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"Studies in Romans. Jew and Gentile" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 1.

E. J. Waggoner

In these verses we have had some sharp questions to those who are "called Jews," that is, who profess to be followers of the Lord. Mere form and profession do not constitute one a proper teacher of the truth of God. He who does not exhibit in his life the power of that which he professes, is only a detriment to the cause. In the verses now before us we have a brief but explicit statement concerning

Circumcision and Uncircumcision. Rom. 2:25-29

"For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Therefore, if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfill the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

Questioning the Text

What does the apostle say of circumcision?

"Circumcision verily profiteth."

When does circumcision profit?

"If thou keep the law."

What does circumcision sometimes become?

"Thy circumcision is made uncircumcision."

Under what circumstances does this take place?

"If thou be a breaker of the law."

What if the circumcised one keeps the righteousness of the law?

"Shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?"

What is the relative standing of the uncircumcised law keeper and the circumcised law breaker?

"Shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfill the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?"

Who is not a real Jew?

"He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly."

What is not circumcision?

"Neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh."

Who is the true Jew?

"He is a Jew, which is one inwardly."

Where is real circumcision?

"Circumcision is that of the heart."

Of what does it consist?

"In the spirit, and not in the letter."

Where is the glory and praise of real circumcision?

"Whose praise is not of men, but of God."

Definition of Terms .-The two terms "circumcision" and "uncircumcision" are here used not only to indicate the rite and the absence of it, but also to designate two classes of people. "The uncircumcision" evidently refers to those who were called gentiles, those who worshiped other gods. This use of the terms is very plain in the following passage: "When they saw that the Gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the Gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter (for he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles); and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." Gal. 2:7-9. Here we find that the terms "uncircumcision," "gentiles," and "heathen," all refer to the same people.

Just what was the profit of circumcision, we are not told in this chapter. The statement of the fact was enough for this place, for the only point in the mind of the writer was to show what circumcision is, and who are the really circumcised. A great deal depends upon these few verses. They should be studied carefully, because upon them depends the proper understanding of a large portion of the prophecies of the Old Testament. If these verses had received the consideration that they ought to have by professed Bible students, there would never have been any "Anglo-Israel" theory, and the unprofitable and misleading suppositions about the return of the Jews to Jerusalem before the coming of the Lord would never have been made.

3

What Is Circumcision? -This question is answered in plain language in Romans 4:11, where the apostle, speaking of Abraham, the first one who was circumcised, says: "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised." To the question, "What is circumcision?" the answer must therefore be, The sign of circumcision is a seal of righteousness.

Circumcision Made Uncircumcision .-This being the case, it is evident that where there was no righteousness, the sign of circumcision was worthless. So the apostle says, "If thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision." As in the previous verses we learned that the form without the fact amounts to nothing, so here we are told that the sign without the substance is of no account. It is very easy for a poor man to put out a sign advertising boots

and shoes; but to fill the shop with goods requires capital. If he has the sign, but has no boots and shoes, he is worse off than if he had no sign.

The Mistake of the Jews .-The Jews made a mistake of supposing that the sign was sufficient. They finally came to hold the idea that the sign would bring the reality, just as many professed Christians in these days suppose that the performance of certain rites will make them members of the body of Christ. But circumcision of the flesh alone could represent no righteousness, but sin. See Gal. 5:19-21. As a matter of fact, many of those whom they despised as "uncircumcised" were thus in reality "circumcised," while they themselves were not.

Circumcision of the Heart .-Real circumcision is a matter of the heart, that is, of the inner life, and not at all of the flesh. The apostle plainly declares that what is outward in the flesh is not circumcision, that is, which consists only in outward form; but "circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter." This is stated as a general truth. This was not a new departure in the days of Paul, but was the case from the beginning. In Deuteronomy 30:6 we read the words of Moses to the children of Israel: "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." All true Jews recognized that true circumcision was only of the heart, for Stephen addressed those who rejected the truth as "stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears." Acts 7:51.

Righteousness in the Heart .-The psalmist says, "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts." Ps. 2:6. Mere outward righteousness is nothing. See Matthew 5:20; 23:27, 28. It is with the heart that man believeth unto righteousness. Rom. 10:10. When Moses, at the command of the Lord, rehearsed the law to Israel, he said: "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 command thee this day, shall be in thine heart." Deut. 6:5, 6. There can be no righteousness that is not the real life. Therefore, since circumcision is but a sign of righteousness, it is evident that there can be no real circumcision except circumcision of the heart.

