for himself. That which he claims is one-tenth; the other nine-tenths he places entirely at our disposal. We may and should devote a portion of this to the Lord, and hold it all subject to his call; but we have nothing to do with any part of the tithe, except to pass it over to the Lord. In Lev. 27:30 we read: "And *all the tithe* of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, *is the Lord's*; it is holy unto the Lord." Compare this verse with the fourth commandment: "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work." The same words are used concerning the tithe that are used in regard to the Sabbath, and it must, therefore, be equally sacred with the Sabbath. "It is the Lord's."

Since the tithe belongs wholly to God, it needs no argument to prove that if we use it, or any part of it, ourselves, we are guilty of robbery. This is a self-evident fact; but lest any should doubt it, we will quote the Lord's own words: "Will a man rob God? Yet *ye have robbed me*. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? *In tithes* and in offerings." Mal. 3:8. These are solemn words. Reader, do they apply to you? We shall come back to this point again.

2. The tithe is not peculiar to the Jewish dispensation. By reading God's instruction to the Jews, on this subject, we learn some things that we would not otherwise know; but the tithe did not originate with the Jews. God said to the Jews: "The tithe of *is the Lord's*," not "shall be the Lord's." The tithe was the Lord's before the Jews had an existence; the Lord simply refreshed the memory in regard to the fact. Turn to Gen. 14, and you will there find recorded a transaction that took place in the patriarchal age. The facts are these: Lot, Abraham's nephew, lived in Sodom. Several kings made war against the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, and, having conquered them, took all their goods. Among the prisoners was Lot. When Abraham heard this, he pursued and attacked the victorious army, and recovered all the booty and captives that they had taken. As he was returning from the slaughter of the kings, he was met by Melchizedec, king of Salem, who brought forth bread and wine. Melchizedec was "the priest of the most high God," and he blessed Abraham. To him Abraham gave tithes of all that he had gained. See Gen. 14:17-20; Heb. 7:4. This was four hundred years before the covenant was made with the Jews, and nearly two hundred years before Judah, from whom the Jews received their name, was born. It is true that this is the first instance on record of the payment of tithe, but we are not told that the system of tithing was instituted here; and since the same conditions existed before this time that did afterwards, we must conclude that tithes were paid from the beginning.

3. Since the tithing system, like the Sabbath, existed before the Jewish dispensation, it also must exist still, unaffected by any changes that have been made. And here also we have the most positive testimony. In Matt. 23:23 we find the following language of Christ: "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." He did not rebuke them for paying tithes, for he plainly says that they ought to do so; but he rebuked them for their hypocrisy. They were scrupulous about paying tithes, because that was something that could be seen; they could take care that everybody should know that they performed this duty, and thus they would gain a reputation for piety and devotion to God. But when it came to heart-service, judgment, mercy, and faith, they could not make so much of an outside show, and therefore they omitted it. It was for this hypocrisy that the woe was pronounced upon them. They could not atone for the neglect of one duty by the strict performance of another; for both were essential. E. J. W.

**August 9, 1883**

**"The Honor Due to God.óNo. 2" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 30.**

E. J. Waggoner

Last week we showed that besides honoring God in a general way with our means, we are called upon to honor him with the first-fruits of all our increase-to devote a tithe to God. We showed that it rests upon the same foundation as the Sabbath, and is as binding on men. The payment of tithes dates from long before the Jews were called as God's peculiar people, and is one of those things which our Saviour said *ought* to be done. Perhaps we do not always grasp the full force of that word "ought." Webster says it denotes "obligation to duty," "moral obligation." When, therefore, Christ said, "These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone," it was the equivalent to a command. In effect he said, It is your duty not only to do judgment, mercy, etc., but also to pay tithes. Reader, do you profess to love the Lord? remember that he has said: "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

There is one more thought which we will present as showing that tithing is not a Jewish but a Christian doctrine. We turn to the case of Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings. Gen. 14. When Melchizedek, king of Salem, and "the priest of the Most High God," came forth, Abraham gave him tithes of all that he had gained. In the seventh chapter of Hebrews, the apostle Paul, in the course of an argument based on this circumstance, to show the superiority of the Melchizedek priesthood, makes incidentally a strong argument on the obligation to pay tithes. We quote verses 4-10.

"Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham; but he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. And as

I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchizedek met him."

The argument for tithing, which is none the less forcible because it is brought in incidentally, to illustrate another point, is as follows: Under the Mosaic law the tribe of Levi, which was appointed for the service of the sanctuary, received tithes of the people. The tribe of Levi was, therefore, superior in rank to the other tribes. Abraham was the father of all the Jewish tribes, and consequently he was greater even than Levi. The Jews regarded Abraham with peculiar reverence. But Melchizedek was greater even than Abraham, as is shown by the fact that he received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him. Heb. 7:4, 6, 7. Abraham had the promises of God, yet Melchizedek blessed him, and the act of blessing implies superiority of age for rank, as Paul says, "And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better." Abraham was himself a priest, empowered to offer sacrifices, as were all the patriarchs, yet he was inferior to Melchizedek, "the priest of the Most High God." And from this Paul concludes that the priesthood of Melchizedek was far superior to that of Levi.

But what has this to do with tithing? Just this: The Melchizedek priesthood received tithes. Christ is now, our priest, but as he is "made a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek," Heb. 6:20; 7:21; Ps. 110:4, we also are under the Melchizedek priesthood, as was Abraham, and therefore we are under obligation to pay tithes, as well as he was. For if it was necessary that those living under the Levitical order should take tithes, it is far more necessary that we should do so who live under the order of Melchizedek, since the Levitical priesthood itself, and the person of its head, paid tithes to Melchizedek. And this point is enforced by Paul when, evidently referring to Christ, he says: "And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them of whom it is witnessed that *he liveth*." Heb. 7:8.

We have now given sufficient evidence, we think, to show that Christians are under obligation to pay tithes. Other points will be noticed, however, as we consider various questions that arise in regard to the tithe. The first thing that will claim our attention is the question as to

## **WHAT THE TITHE IS**

When Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek it is said that "he gave him tithes of all," Gen. 14:20, the "all" referring to the spoil which he had captured from the kings. The remaining nine-tenths, less the amount that the young men that had accompanied him had eaten, Abraham turned over to the king of Salem. See verses 22-24. It should be particularly borne in mind that the tithe was taken from the whole amount, verse 20, without regard to what may have been taken out, and that the support of the servants while on the march came from the nine-tenths. Since Abraham generously refused to keep anything himself, the king of Sodom received nine-tenths of the spoil, less the portion which Abraham's confederates took.

Another point in connection with this circumstance should not be overlooked. The spoil that Abraham recovered originally belonged to the king of Sodom.



Although it was now his, as the king of Sodom himself admitted, verse 21, Abraham refused to consider it so, and persisted in returning it to its original owner, lest he should seem to be under obligation to the king of Sodom. Here is the conversation:-

"And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will *not take any thing that is thine*, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich; save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion." Gen. 14: 21-24.

Now mark, Abraham had sworn that he would not take any thing that belonged to the king of Sodom, except the portion for the young men, and yet he took out one-tenth to give to Melchizedek. What does this show? It shows that Abraham regarded the tenth as belonging solely to God, no matter in whose hands it might be. The king of Sodom had never paid any tithe on this property, and so Abraham, when it came into his possession, promptly gave the Lord his tithe. And in so doing he acted perfectly consistent with his determination to restore to the king of Sodom all his property; for the tithe had always been the Lord's, and the king of Sodom had never had any just claim on it.

We come down about one hundred and twenty-five years, and we find Jacob fleeing from his brother Esau, as recorded in Gen. 28. One night on his journey he slept and dreamed that he saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, upon which the angels of God were ascending and descending. It was here that God renewed the promise that he had made to Abraham and Isaac. When Jacob awoke, his heart was touched, and he felt solemn. The result is stated in the following words:-

"And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God; and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and *of all that thou shalt give me*, I will surely give the tenth unto thee." Gen. 28:20-22

It is worthy of note that Jacob's past life had been very faulty. It was in consequence of his deceptions that he was now fleeing for his life. And now when he turns to the Lord, and resolves to serve him henceforth the first thing in his mind is that he will pay tithes. Surely Jacob must have had some instruction as to the importance of tithing, even though he may not have

carried it out heretofore. Some persons seem inclined to sneer at this vow of Jacob's, and say that he was trying to make a sharp bargain with the Lord. Such an idea can only come from a very superficial reading of this chapter. When Jacob said, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I go," etc., he was only repeating what the Lord had already promised, verse 15: "And behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee into this land. "This, with the two preceding verses, was a great promise on the Lord's part; and Jacob, filled with gratitude, solemnly entered into a covenant

with God, promising to serve him; and in the promised service the payment of tithes occupies a prominent place.

But now to the main point, as to what the tithe is. Read it again verses 20-22, already quoted. Upon how much of the property that he might receive did Jacob promise to pay tithes answer: "Of *all* that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." And now notice particularly that Jacob did not say that he would first pay his expenses-provide himself with food and clothing, and then give a tithe of the remainder to the Lord. Not at all. Read verse 20, and you will see that Jacob did not expect to amass great wealth in Syria; all he asked for was bread to eat and raiment to put on; and this was the "all," of which he promised to give a tenth to Lord. According to the word, if he had earned only a bare living, one-tenth of it was to be returned to the Lord.

From these two cases, then, we may learn that before we use any part of our income, even for the absolute necessities of life, we must take out a tenth of the whole for the Lord. We have also direct testimony to this effect, in these words: "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the *first-fruits of all thine increase*." Prov. 3:9. Many persons who believe it is their duty to pay a tithe, fail to give the Lord all that is his due. We may rob God by withholding a part of the tithe as well as by withholding the whole. When, through the prophet Malachi, God accuses the people of robbing him in tithes and in offerings, he says, "Bring ye *all* the tithes into the store-house." Mal. 3:10. We cannot effect a compromise with God, and satisfy him with the performance of only a part of our duty. E. J. W.

**August 16, 1883**

**"The Sabbath-School. Acts 13:50-52; 14" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 31.**

E. J. Waggoner

Lesson for the Pacific Coast.-Aug. 26. Acts 13:50-52; 14.

#### NOTES ON THE LESSON.

Paul perceived that the lame man at Lystra had faith to be healed. He had heard Paul preach the gospel-forgiveness of sins through Christ-and he believed. In this case, doubtless, as in that of the palsied man whom Christ healed (Matt. 9:2-8), forgiveness of sins preceded the miracle; the healing of the soul was first the healing of the body second. As the man heard of the great love of Christ for suffering humanity, and his power and willingness to forgive sins, how naturally the question would arise in his mind, "Why may I not as well be healed of my lameness as of my sins?" As Christ said, "Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise and walk?" Divine power is required for both, and it is no more wonderful that the sick should be healed than that sins should be forgiven. Most religious teachers at the present time scoff at the idea that in this age of the world God miraculously healed diseases in answer to prayer; yet they profess to believe in the forgiveness of sins. There is a close relation between the two acts. They go together in the promise in James 5:14, 15; also in Ps.

103:3. Why should not Christians depend on God for the healing of the body as well of the soul? "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. 8: 32.

At Lystra the Lord wrought a notable miracle through Paul; a man was healed who had been a cripple from his birth. The people, in their astonishment, cried out that they were gods, and the priest of Jupiter, with the people, was about to offer sacrifices to them. But Paul earnestly spoke against their idolatry. Verses 18, 19, convey a striking lesson:-

"And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them."

"And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead."

The man was healed; the miracle remained among them. Yet the same people who were scarce restrained from offering sacrifices to them as gods, with a little persuasion stoned Paul, and supposing he was dead, drew him out of the city and left him as they would a dead dog.

This is a most remarkable illustration of the fickleness of man and of the utter worthlessness of popular applause. A minister of God should never be elated when the multitude praised him. Especially if the hearts of the people are not stirred by the truth and the Spirit of God, and if the current of popular favor is setting in his direction for the time he should look with great distrust upon words spoken in his praise. Satan would not at all object to having the priests of Jupiter or Mammon do homage to the servants of God, if he could persuade those servants to accept the worship; for he well knows if they do accept it he has destroyed their influence for good. "Beware of the flatterers." Christian workers have no worse enemies.

Neither should the minister be discouraged if the people turn against him. It is no evidence that God is not with him. The well-worn saying: "The voice of the people is the voice of God," is a miserable falsehood, and will lure to ruin all those who trust in it. The people of Lystra had not as good reason to stone Paul as they had to do him reverence; but while he could dissuade them from worshiping him, he could not prevent their stoning him. So it always was, and so it is. A little playing upon the evil passions of men will quickly cause them to forget the best deeds and the greatest benefits.

We have no doubt that if Paul had permitted them to worship him, they would not have been so easily persuaded to stone him; for *man does not so readily turn against his own idols*. Forgetting this, many of a minister has gone to destruction because he measured his success in his work by the applause he received. It was not without an evident reason that the Saviour said: "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! For so did their fathers to the false prophets."

"Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways." Verse 16. Of course "all nations" does not here include the Jews, since God had given them his law so that they might not walk in their own ways. The reason why the other nations were allowed to do so is stated by Paul in the first chapter of Romans: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God

gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." God does not force himself upon any. If they do not wish to remember and acknowledge him, he withdraws from them, and lets them have their own way. The depraved condition of the Lystrans, and the heathen of other nations, shows the level to which men soon sink when they cast off from God. It may be said that infidels and atheists are often men of good morals. The answer to that is that they have the good fortune to live in a land where the public opinion is to a certain extent against immorality. Whatever of good there may be in an atheist is due solely to his surroundings or to the force of early instructions, for there can be no principle to hold him. Let those that fear God be removed from a country, leaving only atheists to and have it, having no communication with any who fear God, and the country would soon be worse than the vilest heathen country on earth.

Although God one time suffered the nations to walk in their own ways, they were not without excuse. "He left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." Paul uses the same argument in Rom. 1: 19-21. Since the creation of the world, the eternal power and godhead of the Creator clearly seen through the things that he has made, so that all unbelievers are without excuse, even though they have not his revealed word. Paul did not preach Christ to these men of Lystra, on this occasion; that would have been beyond their comprehension. They must have a knowledge of the true, and see that they had sinned against him, before they could receive Christ, the remedy for sin.

Many professed teachers of the gospel do not profit by Paul's example. They tell sinners to come to Christ, but do not tell them why they should come; or, if they tell them to come and find pardon for sin, they do not tell them what sin is, nor of what sins they must repent. We say that Paul did not preach Christ, but he was working toward it as fast as possible. He told the people that they were sinners; and not in any general way, but directly. He pointed out the special sin of which they were guilty. Had they acknowledged that much, he would have proceeded to point them to Christ. The only true order is, first the law and the gospel of good news-the relief from sin.

The testimony of Paul and Barnabas to the brethren was that "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." But we are told that the world is constantly growing better, and that soon the whole world will accept the gospel. If this be so, then those words of Paul do not apply now as they did when spoken, and there will come a time when they will not apply at all. In another place, however, Paul said that "*all* that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution;" and by a further examination of the chapter in which these words occur, we find that they apply "in the last days;" and further, the reason why the godly will suffer persecution is that "men shall be lovers of their own selves," corrupt in mind, and "reprobate concerning the faith." This state of things will not improve this time passes, but "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." It must be, then, that Paul's words to the brethren apply to all, and to none so much as to those who live in the last days.

Suppose that the time should come when we would not be obliged to enter the kingdom through tribulation. Then we should have the wonderful spectacle of the disciple being above his master, and the servant greater than his lord. Who is there that aspires to such a position? Who is there that would rejoice to hear the Master say, "This one endured nothing for me"? Said Christ, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers unto the false prophets." There are religious teachers who commend themselves to the world, and are applauded; but we never hear them boldly condemning all sorts of sin. They speak against sin in a general way, but they keep silent concerning sins that are popular. Such are not to be envied. The Christian may and should be like Daniel, so that no fault can be found in him except it be concerning the law of his God; but when he is universally popular, he should tremble for himself. Christ will purify to himself a "peculiar people," and peculiar people are not usually held in high repute. Their peculiarity consists not in grotesqueness, but in goodness.

It does not necessarily follow from Paul's words in Acts 14: 22 that all who strive to enter the kingdom will suffer outward persecution; that they will all be stoned, or burned at the stake, or cast into prison, or even brought before the council. Tribulation includes more than this. The word is derived from the Latin, a threshing-sledge. This was "a wooden platform studded underneath with pieces of flint, or with iron teeth." It was dragged over the grain to cut up the straw, separating the chaff from the grain. All Christians have to undergo this process. Burdens that are very unpleasant have to be borne; duties the most distasteful have to be performed. We may take ourselves off from the threshing-floor of Christ, but the chaff of evil dispositions and inherited faults will remain upon us, effectually shutting us out of the heavenly garner.

When the clumsy instrument had finished its work, a strong wind was directed against the mass, and all the chaff was blown away; the sound, heavy kernels of grain alone remained. But if wheat was still encased in its covering, the chaff became as it were a sail, by which it was borne away to destruction. So it will be with us, if we do not submit to God's cleansing process, however hard it may be at the time. E. J. W.

### **"The Honor Due to God. No. 3" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 31.**

E. J. Waggoner

We notice briefly, in passing, the object of the tithe, and to whom it should be paid. From the statement in Lev. 27:30, "the tithe is the Lord's," we would naturally gather that it is to be used in his service; and if used in his service it must, of course, be given to his servants. From the instances of its use their recorded in the Bible, it seems to have been designed wholly for the support of the ministry. Abraham paid his tithes to Melchizedek, the priest of the Most High God. Under the Levitical law the tithe went for the support of the tribe of Levi, who were engaged in work pertaining to the sanctuary. They, in turn, were to devote a tenth of what they received in tithes, to the support of the priests. See Num. 18:20-26. "All the tenth to Israel" is said to have been given to the tribe of Levi for an inheritance. The remaining nine-tenths was again tithed for charitable

purposes. Num. 14:22-26; Deut. 26:12-14. This is additional evidence that the tithe was designed solely for the support of the ministry.

Whether or not a portion of the tithe might be appropriated to any other use than the support of the ministry, it is certain that the individual never disposed of his own tithe, further than to bring into the treasury. When Nehemiah was restoring the worship of God, he cleansed the chambers of the temple, and brought in the holy vessels. Then he says:-

"And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them; for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, or fled everyone to his field. Then contended I with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place. Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries [margin, storehouses]. And I made treasurers over the treasuries. . . . and their office was to distribute unto their brethren." Neh. 13:10-13.

That the tithe is to be brought to one place, and distributed from thence, is proved by Mal. 3:10: "Bring ye *all* the tithes into the *storehouse*, that there may be meat in mine house." Every man is under solemn obligation to pay tithes, but no individual has any right to dispose of it according to his own notions. "It is the Lord's."

And right here we wish to emphasize the fact that, strictly speaking, we cannot "give" a tithe. We cannot give what does not belong to us, and the tithe is the Lord's. Earthly Governments, in consideration of the protection they afford to the lives and property of their citizens, collect taxes for the support of their officers; but men do not speak of "giving" their taxes, nor do they usually take credit to themselves for liberality, when they have paid them. In God's government the same plan exists. In return for the protection and many blessings that God bestows upon his creatures, he demands a tithe of all their increase, which may be considered as the taxes of his Government. But let it be distinctly understood that the church levies no taxes; the tax is levied by God himself, nor does he *compel* men to pay. Each one must decide for himself whether or not he will thus honor God. There is no compulsion; but the punishment for dishonoring God in this regard, though delayed, is none the less sure.

It is evident from what we have just said, that a man can by no means be called liberal merely because he pays his tithe, no matter how great it may be. The wise man says, "The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." Prov. 11:25. Now while it is true that blessings will follow the strict payment of the tithe, it is clear that that is not what is meant here, for paying tithes is not liberality in any sense of the word. This brings us to a brief consideration of

## OFFERINGS

In addition to their tithes, the Israelites spent much in offerings. There were special offerings, such as sin-offerings, peace-offerings, and thank-offerings. The name of each of these is sufficiently descriptive. For the law in regard to them, see Lev. 4; 5; 7. The point to be remembered is that these sacrifices cost

something, the cost of varying with the wealth or position of the one making the offering. Those ancient Jews had no idea that a man could profess to be a religious man for a score of years, and yet contribute nothing to the cause. And they really seemed to think that there was something disreputable in dead-head worship, even when they could worship for nothing as well as not. When there was a plague upon Israel on account of David's sin in numbering the people, the prophet directed the king to "rear an altar unto the Lord in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite." Accordingly David went up, and was met by Araunah, to whom he told his errand. "And Araunah said unto David, Let my Lord the king take and offer up what seemeth good unto him: behold, here be oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and other instruments of the oxen for wood. All these things did Araunah, as a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The Lord thy God accept thee." 2 Sam. 24:22, 23.