Circumcised by the Spirit .-"For we know that the law is spiritual." Rom. 7:14. That is, it is the nature of the Holy Spirit, for the word of God is the sword of the Spirit of God that can put the law of God into the heart of man. Therefore true circumcision is the work of the Holy Spirit. Stephen called the wicked Jews uncircumcised, because, said he, "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost." Acts 7:51. It seems evident, therefore, that, although the word "spirit" in Rom. 2:29 is not spelled with a capital, it refers to the Holy Spirit and not merely to the spirit of man. Remember that circumcision was given as the seal of righteousness by faith, and that the inheritance promised to Abraham and his seed was through the righteousness of the law (Rom. 4:11, 13), we shall see that circumcision was the pledge of the inheritance. The apostle also says that we obtain the inheritance in Christ "in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." Eph. 1:10-13. The possession promised to Abraham and to his seed was assured only through the Spirit of

righteousness; therefore, from the very beginning there was no real circumcision that was not of the Spirit.

Circumcision through Christ .-"Ye are complete in [Christ], which is the head of all principality and power; in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." Col. 2:8-11. Circumcision must have meant as much when first given as it ever did. Therefore from the very beginning it meant righteousness through Christ alone. This is sufficiently shown in the fact that circumcision was given to Abraham as the seal of the righteousness which he had by faith, and that "he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness." Gen. 15:6.

Who Are the Circumcision? -This question is answered in Philippians 3:3: "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." And this is but saying in other words what we have in our text, "Circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Nobody therefore was ever really circumcised who did not believe and rejoice in Christ Jesus. That is the reason

4

why Stephen called the unbelieving Jews "uncircumcised."

Meaning of Circumcision .-We have not space to go into this question in detail, but the above texts put us on the track. A careful study of the chapters in Genesis which speak of God's covenant with Abraham will also help to clear up the matter. We learn in Genesis 15 that God made a covenant with Abraham on the basis of his faith. The sixteenth chapter tells how Abraham listened to the voice of his wife instead of the voice of the Lord, and sought to work out the promise of God through the flesh and made a failure. His son was to be born of the Spirit, and not after the flesh. See Gal. 4:22, 23, 28, 29. Then the seventeenth chapter shows the revival of Abraham's faith, and the renewal of the covenant, with circumcision as the seal. A portion of flesh was cut off to indicate that he was to have no confidence in the flesh, but was to expect righteousness and the inheritance only through the Spirit of God. The descendants of Abraham would thus have a continual reminder of his mistake and would be admonished to trust the Lord and not themselves. But they perverted this sign. They regarded it as indicating that they were better than other people, instead of looking upon it as an evidence that "the flesh profiteth nothing." But the fact that the Jews perverted and misunderstood the sign does not destroy its original meaning.

Who Are Jews? -We have seen in a quotation from the second chapter of Galatians that the term "uncircumcised" refers to those who do not know the Lord, or who are "without God in the world." See Eph. 2:11, 12. The Jews are "the circumcision." But only those who rejoice in Christ Jesus are the circumcision, who have no confidence in the flesh. Therefore the real Jews are none other than Christians. "He is a Jew, which is one inwardly." There never was a real Jew in the sight of God who was not a believer in Christ. And every true believer in Christ is a Jew in the Bible sense of the term. Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, rejoiced in Christ. See John 8:56.

A Mark of Separation .-Many have entertained the notion that circumcision was given as a distinguishing mark between the Jews and the Gentiles. The fallacy of this idea is sufficiently shown by a study of the giving of circumcision, and by the statement of the apostle Paul of what it really signified. Others suppose that it was given to keep the Jews separate, so that the genealogy of Christ could be ascertained. This also is simply an unfounded guess. Christ was to come from the tribe of Judah, but as all the tribes were circumcised, it is evident that circumcision could not by any means preserve his genealogy. Moreover, circumcision in the flesh never did make any separation between the Jews and the Gentiles. It did not keep Israel from idolatry, and it did not keep them from joining the heathen in their idolatrous practices. Whenever the Jews forgot God, they mingled with the heathen, and there was no difference between them and the gentiles. Circumcision did not separate them.