Imagine now that you hear David say, How providential! Here is everything ready; I could worship God, and it will cost me a farthing. But no; David had a better idea of what true worship is. "And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price." That, you say, was very natural; the king did not want to be under obligation to anybody. But it was not because he was averse to receiving a gift that he refused Araunah's offer; there was a principle involved. Here is his reason: "Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing." And the result was that "David bought the threshing-floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver."

We hear much about the superior privileges of the Christian dispensation; of the increased light that we enjoy. Very true; but do we realize the responsibility that these rich blessings bring? If the ancients had such exalted ideas of the sacredness and importance of the worship of God, what ought we to do? Do we appreciate the blessings that God is showering upon us without measure? Gratitude will show itself in a tangible form as well now as it would three thousand years ago. It is true that "salvation is free," but is it any freer now that it was then? Did the patriarchs and prophets buy their salvation with their tithes and offerings? Did not they obtain pardon for sin through Christ alone, as well as we? Most certainly. All that they could do or give would not purchase the pardon of a single sin, and this they knew; but they had a deep sense of the amazing love of God in holding out to them a free pardon through Christ, and their hearts overflowed with gratitude. Salvation is indeed free, but it has cost a price beyond the comprehension even

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of angels, and when men begin to realize its value, they will not be anxious to avoid making sacrifices, but, with David, their cry will be, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people." E. J. W.

**August 23, 1883**

## **"The Honor Due to God. No. 4" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 32.**

E. J. Waggoner

### **TITHES AND OFFERINGS**

We have seen that the tithe is to be used solely for the purpose of supporting the ministry; but money is required for various other purposes in the cause of God, besides this. Therefore we find in the Bible that offerings were made for special purposes. In the 25th of Exodus we have an instance. The people needed a sanctuary, where they could worship God. Did they vote to reserve a portion of the whole of their tithe for this purpose? No; the Lord directed them as follows: "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering; of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering." "And let them make be a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them." Ex. 25:2, 8. The intervening verses tell of what the offerings were to consist.

Remember that these offerings were all to be given willingly, with the heart. The Lord takes no pleasure in service grudgingly performed. Paul says, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver." 2 Cor. 9:7. In the case under consideration we have an example of the results of such giving; for that the children of Israel did give cheerfully and willingly is stated in Ex. 35:20-29. And here is the result:-

"And all the wise men, that wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they made; and they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the Lord commanded to make. And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much." Ex. 36:4-7.

What a contrast this presents to modern giving! Who ever heard of a similar instance among any other people? Here there was nothing like a fair, or an oyster supper, or a strawberry festival, by which people now coax unwilling dimes from the pockets of worldlings and professors alike, for the benefit of the church; we do not read that Moses went around to remind the people of their duty, and urge them to help the good work along; but "the children of Israel brought a willing offering." We are forced to the conclusion that when people need urging even to make a pledge to help on in the cause, and then need continual reminders of their obligation, there must be a great lack of that cheerful readiness to give that is so pleasing to God.

Now we will compare with this an incident in connection with the tithe. When Hezekiah came to the throne of Israel, he found things in a very bad condition. The temple of the Lord was forsaken, and the people were worshiping idols. In 2 Chronicles, chapters 29 to 31, we have an account of the restoration of the true religion by Hezekiah. He revived the ancient worship, and brought the priests and



Levites back to their service in the temple. But of course the treasury was empty, for while the people were worshiping idols, they did not pay their tithe. But Hezekiah gave commandment to set aside the portion of the Levites, and the people came promptly forward and did their duty. The record says: "And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the first-fruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the field; and the tithe of all things brought they in abundantly." 2 Chron. 31:5.

For four months the people continued to bring in their tithe, laying them in heaps, and then Hezekiah and the princes came to see what had been done. "Then Hezekiah questioned with the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps. And Azariah the chief priest of the house of Zadok answered him, and said, Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the Lord, we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty: for the Lord hath blessed his people; and that which is left is this great store." Verses 9, 10.

Now what did the people do? Did they stop bringing in the tithes, because there was enough on hand? We read further, "Then Hezekiah commanded to prepare chambers in the house of the Lord; and they prepared them, and brought in the offerings and the tithes and the dedicated things faithfully." Verses 11, 12. That is, instead of stopping, they made additional room in which to place the tithes, and continued bringing them in. This is just what we should expect from those who realize the sacredness of the tithe. "The tithe is the Lord's," and must be restored to him, whether it is little or much.

We have heard of men who would stop paying their tithe because it seemed to them that there was enough money in the treasury to supply all present wants. We have known others to stop paying because they have not received as much ministerial labor in their churches they thought was their due. Others refuse to pay because some one has wronged them; and there is no limit to the excuses that may be made to evade the payment of the Lord's portion, when the individual does not want to pay. But no excuse will avail. Suppose that the people have done their duty, as the Israelites did, and have been blessed in consequence, as they were. According to the promise (Prov. 3:9, 10) the Lord has given them abundance, because they have honored him. Now shall they say, "We have done enough; the Lord has received all he needs"? That would not only be foolish, but positively wicked. Yet that is just what some people do. Perhaps the Lord has designed a much greater work than has been done, and is preparing in this way the means with which to carry it forward; but men, by withholding his due, say, there is enough being done; and while they profess to want to see the cause advance, and may even pray for its prosperity, they stand in the way of its advancement.

We would not deal in this way with a neighbor. If we owed them a man a sum of money, we would not think of refusing to pay it to him, on the ground that he was already well provided for. And if we should do so, our creditor would soon take steps to compel us to give him his due, and we would be made to understand that the fact that he was rich would not absolve us from a just obligation. Why will men deal more honestly with their fellow-men than with their Maker? Is it because God is seemingly indifferent, and does not at once present

his claim? And in that case, are we to judge that these same ones would defraud their neighbors, if they could do so without fear of prosecution? Think of it in this light; but always remember that God keeps an account, and, although it may be after a long time, he will surely reckon with his servants.

And yet it should not be for this reason alone that we give the Lord his due. Remember the privileges that we enjoy, far exceeding those of the ancient Jews, whose liberality has never been exceeded by any people. Christ said to Simon, that "to whom little is given, the same loveth little;" and by the same rule, he to whom much is given, will love much, unless he fails entirely to realize what has been done for him. When we realize the infinite price that has been paid for our redemption, we shall be able to sing from the heart the words.

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a tribute far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my life, my soul, my all." E. J. W.

**August 30, 1883**

**"The Sabbath-School. Acts 15:1-32" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 33.**

E. J. Waggoner

Lesson for Pacific Coast.-Sept. 8. Acts 15:1-32.

#### NOTES ON THE LESSON.

It is doubtful if there is any chapter in the Bible that has been the subject of more controversy, among a certain class, than the 15th chapter of Acts. By many it is considered as proving conclusively that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is not binding on Christians. Some may ask in surprise what warrant this chapter gives for such a conclusion, since the subject of the Sabbath is not discussed, and is only mentioned incidentally. The reply is that four things were enjoined upon the new converts as "necessary," verse 28, and the Sabbath not being one of them, it is therefore not to be observed. We have stated the case fairly, that all may judge of its soundness when contrasted with the truth on the matter.

And first, we ask, Who are they that bring this objection against the seventh-day Sabbath? Are they infidels, or those who do not believe that men should observe any day as a rest-day? Not as a rule. They are usually those who keep the first day of the week, a large part of whom claim Scripture authority for such a practice. Why, then, can they not see that if the seventh-day Sabbath is not binding, because of the silence of this council in regard to it, the Sunday is in an equally bad light, for it is not hinted at as one of those "necessary things"? We have never been able to explain this inconsistency except on the ground that Sunday advocates seem to realize that consistency is incompatible with an active warfare against the Sabbath of the Lord. We conclude, therefore, that people do not really believe that this chapter affords any evidence against Sabbath keeping. "Anything to beat," the "Saturday-Sabbath," is the idea; for having once put that

out of sight, habit, early training, and public opinion, will lead people naturally enough to keep Sunday, in form, at least.

Another point may be noticed here, which will show the short-sightedness of those who urge the decision of this council as a reason for not keeping the Lord's Sabbath. The apostolic letter to the converts from among the Gentiles closes thus: "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well." It will be seen that no mention is here made of idolatry, of profanity, of disobedience to parents, of murder, nor of theft. Must we therefore conclude that these converts were granted license to commit all these sins? Is this the liberty of the gospel, to which they were admitted? However much anyone despises the law of God, he cannot admit for a moment that the apostles would sanction the commission of any of the sins above enumerated. Then may we not also conclude that they would not sanction the violation of any part of the law, since it all is of equal authority? See Matt. 5:17-20; James 2:8-12.

Our readers have doubtless by this time concluded that the law of God-the ten commandments-could not have been the subject of discussion; and that is exactly the truth. From verses 1 and 5 we learn that certain issues troubled the churches that had been raised up among the Gentiles, teaching the members that they must be circumcised and keep "the law of Moses," if they would be saved. It was to settle this matter that this council was called. Both Scott and Barnes plainly state that the "Jewish ceremonies," for the "ceremonial law" was the subject of controversy.

The speech of Peter proves that the perpetuity of the moral law was not called in question. He said that God "put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." Purifying their hearts from what? From sin, of course. And what is sin? "Sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:4. But from what sins are they purified by this faith? Paul answers, in Rom. 3:23-25: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of *sins that are past*, through the forbearance of God." Christ's blood purifies from past sins, but does not grant indulgences for future sin. Peter, whose speech we are considering, spoke in another place on this wise: "Seeing ye have *purified your souls in obeying the truth* through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." 1 Peter 1:22. The law of God is the truth, Ps. 119:114; Jno. 17:17. We learn, then, that having been purged from past sins by the blood of Christ, we are, by the aid of the Spirit, to keep ourselves pure for the future by obeying the law of God. This is the testimony of those apostles who took part in this famous council. And further, the very fact that we are purified by faith, proves the perpetuity of the law of God; as Paul says, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we established the law." Rom. 3:31. That is, the fact that we can get rid of sin in no other way but by the death of Christ, shows that the claims of the law of

God cannot be updated in the least; for if it were possible to remit the claims of that law, that act would free mankind from sin, and make it unnecessary for Christ to die.

"Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" Verse 10. What was this yoke? The ceremonial law. The testimony of learned men has much weight with some, so we quote two comments on this verse:-

"This did not relate merely to circumcision, but to the whole ceremonial law; which, though proper and useful for the time, required so many distinctions, burdensome purifications, expensive sacrifices, long journeys, and other things of a similar nature, that it was a very uneasy yoke, in every age, even to the inhabitants of the promised land, and still more to those Jews who had resided in other countries."-*Scott*.

"This does not refer to the moral law; that was of eternal obligation; but to the ritual law, which, through the multitude of its sacrifices, ordinances, etc., was exceedingly burdensome to the Jewish people."-*Clarke*.

But we have the testimony of those apostles who took part in this discussion, that by this "yoke" they did not mean the moral law. Thus John says, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous." 1 John 5:3. James says, "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." Jas. 1:25. See also chap. 2:8-12. A "law of liberty" is very different from a yoke of bondage. And Paul says, "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man." Rom. 7:12, 22. These testimonies should be sufficient to settle this matter.

It is asked "Why was a positive sin, the violation of the seventh commandment, included among the prohibited things, and no other sin?" We reply that none of the things prohibited pertained to the ceremonial law. They were all "necessary things," but the ceremonial law was not necessary. The partaking of meats offered to idols, if not in itself an evil, had the appearance of evil, which is always to be avoided. It would be a cause of stumbling to many, and more than all would, on account of the associations, be a stepping-stone to idolatry. The eating of blood was forbidden to Noah, for both physical and moral reasons, and is as much wrong now as it ever was. Dr. Clarke enters into an extended argument to prove this point, but we have not the space. The same argument would exclude things strangled. As to fornication, so far was it from being accounted wrong by the Gentiles that it formed a part of their heathen worship, and was considered a virtue rather than a crime. So common was it that the converts from the Gentiles would not be apt to think of it as a violation of the law of God; hence they needed special warning on this point. Abstinence from these things which were so common among the Gentiles would separate them in a great measure from their old associations, and prevent their lapsing into idolatry. The law of God, in general, they would keep as a matter of course, as a necessary part of their Christian profession.

"For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath-day." Verse 21. This mention of the Sabbath by James, although incidental, is conclusive as showing which day was regarded by him as the true Sabbath. The day on which the Jews read the law in the synagogues is spoken of as the Sabbath. That day, as every one admits, was what is now called Saturday. But James further says that the law was read *every* Sabbath-day; and since the Jews had only one regular day-the seventh day-for worship and the reading of the law, it necessarily follows that James knew of no other Sabbath than the seventh-day of the week. And this statement, let it be remembered, was made in a Christian assembly, composed of apostles and elders, twenty years after the ascension of Christ. If the first day of the week is the Sabbath of the Christian dispensation, is it not strange that none of this assembly had learned of it during those twenty years? E. J. W.

### **"The Honor Due to God. No. 5" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 33.**

E. J. Waggoner

The question sometimes arises, "Who should pay tithes and make offerings?" As to the first part, the answer is simple: Every one should pay tithe who has any tithe to pay. If a person's income is small, of course his tithe will be correspondingly small; and should there be a person with absolutely no income, dependent entirely upon charity for subsistence, of course he would have no tithe to pay. But that would not be the case with any one having a reasonable degree of health. We are not speaking now of professed Christians merely; every man is under obligation to pay tithe, whether he makes a profession of religion or not. "The tithe is the Lord's," and should invariably be returned to him, no matter in whose hands it may be found. This distinction may be made, however: Worldlings have never confessed that their obligations to God, nor agreed to honor him in the matter of tithes, or otherwise; but Christians profess to honor God, which includes the payment of tithes, and therefore while worldlings are guilty of robbery (Mal. 3:8), Christians who fail to meet their obligations, add to robbery the additional crime of falsehood.

The matter of offerings is of course left largely to the individual. For some, an offering of a few cents would involve more sacrifice than the gift of a thousand dollars would for another. Should the man with ample wealth give a hundred dollars without having to make any sacrifice, it would not be so acceptable in the sight of Heaven as would a few dimes from one who had to deprive himself of some necessity in consequence of his gift. "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." 2 Cor. 8:12.

But while each individual must be his own judgment as to how much he will give, the obligation to make offerings rests upon all; for the Lord, through the prophet Malachi, accuses his people of robbing him in the matter of offerings; but the withholding of offerings could not be called robbery if the Lord had no claim on us beyond our tithe. There can be no exceptions to the general rule that all should make offerings, for it would seem to be impossible to find a person in

more reduced circumstances than was the poor widow mentioned in Mark 12:42. She had only two mites (less than half a cent) in the world, yet she gave, not one-tenth merely, but the whole of it; and we do not read that the Lord condemned her in the least for this act.

A common idea is that if a man gives freely he will impoverish himself. The trouble is that men leave God out of their calculations. Dr. Clarke, in his comment on Acts 15:10, includes the payment of tithes, etc., in the ceremonial law-the "yoke of bondage"-and artlessly says: "Had not God, by an especial Providence, rendered both their fields and their flocks very fruitful, they could not have borne so painfully a ritual." Well, that is just what the Lord promises to do for those who render to him his due. "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." Prov. 3:9, 10. Again he says:-

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts." Mal. 3:10, 11. It is "the Lord of hosts" that makes this promise; certainly he has the power to fulfill it; and who dare say that he will not keep his word?

The wise man said, "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." Prov. 11:24. There can be no doubt but that many who bewail their (in most cases imaginary) inability to assist in the cause of God, owe their pecuniary embarrassment to the fact that they are not willing to make this sacrifice and help with what they have. A notable instance of this is described in the Bible.

We learn from the book of Ezra that the people who at the command of Cyrus, went up from Babylon to Jerusalem to build the temple, became discouraged on account of the opposition brought to bear against them, and abandoned the work for several years. Added to this opposition was a severe drought, which cut off their crops, depriving them of even the necessities of life. Of course under the circumstances they could not be expected to give time and means for the building of the temple, and they very naturally concluded that the time had not come for the Lord's house to be built. Haggai 1:2; "for," they doubtless reasoned, "if the Lord wanted his house built now, he would give us the means with which to do it."

"Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes." Haggai 1:3-6.

Then the Lord gives the cause of this terrible want: "Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man

unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land," etc. Verses 9-11. Read also chapter 2:11-19.

In this instance the people thought that the hard times was a sufficient reason for not building the temple, when the hard times came solely because they had not gone ahead with the work of building. The Lord now promised them that from this time he would bless them, if they would take hold of the work; and to assure them of his ability to give and to withhold prosperity, and also of his right to receive homage, he said, "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts."

The apostle Paul said in regard to the subject of giving, "But this I say, He that soweth sparingly shall

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reap all so sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." 2 Cor. 9:6. There are many who have proved the truth of this, and who know that it pays to take God into all their calculations, and in all their ways to acknowledge him; for, as Paul continues, "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." E. J. W.

## **September 6, 1883**

### **"The Sabbath-School. Acts 15:32-41; 16:1-34" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 34.**

E. J. Waggoner

Lesson for Pacific Coast.-Sept. 15. Acts 15:32-41; 16:1-34.

#### **NOTES ON THE LESSON.**

Immediately after the council at Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, accompanied by Judas and Silas, who were prophets and delivered to the church the decision of the apostles and elders. After performing his mission, Judas returned to Jerusalem, but Silas chose to remain in Antioch. "Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also." V. 35.

Among the others who were at Antioch was Peter. This we learn from Galatians 2. At this time an incident occurred that ill accords with the Catholic dogma of the supremacy of Peter in the church. From Paul's statement to the Galatians we learn that Peter, in accordance with the decision of the council at Jerusalem, and with his practice before that time (Acts 11:3), mingled freely with the Gentiles, and ate with them. But as soon as some Jews came down from Jerusalem, "he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision." Gal. 2:13.

This was not done for the purpose of saving a weak brother from stumbling, but from fear of the accusations which the Jews might bring against him. It was a slight manifestation of the spirit which had moved him to deny his Lord. His act

was contagious, many of the Jews doing likewise, and even "Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation." "They walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel." Then it was that Paul "withstood him to the face," saying before them all, "If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Jews, why compellest thou of the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" Having thus fully exposed Peter's dissimulation, he showed that forms and ceremonies are lost in faith in Christ.

It is not likely that there were any hard feelings on either side. Paul simply did his duty, and Peter readily acknowledged his fault. But how can our Catholic friends harmonize this affair with the theory that Peter occupied the same position in regard to the early church that the pope does to the Catholic Church? Imagine Cardinal Newman addressing Leo XIII. As Paul did Peter. If he should dare to do such a thing it is very certain that the pope would not take it so meekly as Peter did.

From the account of the dispute between Paul and Barnabas, Dr. Barnes draws the following lesson:-

"This account proves that there was no *collusion* or *agreement* among the apostles to impose on mankind. Had there been such an agreement, and had the books of the New Testament been an imposter, the apostles would have been represented as perfectly harmonious, and as united in all their views and efforts. What imposter would have thought of the device of representing the early friends of the Christian religion as *divided* and *contending*, and *separating* from each other? Such a statement has an air of candor and honesty, and at the same time is so apparently against the truth of the system that no imposter would have thought of resorting to it."

We have here an opportunity to test the value of mere apostolic example for any custom. Peter dissimulated, and Paul and Barnabas indulged in heated contention. Now many profess to base their observance of Sunday on the example of the apostles. To be sure they cannot prove that any of the apostles ever kept Sunday, since the Bible nowhere intimates that they did, but no matter; that does not affect the popular claim. They can point to one religious meeting held on Sunday, Acts 20:7, and Paul was there. From this they build on the following: "The apostles kept Sunday (as we infer), the majority of the world now keep Sunday, therefore it *must* be right." Reasoning on the same scale, we derive this: "The apostles contended (as we *know*); an overwhelming majority of the world also dispute and quarrel to a greater or less degree; therefore quarreling is right, and we ought to engage in it." The truth is, it is not the apostles' practice, but their teaching, that we are to follow; and even their teaching would be invalid if it did not agree with that part of the Scripture that was already written. It is easy to find a precedent for any wrong practice, if that is all that is desired.

It would seem that one would need only to read the arguments in favor of infant baptism, drawn from verses 15 and 33 of chapter 16, to be convinced that that custom has no solid foundation whatever on which to rest. For instance, Dr. Barnes says on verse 15:-



"'And her household.' Greek, her house; (*ho oikos autes*), her family, no mention is made of *their* having believed, and the case is one that affords a strong presumptive proof that this was an instance of *household* or infant baptism. For (1) her believing is particularly mentioned. (2) It is not intimated that they believed. (3) It is manifestly implied that *they* were baptized because *she* believed. It was the offering of her family to the Lord. It is just such an account as would now be given of a household or family that were baptized on the faith of the parent."

But what right has the Dr. to say, "household or infant baptism"? Is a household necessarily composed exclusively of infants? If "household" and "infants" are, as he implies, synonymous terms, then wherever the word occurs it means only infants, to the exclusion of adults, and that is absurd. A household is simply those dwelling under the same roof; and, although Dr. Clarke says, "We can scarcely suppose that the whole families of Lydia and the jailer had no children in them," we have known of many households in which there was not a child under ten years of age, and such cases were not considered remarkable. Dr. Clarke seems to have forgotten that although infants are children, children are not necessarily infants. We firmly believe in the right of children to be baptized when they are old enough to express a desire for that ordinance, but this is not infant baptism.

But, leaving conjecture, what warrant is there for saying of the household of Lydia that since "it is not intimated that they believed, it is manifestly implied that they were baptized because *she* believed"? Christ in commissioning the apostle said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." The apostles placed believing and baptism together, as shown by Acts 2:38 and 8:37. John the Baptist also refused to baptize the unbelieving and unrepentant Pharisees and Sadducees. Matt. 3:7-10. To suppose that they baptized any who did not believe, is to claim that they violated their commission. And even if they had done so, what profit would have been to those so baptized? Christ said, "He that believeth not shall be damned." The mere ceremony of baptism confers no blessing on any. For an unbeliever to be baptized is solemn mockery. Those who do not believe will be lost whether they had been baptized or not. The terrible delusion of the ancient Jews, and of the modern Catholics as well, was in ascribing virtue to a round of ceremonies performed without one thought of that which they symbolize. Protestantism has largely followed in the same path, and as a consequence the church is burdened with nominal professors, who have no just appreciation of the principles of the gospel, and to base their hope of salvation on the mere fact that they have been baptized.

After all, Dr. Clarke, in his comments on verse 32, dares make no stronger statement in favor of infant baptism than that "it is *pretty evident* that we have in this chapter *presumptive evidence* that children were received into the church in this way," *i.e.*, by infant baptism, so called. One would hardly expect that that sage conclusion was preceded in the same paragraph by this statement concerning the jailer. "And appears that he and his whole family, who were capable of receiving instruction, embraced this doctrine, and show the sincerity of

their faith by immediately receiving baptism. From this we conclude that the Doctor found it difficult to bring his reason and his prejudices into harmony.

We can only ask, in leaving this subject, Why do the advocates of infant baptism indulge such absurd conjectures, which, as we have seen, often directly contradict the Scriptures, if they have any direct Bible authority to offer in support of the custom?

It is sometimes asked, "Why did Paul rebuke the damsel possessed of the Spirit, since she told nothing but the truth?" We answer: For that very reason. Had she heaped abuse upon the apostles, it would not have been had so damaging to them. For (1) the Jews who were in the city would conclude from her testimony in favor of the apostles that they were moved by the same spirit that she was, and would therefore be hardened against the gospel; and (2) the Gentiles would also naturally conclude that the teachings of both were a part of the same system, and that therefore they had nothing to learn from the apostles. Her testimony was calculated to bring the gospel into bad repute. The truth always suffers more from the professed friendship of wicked men than from there enmity. A man who professes Christianity, and still lives contrary to its teachings, brings reproach upon it; and the more loudly he declares his belief, the more does the cause suffer. Christians may well rejoice when they are the subjects of calumny by wicked men.

The only record we have of Paul's singing was when he was in the jail at Philippi, lying on the cold floor, his back bruised and bloody from the "many stripes" it had received. At midnight they "prayed and sang praises unto God." With what propriety he could afterwards exhort the Philippians to "be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God," and what weight his testimony must have had. He had set them an example of "rejoicing in tribulation." Without any misgivings he could say to them, "Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and seen in me, do;" and we are not surprised that the believers at this time were the most faithful of any of Paul's converts. They prayed for light, before Paul was sent to them, and they did not refuse to accept it when it brought persecution.

### **"The Honor Due to God. No. 6" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 34.**

E. J. Waggoner

We have already noticed the temporal blessings that are promised to those who honor God in the matter of tithes and offerings. It may be said that there are those who have given liberally and yet are in somewhat reduced circumstances. There may be various reasons for this. It must be remembered that the payment of tithes and offerings is only a part of the honor due to God. Those persons may be neglecting some other duty equally necessary. But, more than all, we must remember that God does not settle his accounts every year; neither does he promise to pay entirely in this world's coin. There is a reward of a more enduring nature, of which we shall speak particularly.

Notwithstanding the fact that God's people are often "the poor of this world," they are never left to suffer in this life. Christ exhorts us not to be anxious in regard to what we shall eat, drink, and wear, significantly adding, "For your heavenly Father knoweth that he had need of these things." So long as he remembers it, what need have we to fear. Then the Lord says: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matt. 6:30-33. In the face of this promise, whoever spends time worrying or fretting shows his disbelief in God.

We should never forget that we are placed on this earth for no other purpose than to glorify God. See Rev. 4:11; 2 Cor. 10:31. Most people seem to think that the sole duty of man is to provide for himself, leaving God out of the question entirely; and even many who recognize the fact that God has claims upon them, think that "we must make a living." Not so; we must glorify God, and this must be our first, and, indeed, our only object; and since we cannot provide for ourselves, but must depend upon God for all our temporal supplies, it stands to reason that by serving him faithfully our prospects for a *continued* supply of at least the necessities of life, is better than if we ignored him.

Christ's parable in Luke 12:15-21, shows what a man will lose by a failure to make the glory of God the first thing in all his calculations. What we have stated above agrees with the words of verse 15, that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." This is illustrated by the cases of the man whose barns were insufficient to contain the abundant produce of his field. After considering the matter, he decides thus: "This will I do; I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine these, eat, drink, and be merry."

"A wise course; a prudent man," says the worldling, "But God said to him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" Foolishness, in the Bible, is but another name for wickedness. See Ps. 38:4-6; 107:17; Prov. 1:7, 32; 3:35; 14:9; Rom. 1:21-23, etc. What wicked thing had this man then, that he should be thus condemned? He had not defrauded his neighbor, for his wealth was due solely to the fruitfulness of his farm. Without doubt he had been counted an upright man in the community. But Inspiration says that the fool is he that "hath said in his heart, There is no God." That was just this man's position. He might not have been an infidel; he may even have been a church member; but in all his plans he acted as though there was no God in the universe. He proclaimed more loudly than by words that he had no faith in God's power to protect. In his heart he did not believe in a kind, heavenly Father, and therefore he did not show any gratitude.

But the words of verse 21 are what should startle everyone of us. After telling the fate of the rich man, the Lord says: "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." We may not be so successful in laying up treasure as was the rich man, and yet have the same desire. One says, "I am too poor to pay tithes; I am in debt, and it will take all I can possibly turn to meet my expenses." This is only another way of saying, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?" It comes from a failure to recognize that we are more deeply in

debt to God than we ever can be to any man, and that his claim is paramount to all others. There are many other ways in which we can show that we know of nothing better than "getting on in the world" by "looking out for number one;" but we leave each to make the application for himself. But let this Scripture ring in our ears: "So is he that layeth [or striveth to lay] up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." The lesson so forcibly taught by this parable is that he who would enter Heaven must first place on deposit there a portion of his earthly gains. The same thing is positively asserted by Paul in 1 Tim. 6:17-19.

This is more completely shown in the parable of the unjust steward, Luke 16:1-9, to a brief explanation of which we invite the reader's careful attention. To bring the parable more vividly before the reader, we quote it entire:-

"(1) There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. (2) And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. (3) Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. (4) I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. (5) So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? (6) And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. (7) Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore. (8) And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. (9) And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of [by means of, R.V.] the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

The force of this parable is usually much weakened by the assumption that the steward provided for his future wants by defrauding his lord of a portion of the various amounts due him. But this is a misapprehension of the text. No lord would commend a servant for embezzling property, nor call him wise for such a simple, easily-discovered piece of rascality. The lord knew what was due him, and would have arrested the steward, instead of complimenting him, if he had done what he is commonly supposed to have done. It was not for this transaction that he is called unjust, but for his unfaithfulness, for which he was discharged. What the steward actually did was this: Having ascertained how much rental was due from one man, he said to him, "You need pay only half of that; I will make up the rest out of my own pocket." And so he paid a part of the indebtedness to each of his lord's debtors, putting them all under lasting obligation to him. Here is where his wisdom was shown. He saw that the money which he had saved would support him but a short time, and then he would be destitute. So instead of hoarding up what he had, deriving a scant living from it, and then becoming penniless, he spent it all at once, but in such a way as to ensure his support for the rest of his life; for those whom he thus befriended would gladly receive him into their houses. See verses 4. Now for the application: Our Saviour exhorts us to make to ourselves friends by means of this worldly treasure that we have, so

that at last we may be received into everlasting habitations. This will be done by giving to the cause of God, and to the poor. To some it seems the height of foolishness for a man to "give away" his earnings, but the result will prove that it is the only wise plan.

A little illustration will show how the children of

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this world that may be in their generation wiser than the children of light. Suppose that A and B have each the same amount of money, and that A knows that he will live forty years, while B has the promise of only ten years more of life. B invests his money in such a way that the principal and interest will keep him just ten years-till his death. A invests his in exactly the same manner, so that it also will last just the same length of time. Now which is the wiser of these two men? You say at once, "B; for although A has pursued the same course, he has not looked far enough ahead, and will finally become bankrupt." Now Christians have a knowledge of the world to come, a promise of everlasting life. But the worldling knows only of this world, and has no hope beyond this life. If, then, a Christian uses his money just as his worldly neighbor does his, making the same investments, and does not honor God with his substance, is he not by far the more foolish of the two? Certainly; for the worldling makes plans for all the time of which he has any knowledge, while the Christian, expecting to live through eternity, plans only for time, with every prospect of becoming bankrupt at last.

Let no one accuse us of teaching that men can gain a home in Heaven simply by the payment of a little money. This alone will avail nothing; but the Bible plainly teaches that without this no one can enter Heaven. And there is reason in this, as in all God's requirements. Although eternal life is the gift of God through Christ, it will not be bestowed upon us unless we gain the victory over our sins. God could not admit us to Heaven with our sins upon us, nor could we be happy if he did. But selfishness is at the bottom of all sin (See 2 Tim. 3:1-5), and no one can enter Heaven with the least taint of it about him. Christ is our pattern, and he was so unselfish as to give his life for his enemies. It is because we are so saturated with selfishness that we cannot appreciate pure unselfishness, as manifested by Christ.

Now the Lord desires to draw us out of ourselves, and lead us to think less of ourselves than of others, to be humble, to have the charity that "seeketh not her own,"-in short, to have us develop characters exactly the opposite of what the world admires. Denying ourselves, making sacrifices, tends to produce just such a character. At the same time, our interest in heavenly things is increased. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." When we give to the cause of God, we have an interest in it, and thus giving quickens us spiritually.

In proof of this last statement, we refer the reader once more to the 3rd of Malachi. After God, through the prophet, had denounced the sin of the people in withholding tithes and offerings, and had exhorted them to bring all the tithes into the store-house, and see if he would not increase their earthly store, and pour out a blessing till there would not be room to receive it, he almost immediately added: "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another." A natural consequence; men who invest in mining stocks, think and talk about mines;

those who have their money in the railroad's stock, have their minds on railroads, and can talk of but little else; and, in like manner, those who have their treasure in the bank of Heaven, cannot do otherwise than talk of the security that is given. If any one will look about him he will become convinced that the zealous ones in the church,-those who can always be depended on as being at their posts, on the right side of every question,-are not those who rob God in tithes and offerings.

But while it is a fact that those who do not fear God enough to render to him his due, do not speak "often" one to another, we know that they do *sometimes*. But to what purpose? Let us read the remainder of verse 16: "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and *the Lord harkened and heard it*, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name." Then the Lord does not hear and record the testimony of those who do not fear him, no matter how their lack of reverence is shown. See also Luke 6:46. This is a solemn thought, and should cause us all to search our ways. The last two verses of this chapter, it will be seen, are in harmony with the ideas advanced in this article: "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

We might multiply evidence on these points, but these articles were not designed to be exhaustive on this subject. Enough has been given to show that our substance and the first-fruits of our increase are by no means the least among the means by which we must honor God. Do not think, dear reader, that you can atone for the neglect of one duty by the strictest performance of another, or that God will likely pass by any failure to give him the honor which he is so worthy to receive; and remember that these words of the Lord are as true now as when first uttered: "Them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise thee shall be lightly esteemed." E. J. W.

**September 20, 1883**

**"The Sabbath-School. Acts 16:35-40; 17:1-20, and 17:20-34" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 35.**

E. J. Waggoner

Lessons for Pacific Coast.-Sept. 22 and 29.

Acts 16:35-40; 17:1-20, and 17:20-3.

NOTES ON THE LESSON.

NOTE.-The Sabbath-school notes this week were written at the camp-meeting, under circumstances not the most favorable, as we did not have the *Instructor* containing the lesson, and our time was quite fully occupied with other duties. Since there was no paper last week, we thought best to briefly pass over both lessons, as there were points in the lesson that would have been omitted, upon which we wish to comment. Other points would be noticed if we had space.

There are those who think more of apostolic example than they do of the commandments of God. We do not believe that they that were sent were greater

than He who sent them, therefore we give the commandments of God and Christ (which are always the same) preference. But we believe in following the example of the apostles in the main, because they were usually exactly right. Acts 17:2 presents a practice which we believe in following. When Paul came to Thessalonica he found a congregation of the Jews; "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures." From this we learn that Paul was in the habit of observing the Sabbath. We are not surprised at this, for he himself said, "I delight in a law of God." Compare this statement in regard to Paul's custom with the fact that we have the record of only one sermon preached by Paul upon the first day of the week, and that upon that same first day he traveled twenty miles. Upon which side is the weight of apostolic example? We shall have more on this point hereafter.

It is interesting to notice Paul's method of preaching. He "reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered," etc. He did not use a single text as an excuse for reading a learned essay, or delivering an eloquent oration, but he preached the Bible itself. The Bible was his text-book, and he studied it with his congregation. And he did not present his views in an apologetic manner. He knew what the Bible taught, and believed it; and there was no guess-work about the matter. He presented the truths of God's word as facts. It is this sort of preaching that wins souls if anything will, and it was so in this case. Many believed; "of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few."

But envy had possession of many of the Jews, so that facts had no weight with them. They attempted to do by force what they were unable to do by legitimate argument. They "took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort" and made an uproar, trying to destroy Paul and Silas. This move was ostensibly in the interest of religion, yet they were willing to accept the assistance of the lowest rabble. No doubt these lewd fellows took great credit to themselves for the zeal which they manifested in the cause of religion. In their minds that act would atone for all the profligacy of which they had been guilty, and that in which they proposed to indulge. When men can be religious by persecuting the righteous, all the wicked suddenly become converted.

"And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also." Well, if that is what they had been doing, ought they not to have been stopped? What business had Paul and Silas to go around stirring up the people? Just this right: The Lord had sent them out with a special message of truth for the people. Their only work was to deliver their message. If people rejected it, and grew angry at them, that was none of their business. Indeed, that is just what they were taught to expect. The Saviour said, "For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against for mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." Matt. 10:35, 36. It was not because Christ loved strife, that he said this; but he had come to speak the truth, and he knew that the truth would cause division. Men who reject the truth will ever be opposed to those who, by

accepting the truth, condemn them. We hear men deprecating the preaching of Sabbath reform, because it causes divisions. Such ones would have used all their energy to choke down Paul, had they lived in his day, for he stirred up more strife than any other man of whom we have any knowledge. Yet these persons profess to believe in Paul. We are strongly reminded of Matt. 23:29-31.

When Paul and Silas were forced to leave Thessalonica, they came to Berea, where also there was a congregation of Jews, of whom Luke says: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they receive to the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so." Here we have true nobility, according to the Bible standard. It is now considered a mark of wisdom and honor to doubt the word of God, and to criticize and try to pick flaws in it; but God decides differently. "Fools despise wisdom and instruction." The words "more noble" mean literally "of better birth"; so those who with meekness receive the word of God into good and honest hearts are of far higher birth than those who despise it, since they are the sons and daughters of God.

They "searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so." What Scriptures did a search? The Old Testament-the only Scriptures they had. What things were Paul and Silas preaching? The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth-his life, death, resurrection, ascension, and second advent. Then, since these Bereans searched the Old Testament to find out the truth of the apostle's preaching, it must be that they referred them to that same book. Then it must be, also, that the gospel is found in the Old Testament as well as in the New. And so it is, for Paul says that the Gospel was preached to Abraham, and he lived many hundred years before any of the New Testament was written. Indeed, although we have the New Testament, we could not be certain that it is true, or that Christ is the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world, if it were not for the Old Testament.

It is worth while also to notice how the Bereans studied the Scriptures. They searched them *daily*. Nothing but daily study of the word will give a person an understanding of its truths. And they studied with an object; they desired to find out if those things were so. And we may well suppose that, since they searched for this purpose, it was their firm intention to accept the teaching of Paul and Silas, if they were found. To be true and this is proved by the next verse: "Therefore, many of them believed." This would be the case now if men would search the Scriptures; but as it was then so now, the majority prefer to search tradition, for the testimonies of the fathers, or science (falsely so called), or if they do search the Scriptures, they do so with a spirit of caviling and doubt, and do not, like the noble Bereans, receive the word "with all readiness of mind."

When Paul came to Athens, his spirit was stirred, powerfully agitated, because he saw the city wholly given to idolatry, or full of idols. Athens was then the metropolis of the world, the seat of all learning and art. It no doubt had more in it to attract the eye than all the rest of the world. Livy says that it "was full of the images of gods and men, adorned with every variety of material, and with all the skill of art." Another writer humorously said that "it was easier to find a god than a man there." Paul was educated and refined; he doubtless had an eye for the



beautiful, both in nature and art. But his was the true culture and refinement-the culture that comes from an acquaintance with God. The vanities of Athens had no attraction for him. He could think only of the one thing-that all these were leading from God. How many Christians are there at the present time who, like Paul, are agitated over the wickedness that abounds, rather than attracted by and lost in admiration for the splendor which is often only a covering for vice? In this age of the world especially the Christian has something far greater to attract the attention than mere sight-seeing.

"Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoics, encountered him." The Epicureans derived their name from Epicurus, who lived about 300 years before Christ. "They denied that the world was created by God, and that the gods exercised any care or providence over human affairs, and also the immortality of the soul. [They denied all future existence.] One of the distinguishing doctrines of Epicurus was that pleasure was the *summum bonum*, or chief good, and that virtue was to be practiced only as it contributed to pleasure." It is easy to see to what practices such doctrines would lead. The Stoics believed that the universe was created by God, but that all things were fixed by fate; that even God was under the dominion of fate. It will be readily seen that Paul's teaching would be diametrically opposed to such doctrines as these.

We should not fail to notice the adroitness and skill with which Paul introduced his subject. The philosophers had said, "He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods." Now the Athenians were very jealous of the worship of their gods. Pausanias says that they greatly surpassed all others in their zeal for religion. It was dangerous for anyone to speak against their idol worship. About 400 years before, Socrates, one of their own philosophers, the wisest and most highly esteemed of any among them, had been put to death because they thought he was unsettling the minds of the young, and teaching disrespect for the gods. Now if Paul had introduced this subject bluntly, it is doubtful if he would have allowed to speak at all. Thus he would have defeated his own purpose. So he took them on their own ground. He said, "I perceive that ye are somewhat superstitious." The word "superstitious," as used here, means "excessively religious." He had seen an altar with the inscription, "To an unknown God;" so he said, "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." They could find no fault with him for teaching them more perfectly concerning a god whom they professed to worship. But this means he was able to preach to them further, "Jesus and the resurrection." Paul showed on this occasion the wisdom of the serpent, in winning souls to Christ, as the apostles had been commanded. Those who labor in these days would do well to learn a lesson from this. And yet, how many are there who would not compromise the truth should they be placed in Paul circumstances, and attempt to do this as he did?

It was only lately that we noticed a criticism on Paul, because he did not preach Christ, but attempted to convince the Athenians by science. He must be a very careless reader who could make such a criticism. It is not to be supposed, of course, that we have the whole report of Paul's sermon, for it would not have taken him two minutes to deliver it. This report gives only the heads of his

discourse. It is a perfectly legitimate thing to prove the existence of God, from nature, and this is what Paul did. Having proved the existence of God, and his nature, he introduced the gospel in these words: God "now commandeth all men everywhere to respect; because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, and that he hath raised him from the dead." We do not think a more powerful gospel sermon could been preached than Paul preached at Athens. E. J. W.