Still further, God did not wish the Jews to be separated from the Gentiles in the sense that they were to have no dealings with them. The object of his calling out the Jews from Egypt was that they should carry the Gospel to the heathen. He did wish them to be separate in character, but outward circumcision could never effect this. Moses said to the Lord, "Wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth." Ex. 33:16. The presence of the Lord in the heart of men will separate them from all others, although they live in the same house and eat at the same table. But if Christ is not in the heart of a man, he is not separated from the world, though he may have been circumcised and may live a hermit.

Literal and Spiritual Seed .-Much of the confusion that has existed in regard to Israel has arisen through a misunderstanding of these terms. People suppose that to say that only those who are spiritual are really Jews is to deny the literalness of the seed and of the promise. But "spiritual" is not opposed to "literal." That which is spiritual is literal, and real. Christ is spiritual, but he is the real, literal Seed. God is spiritual, and is only Spirit, yet he is not a figurative Being, but a real, literal God. So the inheritance of which we are heirs in Christ, is a spiritual inheritance, yet it is real. To say that only those who are spiritual constitute the true Israel is not to modify or turn aside the Scriptures, or to weaken in any way the directness and force of the promise, because the promise of God is only to those who have faith in Christ. "For the promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." Rom. 4:13. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal. 3:29. E. J. W.

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"Examining Ourselves" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 2.

E. J. Waggoner

We are to examine ourselves, whether we be in the faith. It is not to find out what is in the heart, because no man on earth can find out what is in the heart.

The man who starts out to do that is going to be terribly deceived; for "the heart is deceitful above all things," and it will deceive him every time. But the Lord says, "I the Lord search the heart." He makes known to every man the fruit of his ways, and we want to have confidence enough in him to let him do the searching of the heart.

When we find out that we are in the faith, we shall not be afraid to truth the Lord to search the heart and make known the sin. If we be in the faith, we know that Christ died for sinners, in order that they might be separated from sin. Therefore he is more interested in having us know the sins, so as to give them up to him, than we are to know them. It is not an unheard of thing, by any means, to find professed Christians who do not know that the Lord loves them when in sin, and so they are always afraid of the Lord, from a sense of their sinfulness. Are you in the faith? If so, you will accept the knowledge of sin as the result of the revelation of the righteousness which will take away that sin, and rejoice in the Lord. E. J. W.

"Studies in Romans. The Sum of the Matter" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 2.

E. J. Waggoner

We have now finished the study of the first two chapters of the book of Romans, and it is time to take a brief review. It is not really correct to say that we have finished the study of these two chapters, because we can never finish the study of any portion of the Bible. After we have put the most profound study upon any portion of the Scripture, the most that we have done is only a beginning. If Newton, after a long life of study of natural science, could say that he seemed to be as a child playing on the seashore with the vast ocean before him unexplored, with much more aptness can the same be said by the greatest student of the Bible.

Let no one therefore think that we have by any means exhausted this portion of the book. When the reader has the text well in mind, so that he can quite distinctly recall any passage at will, and can locate it with reference to the connection, he has just got where he can begin to study with real profit. Therefore let the reader who is anxious to acquire an understanding of the Scriptures for himself, dwell upon the words as though he were digging in a sure place for treasure. An inexhaustible treasure awaits his search.

We found that the first portion of the first chapter, containing the salutation, some personal remarks, and the statement of the theme, really contains an epitome of the whole Gospel.

Leaving out the introduction, we might say that the first chapter is devoted to a statement of the origin of heathenism, and the condition of the heathen world.

The second chapter is really summed up in the first verse, "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things." The remaining verses are but an amplification of this statement.

Thus, we find that there is no exception to the fact that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Hearing and knowing the truth is not a substitute for practicing it. God is no respecter of persons, but will punish sin wherever it is found.

Accepted with God .-In the house of Cornelius the apostle Peter made a statement: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." Acts 10:34, 35. There are men in heathen lands who may never have heard the name of God, or seen a line of his written word, who will be saved. God is revealed in the works of creation, and they who accept what they see of him there are accepted with him as surely as they who have learned much more of him.

Objections Answered

The first part of the third chapter of Romans consists of questions and answers. The thoughtful reader of the epistles of Paul must have noticed the frequent occurrence of questions in the midst of an argument. Every possible objection is anticipated. The apostle asks the question that an objector might ask, and then answers it, making his argument more emphatic than before. So in the verses next following it is very evident that the truths set forth in the second chapter would not be very acceptable to a Pharisee, and he would combat them with all his might. That the questions raised by the apostle are not difficulties that lie in his own mind; this is clear from the parenthetical clause in verse 5, "I speak as a man." With this in mind, we may read Rom. 3:1-18:-

"What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way; chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid; yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged. But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man.) God forbid; for then how shall God judge the world? For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? And not rather (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say), Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just. What then? are we better than they? No, in nowise; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes."

As this text consists almost wholly of questions and sharp, clear answers, we shall not, as heretofore, specially question the text. Read it carefully.

"The Oracles of God." -An oracle is something

19

spoken. That which was emphatically spoken by the mouth of the Lord is the Ten Commandments. See Deut. 5:22. Stephen, speaking of Moses receiving the law, said, "This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; who received the lively oracles to give unto us." Acts 7:38. The Ten Commandments are primarily the oracles of God, because they were uttered by his own voice in the hearing of the people. But the Holy Scriptures as a whole are the oracles of God, since they are the word of God, spoken "in divers manners" (Heb. 1:1), and because they are but an expansion of the Ten Commandments. Christians are to shape their lives solely by the Bible. This is seen from the words of the apostle Peter: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." 1 Peter 4:11.

The Law an Advantage .-There are many who think that the law of God is a burden, and they imagine that the advantage of Christians is that they have nothing to do with it. But on the contrary, John says, "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous." 1 John 5:3. And Paul says that the possession of the law was a great advantage to the Jew. So Moses said: "What nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" Deut. 4:8. All who truly love the Lord, count it a great blessing to have God's holy law made plain to them.

"Committed." -The advantage of the Jew was not simply in the fact that to them were made known the oracles of God, but that "unto them were *committed* the oracles of God." The Revised Version has it, "They were intrusted with the oracles of God." That is, the law was given to them to hold in trust for others, and not simply for their own benefit. They were to be the missionaries to the whole world. The advantage and the honor conferred upon the Jewish nation in intrusting them with the law of God to make it known to the world, can not be estimated.

Tell It to Others .-When Peter and John were arrested and threatened for preaching Christ, who is simply the living law in perfection, they said, "We can not but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Acts 4:20. They who appreciate the gift which God commits to them must tell it to others. Some think that it is useless to carry the gospel to the heathen when they hear that God justifies the heathen who walk according to the little light that shines to them just the same as he does the person who walks according to the light that shines from the written word. They think that the wicked heathen are in no worse case than the unfaithful professed Christians. None who appreciate the blessings of the Lord could think so. Light is a blessing. The more people know of the Lord, the more they can rejoice in him, and all who truly know the Lord must be desirous of helping to spread the "good tidings of great joy" to all the people for whom it is designed.

God's Faithfulness .-"What if some were without faith? Shall their want of faith make of none effect the faithfulness of God?" A very pertinent question. It is an appeal to the faithful of God. Will he break his promise, because of man's unbelief? Will he be unfaithful because man is unfaithful? Will our wavering cause God to waver? "That can not possibly be;" for this is the force of the expression which is incorrectly rendered, "God forbid." God will be true even though every man be a liar. "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he can not deny himself." 2 Tim. 2:13. "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds." Ps. 36:5.

Power and Faithfulness .-Some one might hastily affirm that this overthrows the previous statements, that only those who have faith are heirs of the promise; for "how can it be that only the faithful are Abraham's seed, and thus heirs, if God will fulfill his promise even though every man disbelieves?" Very easily, when we consider the Scriptures and the power of God. Listen to the words of John the Baptist to the wicked Jews who could be fitly characterized only as "vipers:" "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." Matt. 3:9. God will bestow the inheritance only on the faithful; but if every man should prove unfaithful, he who made man of the dust of the ground can of the stones raise other people, who will believe.

God Justified .-"That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged." God is now accused by Satan of injustice and indifference, and even of cruelty. Thousands have echoed the charge. But the judgment will declare the righteousness of God. His character, as well as that of man, is on trial. In the judgment every act, both of God and man, that has been done since creation will be seen by all in all its bearings. And when everything is seen in that perfect light, God will be acquitted of all wrongdoing, even by his enemies.

Commending God's Righteousness .-Verses 5 and 7 are but different forms of the same thought. God's righteousness stands out in bold relief in contrast with man's unrighteousness. So the caviler thinks that God ought not to condemn the unrighteousness which by contrast commends his righteousness. But that would be to destroy the righteousness of God, so that he could not judge the world. If God were what unbelieving men say he ought to be, he would forfeit even their respect, and they would condemn him more loudly than they do now.