**"Review of Sermon on the 'Christian Sabbath'" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 35.**

E. J. Waggoner

A few weeks since we received a copy of the Stockton (Cal.) *Independent*, which contained the synopsis of a sermon on "The Christian Sabbath, and the Abrogation of the Jewish Sabbath," by Rev. W. T. Fleenor, pastor of the First Baptist Church of that city. Having received several requests to review the sermon, we decided to do so, but have been hindered hitherto by press of other matter. We offer no apology for the number of articles that appear in the SIGNS, nor even for repeating arguments again and again; for we believe the Sabbath reform is the message for this time, and we know that "precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here all little and their little."

The most unpleasant part of the work, is that of reviewing articles or sermons in opposition to the truth, because (1) The arguments urged against the Sabbath are so weak and puerile, and so self-contradictory that it seems almost a waste of time to notice them; and (2) We do not like to *seem* to be finding fault with others, when we have no personal feeling in the matter at all. We do so, however, because arguments that appear very weak to those familiar with Bible truth may seem strong to others, who have heard little or nothing of the evidence in favor of the Sabbath of the Lord. And these arguments, weak though they may be, often afford an excellent opportunity to bring out the strait testimony of the Bible. But that we may save space, in this instance, we will not repeat all the arguments which the speaker brought forward, but will simply present the Bible evidence of the truth that have been assailed.

There is no fact more susceptible of proof than that the Sabbath began at the close of the creation week, and that the first Sabbath commandment was spoken at that time. Notice the following points: 1. "Sabbath," as is generally known, means "rest;" it is nothing more than the Hebrew word for 'rest.' 2. When God had completed his work in six days, and pronounced everything very good, he rested on the seventh day. Gen. 2:1-3: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." If "Sabbath" means "rest," then this text plainly declares that God made the Sabbath at the

close of the first week of time; for he not only rested, but he blessed the day of his rest and sanctified it, or set it apart for a holy use. 3. Our Saviour declared that "the Sabbath was made for man;" it was not given to man centuries after it was made, but it was *made for him*; it was designed for his especial use.

Again, to sanctify is to set apart. God sanctified the seventh day; from what did he set it apart? From the other days of the week. This was a part of the work of making the Sabbath. Now to say that the Lord made the Sabbath for man, and set it apart for his use, and yet told him nothing about it, is to charge God with folly. We do not see how the evidence could be any clearer than it is, that in the beginning, in Eden, God commanded men to keep the Sabbath. The "Speaker's Commentary" says on Gen. 2:3: "The natural interpretation of these words is that the blessing of the Sabbath was immediately consequent on the first creation of man, for whom the Sabbath was made."

The record says that "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." Our objector says: "The seventh day of what? Not of the week, for the days of creation were long periods of time. No one can keep that day." We say that God blessed and sanctified the seventh day of the week, and none other. The commandment, Ex. 20:8-11. teaches us that we are to keep holy the Sabbath-day, because God rested upon and hallowed it. We are to rest upon the same day upon which God rested. What day of the week this was may be learned from Luke 23:54-56; 24:1. The women who followed Jesus to the tomb "returned and prepared spices and ointments, and rested the Sabbath-day *according to the commandment*." Then whatever day of the week they kept, was the day of the week which the commandment enjoins. That must be admitted by all. The very next day (Matt. 28:1) they came again to the sepulcher. This visit was made on "the first day of the week;" consequently the day previous-the Sabbath according to the commandment-was the seventh day of the week.

The days of creation were literal days of twenty-four hours each. 1. They were days composed of an evening and a morning. Gen. 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31. 2. There were days over which the sun and moon were made to rule. Gen. 1:16. 3. As above stated, God commanded men to rest upon the day that he did. To claim, then, that that day was a long, indefinite period of time, is to charge God with trifling with man. The theory of an indefinite period of time for creation, is the offering of "science falsely so called" to the cause of infidelity. No proof for such a theory can be brought forward; it rest solely on infidel conjecture.

It is urged that we do not find the patriarchs keeping the Sabbath; that for a period of 2500 years no mention is made of the Sabbath. The men who make this objection seem to think that the book of Genesis is a diary kept by the patriarchs, and that Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, each contributed to the complete history of his own time. Nothing could be further from the truth. The book of Genesis contains the history of 2500 years, the events have all taken place. It was written to show God's plan in regard to mankind, and to trace the genealogy

of Christ. The record does not state that Enoch, or Noah, or Abraham refrained from blasphemy and theft, but we do not therefore conclude that these men were

thieves and blasphemers; neither have we any reason to conclude that they were Sabbath-breakers, because particular mention is not made concerning each one that he kept the Sabbath. God had given the Sabbath commandment; to say, then, that a certain man was a good man is equivalent to saying that he kept the Sabbath. Of Enoch and Noah is said that they "walked with God," and of Abraham that he kept God's commandments, statutes and laws. But even if no one from Adam to Moses had observed the Sabbath, it would not have affected God's commandment in the least. We close for this week with the following testimony from Dr. Scott, comment on Gen. 2:3:-

"The sacred writer here both records the appointment of the Sabbath, and assigns the reason for it: 'Because that in it the Lord rested from all his work.' This is evidently *historical*, and not by *anticipation*; for the reason subsisted from the beginning, and was more cogent immediately than it could be at a distance of more than two thousand years, when the command was solemnly renewed from Mount Sinai, long after sin had marred the beauty of the great Creator's work; and it concerns the whole human race, as much as the nation of Israel. . . . And the silence of Moses concerning the observation of the Sabbath by the patriarchs, so far from proving that they were not commanded to observe it, will not render it so much as probable that they did not actually keep it, to those who attentively consider how much darkness rests upon many similar subjects, in the Scriptural history of the Church. Yet some intimations are given in this book, which show that the patriarchs divided the time into *weeks*, and observed the seventh day." E. J. W.  
(*To be Continued.*)

**October 4, 1883**

**"The Sabbath-School. Acts 18:18-28; 19:1-20" *The Signs of the Times*  
9, 36.**

E. J. Waggoner

Lesson for Pacific Coast.-October 13.

Acts 18:18-28; 19:1-20.

NOTES ON THE LESSON.

"And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while." Although they had fiercely risen up against Paul, and beaten Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, the apostle did not leave his work there until he was satisfied in his own mind that it was pleasing to Lord. While we should never place ourselves in danger unnecessarily, and thus tempt the providence of God, the servant of the Lord should look to his Master for indications of duty, and not suffer the world, or opposers, to deter him from his work.

"Having shorn his head in Cenchrea, for he had a vow." Conjectures on this text are very numerous, and commentators are much divided in respect to it. The original does not positively show to whom this statement refers, whether to Paul or Aquila. Dr. Clarke says that "Chrysostom, Isidore of Seville, Grotius,

Hammond, Zegerus, Erasmus, Baronius, Pearce, and Wesley, referred the vow to Aquila. Jerome, Augustin, Bede, Calvin, Dodd, Rosenmüller, and others, refer it to St. Paul." Where it is left so obscure we cannot think any importance attaches to it. And the nature of the vow cannot be determined. Dr. Barnes, after giving a number of conjectures which have been raised by different authors, discreetly says: "But where nothing is recorded, conjecture is useless." Happy would it be for the cause and the honor of Christianity if everything not revealed were treated in the same manner.

"I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem." Here again conjecture has been busy as to this feast. Clarke and Scott suppose it was the passover, the Biblical Commentary says, Pentecost. But all agree that the passage is very doubtful. Clarke says: "The whole of this clause is wanting in ABE, six others, with the Coptic, AEthiostic, Armenian, and Vulgate. Griesbach leaves it in the text with the mark of doubtfulness," etc. It is also wanting in various translations, and in the Revised Version. "But bade them farewell, saying, I will return again unto you, if God will."

"And a certain man named the Apollos. . . . an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures. . . . In the way of the Lord, and being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord." The context makes this description of Apollos noteworthy. Notwithstanding his gifts and zeal, he was of *a teachable spirit*, willing to be instructed by Aquila and Priscilla. It would be well for the cause of truth, for the honor of Christianity, if all learned and eloquent men were so gifted with the grace of humility. This is the true spirit of a teacher. For how can one teach who has not first been taught? And how shall he be taught if he is not teachable? It is not difficult to graduate in the schools, or in theology, but there is no such thing as graduating in Christian experience or Bible knowledge. In these we are always "disciples," learners. Nor did he wait for Paul to be his instructor; he was willing to have the way of God expounded unto him by any who were more fully instructed than he was. Though Aquila and Priscilla were helpers in the work, at that time here spoken of they were probably not public laborers in the gospel, if they ever were.

Why would Apollos listen to those who were not eloquent as himself, who could not reason as powerfully as he could? We find the answer in the then prevailing method of teaching the faith. They reasoned-but not with "vain reasoning," nor according to the demands of 'science,' falsely so called, as is the custom of these days, but they "reasoned out of the Scriptures." Acts 17: 2. What the Scriptures said was a finality to the early Christians, no matter who presented the word. There is truly a great "falling away" from the simple faith of early times.

"And when they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus." Acts 19:5. On this text we copy from "Thoughts on Baptism:" "Acts 19 does not afford so clear proof that they who were baptized unto John's baptism were again baptized by the apostles as has been supposed by many. This was an unusual case, according to the record. On being questioned by Paul they said: 'We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.' They had not been baptized by John, but by Apollos, who had been converted at Ephesus a short time before the visit of Paul. Though this was years after the

resurrection of Christ, Apollos new only the baptism of John, and baptized just as John had administered the ordinance, unto a belief in a Messiah who was yet to come. That they were unacquainted with the facts concerning Christ, and the fulfillment of John's predictions of Christ's work, is evident from their answer to Paul: 'We have not even heard whether the Holy Spirit, is given.' (Anderson's translation.) The Revised Version gives the same form in verse 2. 'We did not so much as hear whether the Holy Ghost was given.' It was an error on the part of Apollos to teach the people that Christ was yet to come, when he had already died and was risen from the dead. This error of Apollos was corrected when Aquila and Priscilla expounded to him the way of God more perfectly. Those who were baptized by John in the faith of a coming Messiah, did not need to be baptized again when they accepted him. But those who were baptized in the faith of a coming Messiah after he had died and risen from the dead, needed to be baptized again, inasmuch as their first baptism was nearer to a denial of him who had come, than a belief in him, in every way seems just and fitting that Paul should commence with them as novices."

"He went into the synagogue and spake boldly for the space of three months." The apostles always gave the Jews the first opportunity of hearing the doctrine concerning Christ. Speaking three months boldly in the synagogue certainly effected his purpose. And in this the churches of this day might learn a lesson. Objection is made against those who preach the advent near, and the special message of warning which is to precede the advent, that they seek to proselyte members of the churches, instead of endeavoring to convert sinners. The charge is unjust, they preach to all classes. But if they have a *neglected duty* or a *rejected truth* to proclaim, it is certainly right to present it to the professed servants of God, that they may have the light they need. The word of the Lord says: "Cry aloud, spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins." Isa. 58:1. It is no excuse for the neglect of this order that they seek the Lord daily, and delight to know his way, and take delight in calling upon him. See verse 2. No matter how zealous they may be in worship, if they are indulging in sin they must be warned. The Saviour confirmed the words of the prophet, that they worship in vain who teach for doctrine the commandments of men and made void the commandments of God through their traditions. Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:1-9.

When the Jews had been fully warned, Paul having spoken in the synagogue for the space of three months, some of them turned to actively opposing his doctrine, and he left them, and separated the disciples from the congregation. But he did not leave the city. It is not likely that a large proportion of the people had heard him in the synagogue of the Jews, and with commendable perseverance he determined to proclaim the truth to all, while the opportunity was afforded, and the minds of many were already awakened on the subject. He labored, speaking daily in a public place, and continued thus doing for the space of two years; "so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." In this a great purpose was accomplished, worthy of the labor and the time employed.

The position and importance of the city of Ephesus made it a desirable point for the apostle to labor in for so long a time. The goddess Diana and her famous temple were here, of which Dimitrius said "whom all Asia and the world worshipeth." The Temple of Diana was considered one of "the seven wonders of the world." It was built at the expense of all Asia Minor; and Barnes says, "by contributions from a great number of princes, and doubtless multitudes from all parts of the earth came to Ephesus to pay their homage to Diana." Thus by Paul's remaining here so long opportunity was given to all in Asia to hear the word of the Lord. We should wisely exercise our judgments in improving the openings presented to us by Providence for furthering the cause of truth.

"Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all." Magical arts, enchantment, divination; all this was declared to be an abomination to the Lord. Deut. 18:9-12. It was done by consultation with the men's professing to be the spirits of the dead. When these magicians became converted to the doctrine of Christ they quit those practices of the heathen. And this proves that the standard Christianity under the preaching of the apostles was quite different from that acknowledged in the churches of the present day; for now, under the name of "Christian Spiritualism," divination, or consulting with "familiar spirits," carried on within the church, and many of the most imminent ministers of the land are in the habit of constantly consulting those who practice witchcraft, or mediums. Not many are aware, and very few are willing to be convinced of the fact that under the working of the "mystery of iniquity," many of the practices of the old pagan worship are grafted into the Christian faith, and their influence is largely felt even to the present day. This idea of the spirits of the dead being in Heaven, becoming our guardian angels, with whom we may hold intercourse through some medium, or necromancer, is increasing in popularity, instead of its being avoided as the Lord commanded. That they will continue until the coming of the Lord, and that they are still abominable in his sight, see 2 Thess. 2:1-12; Rev. 16:12-15; 21:8.

The value of the books which were burned is variously estimated, it not been known what currency was referred to. It was, however, somewhere between \$8,500 and \$25,000. "To what purpose was this waste?" (Matt. 26:8) Judas would have suggested that they should be sold, and the proceeds given to the poor. In modern churches they might have been put up for "a raffle," and thus much money brought into the church treasury. But they were connected with a work of iniquity; a work which the Lord abhorred, and their possessors proved the thoroughness of their conversion by destroying them. On this Dr. Barnes well remarks: "The universal prevalence of Christianity would make much that is now esteemed valuable property utterly worthless, as, for example, all that is used in gambling; and fraud; in counterfeiting; in distilling ardent spirits for a drink; and the slave trade; and in attempts to impose on and defraud mankind." To which may be added, the enormous expense incurred in raising, preparing, and in trafficking in tobacco. But that evil could be eradicated only by a purer type of Christianity than that generally recognized at the present day.

And these converts were not ashamed to destroy the property which was valued so highly by the world. They "burned them before all." There is power in

the truth when preached in its purity, to separate men from the works and workers of iniquity.

**October 11, 1883**

**"The Sabbath-School. 1 Thess. Chapters 1-3" *The Signs of the Times*  
9, 37.**

E. J. Waggoner

Lesson for Pacific Coast.-October 13.

1 THESS. CHAPTERS 1-3.

NOTES ON THE LESSON.

It is the opinion of the best critics that the epistles to the Thessalonians were written from Corinth. When Paul was forced to cease his labors in Berea, he was conducted by the brethren to Athens, but Silas and Timothy remained at Berea. Acts 17:13, 14. As soon as he reached Athens he sent word for his fellow-laborers to join him. Verse 15. It seems evident that they did join him at Athens, and that Timothy was sent from Athens to Thessalonica, to learn the condition of the brethren. The following Scriptures imply this: Acts 17:16 says that "Paul waited for them at Athens." He had sent them a command to come to him with all speed, and if they obeyed, he would not have to wait long. In 1 Thess. 3:1, 2 we read: "Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; and sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith." This strongly implies that Timothy was sent from Athens to Thessalonica, but he was not the bearer of the epistle to the Thessalonians, for it is in Paul's first epistle that he speaks of having sent Timothy. It was in consequence of the good report of their constancy that Timothy brought, that Paul wrote his first epistle. Nothing is said about Silas being sent with Timothy, and he may have been sent on some other errand, but Acts 18:5 shows that they returned from Macedonia in company, and found Paul at Corinth. It was then and there that Paul wrote his first epistle to the Thessalonians.

Although Silas and Timothy are associated with Paul in the opening sentence, we are not to conclude that they had an equal share with him in the writing of the epistle. It simply shows that they endorsed what Paul wrote. This would not be a minor matter, for the Thessalonians were, doubtless, better acquainted with Silas and Timothy than with Paul. On the other hand, if Paul were well known, and his worth as an apostle of Jesus Christ were fully appreciated, to mention his helpers in connection with himself, would increase their influence among those to whom he wrote. And this was what Paul desired, for he had no petty fear that he should not be appreciated, and he also expected and intended that younger men succeed him in this work.

The comments of Dr. Clarke on 1 Thess. 1:3 are so good that we give them entire:-



"This verse contains a very high character of the believers that Thessalonica. They had faith, not speculative and indolent, but true, sound, operative; their faith worked. They had love, not that gazed at and became enamored of the perfections of God, but such a love as labored with faith to fulfill the whole will of God. Faith worked; but love, because it can do more, did more, and therefore labored-worked energetically-to promote the glory of God and the salvation of men. They had hope; not an idle, cold, heartless expectation of future good, from which they felt no excitement, and for which they could give no reason, but such a hope has produced a satisfying expectation of a future life and a state of blessedness, the reality of which faith had descried and love anticipated; a hope, not hasty and impatient to get out of the trials of life and possess the heavenly inheritance, but one that was as willing to endure hardships as to enjoy glory itself, when God might be most honored by this patient endurance. Faith worked, love labored, and hope endured patiently.

"It is not a mark of much grace to be longing to get to Heaven because of the troubles and difficulties of the present life. They who love Christ are ever willing to suffer with him; and he may be as much glorified by patient suffering as by the most active faith or laborious love. There are times in which, through affliction or other hindrances, we cannot *do* the will of God, but we can *suffer* it; and in such cases he seeks a heart that bears submissively; suffers patiently, and endures as seeing him who is invisible, without murmurings or repining."

"For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad." Verse 8. There can be no better recommendation of a Christian than that by his life the word of the Lord is sounded forth. This is more likely to be the case in heathen than in so-called Christian countries, because, as did the Thessalonians, they received the word "in much affliction." Those who live in a land where Christianity is popular, are very liable to fall in with that type of Christianity that is popular, and that is not a kind that will recommend them either to God or to man.

That the Thessalonians did suffer severe persecution, we learn from the 14th verse of the second chapter. "For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Jesus Christ, for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews." The record in Acts, having to do only with Paul, states that the Jews set the whole city in an uproar on account of the apostles. But after the mob once became aroused, we cannot suppose that they would quietly settle down without proceeding to acts of violence against those who received the apostles' doctrine. In this case, as in others, the Jews were the instigators of the persecution, but took no active part in carrying it on.

We are not left in doubt as to what doctrine Paul preached to the Thessalonians. From Acts 17:2, 3 we learn that he preached only Scripture doctrine. He was not content with mere assertions, but he reasoned. A reasoning sermon is a good sermon; but the reasoning must be Scriptural reasoning. The trouble with too many sermons of the present day is that human reason enters into them too largely. Paul preached "that Christ must needs have suffered and risen from the dead," but did not leave his hearers with this. He also taught them

to wait for his coming from Heaven. 1 Thess. 1:10. Without this last part, his preaching would be incomplete. Any preaching of the gospel that leaves out Christ's second advent, is not Scriptural preaching. The death and resurrection of Christ afford the Christian a strong ground for hope of salvation; but since that salvation is to be revealed only at Christ's second coming, John 14:1-3; Col. 3:4; 1 Pet. 1:5; Heb. 9:28, etc., if that coming should be studiously concealed, the hope aroused by the knowledge of the resurrection of Christ would be turned into despair. Should Christ not come, then the plan of salvation would be as much a failure as it would have been had he never risen from the dead. But Christ is coming again, and this thought should be to us an ever-present blessed hope.

Inexperienced Christians are liable to be misled by the statement of their teachers that the Christian life is one of peace and joy, and that happiness can be found nowhere else. This is true, but some think that therefore they should have no trials, but should find everything easy and pleasant. When afflictions come they think that God must certainly be displeased with them, or has forsaken them. The trouble is that they do not realize that the Christian finds joy and happiness in a far different matter from what the worldling does. Paul feared that the Thessalonians might become discouraged by their persecutions, so he sent Timothy to comfort them, "That no man should be moved by these affliction; for yourselves know that we are appointed there unto." Chap. 3:3. He would have them learn to "glory in tribulation;" to take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses *for Christ's sake*. When they come for this cause we may rejoice; but no one should feel elated over trials that are brought on by his own perverseness. Shame is called for in such a case. E. J. W.

**October 25, 1883**

**"The Sabbath-School. 2 Thessalonians" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 39.**

E. J. Waggoner

Lesson for Pacific Coast.-November 3.

2 THESSALONIANS.

NOTES ON THE LESSON.

"Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." 2 Thess. 1:6-9. From these verses we learn (1) that the time for the punishment of the wicked and the reward of the righteous is when the Lord comes. No one can say that this coming is at the death of the individual, for the Lord will be "revealed from Heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire." The rewards are not given until that time comes. So Christ himself says, "Behold I come quickly; and my reward is *with me*, to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev. 22: 12.

2. We learn that God's righteousness is just as clearly manifested in recompensing tribulation to the wicked, as it is in granting rewards to the righteous. The punishment of the wicked is not an arbitrary thing which God could remit if he chose to do so. He does not punish in order to gratify malice or revenge. "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord; wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye." Eze. 18: 32. God is under obligation to punish the wicked. The principles of his Government demand it, should he not do so, but suffer his laws to be broken with impunity, no saint would have any assurance of protection. God's Government would soon cease to exist, and he would be unable either to protect or reward his loyal subjects. It is true that God is love, and this love is manifested in the judgment of the wicked as clearly as in the reward of the righteous. Those who say that, because "God is Love," he will not punish the guilty, do not realize that they are defaming his character and Government. Most men think that it is just and right for earthly governments to punish law-breakers; why should they imagine God less just than man.

3. To the saints Paul says, "Them that trouble you" shall receive tribulation at the last day. Then the persecuted ones can have no occasion to either do or say anything in the way of retaliation. God has pledged the honor of his Government that his loyal, persecuted subjects shall be avenged, and he will do it speedily, though he seem to bear along with them. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

4. The nature of the punishment of the wicked is clearly brought to view." Shall be punished with everlasting destruction. "No stronger term could be used to signify this final utter extinction. This verse is an inspired explanation of Matt. 25: 46. Here we are told that at the coming of the Lord the wicked "shall go away into everlasting punishment." It is claimed by many that this proves the unending existence of the wicked, because "everlasting" is the same as "eternal," which describes the life of a righteous. But the text under consideration informs us that their punishment is to be "destruction." As Paul says in Rom. 6: 23, "The wages of sin is *death*," which is the same as destruction. Having once been destroyed, the wicked will to all eternity remain destroyed. The action in their case will be final. Before that destruction is fully accomplished there will be much suffering; "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish" will be rendered unto "every soul of man that doeth evil." These are but accessories to the great punishment, which is death. We firmly believe that the Bible teaches that the wicked will be punished eternally; but our readers will note that this does not necessarily mean the eternal conscious suffering; if it did, then the wicked would have eternal life, which is promised to the righteous alone.

From the first part of the second chapter, it seems evident either that some of the Thessalonians had gained the idea from Paul's first letter that Christ's coming was near at hand, or that some one had written to them to that effect, claiming Paul as their authority, or even personating him. However this may be, it is certain that Paul had no such idea, for he plainly says so. Some writers will persist in saying that the first epistle shows that Paul expected the Lord to come in his day; but we prefer to believe him when he says that he did not.

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." 2 Thess. 2:3, 4. Dr. Barnes has given full and good comments on this text, and we give the following extracts. The facts which he states are worth preserving for reference:-

Most Protestant commentators have referred it to the great apostasy, under the Papacy, and, by the "man of sin," they suppose there is allusion to the Roman Pontiff, the Pope. It is evident that we are in better circumstances to understand the passage than those were who immediately succeeded the apostles. Eighteen hundred years have passed away since the epistle was written, and the "day of the Lord" has not yet come, and we have an opportunity of inquiring whether in all that long tract of time any one man can be found, or any series of men have arisen, to whom the description here given is applicable. If so, it is in accordance with all the proper rules of interpreting prophecy to make such an application. If it is fairly applicable to the Papacy, and cannot be applied in its great features to anything else, it is proper to regard it as having such an original reference. Happily, the expressions which are used by the apostle are, in themselves, not difficult of interpretation, and all that the expositor has to do is to ascertain whether *in any one great apostasy all the things here mentioned have occurred*. If so, it is fair to apply the prophecy to such an event; if not so, we must wait still for its fulfillment. The word rendered "falling away" (*apostasias, apostasy*), is of so *general* a character that it may be applied to *any* departure from the faith as it was received in the time of the apostles.

*And that man of sin.* This is a Hebraism, meaning a man of eminent wickedness; one distinguished for depravity. Comp. John 17:12; Prov. 6:12, in Heb. The use of the article here-*ho anthrospos*,-"*the* man of sin," is also emphatic, as in the reference to "*the* falling away," and shows that there is allusion to one of whom they had before heard, and whose character was well known; who would be *the* wicked one by way of eminence. See also verse 8, "*that* wicked"-*ho anomos*. There are two general questions in regard to the proper interpretation of this appellative; the one is, whether it refers to an individual, or to a series of individuals of the same general character, aiming at the accomplishment of the same plans; and the other is, whether there has been any individual, or any series of individuals, since the time of the apostles, who, by eminence, deserve to be called "*the* man of sin." That the phrase, "*the* man of sin," may refer to a *succession* of men of the same general character, and that it does so refer here, is evident from the following considerations: (1.) The word "king" is used in Dan. 7: 25; 11: 36, to which places Paul seems to allude, to denote a succession of kings. (2.) The same is true of the *beast* mentioned in Dan. 7, 8. Rev. 13, representing a kingdom or empire through its successive changes and revolutions. (3.) The same is true of the "*woman* arrayed in purple and scarlet" (Rev. 17: 4), which cannot refer to a single woman, but is the emblem of a continued corrupt administration. (4.) It is clear that a succession is intended here, because the work assigned to "the man of sin" cannot be supposed to be

that which could be accomplished by a single individual. Statement of the apostle is, that there were then tendencies to such an apostasy, and that "the man of sin" would be revealed at no distant period, and yet that he would continue his work of "lying wonders" until the coming of the Saviour to destroy him. In regard to this "man of sin," it may be further observed. (1.) That his appearing was to be *preceded* by the "great apostasy;" and (2.) that he was to continue and perpetuate that apostasy. His rise was to be owing to a great departure from the faith, and then he was to be the principal agent in continuing such a departure by "signs and lying wonders." He was not himself to *originate* the defection, but was to be the creation or the result of it. He was to rise upon it, or grow out of it, and, by artful arrangements adapted to that purpose, was then to perpetuate it.

The question now is on the applicability of the phrase "the man of sin" to the Pope. That his rise was *preceded* by a great apostasy, or departure from the purity of the simple gospel, as revealed in the New Testament, cannot reasonably be doubted by any one acquainted with the history of the church. That he is the *creation* or *result* of that apostasy, it is equally clear. That he is the grand agent in *continuing* it, is equally manifest. Is the phrase itself one that is properly applicable to him? Is it proper to speak of the Pope of Rome, as he has actually appeared, as "*the* man of sin?" In reply to this, it might be sufficient to refer to the general character of the Papacy, and to its influence in upholding and perpetuating various forms of iniquity in the world. It would be easy to show that there has been no dynasty or system that has contributed so much to uphold and perpetuate sins of various kinds on the earth as the Papacy. No other one has been so extensively and so long the patron of superstition; and there are vices of the grossest character which all along have been fostered by its system of celibacy, indulgences, monasteries, and absolutions, that it would be a better illustration of the meaning of the phrase "man of sin," as applicable to the Pope of Rome, to look at the general character of the Popes themselves. Though there may have been some exceptions, yet there never has been a *succession* of men of so decidedly wicked character as have occupied the Papal throne since the great apostasy commenced. A very few references to the characters of the Popes will furnish an illustration of this point. Pope Vigilius to the Pontifical throne through the blood of his predecessor. Pope Joan-the Roman Catholic writers tell us-a female in disguise, was elected and confirmed Pope, as John. Pistana says that "she became with child by some of those that were round about her; that she miscarried, and died on her way from the Lateran and to the temple." Pope Marcellinus sacrificed to idols. Concerning Pope Honorius, the Council of Constantinople decreed: "We have caused Honorius, the late Pope of Old Rome, to be *accursed*; for that in all things he followed the mind of Sergius the *heretic*, and confirmed his wicked doctrines." . . . Of the popes, Platina, a Roman Catholic, says: "The chair of Saint Peter was usurped, rather than possessed, by monsters of wickedness, ambition, and bribery. They left no wickedness unpracticed." See the *New Englander*, April, 1844, p. 285, 286.

*Sitteth in the temple of God.* That is in the Christian Church. It is by no means necessary to understand this of the temple at Jerusalem, which was standing at the time this epistle was written, for (1.) the phrase "the temple of God" is several

times used with reference to the Christian Church: 2 Cor. 6: 16; Eph. 2: 21; 1 Cor. 3: 16, 17; Rev. 3: 12; and (2.) the temple was the proper symbol of the church, and an apostle trained amid the Hebrew institutions would naturally speak of the Church as the temple of God. The temple at Jerusalem was regarded as the peculiar dwelling-place of God on earth. When the Christian Church was founded, it was spoken of as the peculiar dwelling-place of God. See the passages referred to above. He dwelt among his people. He was with them, and walked with them, and manifested himself among them-as he had done in the ancient temple. The usage in the New Testament would not lead us to restrict this language to an *edifice* for a "church," as the word is now commonly used, but rather to suppose that it denotes the Church as a society; and the idea is, that the Antichrist here referred to would present himself in the midst of that church as claiming the honors due to God alone. In the temple at Jerusalem God himself presided. There he gave laws to his people; there he manifested himself as God; and there he was worshiped. The reign of the "man of sin," would be *as if* he should sit there. In the Christian Church he would usurp the place which God had occupied in the temple. He would claim divine attributes and homage. He would give laws and responses as God did there. He would be regarded as the head of all ecclesiastical power; the source from which all authority emanated; the same in the Christian Church which God himself was in the temple. This does not then refer primarily to the Pope is sitting in any particular Church on any particular occasion, but to his claiming *in* the Church of Christ the authority and homage which God had in the temple at Jerusalem. And whatever place, whether in a cathedral or elsewhere, this authority should be exercised, all that the language here conveys would be fulfilled. No one can fail to see that the authority claimed by the Pope of Rome meets the full force of the language used here by the apostle.

*Showing himself that he is God.* This does not necessarily mean that he actually, in so many words, claimed *to be God*; but that he usurped the place of God, and claimed the prerogatives of God. If the names of God are given to him, or are claimed by him; if he receives the honors due to God; if he asserts a dominion like that of God, then all that the language fairly implies will be fulfilled. The following expressions, applied to the Pope of Rome by Catholic writers without any rebuke from the Papacy, will show how entirely applicable this is to the pretended head of the church. He has been styled "Our Lord God the Pope; another God upon earth; King of kings, and Lord of lords. The same is the dominion of God and the Pope. To believe that our Lord God the Pope might not decree as he decreed, is heresy. The power of the Pope is greater than all creative power, and extends itself to things celestial, terrestrial, and infernal. The Pope doeth whatsoever he listeth, even things unlawful, and is more than God." See the authority of these extraordinary declarations in Bishop Newton, *On the Prophecies*, diss. xxii. How can it be doubted that the reference here is to the Papacy? Language could not be plainer, and is not possible to conceive that anything can ever occur which would furnish a more manifest fulfillment of this prophecy. Indeed, interpreted by the claims of the Papacy, it stands among the very clearest of all the predictions in the sacred Scriptures. E. J. W.

**November 1, 1883**

**"The Sabbath-School. Review of Acts 13-18; 1 and 2 Thess." *The Signs of the Times* 9, 41.**

E. J. Waggoner

Lesson for Pacific Coast.-November 10.

Review of Acts 13-18; 1 and 2 Thess.

**NOTES ON THE LESSON.**

The Bible, unlike most books, is adapted to all times and all classes of people. Much of it was written for a special purpose, for the reproof or encouragement of those then living, yet it is as applicable to us as it was to persons who lived hundreds of years ago. The parables of Christ were all given for the purpose of meeting some pressing want, yet they are as fresh to-day as when uttered. All of the epistles were addressed to persons who lived in the days of the apostles, yet Christians in all intervening time have felt that they were for them as much as for those who are named in them. In the case of the epistles to the Thessalonians, we readily see that the apostle had in mind not only the Thessalonians brethren, but those especially who would live in the days immediately preceding the coming of the Lord. If we remember this fact, it will add new force to many passages.

In the fifth chapter of 1 Thessalonians, the apostle gives several short precepts that are worthy of our careful consideration. First we notice the exhortation to the brethren to "know" those who labored among them, "and to esteem them very highly in love for their work sake." And what is the work for which the brethren are to esteem those who labor among them? It is to admonish, or, as Paul says to Timothy, to "reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." Ministers are not to be esteemed because they succeed in pleasing their hearers, or in expressing the sentiment of the congregation, but because they are faithful in exhortation and reproof. The true Christian will always love the one who faithfully admonishes him, no matter how severe the rebuke may be. David said, "Let the righteous smite thee; it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head."

The apostle writes: "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly." He does not seem to have had any faith in the idea that no one has any right to interfere to set matters right in the church; that church difficulties are to be left alone to work themselves clear. He knew that under such circumstances they usually work themselves clear through the church. As much reproach is brought on the cause of God by lax discipline as by any other thing. The church relation is of divine origin, and unless each member does his duty faithfully, and all work in harmony, its object will be defeated. On this point we can do no better than quote the words of another:-

"The word here used is one which properly means *not keeping the ranks*; and then irregular, confused, neglectful of duty, disorderly. The reference here is to the members of the church who were irregular in their Christian walk. It is not difficult for an army, when soldiers get out of their places in the ranks, or are thrown into confusion, to see that little can be accomplished in such a state of irregularities and confusion. As little difficulties is it, when the members of the church are out of their places, to see that little can be accomplished in such a state. Many a church is like an army where not half of them could be depended on for efficient service. . . . an army would accomplished little if a large proportion of it were irregular, idle, amiss, or pursuing their own aims, to the neglect of the public interest, as there are members of the church, who can never be depended on in accomplishing the great purpose for which it was designed."

"See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men." The easiest way to see that this injunction is carried out would be for each one to hold his own evil tendencies in check. But if there are those who do not practice that charity which is described in 1 Cor. 13:4, 5, then the church has a duty in the matter. It is the duty of the body to see that the members are in harmony. This should not be done in a harsh, censorious matter, but in accordance with the command in Lev. 19:17, 18: "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord."

"Despise not prophesyings." It must be remembered that there is a difference between prophecies and prophesyings. The command does not have reference especially to the prophecies of the Old Testament, or of the New, although it is a sad fact that they are quite generally despised at the present day. But it has to do with something in the present tense. It needs no argument to show that this chapter is addressed through the Thessalonians to those who would be living in the very last days. Then it must be that there will be some in the last days who will prophesy, and not only so, but there prophesying is to be esteemed. There will be false prophets, but this only makes it the more certain that there will be true ones. Joel says, "And it shall come to pass afterward ["in the last days," Acts 2:17], that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughter shall prophesy, and your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions." But if there are to be both true and false prophets, how can we tell which to believe? The same rule applies now as of old: "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

It is not optional with us whether or not we will try the spirits. The command is, "Prove all things." We are in duty bound to test every doctrine or professed truth that is presented to us. To turn away from a new truth, simply because it is new to us, and then to imagine that we cannot be condemned, on account of our ignorance, is a fatal mistake. We do not know but that the new thought may be true; therefore we are to turn upon the blazing light of God's word, to try it. If it proves to be good, then we must hold it fast, at whatever sacrifice. This



necessarily implies the utter rejection of everything that is bad, for good and evil cannot dwell long together. Not only must we reject the wrong; but we must "abstain from all appearance of evil."

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly." Entire sanctification is most clearly brought out in the Scriptures, as necessary for all; but like every good and necessary thing, it has been sadly abused. The prevalent idea at the present time is that sanctification is a state of mind or feeling; a state in which the individual feels very good, in short, perfectly satisfied with himself. It arises from the idea that the sole object of religion is to make man happy. This is a mistake. Man's first great duty is to please God, whether the duty be pleasant or disagreeable. And we can please God only by keeping his commandments. With this agree the words of Christ. "Sanctify them through thy truth; by word is truth." We can test every man's professed sanctification by the law of God. If his life is wholly devoted to carry out its requirements, his sanctification is genuine; but if he ignores, or tramples upon God's law, or any portion of it, his sanctification is spurious. And true sanctification does not loudly proclaim its own excellence. "Charity [love] vaunteth not itself." The man who loudly "professes entire sanctification," may well be suspected of insincerity.

Much of the so-called sanctification is a manifestation not only of selfishness but of obstinacy. A religion of feeling must necessarily be a selfish religion. The great object of the person is to get in a state of mind where nothing will trouble him. Duty may be acknowledged in theory, but if it is contrary to the feelings, it is rejected. We have known persons who confessed that the fourth commandment is as binding now as it ever was, and that there is not the slightest warrant in the Bible for Sunday-keeping, yet they deliberately decided not to obey, because they did not *feel* as though they ought to. They had such a "perfect love" for God that they were excused from obeying him! We think we are warranted in calling such a course a manifestation of "perfect obstinacy" and self-will. Purity of heart and soul comes only through obeying the truth. 1 Peter 1:22.

"And pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." "There," says one, "You materialistic Adventists do not believe that man is a compound body, composed of soul, body, and spirit; and what do you do with this text?" We accept every word as true. Our friends are sometimes too hasty in telling what we do and do not believe. We believe most heartily that man has a soul, body, and spirit, because Paul speaks of those different part; but we utterly reject the idea that any or all of these parts are essentially immortal, because the Bible gives positive evidence to the contrary. If these elements compose the man, what reason have we to suppose that the man can maintain a conscious existence without any one of them? Such a supposition is contrary both to reason and Scripture. See Ps. 146:3, 4, etc.

2 Thess. 1:9 says that the wicked "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." This is commonly supposed to mean that the wicked will be banished from the presence of the Lord, and that this alone will constitute their punishment. But, in the first place, to be out of God's immediate presence is what the wicked desire; no greater punishment could be devised for them, than to be obliged to be in the

sacred presence of God. Wicked men do not now seek the place where God manifests himself, and we cannot suppose that they ever will, unless they become converted. Indeed, the prophets tell us that at the last day, the wicked will say to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." Rev. 6:16. And secondly, there is no place in the universe where the wicked could flee from the presence of God. See Ps. 139:7-12. The wages of the sinner will be death, destruction that comes from the presence of the Lord. And when their destruction shall have been accomplished, no place will be found for them. Dan. 2:35. The wails and blasphemies of the damned will not forever rise to mar the harmony of a portion of God's universe, for there will come a time when "every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them," will unite in saying, "Blessing and honor, and glory, and power, unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." E. J. W.

### **"That Blessed Hope" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 41.**

E. J. Waggoner

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." There are several points that may be noted on this text: 1. Those who are dead are represented as asleep. The term is very common in the Bible. Read Job 7:21, Dan. 12:2; John 11:11-14, etc. The righteous are asleep in Jesus. 2. This being the case, it follows that the dead are unconscious, for a sleeping man knows nothing of what is going on around him. The general tenor of the inspired writings is in harmony with this idea. For examples see Job 14:14-21; Ps. 6:5; 88:10-12; 115:17; 146:3, 4; Eccl. 9:5, 6, 10. 3. It is folly to say that we cannot know anything of the future. Paul said that he would not have his brethren ignorant; if we believe his words, we must admit that something can be known of man's future. 4. It is not wrong for Christians to sorrow; the only sin is in giving away to uncontrollable grief, as did the heathen. They, having no hope, indulged in the most extravagant expressions of sorrow-tearing out the hair, rending their garments, uttering loud shrieks, cutting their flesh, etc. A Christian's grief may be even more acute than that of the heathen, for Christianity tends to elevate, and to quicken the sensibilities, but it will always be tempered by hope.

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." From what place will God bring them? "From Heaven," many persons say. But the apostle says that those whom he brings have been *asleep*, and if the view of our friends be true, it must be that the saints in heaven do nothing but sleep, and that is absurd. The psalmist says, "In thy presence is fullness of joy; at the right hand there are pleasures forevermore." We think it will need no argument to convince any rational person that David's conception of "fullness of joy" and "pleasures forevermore" would not be met by a long period of unconscious sleep. Those who are asleep are in the grave, and from thence God will bring them, even as he did our Lord. Just as

surely as Jesus died and rose again, so surely will God raise from the dead all the sleeping saints.

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] which are asleep." Paul says, "we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." From this some have supposed that Paul expected that the Lord would come in a very few years, and that he would live until that event; but this was not his expectation. We must believe him when he says, "For this we say unto you *by the word of the Lord*." Paul received his instruction directly from Heaven. Not to say that Paul was mistaken in regard to the time of Christ's second advent, is equivalent to saying either that he was not inspired, or that the Holy Spirit was mistaken. Neither of these positions can be taken by those who believe the Bible. That Paul had a correct idea of the time of the second advent, is clear from 2 Thess. 2:1-8. In his vivid narrative, Paul speaks of things to come as though they were present.