"I Speak as a Man." -Was not Paul a man? Most certainly. Was he ever anything other than a man? Never. Then why the expression, "I speak as a man"? Because the writings of Paul, like those of the ancient prophets, were given by inspiration of God. The Holy Spirit spoke by him. We are not reading Paul's view of the gospel, but the Spirit's own statement of it. But in these questions the Spirit speaks as a man; that is, the Spirit quotes the unbelieving words of man in order to show the folly of that unbelief.

Unbelieving Questions .-There is a great difference in questions. Some are asked for the purpose of gaining instruction, and others are asked for the purpose of opposing the truth. So there must be a difference in answering them. Some questions deserve no more notice than would be given the same unbelief

if uttered as a positive statement. When Mary asked, "How shall this be?" (Luke 1:34) with a desire for further information, she was told how. But when Zacharias asked, "Whereby shall I know this?" (Luke 1:18), thus plainly showing his disbelief of the angel's words, he was punished.

Wickedness Exposed .-When the objector says, "If the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner?" the swift retort comes, in effect: "You might rather say, what you really mean is, Let us do evil that good may come." The real intent of these unbelieving questions is that what which is called evil is really good; people are really righteous, no matter what they may do, so that good will at last come out of evil. This is the substance of modern Spiritualism and of Universalism, which teach that all men will be saved.

Evil not Good .-There are many besides Spiritualists who virtually say, "Let us do evil that good may come." Who are they? All who claim that man is able of himself to do any good thing. The Lord declares that only God is good, and that good can come only from good. See Luke 18:19 and 6:43-45. From man only wickedness can come. Mark 7:21-23. Therefore he who thinks that of himself he alone can do good deeds, really says that good can come from evil. The same thing is said by the one who refuses to confess that he is a sinner. Such an one is placing himself above God, for even he can not make evil into good. God can make an evil man good, but only by putting his own goodness in place of the evil.

"All under Sin." -The objector is silenced by the exposure of his infidel sentiments; the damnation of those who hold such positions is just; and now the conclusion is emphatically stated, namely, that all men, both Jews and Gentiles, are alike under sin. Thus the way is fully prepared for the further conclusion that there is but one way of salvation for all men. The one who has been brought up within the sound of church bells and who hears the Scriptures read every day, has the same sinful nature and the same need of a Saviour, that the savage has. No one can justly despise another.

All Out of the Way .-When the apostle

20

wrote concerning both Jews and Gentiles, "They are all gone out of the way," he was but repeating what Isaiah had written hundreds of years before: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isa. 53:6.

"The Way of Peace." -"The way of peace have they not known" because they refused to know the God of peace. It has already been shown that God's law is his way; therefore, since he is the God of peace, his law is the way of peace. So he says, "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. "Great peace have they which love thy law; and nothing shall offend them," or, "they shall have no stumbling-block." Ps. 119:162. So he who prepares the way of the Lord, by giving knowledge of remission of sins, guides our feet into the way of peace (Luke 1:76-79), because he brings us into the righteousness of God's law.

E. J. W.

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"Blessed Are They that Mourn" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 3.

E. J. Waggoner

"Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." Matt. 5:4.

There are two questions that one naturally wishes to have answered when reading this text, namely, What mourners shall be comforted? and, When shall they be comforted?

Note the fact that the promise is unlimited. Christ said that he was sent "to comfort all that mourn." Isa. 61:2. God is no respecter of persons. He does not single out special cases to be the recipients of his grace. This promise is for every mourner.

The first and most natural thought suggested by the word "mourn" is of sorrow caused by affliction and bereavement. That the Lord comforts such mourners is shown by his whole earthly life, and is specially manifest in the case of the widow of Nain, and at the grave of Lazarus. He has comfort for every manner of grief.

But death is the result of sin. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." 1 Cor. 15:56. If it were not for sin, there would be no mourning. Therefore the Lord specially comforts those who mourn for their sins.

One thing, however, is necessary, and that is that the mourners should know this promise. It is self-evident that in order to be comforted one must know where comfort is to be obtained. The mourner must believe this promise of the Lord, and become acquainted with him through it. There is absolutely no limit to the promise, and no other qualification than that the mourner should believe and know the Lord. Whoever accepts the word of the Lord in good faith, shall be comforted, no matter for what he mourns.

When shall they be comforted? Let the Scriptures answer: "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." 2 Cor. 1:3-5.