The word "prevent" is from the Latin words *pre*, before, and *venio*, to go, meaning "to go before," and was formerly used in this sense. It is so used in King James' version. See Ps. 88:13; 119:147, 148. But as one who went before another was able to "head him off," as it is commonly expressed, the word finally became restricted to its present signification, to hinder. The Revised Version has the passage in harmony with modern usage. The word "conversation" is another word whose signification has been thus changed. It now means simply familiar talk; but in the Bible it has an entirely different meaning, being applied to one's manner of life.

"For the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven

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with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." We cannot regard this text in any other way than as a description of an actual occurrence to take place in the future. If the expression, "the Lord himself," does not mean Jesus Christ in person, but is a figure of something else, what words could the apostle have used to express the reality? If this be figurative language, then there is no literal language in the Bible. It it agrees, however, with the words which the angel spoke to the disciples at the ascension of Christ. Acts 1:9-11. The last clause of the verses quoted settles an important point. "And so shall we ever be with the Lord." How shall we be with the Lord? By the descent of Christ to raise the dead and change the living. Can we not be with him before that time? No; for so he told his disciples when on earth. The ardent Peter said, "Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake;" John 13:27; but still Jesus did not reverse his former sentence: "As I said unto the Jews, Whither I go ye cannot come; so now I say to you." Then he comforted them with these words; "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." This is the "blessed hope;" with

these words the apostle Paul commended Christians to comfort one another. Men should be careful how they attempt to improve on the methods laid down by inspiration.

Some time ago a religious journal of note made an admission on this text, that was fatal to the popular view (the one which it also holds), that all men have inherited immortality. It said: "It is hard for us to understand how those converts could have imagined that it was peculiarly unfortunate to die before Christ's second coming. It was because they imagined, and Paul too, perhaps, that Christ was to come soon, in the lifetime of some of them (we have already shown that he did not imagine any such thing), and that his coming was physical; and they did not understand the doctrine of the immortality of the soul." That is, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is so opposed to the doctrine of Christ's second coming, that those who hold to the former necessarily ignore the latter. We believe that this is the case. But the doctrine of Christ's second coming is one of the most prominent in the whole Bible, and it must therefore follow that the Bible is opposed to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. It was well said that "they did not understand the doctrine of the immortality of the soul;" but if Paul and his co-laborers did not understand nor teach it, whence is it that our modern teachers have learned so much about it? Have they a later revelation in which inspiration has corrected its former mistakes? Away with a doctrine which leads men to treat God's word. Such teachers would do well to ponder upon Paul's words to the Galatians brethren. Gal. 1:8.

"But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." No argument can be drawn from this to prove that Christians cannot know anything about Lord's coming, for the next verse shows that he comes as a thief only to those who cry "Peace and safety,"-those who are not watching. The brethren, Paul states, are not in darkness that that day should overtake them as a thief. Christ gave his disciples very full instructions in regard to the times and the seasons (see Matt. 24), and as the whole gospel was revealed to Paul by the Lord himself, he had imparted the same information to the Thessalonians brethren. The prophecies of the Old Testament, especially the Book of Daniel, give much light on the times and the seasons.

On 2 Thess. 5:10, Dr. Barnes makes the following comment:-

"'Whether we wake or sleep.' Whether we are found among the living or the dead when he comes. The object here is to show that the one class would have no advantage over the other. This was designed to calm their minds in their trials, and to correct an error which seems to have prevailed in the belief that those who were found alive when he should return, would have some priority over those who were dead. 'Should live together with him.' The word rendered 'together' is not to be regarded as connected with the phrase 'with him,' as meaning he and they would be together, but it refers to those who wake and those who sleep, those who are alive and those who are dead,-meaning that they would be *together*, or would be with the Lord *at the same time*; there would be no priority or precedence."

That is exactly the truth on this important subject. Happy would it be for Christianity if the churches had never departed from it. E. J. W.

**November 15, 1883**

**"The Sabbath-School. 1 Corinthians 2:6-4:21" *The Signs of the Times*  
9, 43.**

E. J. Waggoner

Lesson for Pacific Coast.-November 24.

1 Corinthians 2:6-4:21.

**NOTES ON THE LESSON.**

"Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought; but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world." In the previous chapter, Paul had said that "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness;" and in the beginning of this chapter, he says that he came not to the Corinthians "with excellency of speech or wisdom," or with "enticing words of man's wisdom." He is not willing to admit, however, that he really uttered any foolishness, although it seems so to the scoffers. He had not spoken the "wisdom of this world" but the wisdom of God, which is infinitely superior. He says that he spoke this wisdom "among them that are perfect." By this he means, not those who are sinless, for there would be no object in preaching to such at all; but to those who were somewhat advanced in Christian knowledge—who had received enough of the Spirit of God to enable them to appreciate the beauties of the gospel plan.

This wisdom, he says, "none of the princes of the world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." This text proves that skepticism depends more upon the condition of the heart than of the head. Those who put Christ to death were ignorant of his true nature. Had they *known* that he was the Son of God, not one of them would have lifted his hand against him. Why did they not know? They had listened to his teachings, and had witnessed many of his miracles. But instead of becoming convinced, as hundreds of others did, on the same evidence, they closed their eyes and ears, and steeled their hearts, lest they should be converted. The reason for this course lay in the fact that their own selfish interests were involved; Christ uttered plain truth which condemned their most cherished habits of life; to follow him would be at the cost of great personal inconvenience to themselves, and they therefore deliberately resolved to reject him. No person, however, can long remain in a state of self-condemnation, and when one has willfully rejected clearly revealed truth, it does not take him long to become firmly convinced that the error which he accepts is truth. And so the Jews, although their minds had once been enlightened, were ignorant of Christ when they crucified him. In like manner, we have known the most bitter opponents of the true Sabbath of the Lord to be those who had once acknowledged its claims, and even kept it. They rejected light, and darkness

came upon them, so that they did not have their former clear conception of truth. "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

In the ninth, tenth, and the eleventh verses Paul proceeds with the argument to show why the gospel seems like foolishness to the wicked. "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Human reason cannot grasp the wonderful truths of the gospel. The blessings which God stands ready to bestow upon those who obey the gospel, have no meaning to those who serve self. When Christians tell of the great love of God, how it lifts them above earthly trials and sorrows, they seem to the worldling to be simply fanatical. This is because the things of the Spirit of God are spiritually discerned (verse 14). In the eleventh verse the apostle clenches his argument by saying, "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." That is, that as no one can know the thoughts and designs of the man, except the man himself, so none but the Spirit of God can comprehend the things of God, and he alone, therefore, is capable of revealing them to others. It would be far less absurd for a man to profess to understand all the hidden thoughts of his neighbor's mind, than for one entirely destitute of the Spirit of God to imagine that he is capable of passing judgment upon the truths of the gospel.

This eleventh verse has been used as proof of the inherent immortality of man but one must have that doctrine firmly fixed in his own mind before he can derive any comfort from this text, for it declares no such thing. That there is a spirit in man, is plainly stated many times in the Bible; but that that spirit is an entity of itself, distinct from the man; that it of itself alone is capable of thought; or that it can maintain an existence separate from the body, is not stated, either by this text or any other. These things are always assumed, and then various texts of Scripture are interpreted, in accordance with that assumption.

In the third chapter, the apostle says that he was unable to give the Corinthians all the instruction that he wished to, on account of their lack of spirituality. They had suffered the Spirit to come into their hearts only to a limited extent, and consequently could appreciate but little of the truth. They were as babes, requiring milk, the proof of their carnal condition is found in the fact that there were among them "envying, strife, and divisions." These things may exist with worldly wisdom, but are incompatible with "the wisdom that is from above," which is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good friends, without variance [R.V.], and without hypocrisy." James 3:17. Without this wisdom, all other attainments will profit nothing.

The apostle next guards them against forming factions among themselves, calling themselves after some favorite minister. He would not have any favoritism in the church, as to the ministers, for that would tend to create divisions. The minister is nothing of himself, whatever his talents may be, for the increase comes from God, for whom all our fellow-laborers. He first compares the ministers to husbandmen, and the church to a vineyard, and then he likens them to the architects, and the church to the building which they rear for God. If the building is truly God's, it can have but one foundation, that is Christ. 1 Cor. 3:11;

Eph. 2:19, 20. If a man lays any other foundation, it comes to nothing; but "the foundation of God standeth sure." 2 Tim. 2:19.

It makes a great deal of difference, however, how a man builds even on the sure foundation. "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." 1 Cor. 3:12-15. It is evident from Paul's statement, "ye are God's building," that the gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and stubble, "that may be built upon the true foundation, indicate different classes of people in the church of God. The gold, silver, and precious stones are the good, -those whom the fire cannot harm; while the wood, hay, and stubble represent those who will finally be cast into the fire and consumed. The day of Judgment will reveal the characters of all, so that "every man's work shall be made manifest." "The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." This does not mean that every man will have to pass through purgatory, nor does it have the slightest reference to such a place; the meaning is brought out in verses 14 and 15, where it is declared that some will abide, and some will be burned. And so the class of work that has been done by the minister will be revealed by the fire. The next two verses are clear. If it is seen that the laborer has built enduring substance on the foundation he shall receive a reward;" for "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever." Dan. 12:3. But if any man's work be burned; if his converts prove to be only worthless stubble, he will suffer loss; the joy of seeing many in the kingdom of God as a result of his labors, will not be his; yet he himself shall be saved. Surely every minister has need to "take heed how he buildeth."

And the individual members have no less need of care. The Church is the temple of God, in which his Spirit dwells. "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." How can one defile the temple of God? By cherishing some sin; by harboring vain and evil thoughts, envy, malice, hatred, an unforgiving or fault-finding disposition. All these bring reproach upon the church. It is a fearful thing for a man to come into, or continue in, a church, and still cling to evil thoughts and practices. His punishment will be greater than though he had committed the same sins without the pale of the church; for now he has defiled the temple of God. Then "let no man deceive himself;" but "let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." E. J. W.

### **"Our Lord's Last Passover" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 43.**

E. J. Waggoner

There is nothing in the life of our Lord that is unimportant; no act that should not be studied most carefully and reverently. But of all the recorded events of his earthly ministry, those immediately connected with his death. Everything centers around this point; it is that upon which all our hope depends. It is not strange,

therefore, that the order of the events connected with the last supper should be (as has been the case) the subject of much careful study. It is true that some deprecate any special effort to locate different events in our Lord's life, thinking that it tends to divert the mind from the moral truths intended to be conveyed; but to us it seems highly proper. Indeed, each study appears to be very necessary if we would realize the full import of all that he did.

It will be admitted that Christ was very careful in regard to the fitness of things. We cannot conceive of his doing anything out of place. Many scenes in his life that appear abrupt, and for which no reason can be given when considered by themselves, are fully explained when we consider the circumstances under which they took place. Of course there are many incidents in the life of Christ which cannot be assigned to any particular time or place. They are complete in themselves. But we think that those events in the life of our Lord which stand closely related to any other event, may be properly located by a careful study of the different accounts given by the four evangelists. And as such study makes the narrative seem more real to us, and brings us to a clearer understanding of our Lord's life, the important truths which he taught must thereby certainly make a deeper impression upon us.

It is not because there has not been much discussion on the subject that it is taken up here. The various conflicting theories have been treated at length; so great that the average reader often becomes confused before he arrives at the author's conclusion. And in the books on this subject we find, as we think, a mixture of truth and error. We shall endeavor as much as possible to simplify the evidence in the account, and so present it that all may take their Bibles and trace the matter for themselves.

Matthew and Mark give almost precisely the same account of the events of the passover night. They note this sitting down to supper, the designation of the one who would betray Jesus, and the Lord's supper. Both follow the same order. It is quite certain, that while they have omitted many things, they have given those events in their proper order. Luke does not follow the same order, but he mentions one point which the others omit-the strife among the disciples. John says nothing about the Lord's supper, but he gives a minute account, which is not mentioned by any of the others. A comparison of the four accounts will show that John's is the most complete in its detail, and we shall therefore use that as a basis. Separating it into its parts we have the following table:-

1. The supper. John 13:2.
2. Jesus rises and watches. Verses 4-11.
3. He takes his garments again. Verse 12.
4. He explains his act and bids them follow his example. Verses 12-17.
5. He says that one sitting at the table with him would betray him. Verse 18.
6. He tells how the traitor may be known. Verses 23-26.
7. He gives the sop to Judas. Verse 26.
8. Judas immediately goes out. Verse 30.

Before going further we must harmonize an apparent discrepancy in John's narrative. In verses 2 and 4 we read: "And supper being ended. . . he riseth from supper," and then follows the account of the feet washing. Thus the idea



generally obtains that the passover supper was entirely finished before the feet washing was performed. But in verses 12, 23-30, we again find them at supper. The question now arises, What relation, in point of time, does the feet washing sustain to the passover supper? We reply, It took place at the beginning of the supper, and offer the following proof: The original for, "And supper being ended," is, *kai deipnon genomenon*, which may be translated, "And supper being ready." The Revised Version renders it, "And during supper." Greenfield's Lexicon has it, "During supper." Robinson's Lexicon, on the verb alone, says: "f) of any location, e.g. a repast, *to be prepared, made ready*, John 13:2." The Emphatic Diaglott: "While supper was preparing." Speaker's Commentary: "During supper." Clarke's Commentary: "While supper was preparing." Campbell: "While they were at supper." Barnes says on this text: "This translation expresses too much. The original means, *while they were at supper*, and that this is the meaning is clear from the fact that we find them still eating after this. The Arabic and Persic translations give it this meaning." Other good authorities give this meaning also. It may then be considered as settled that John's account is consistent with itself, and that the feet washing took place during, or near the beginning of, the meal. If supper was ready, and they were already sitting down when this event occurred, it would be perfectly consistent to say that it happened *during supper*.

We will now consider a circumstance mentioned only by Luke—the strife among the disciples. It is recorded in Luke 22:24, after the account of the supper and the pointing out of the traitor. But there is very strong evidence to show that Luke's account is not chronological. And here we would remark that although Luke's account is very minute in his description of many things, he seems to have in general made no attempt to follow the order of events. His account of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness is a case in point.

We first notice that the language of Luke 22:27 is similar to that of John 13:16. Christ's reproof and instruction in Luke 22:25-27, are evidently the same as his remarks in connection with the ordinance of feet washing. It is most natural to conclude that this humiliating ordinance was given immediately in connection with the strife of the disciples as to who should be accounted the greatest. It is impossible to think for a moment that any such strife could have taken place *after* that lesson on humility. But we have seen that the feet washing took place at the beginning of the supper. Then the strife (Luke 22:24) must have preceded the supper, and is recorded by Luke out of its proper place.

Again, concerning what would the disciples be most likely to contend at that time? we answer. They would naturally contend as to who should have the precedence at table. Among the ancients the distinctions in age or rank were clearly defined, and at table the oldest or most honorable had certain seats assigned them. An instance of this is found in Gen. 43:33. Among all people, even at the present time, there is a difference, in point of precedence, in the seats at the table, and table etiquette is very clearly defined and strictly observed. The same point is brought out in Matt. 23:6; Mark 12:38, 39; Luke 14:7-11, where Christ reproved those who chose the chief places. There is certainly nothing else concerning which they could strive for the precedence on this occasion. And this strife furnished an occasion for Christ to give them the

most impressive lesson on humility. But this again shows that the ordinance of the washing took place at the beginning of the meal.

Some may object, and say that their strife was as to who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven, and that it did not refer to their place at the table. But the disciples still looked for a temporal kingdom, which

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they thought Christ was soon to set up; and they would naturally expect that their rank in the kingdom would be determined by the position they occupied previous to its being set up. With this view their place at table was to them a matter of great importance.

That we may keep the subject clear in our minds, we will now state in their order the events that occurred up to the present point of the investigation. 1. Supper being ready, Jesus sat down. He was the host, and of course took the first place. 2. A strife arose among the disciples as to who should have the place of honor, that being, doubtless, the one nearest to Jesus. 3. To rebuke this unseemly strife, he rose from supper and proceeded to wash their feet, teaching them by precept and example that humility was the only ground of preferment in his kingdom. 4. Having completed this ceremony, he resumed his garments and sat down again to supper. E. J. W.

*(To be Continued.)*

**November 22, 1883**

**"The Sabbath-School. 1 Corinthians 5-9" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 44.**

E. J. Waggoner

Lesson for Pacific Coast.-December 1.

1 CORINTHIANS 5-9.

NOTES ON THE LESSON.

The fifth chapter of 1 Corinthians is devoted to a scandalous offense that had been committed by a number of the Corinthian church. From the first verse we learn that the apostle did not always receive his information concerning the needs of the church direct from the Spirit, but often from other sources. The fact that he often depended upon credible reports, does not in the least detract from his character as an inspired apostle. God does not tell men that which they can find out as well for themselves. In this case Paul charges the church to purge itself, lest the single sin should corrupt the whole body. Verses 6, 7. Strict discipline is what the church owes to the steadfast members, no less than to the disloyal ones. The church at Corinth, however, was puffed up, not because of this sin, but in spite of it. While the whole body should have been mourning the shame that had come upon them, and making efforts to remove it, they were congratulating themselves on their prosperity. Indeed this sin may have served to make manifest their pride, because it is likely that many were Pharisaically boasting because *they* had not walked disorderly, not thinking that by tolerating

sin in the church, they themselves became responsible for it. It has been well said that "Men are always elated and proud when they have the least occasion for it." When church members feel a tendency to complacency and boasting, it is time to examine themselves to find out what is wrong.

"I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators." 1 Cor. 5:9. The apostle here refers to a previous epistle, which has not been preserved. After briefly considering the supposition that the reason why it was not preserved was that it was not inspired (a thing not very probable), Barnes says: "If inspired, they may have answered the purpose which was designed by their inspiration, and then have been suffered to be lost-as all inspired *books* will be destroyed at the end of the world. It is to be remembered that a large part of the *discourses* of the inspired apostle, and even of the Saviour himself (John 21:25), have been lost. And why should it be deemed any more wonderful that inspired *books* should be lost than inspired *oral teaching*? Why more wonderful that a brief letter of Paul should be destroyed than that numerous discourses of him who spake as never man spake should be lost to the world? We should be thankful for the books that remain, and we may be assured that all the truth that is needful for our salvation has been preserved and is in our hands. That *any* inspired books have been preserved, amidst the efforts that have been made to destroy them *all*, is more a matter of wonder than that a few have been lost, and should rather lead us to gratitude that we have them, than to grief that a few, probably relating to local and comparatively unimportant matters, have been destroyed."

"But now have I written you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, for a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat." Verse 11. This is by many regarded as equivalent to saying that they should not partake of the Lord's Supper with members of the church who were guilty of the above-mentioned sins; but the connection seems to strongly indicate that the prohibition extends to ordinary meals. Of course this would shut off communion, for they would not commune with one with whom they could not eat a common meal. To say that they shall not eat with a certain class is a far greater restriction than to say that they must not commune with them. Now in his former epistle Paul had said that they were not to company with fornicators. Of course that would effectually shut off partaking of the Lord's Supper with them. Still they were not to abstain absolutely from all dealings with such men, for that would necessitate, as Paul says, a removal from the world. But now he is more rigid than before, and says that if one who professes to be a Christian is guilty of such practices, they are to show their abhorrence of his course, by refusing even to eat with him. The reason for this is readily seen: If a man made no profession, but was known to be a heathen, no one would think of holding the church responsible for his crimes, even though its members had dealings with him. But should the members of the church associate with one who had been, and perhaps still professed to be, one of their own number, and who was notoriously licentious, the world would think that the church still recognized him as a Christian. So they were not to be seen in his company *at all*. This course was to be followed, not in a spirit of harshness,

but for the reputation of Christ's cause. And this restriction would not prevent them from relieving the wants of any who might need aid.

The violation of the tenth commandment is quite generally regarded as a comparatively venial offense, but Paul places the covetous man in no enviable position. Covetousness, the use of abusive language, and extortion, are classed with drunkenness and adultery. The Greek word for covetous is defined by Liddell and Scott as "one who has or claims more than his share." If Paul's injunction were strictly obeyed, what a thinning out there would be in many churches. There are few churches in which there are not some who are so desirous of having more than their share that they will even rob God of his portion.

"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?" 1 Cor. 6:2, 3. This language will allow of no other interpretation than that the saints will have some part to act in apportioning the amount of punishment due to wicked men and angels. Some have taught from this text, that the people of God will ultimately gain the ascendancy in this world's affairs, so that all public offices will be filled by them; but this cannot be true, for a plain distinction is made between the judgment which the saints are to exercise, and "the things that pertain to this life." Christ himself taught the same thing to his followers when he said to them: "In the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Matt. 19:28. This is at the last day, the time when Daniel says that judgment is to be given to the saints of the Most High. Dan. 7:22.

It remains for the prophet John to fix definitely the time when the saints will engage in this work of judgment. We have already learned that it is when Christ comes, and that is when the righteous are raised. 1 Thess. 4:16. In Rev. 20:4 we read: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." The next verse shows that this thousand years commences with the resurrection of the righteous (at Christ's coming), and ends with the resurrection of the wicked, who will be raised to suffer the second death, which is described in the succeeding verses. From this it is plain that when the saints are made immortal, they at once enter upon the work of judging. Just how much of the work is allotted to them, we cannot of course tell, but it will have to do simply with the fixing of the sentence, and not with the execution, for that is committed to Christ. See John 5:26, 27. If Christians could only realize that they must be ready, when Christ comes, to take part in such a work as this, their minds would not be so much taken up with light and frivolous things that do not elevate and strengthen them.

When Paul says, "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?" he must not be considered as giving any sanction to litigation; for he says in verse 7, "Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not

rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" Their cause might be just, yet rather than engage in strife, they should suffer themselves to be defrauded. Paul had no sympathy with the idea that men must stand up for their personal rights, although he was very jealous for the honor of God's cause. E. J. W.

**"Our Lord's Last Passover. (Continued.)" *The Signs of the Times* 9,  
44.**

E. J. Waggoner

*(Continued.)*

We have now to consider the remaining events of the passover supper, and the institution of the Lord's Supper. Although in Exodus 12, where the directions for the passover are recorded, there is no mention made of wine, we learn from the Rabbinical writings that four cups were drank during the meal. Matthew and Mark speak only of the cup which Christ blessed as the emblem of his blood. Luke speaks of two cups, chap. 22:17, 20. The first one mentioned is one of those drank during the passover supper; the second, verse 20, is plainly said to be the emblem of Christ's blood. And this verse furnishes proof that the Lord's Supper was instituted at the close of the passover supper; for Luke says: "Likewise also he took the cup *after supper*, saying, This is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you."

There is no disagreement between Luke 22:29, and Matt. 20:26: "The first says: "Likewise also [he took] the cup *after supper*;" the latter says: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it." The unleavened bread was on the table as part of the passover meal. While they were at table, and some of them still eating, Jesus took of this bread, and did as is recorded. This act, and the solemn manner of Christ marked the close of the Passover meal, so that when he took the cup it was indeed *after* supper.

We have now sufficient data from which to ascertain whether or not Judas partook of the Lord's Supper. All of the evangelists state that it was while they were at supper that he was pointed out. Matt. 26:21-25; Mark 14:18-21; Luke 22:21-23 John 13:18, 21-26. Thus the prophecy in Ps. 41:9 was fulfilled. John tells us (13:26) that the traitor was designated by Jesus giving him a sop when he had dipped it in the dish. But this shows that they were then partaking of the passover, which as we have seen, was *after* the feet-washing, and *before* the Lord's Supper. John further tells us that when Judas had received the sop he "went immediately out." John 13:30. The conclusion, then, is unavoidable, that Judas was not present when Jesus instituted his memorial supper.

Matt. 26:27 is urged as an objection against this conclusion. "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it." Mark also says that they all drank of it. But we reply that "all" need not necessarily refer to the twelve, but might refer only to all who were present; for after Judas had left them, and Christ was in the garden with only the eleven, he said to them, "All ye

shall be offended because of the this night." No one will claim that Judas was present with them.

Luke's account is supposed by some to disprove this conclusion. In order to make the subject perfectly clear, we will give his account in full. Verse 17: "And he took the cup [one of the passover cups], and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves; 18. For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. 19. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. 20. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. 21. But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table."

The objection is, that Christ is here represented as mentioning the traitor but not until after it had taken place, and that, consequently, Judas was at the Lord's Supper. To this we answer thus: 1. We already proved that the Lord's Supper *followed* the passover (see verse 20), and that Judas left *during* the passover supper. See John 13:30, in connection other proof given above. 2. We have also seen that Luke's account is not chronological; that he mentions many events out of their regular order. There is, therefore, no alternative left us but to conclude that Luke has not followed the consecutive order of the events in this instance. Should we conclude otherwise, we not only make confusion of the accounts of the other evangelists, but we make Luke inconsistent with himself.

But it is still further objected that there is no break between verses 19 and 20, and that the statement, "Behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table," closely follows the words, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you," the two sentences being connected by the conjunction "but." Keeping in mind the two points already brought out, as just mentioned above, a reference to the Greek of the text will remove this objection. The word translated "but" in verse 21 is *pleen*. Liddell & Scott's Lexicon gives this definition: "Adv. after parenthesis, *yet, still, but.*" Robinson says of it: "At the beginning of a clause, *much more, rather, besides*, passing over into an adversative particle, *but rather, but yet, nevertheless*;-Also where the writer returns after a digression to a previous topic." Andrews' Latin lexicon says the same of the corresponding word in the Vulgate. Thus this objection is entirely removed. Luke introduces the subject of the passover, and speaks of the cup. This seems to remind him of the Lord's Supper, and he briefly describes that in verses 19, 20, they being thrown in parenthetically, and in verse 21 he resumes the narrative concerning the passover.

We think, therefore, that Luke's account does not disagree in the least with that of the other evangelists, nor disprove our conclusion that Judas was not present when the Lord's Supper was instituted.

This fact is not without weight upon the subject of

open or close communion. When we consider the nature and object of the Lord's Supper, it will appear that Christ could not have allowed Judas to remain on that solemn occasion. The object of the Lord's Supper is stated thus: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, eat to show the Lord's death till he come." 1

Cor. 11:26. This information Paul says he "received of the Lord." The supper, then, was intended as a memorial, to keep in mind the death and not merely to keep the fact in mind, but as an expression of the partaker's belief in Christ death.

But a mere belief that Christ died is not sufficient to constitute Bible belief in this great sacrifice. The devils believe, but their belief is of no benefit to them. There are many disbelievers in Christianity who will admit that there was such a being as Christ, and that he died; and yet their belief is of no profit to them, for they do not discern Christ's divine nature, nor the object for which he died. We must understand that he died to vindicate the claims of justice; that God's law had been broken, and that the death of the sinner was demanded; that Christ died in man's stead, that through faith in him we might be saved from death. But "faith without works is dead," and therefore our faith in Christ is nothing unless accompanied by obedience. To reap any benefit from Christ's sacrifice we must turn from our sins, and keep the whole law of God. See Isa. 1:16-18; 55:7; Rom. 6:1-6; Matt. 7:21-23; Luke 6:46, etc. Now no one, however "liberal," would claim that one who has no faith in Christ could be allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper. No one would think of inviting a heathen or a profane worldling to that ordinance.

But, as we have seen, faith in Christ implies an honest desire to keep God's law; consequently, no one who is a violator of law of God, even though he may profess faith in Christ, has a right to come to the Lord's table. We think this proposition cannot be controverted. We do not say that one must be without fault before he can commune, but he must have repentance for his sins, and an earnest desire to put them away. With trust in God, that he for Christ's sake will forgive sin, the individual must humbly strive to walk in the light as fast as God shows it to him.

Now how was it would Judas? We find that he had cherished his selfish and avaricious feelings, and had finally yielded to them altogether, and had been stealing from the common purse which our Lord and his disciples had. John 12:6. He had been carrying on a constant deception. He had become so hardened, even under the sublime teachings and solemn warnings of Christ, that he had bargained to betray his Lord. He had deliberately sold himself to the devil for twenty dollars. He was a thief, a liar, a murderer, and a traitor; a villain of the deepest die; a hardened, unrepentant sinner. And his sin is augmented by the fact that he sinned against the greatest light that any man could have. It would have been sacrilege for such a one to each of the Lord's Supper; to partake of the body and blood of Christ. We read: "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 1:7. But Judas was walking in darkness, and could have no fellowship with Christ and his loyal disciples. He had nothing in common with them. He was with them, but not of them.

These two positions strengthen each other. From the very nature of the Lord's Supper, as explained by the Holy Spirit, we see that it would have been morally impossible for Judas to remain on that occasion; and by our Lord's action we may learn something as to what persons may be permitted to eat of the supper

which is called by his name. For in the light of the foregoing testimony it seems clear that Christ designed that the traitor should be pointed out at the time that he was, so that he might withdraw and not be present at the ordinance which was to follow. This idea is strengthened by our Lord's words to Judas, "What thou doest, do quickly." Although none of the disciples fully understood that Judas was to betray Christ (or that he was to do it immediately), John 13:28, yet the fact that Christ knew of his intentions, and that nothing could be gained by further attempt at concealment, would naturally cause him to obey Christ's command to go at once. E. J. W.  
(*To be Concluded.*)

**November 29, 1883**

**"The Sabbath-School. 1 Corinthians 10-15" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 45.**

E. J. Waggoner

Lesson for Pacific Cost.-December 8.

1 CORINTHIANS 10-15.

NOTES ON THE LESSON.

Paul's first the epistle to the Corinthians was written because grievous errors had arisen in the church, which he wished to correct. The fifth, eleventh, and fourteenth chapters are especially directed against certain evils of which that church was guilty. The existence of these faults was made known to Paul, not by revelation from Heaven, but by the reports of those who came from Corinth, and because one sin, at least, was so well known as to be the subject of common talk. See 1 Cor. 1:11; 5:1; 11:18.

From the consequences attending their perversion of the Lord's Supper (chap. 11:30) we may well suppose that this error was even more displeasing to God than the sin described in chapter five; the reason why is, that it shows great lack of spiritual discernment, and such a degree of irreverence as would lead to the commission of almost any sin. We learn from verses 20-22, 33, 34 that they were in the habit of making a regular meal of the Lord's Supper, each one helping himself to all that he could get, making this solemn ordinance a disgraceful revel. There are at the present day well-meaning persons who, although they do not behave so badly as did the Corinthians, make the Lord's Supper an occasion for partaking of an ordinary meal. Concerning such a custom the apostle exclaims in astonishment: "What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not." Verse 22. Dr. Barnes has so excellent a comment on this verse,-condemning the gross perversion of the Lord's Supper, but another evil that has sprung up in most modern churches,-that we quote it:-

"Do you not know that the church of God is not designed to be a place of feasting and revelry, nor even a place where to partake of your ordinary meals? Can it be that you will come to the place of public worship, and make them the



scenes of feasting and riot? Even on the supposition that there had been no disorder, no reveling, no intemperance, yet on every account it was grossly improper to make the place of public worship a place for a festival entertainment."

What would the good Doctor say if he could know that many, even of the denomination which he so worthily represented, think that a church is not well equipped unless it has a commodious kitchen attached. As for those who need a regular meal in church, as an act of piety, let them learn by these words of Paul, how displeasing their course is to God: "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come." 1 Cor. 11:33, 34.

In the twelfth Chapter of 1 Corinthians Paul corrects some errors in regard to Spiritual gifts. It seems that the church at Corinth had some members who were highly gifted, and others who aspired to prominent positions. There was a strife among the brethren as to whose endowments were the greatest. Many seemed to have thought that one who had no remarkable gift was of no use in the church, and accordingly became puffed up when they viewed their own gifts. In the course of the chapter, the apostle, under the figure of the body, shows that although different members have different offices, none are to be despised on account of their lowly position. He then gives them a strong but delicate reproof for their course. He urges them to earnestly desire the best gifts that God has to bestow, but proceeds to show them something more excellent than high endowments, without which these amount to nothing. That something is charity, or, more properly, love.

The first three verses of chapter 13 show the importance of love. From them we learn that it is possible for a person to have faith in the highest degree, to be able to prophesy, to have all wisdom, to be able to speak as an angel, to be charitable (in the common acceptance of the term) to the extent of giving away all his goods, and finally, to give up his life as a martyr, and still amount to nothing in the estimation of God. Such a statement as this must certainly have caused the Corinthians to regard themselves with less complacency. It should have this effect on us.

We cannot here enter into any extended examination of this subject. One or two references must suffice. John says, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." 1 John 5:3. Paul says that "love is the fulfilling of the law;" and Christ himself said that all the law and the prophets were summed up into two great principles, love to God, and love to man. Matt. 22:36-40. We conclude, then, that this thing which is greater than all gifts of prophecy or of wisdom, and without which they are nothing is simply the keeping of the commandments of God, not as a matter of outward form, but from the heart. Peter says that charity [love] covers a multitude of sin. 1 Pet. 4:8. And James says that the same result is accomplished by converting a sinner from the error of his ways. James 5:20. But a sinner is converted only by the application of the law of God. Ps. 19:7; Rom. 7:7-10; James 2:25. So we see again that the keeping of the commandments is that charity of which Paul writes.

In the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians we have direct and most unmistakable proof of the falsity of the doctrine that men are naturally immortal, or that they receive their reward at death. The apostle first proves (verses 3-8) beyond all cavil that Christ was really raised from the dead; for if the testimony of above five hundred persons who saw him alive after he had been put to death, does not establish the fact beyond all contradiction, then nothing can be proved. But since it is a fact that Christ is raised from the dead, how can any one say that there is no resurrection from the dead? See verse 12. The same power that raised up Christ, has promised to raise all mankind; and the fact that Christ was raised is proof of his power to fulfill this promise; hence Christ's resurrection is a pledge of the general resurrection. Whoever says that there is no resurrection, denies that Christ is risen, and virtually declares that the twelve apostles and the "five hundred brethren," were false witnesses. Verses 13-16.

In this matter Paul establishes the fact that there will be a resurrection. There can be no misunderstanding of this argument; it is as simple as it is conclusive. Then he goes over the ground again, and shows what would be the consequences if there were no resurrection. "For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." Verses 16-18. Mark that Paul does not say that if the dead rise not something terrible will happen to those who have fallen asleep in Christ; he does not say that in such a case they *will perish*; but he says that if the dead rise not, those who have fallen asleep in Christ "*are perished*." Then it necessarily follows that they are in the same condition *now* (with a resurrection in prospect) that they would be in to all eternity, if there were no resurrection. Why is it that they are not really perished? Because they have the promise of a resurrection from the dead,-a promise made by One who never fails. The condition of the dead now is in nowise different from what it would be if Christ had not died and rose again, nor from the condition that those will be in who will suffer the second death, except that in that case there is a limit and in these there is none. There can be no other fair construction put upon Paul's words here; whosoever, therefore, affirms that the righteous that are now enjoying the bliss of Heaven, must leave Paul out of the account.

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." Verse 20. Some have imagined a discrepancy between this statement and the fact that some were raised from the dead even before Christ's death; and others have tried to make a difference between the resurrection of those persons,-Lazarus, the widow's son, etc.,-and that of those who were raised at or after Christ's resurrection. But this is not necessary in order to harmonize the Scripture narrative for there is no discrepancy. Lazarus had as literal a resurrection as did Dorcas, or Christ himself. His resurrection, however, was accomplished only by virtue of Christ's promised death and resurrection, which, since God had promised it, was the same as already accomplished. Christ was the first-fruits; not the first in point of time, but the chief. And since his resurrection was that by which the resurrection of all was made possible (see verse 21), it might be said to be the first. In one sense it was indeed the first, for as soon as it was promised it was virtually done; had this not been the case, no

miracles of raising the dead could have been done before the resurrection of Christ.

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Verse 22. There is no condition to this statement; it includes both good and bad. Those who claim that only the righteous are raised, must also claim that none but the righteous die in Adam; for the "all" in the latter part of the verse must mean the same as the first "all." Adam sinned, and thus fell under the power of death; and since he could not transmit to his posterity that which he did not possess himself, all men are mortal. We receive mortality part of our inheritance from Adam. But to all the promise of a resurrection is given. This, however, can give no satisfaction to the universalist, for Paul immediately adds: "But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." This implies that there will be some who are not Christ's at his coming, and this fact is plainly stated in Matt. 13:38-42; 25:31-41, etc. The first are raised to eternal life; the second, to damnation, eternal death. John 5:28, 29.

As shown above from verses 13-18, Paul declares that the dead have no conscious existence-neither good nor bad have inherent immortality. In verses 51-55 he tells us how and when immortality will be given to the righteous. At the last trump the living shall be changed "in a moment, in the twinkling of the night," and the dead shall be raised incorruptible. "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." This must be done because corruption cannot inherit in corruption. Verse 50. It follows from this that the good do not at death receive their incorruptible reward, for incorruption is not put on till Christ comes. When that event shall take place, and the mortal shall have put on immortality, "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." Then, and not till then, will the redeemed shout, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

The apostle fitly closes this chapter with the following words: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." The word "therefore" shows that this is a conclusion from what has preceded. Why should they be always abounding, and how do they know that their labor is not in vain? Because they now know that there will be a resurrection, and that death is not the end of all things; they can look beyond for a reward. The conclusion is unavoidable, however, both from this and previous verses, that if there were no resurrection from the dead, all their labor would be in vain. The common view that man is naturally immortal, robs Christ of his highest prerogative, that of life-giver, and opens the way for men to ignore him altogether; but the view which we advance is in harmony with the Bible statement that "the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord," and is consistent with the fact that the redeemed will be able to say, "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

E. J. W.

**"Our Lord's Last Passover. (Concluded.)" *The Signs of the Times* 9,  
45.**

E. J. Waggoner

*(Concluded.)*

To the proposition that none but those who show their faith in Christ by obedience to God's law can rightfully partake of the Lord's Supper, it may be objected that, although Christ, who was its founder, had a right to bar whomsoever he saw fit, his followers are not competent judges as to who is worthy and who is not; that they have no right to deprive anyone of the privilege. It is claimed that such an act savors of bigotry, and is a mark of illiberality.

To this we would reply. (1) That it is the Lord himself who sets the standard; his followers dare not go beyond him. (2) That the question of liberality or illiberality is not concerned in the case. One may be liberal with that which is his own, and may dispose of it as he pleases; but to take the same freedom with that which is another's would be sin. But the supper in question is "the Lord's Supper;" consequently no one but he can dispense its privileges. The word "illiberal," when used with reference to those who do not believe in communing with law-breakers, is sadly misapplied. (3) Those who do so cannot be said to deprive anybody of the privilege of communion. They simply refuse to commune with them for the obvious reason that communion with them is impossible. There is not perfect union and harmony. There cannot be while one keeps the law and the other pursues in breaking it. "For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion has light with darkness?" (4) No one decides as to another's fitness or unfitness; the individual does that for himself. If he professes to have faith in Christ and to love God's law, no one can have any right or wish to exclude him. He may be at heart a law-breaker, although correct in his profession; but of this no one can judge. God alone can read the heart. If the individual presumes to act the part of a hypocrite, the responsibility is his own. And (5) As to being deprived of the privilege of the Lord's Supper, we would reply, that it is very far from being a privilege to one who is unworthy. Paul tells us in 1 Cor. 11:15 that he who does not discern the Lord's body is an unworthy partaker. The phrase, "not discerning the Lord's body," means that the individual does not realize the nature and object of the ordinance. This would be the case if the person did not realize that Christ's blood was shed "for the remission of sins that are passed," and that when we accept it in our case we virtually pledge ourselves to abstain from sin in the future; "to walk even as he walked." In short, if a person presumes upon the mercy of God, and thinks that the sacrifice of Christ renders any effort on his part unnecessary, he would certainly be unworthy. And Paul says that he who eats and drinks unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself.

The ordinances of the Gospel our duties to be performed, and not merely privileges to be enjoyed. But they are not duties that are enjoined upon all, irrespective of their condition. There are two kinds of duty—primary and secondary; and it is the non-performance of the first that makes necessary the performance of the second. It is every person's duty to keep the law of God.

There is no individual who is free from this obligation. Had man never sinned, keeping the law of God would have been his whole duty. But all men have sinned, and now God commands all men everywhere to repent. Christ died that we might find forgiveness of our sins by repentance and faith in him, and we are called upon to show our faith by performing certain duties. But we are not called upon to do these duties without first having repented. Christ's teaching was, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." Paul preached, "Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." This is the true order. And the repentance must be complete. We must keep the whole law. Keeping eight-tenths or nine-tenths of the law is not enough.

As we have before remarked, then, there is no exclusive ess about the matter. Certain ones who do not render obedience to all the law of God, will say, Come, let us partake of communion together. We would be glad to do so, but how can there be communion when there is disagreement? When they say, Let us commune together, it is equivalent to saying, Let us show our union or agreement; let there be perfect harmony between us, and yet they refuse to agree. It is sometimes said: We will waive this point; we will not let our opinions interfere; we will agree to disagree. But an agreement to disagree is disagreement still, and brings no union. Beside it is not our opinion that separates us, but the commandment of God.