Whoever is afflicted for any cause whatever, may know if he will that he is afflicted with Christ. "In all their affliction he was afflicted." Isa. 63:9. Even tho the affliction be directly because of sin, we may have the same assurance, for we are told, "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted," and, "For the transgression of my people was he stricken." Isa. 53:7, 8. The thought alone that Christ bears with us the burden of grief or temptation, is enough to make it light, because it draws our minds away from ourselves.

But Christ can not be divided. The one who has Christ has him for all that there is in him. Therefore if our faith grasps him in his sufferings-that is, if we remember that "he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows," so that we bear them only in him-then it is most certain that we shall have at the same time

all the comfort there is in him. As "the joy that was set before him" enabled him to endure the cross, and despise the shame, so the joy that there is in him enables us to rejoice in tribulation. E. J. W.

"Studies in Romans. A Wonderful Manifestation" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 3.

E. J. Waggoner

The portion of Romans thus far studied has shown us both Jews and Gentiles in the same sinful condition. No one has anything whereof to boast over another. Whoever, whether in the church or out, begins to judge and condemn another, no matter how bad that other one may be, thereby shows that he himself is guilty of the same things that he condemns in the other. Judgment belongs alone to God, and it shows a most daring spirit of usurpation for a man to presume to take the place of God. Those who have the law committed to them have a wonderful advantage over the heathen; nevertheless they must say: "Are we better than they? No, in no wise; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin." Rom. 3:9. And now we come to the beginning of

The Grand Conclusion. Rom. 3:19-22

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe."

What do we know?

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law."

To whom does it speak?

"To them who are under [within the sphere of] the law."

What is the object of its speaking?

"That every mouth may be stopped."

Under what circumstances only may every mouth be stopped?

"All the world may become guilty before God."

What then is the conclusion?

"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight."

Why not?

"For by the law is the knowledge of sin."

What is now manifested?

"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested."

How is righteousness manifested?

"Without the law."

Whose righteousness is it that is thus manifested?

"The righteousness of God."

What credentials has this righteousness?

"Being witnessed by the law and the prophets."

Where is it manifested?

"Unto all and upon all them that believe."

How is it manifested?

"By faith of Jesus Christ."

Within the Law .-This is not the place to consider the force of the term "under the law," since it does not really occur here. It should be "in the law," as in Rom. 2:12, for the Greek words are the same in both places. The words for "under the law" are entirely different. Why the translators have given us "under the law" in this place, and also in 1 Cor. 9:21, where the term is also "in the law," as noted in Young's Concordance, it is impossible to determine. There certainly is no reason for it. The rendering is purely arbitrary. What the verse before us really says is, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are in the law," or, "within the sphere or jurisdiction of the law." This is an obvious fact, and in view of what immediately follows, it is a very important fact to keep in mind.

"What the Law Saith." -The voice of the law is the voice of God. The law is the truth, because it was spoken with God's own voice. In the covenant which God made with the Jews concerning the Ten Commandments, he said of the law, "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice." etc. Ex. 19:5. The commandments were spoken "in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice." Deut. 5:22. Therefore when the law of God speaks to a man, it is God himself speaking to that man. Satan has invented a proverb, which he has induced many people to believe, to the effect that "the voice of the people is the voice of God." This is a part of his great lie by which he causes many to think themselves above the law of God. Let every one who loves the truth, substitute for that invention of Satan the truth that the voice of the law of God is the voice of God.

Every Mouth Stopped .-The law speaks that "every mouth may be stopped." And so every mouth would be, if men would only consider that it is God that is speaking. If men realized that God himself speaks in the law, they would not be so ready to answer back when it speaks to them, and they would not frame so many excuses for not obeying it. When some servant of the Lord reads the law to people, they often seem to think that it is only man's word to which they are listening, and so they feel themselves privileged to parley, and debate, and object, and to say that, although the words are all right, they do not feel under obligation to obey, or that it is not convenient. They would not think of doing this if they heard the voice of God speaking to them. But when the law is read, it is the voice of God now just as much as it was to the Israelites who stood at the base of Sinai. People often open their mouths against it now, but the time will come when every mouth will be stopped, because "our God shall come, and shall not keep silence." Ps. 50:3.

The Law's Jurisdiction .-What things soever the law says, it sa to them who are within its sphere, or jurisdiction. Why? "That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." How extensive, then, is the jurisdiction of the law? It includes every soul in the world. There is no one who is exempt from obedience to it. There is not a soul whom it does not declare to be guilty. The law is the standard of righteousness, and "there is none righteous, no, not one."