But what if the person asking to commune does not understand all the law, but is walking up to all the light that he has? Then give him the further instruction that he needs. If he has *been* conscientiously walking in all the light that he had, he will thank God for further light, and will at once accept it. But what if he cannot see as you do, and is still honestly trying to do right? Then pray that his eyes be opened. If he is really honest, God will not permit him to wander in darkness. But whether honest or dishonest, whether walking in the light or self-deceived, there can be no true communion where there is material disagreement. The Saviour prayed thus for his disciples: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." John 17:11. And in this prayer He included his whole church, for He said: "Neither pray I for these alone but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as now, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." Verses 20, 21. Christ, then, did not contemplate many churches, nor one church with the individual branches "each serving God in his own way," but an individual church, between the members of which the union should be as close as it was between him and the Father.

And this union and harmony was not intended to be a union which should be brought about by an agreement to ignore certain doctrines of the word of God, for that would be union only in name. The prayer of the Lord Jesus was: "Sanctify them through the thy truth; thy word is truth." Christian union, therefore, can only exist where all believe and speak the same thing. The apostles continually urged this state of things upon those to whom they wrote. Rom. 12:16; 15:5; 1 Cor. 1:10; 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 2:2; 3:16; 1 Peter 3:8; etc. To say that it is impossible for all to see alike, is to impeach the wisdom of Christ and his inspired apostles. The exhortation of Paul in 1 Cor. 1:10 is peculiarly noteworthy: "Now I beseech you,

brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no division among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same judgment." Nothing could indicate more perfect unity than this. All must have one mind and one judgment. And this state of things existed in the early church, as we learn from Acts 4:32. "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul." What has been done can be done; and this condition must necessarily exist among the true followers of Christ.

There is another lesson that we may learn from the example of Christ on this occasion; one that all the followers of Christ should ever keep in mind, and which if acted upon, would take the edge off from any such epithet as "exclusive" or "bigoted." It is this: Christ could not suffer Judas to commune with his loving followers, and yet he washes his feet. What an amazing instance of humility! The King of glory condescends to wash the feet of his betrayer, a vile wretch with whom he could have nothing in common. No word of harshness or reproach for his perfidy, but a manifestation of tenderness, as though he were his best friend. And after giving Judas this proof of his gentleness and humility, he gives him to understand all his villainy is known, and delicately requests him to do his work at once, that his presence may not mar the scene of harmony and love that should follow. E. J. W.

**December 6, 1883**

**"Importance of Bible Study" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 46.**

E. J. Waggoner

No one will question the statement that those who presume to teach the Scripture should have a good knowledge of them. "For the priest lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth." This fact is so well established that dishonest men often take advantage to lead people astray; professing to be Bible teachers, they gain the confidence of those not familiar with the Bible, and palm off upon them the theories of man's devising, in the place of sacred truth. There are, however, but few, even of those who profess to love the Bible and to be guided by its teachings, who recognize the necessity of a thorough study of the Bible for themselves. It is for this reason that they are so easily deceived by ignorant and unscrupulous men.

If there were nothing in the Bible itself on this point, our own reason ought to teach us that if the Bible is to be our rule of life, we ought to know for selves. If it is a guide-book to tell us whereabouts we are in the journey toward the celestial city, and to warn us of the dangers and difficulties of the way, certainly everyone who is making the journey needs to be thoroughly acquainted with its contents. It was for this purpose that the Bible was written; the inspired penmen did not write for the benefit of a few, but for all. The way in which it was designed that the Bible should be studied, is thus given by Moses:-

"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou

liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes." Deut. 6:6-8.

The last part was not to be taken literally, as the Jews afterward supposed: it is a figure to give expression to the note that the sacred truths were to be studied until they would be constantly in the mind, before the eyes, and influence both the thoughts of the head and the actions of the hand. David had the correct the idea of this injunction, for he said: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Ps. 119:11. There two points to be noted in this text: 1. "Thy word have by *hid* in mine heart." How did he do this? The following verses tell: "I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways." Verse 15. Also verses 23, 48, 78. "Mine eyes prevent the night-watches, that I might meditate in thy word." Verse 148. It was by constant study that David was unable to hide the word in his heart. Any one who reads these verses thoughtfully, will be convinced that David was not content with having a copy of the law in his possession, but that he studied it until he had, as we say, "learned by heart." How else could he meditate upon it in the night? 2. "That I might not sin against thee." This is why he studied the word so carefully. A blessing is pronounced on the man who meditates day and night in the law of the Lord (Ps. 1:1, 2); and this blessing consists primarily in the fact that by so doing he is kept from sin. "The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment. The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide." Ps. 37:30, 31.

There is no other way than this brought to view in the Bible, whereby we may be kept from sin. We are to be sanctified through the truth, and it is by obeying it that our lives are purified. Now since none can enter heaven except those who are free from sin, it follows that it is as necessary for lay members to have the word of God in their hearts (not on their tables, or simply in their hands), as it is for preachers of the gospel. Of course the latter will be, from constant exercise, more ready in handling the word than others, but this should be the only difference. We, as a general thing, have not realized the necessity of close, personal study of the Bible. It is our standard; we draw our faith, pure and simple, from its pages; it is that which is to be our "shield and buckler," *i.e.*, our defense, in the time of trouble. How important, then, that we make it our constant study.

The Bible is able not only to make us "wise unto salvation," but it furnishes the best possible discipline for the mental faculties. The psalmist says: "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding and to the simple." Ps. 119:130. When Moses was giving his final charge to the children of Israel, he

said, "Behold, I have taught you statutes, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that he should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them; for *this is your wisdom* and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all the statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'" Deut. 4:5, 6. The book of the law was the only book that the Israelites had, yet there were no more shrewd and acute people among the ancients. Even to-day, the Jews, although they have said they have sadly wandered from the ancient landmarks, are the leaders in literature and the arts; and we think that we are safe in saying that their aptness is due to the fact

that their ancestors were men who made the law of God there constant study. E. J. W.

**"Bible Study at Healdsburg College" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 46.**

E. J. Waggoner

The managers of this institution, recognizing the facts briefly mentioned above, determined that this should be a place where education of the true kind might be obtained. To this end there are several classes in the Bible, adapted to the capacity of the various students who attend. At a certain hour in the day, nearly the entire school is engaged in these Bible-classes. Those students who are not of our faith are not required to pursue the study unless they wish to, but most of them do so from choice. There are certain classes engaged in studying Old Testament history, in which those of any denomination can join without scruple.

Soon after the camp-meeting this fall, an advanced class was started. This class is engaged in purely denominational work. The design is to fit men and women for active duty in the field, especially in the work of holding Bible-readings. At present it consists of thirty-seven members, whose ages range from sixteen to sixty years. The average membership thus far is thirty-four. Of this number, four-fifths will doubtless engage in active missionary work during the coming year. Several of them have already done a good service.

In this class the different points of our faith are taken up in a systematic manner, from a Bible stand-point, "What does the Bible say?" is the one question constantly before the class. Each student is expected to turn to every passage in which reference is made, and follow the reader. This tends to produce readiness in finding Scripture texts. Questions are asked freely by both teacher and students, until everything is made clear to the minds of all. When a subject has been canvassed in this way, each member of the class is required to give a series of questions such as he would use in presenting the matter to one not of the faith. Quite often students have the privilege of showing the connection between certain texts before the class, or else of presenting it in writing. We hold that when a person knows a thing he can tell it: consequently the ability to state the different points clearly is made the test of knowledge.

This class, we said, is designed to fit men and women for work in the field; but we believe that it should not be limited to those who expect to leave their homes. As already shown, it is the duty of every one to know the Bible for himself, that he may be protected against the deceptions of Satan. There should be scores engaged in such study where there is one now. Do you say that the process just described is a slow one, and takes too much time? There is no royal road to a knowledge of the Bible any more than to a knowledge of geometry. It is true that the Lord could give us at once a perfect knowledge of the Bible if he wished, but we do not read that he ever did so. He has given us minds, and expects us to use them. He is not in so great need of workmen, that he will employ those who do not use all the means placed in their power. Those who have attained in the



eminence as Bible students, and have been leaders in the cause, have become so by hard, unremitting labor. The way is open for others to follow their example.

But we do not expect any to accomplish this work without the help of the Lord. There is nothing which a person can undertake with so much assurance of divine aid as a study of God's word. Great results may be accomplished in a short time, if we earnestly and prayerfully apply ourselves to the task. Do not say that you cannot afford the time; our time is given us for no other purpose than to work in the service of God, and to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Lord. But little of it yet remains, and Satan is mustering his force for a desperate final conflict. It is not enough that we have a sword; we must have it drawn from the scabbard, and sharpened for use. Let us awake, and put on the whole armor of God. E. J. W.

**December 13, 1883**

**"The Sabbath-School. 1 Cor. 16; 2 Cor. 1-4" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 47.**

E. J. Waggoner

Lesson for Pacific Coast.-December 22.

1 COR. 16; 2 COR. 1-4.

NOTES ON THE LESSON.

"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." 1 Cor. 16:1, 2. Paul does not here command the church at Corinth to make a collection, but simply gives them directions as to the manner of making it; the text shows that they had previously understood the necessity for such a collection. When Paul was at the council led at Jerusalem, and received "the right hand of fellowship" from the apostles and elders there, that he should go on to the heathen, it was desired of him that he should remember the poor (Gal. 2:9, 10); it was in accordance with this wish that he had previously asked the Corinthian brethren to give of their means.

This text is considered by first-day writers as the end of controversy on the Sunday question. Dr. Barnes remarks: "There is here clear proof that the first day of the week was observed by the church at Corinth as holy time." It is not claimed by him or anyone else, so far as we know, that there is here anything like a commandment for Sunday observance, but simply that Paul recognizes the observance of Sunday as something already established. Now we wish to call attention to two things: 1. If the Sunday-Sabbath was then a fixed institution in the church, there must have been a time when it originated,-a time when the commandment was given. This cannot be denied, for it is well known, and admitted by all men of judgment and candor among first-day people themselves, that there was a long period when the first day of the week was considered only a working day, and the seventh was the only recognized day of rest. See Ex.

20:8-11, and others. We repeat, then, that if this order of things were changed, a commandment to that effect must have been given. But since no one can find such a commandment, or any hint of such a thing, we deny that any such change was made. 2. From Dr. Barnes himself we will show that his "clear proof" that Sunday was observed by the Corinthians as a day of rest is an assumption unwarranted by the facts in the case. After quoting the Greek of the phrase, "lay by him in store," he says: "Let him lay up at home, treasuring up as he has been prospered. The Greek phrase, 'by himself,' means, probably, the same as 'at home.' [All the best authorities agree on this; they make no question but that the apostle's words literally mean that the offering should be laid by and treasured up at home.] Let him set it apart, let him designate a certain portion; let him do this *by himself*, when he is at home, when he can calmly look at the evidence of his prosperity." Now the moment it is admitted (and it cannot be denied) that the laying by was a personal affair with each individual at home, and not at church, then all that is assumed for first-day observance vanishes into nothingness. Moreover, to "calmly look at the evidence of his prosperity" is not generally considered to be the proper manner in which to keep the Sabbath. The Bible teaches a different way. See Isa. 58:13. The passage under consideration is the last place in the Bible where the first day is mentioned; there are seven other places where it is found, and all of them give just as much support to the Sunday cause as this one does, and no more.

"I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first-fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,) that ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth." 1 Cor. 16:15, 16. Paul here shows that those who are *addicted* to the ministry of the saints are worthy of the highest regard; others are to submit themselves to such. There is consistency in this, for Paul says that those who sow bountifully shall reap also bountifully; not simply in temporal things, but in spiritual. The *amount* given does not matter; that will depend on circumstances; but those who devote themselves to the service of the Lord, by caring for his saints, are by him especially honored even here.

The reader must not fail to compare the two verses just quoted, with the 16th verse of the 1st chapter. Paul says that he baptized the household of Stephanas, and our Pedobaptist friends find in that statement proof that Paul baptized infants; "for it is not probable," say they, "that there were no children in the family; and if there were, then of course they must have been baptized, since they formed a part of the household." This is to many sufficient evidence in favor of so-called infant baptism. But let us apply the same reasoning in 1 Cor. 16:15, 16. Here the word "house," is used instead of "household," but no one will dispute that in both instances family is meant. Paul says in this place that the house of Stephanas "have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." Consistency requires of those who find infant baptism in 1 Cor. 1:16 should on this text reason thus: "Of course there were infants in his family, and consequently we have here undoubted proof that in the early church children were so precocious that from their earliest infancy they worked diligently for the support of the saints." Remember that Paul is speaking of the same family in both instances. But

concerning the latter text Pedobaptists would say, with all reason, that if those of the family would come to years of discretion were given to hospitality, and to the service of the church, it is all that is required by the text; and thus they demolish their previous argument for infant baptism; for in order to reap any benefit from the statement that a household was baptized, they must prove that in *every* instance where something is dedicated of a *household*, the same action is predicated of all the infants of that household, should there be any. This they would not attempt to do. When we remember that the strongest proof for infant baptism is found in the baptism of the households of Lydia and the jailer, we see that nearly the whole theory is evaporated by the consideration of this one text.

"For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." 2 Cor. 1:5. There is in this verse a wonderful amount of comfort to the Christian, if it only be appreciated. It is simply a fulfillment of the promise, "As by day, so shall thy strength be." Dr. Clarke well says that from this "we learn that he who is upheld and a slight trial, need not fear a great one; for if he be faithful, his consolation shall abound as his sufferings abound. Is it not as easy for a man to lift one hundred pounds weight as it is for an infant to lift a few ounces? The proportion of strength destroys the comparative difficulty." The angel said to Daniel, "The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits." Dan. 11:32. The Lord himself said to the Jews that if they would obey him, five of them should chase an hundred, and an hundred of them should put ten thousand to flight. Lev. 26:8. Would there be anything that the people of God could not do or endure, if they only had faith in God? With each new trial, fresh consolation would come, and each new duty entered upon would bring strength for its own accomplishment. What reason is there, then, in discouraged? Suppose the way is rough; "as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." If a man be in Christ, he can do all things. Phil. 4:13. Christ himself said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." John 16:33. Why should the fact that Christ has overcome the world, impart courage to us? Because it is an assurance that we can do the same, for all his strength is freely given to us, if we will but accept it. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." 1 John 5:4. Is it, then, proper to say of any one man that he is a "weak Christian"? To be a Christian is to be in Christ, and those that are in this condition are partakers of his power, which is infinite. Just to the extent then that a man is weak in the Christian life, is he out of Christ, and, consequently not a Christian. This does not mean, however, that a man must be strong in himself; "our sufficiency is of God."

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." 2 Cor. 4:7. This shows that there is a purpose in our being weak. We are compared to frail earthen vessels, that might be easily broken. If such vessels were subjected to rough usage, and were still preserved intact, it would indicate that some special care had been exercised, for the destruction of the vessels would be the natural result. So if we are preserved from the snares of the enemy, it will indicate that some power far superior to ourselves is entitled to the credit. But Christ cannot work in us, if we feel so strong as to make the attempt to do the work ourselves. And since, having no

strength, we often act as though we have it, it is certain that if we *had any* strength of our own, we would not give the Lord a chance to work at all, and we would be lost. We therefore repeat that it is a wise providence that has made us as weak as we are, in order that the power of Christ may rest upon us. Instead of becoming discouraged over our natural weakness, we ought rather, with Paul, to take pleasure in the fact, and "glory in the infirmities; for when I am weak, then am I strong." E. J. W.

### **"The Coming Conflict" *The Signs of the Times* 9, 47.**

E. J. Waggoner

For more than thirty years Seventh-day Adventists have held that the people of the United States would make a law for the enforcement of Sunday observance upon all classes of persons, regardless of their nationality or religious belief. Although for many years there was no inclination of such a movement, and the idea that such a thing could ever be done in this country was ridiculed, this denomination did not cease nor change their preaching, knowing that time would prove its truth. Their confidence did not arise from any fanaticism, but was based on a fair interpretation of the sure word of prophecy.

It was this belief that led them to be so zealous in presenting the claims of God's law, especially of the fourth commandment. Knowing that the Bible recognizes no Sabbath but the seventh day, and that the only authority for Sunday observance is that of the Catholic Church, which regards the change it has made in God's law as the badge of its power, they justly concluded that the enforcement of Sunday observance would be causing all to receive the "mark of the beast." But those who receive this are threatened with a most terrible punishment, and it is plainly declared that those who are prepared for the Lord's coming will be the ones who have kept "the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus," and "have the father's name in their foreheads." With this knowledge, they could do no other wise than to earnestly proclaim the truth, not with any hope of hindering or preventing that which they saw must take place, but in order that all who wished to obey God rather than men, might know what his will is.

Time has made the study of the above-mentioned prophecy almost unnecessary, except for the purpose of showing the exact fulfillment of God's word. The thing which was predicted is now upon us. There is a thoroughly organized party now in existence, whose sole object is to "maintain *existing Christian features* in the American Government, and to secure such an amendment to the Constitution of the United States as will indicate that this is a Christian nation, and to place all the Christian laws, institutions, and usages of our Government on an undeniable legal basis and the fundamental law of the land." This may not seem so bad to the casual reader, but when he learns that some of the "existing Christian features" are in direct opposition to the Bible, he cannot fail, if he be indeed a Christian, to regard it as a serious matter. It has been claimed, and is still by some, that it is not the design of this party to do violence to anybody's religious convictions, but we have seen too much to be deceived. In California and some parts of the East, the spirit of the movement

has been clearly manifested. The zeal of very many arises, not so much from love to the Sunday, which is the only "Christian usage" that is made much of in this contest, as from hatred to the Sabbath of the Lord.

We do not believe that even Seventh-day Adventists, as a general thing, realize the gigantic proportions to which this movement has grown, or the long and rapid strides with which it is now going forward. In the East, conventions are constantly being held; many men spend their entire time in advocating the measure. One Synod of the Covenanter Church, in Pennsylvania, pledged \$10,000 for the support of the "National Reform Party" during the coming year. Their missionary efforts are very similar to those of our people; and when we remember what an amount of men and means the party has at its disposal, and that its views are by no means so unpopular as those we advocate, we can imagine the progress which is being made. One convention of two or three days' continuance, is usually all that is needed to settle the movement in a place. The local clergymen then take it up, and take it before their people. They also take it advantage of the temperance sentiment of the people, making them believe that this movement is the only hope for prohibition. The publishers of the *Christian Statesman* the organ of the party, are urging their subscribers to send the names of those who are not receiving the paper, and then to follow up the sample copies which will be sent, by letters or visits, for urging the parties to subscribe.

In view of these things the General Conference, at its recent session, passed the following resolution:-

WHEREAS. We, as students of prophecy, have for years anticipated the present Sunday movement, and understand that there is a conflict before us, the magnitude of which can scarcely be appreciated; and,

WHEREAS, Thousands of earnest Christians are laboring sincerely for the enforcement of the Sunday Law, who would not do so if the claims of the true Sabbath were placed before them: therefore,

*Resolved*, That we remind our people of their duty to place the great light which God has given them upon the Sabbath question before others; and we urge that this be done before the leaders of this Sunday movement have opportunity to represent the issues of this question in a false light."

If this resolution is complied with, we have not much time to spare. Next year will be a great year in politics, being the time of the national campaign, and the "Reform Party" will not be silent. Our people will be brought face to face with this question, and how are they prepared for it? There are many who might do a great deal of good in their own neighborhood, by holding Bible-readings, if they only were qualified; but they do not feel that they are able to bring out the truth as it should be. Many believe the truth, but yet could not give a satisfactory reason for their belief. Such cannot hope to be able to benefit others, or even to hold their present positions very long against the sophisms of the opposition. None should rest satisfied until they are intelligently sound in the faith. We quote from an article by Mrs. E. G. White, in the last *Review*: "Our people, who are expecting such great and important events soon to transpire, should know the reasons of their faith, that they may be able to give an answer to every man that shall ask them a reason for the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear. In his word

God has revealed truth that will benefit his church. As a people, we should be earnest students of prophecy; we should not rest until we become intelligent in regard to the subject of the sanctuary, which is brought out in the visions of Daniel and John."

These prophecies, and the sanctuary question, have been the subject of special study in the Bible-class at Healdsburg College. Next term, beginning January 2, it is the design to connect with these the subject of the Sabbath, in all its bearings,-considering the Bible evidence for the seventh-day Sabbath, the claims and objections of the opposition, the Sabbath in prophecy, the change, and the restoration,-in short, all that pertains to this vital question. This will be done with special reference to the struggle into which, as upholders of Bible truth, we may expect to be forced very soon. The investigation will be very thorough, and all will have an opportunity to be sure that they understand what they believe. Shall we not anticipate the coming conflict, and fortify ourselves and our position? Those who hold these truths are but a little company, and there is a place in the work for every one. Even should our service be to "only stand and wait," let us wait as minute-men, ready for instant action wherever the Master may call us. And do not delay in your preparation, for the demand for laborers is urgent, and "the King's business requires haste." Now is the time. E. J. W.