No Justification by the Law .-"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." One of two things must be the case whenever a man is justified by the law, namely, either the man is not guilty, or else the law is a bad law. But neither of these things is true in this case. God's law is perfectly righteous, and all men are sinners. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." It is obvious that a man can not be declared righteous by the same law that declares him to be a sinner. Therefore it is a self-evident truth that by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified.

A Double Reason .-There is a double reason why no one can be justified by the law. The first is that all have sinned. Therefore the law must continue to declare them guilty, no matter what their future life might be. No man can ever do more than his duty to God, and no possible amount of good deeds can undo one wrong act. But more than this, men have not only sinned, but they are sinful. "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Rom. 8:7. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye can not do the things that ye would." Gal. 5:17. Therefore, no matter how much a man may try to do the righteousness of the law, he will fail to find justification by it.

Self-justification .-If one were justified by the deeds of the law, it would be because he always did all that the law requires. Note well that it would be he that did it, and not the law. It would not be that the law itself does something to justify the man, but that the man himself does the good deeds required. Therefore if a man were justified by the law, it would be because he has in him by nature all the righteousness that the law requires. He who imagines that he can do the righteousness of the law, imagines that he himself is as good as God is, because the law requires and is a statement of the righteousness of God. Therefore for a man to think that he can be justified by the law, is to think that he is so good that he needs no Saviour. Every self-righteous person, no matter what his profession, exalts himself above the law of God, and therefore identifies himself with the Papacy.

Righteousness without the Law .-Since because of man's weak and fallen condition no one can get righteousness out of the law, it is evident that if any man ever has righteousness he must get it from some other source than the law. If left to themselves and the law, men would truly be in a deplorable condition. But here is hope. The righteousness of God without the law or apart from the law, is manifested.

This reveals to man a way of salvation.

Righteousness "Manifested." -Where?-Why, of course where it most needs to be manifested, in people, that is, in a certain class described in the next verse. But it does not originate in them. The Scriptures have already shown us that no righteousness can come from man. The righteousness of God is manifested in Jesus Christ. He himself said through the prophet David: "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation; lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest." Ps. 40:8, 9.

"Witnessed by the Law." -Let no one imagine that in the Gospel he can ignore the law of God. The righteousness of God which is manifested apart from the law, is witnessed by the law. It is such righteousness as the law witnesses to, and commends. It must be so, because it is the righteousness which Christ revealed; and that came from the law, which was in his heart. So, although the law of God has no righteousness to impart to any man, it does not cease to be the standard of righteousness. There can be no righteousness that does not stand the test of the law. The law of God must put its seal of approval upon every one who enters heaven.

Witnessed by the Prophets .-When Peter preached Christ to Cornelius and his family, he said, "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Acts 10:43. The prophets preached the same Gospel that the apostles did. See 1 Peter 1:12. There is but one foundation, and that is "the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." Eph. 2:20. This also suggests another thought about "witnessed by the law." It is not simply that the righteousness which is manifested in Christ is approved by the law, but it is proclaimed in the law. In the portion of Scripture specifically known as "the law," the portion written by Moses, Christ is preached. Moses was a prophet, and therefore he testified of Christ the same, "for he wrote of me." John 5:46. More than this, the very giving of the law itself was a promise and an assurance of Christ. This will appear when we come to the fifth chapter of Romans.

The Righteousness of God .-While there is no chance for the despiser of God's law to evade its claims under cover of the expression, "the righteousness of God apart from the law," there is also no need for the lover of that law to fear that the preaching of righteousness by faith will tend to bring in a spurious righteousness. Such is guarded against by the statement that the righteousness must be witnessed by the law, and further by the statement that this righteousness which is manifested apart from the law is the righteousness of God. No one need fear that he will be wrong if he has that righteousness! To seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness is the one thing required of us in this life. Matt 6:33.

"By Faith of Jesus Christ." -In another place Paul expresses his desire when the Lord comes to be found "not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Phil. 3:9. Here again we have "the faith of Christ." Still further, it is said of the saints, "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Rev. 14:12. God is faithful. 1 Cor. 1:9. Christ is faithful, for "he

abideth faithful." 2 Tim. 2:13. God deals to every one a measure of faith. Rom. 12:3; Eph. 2:8. He imparts to us his own faithfulness. This he does by giving us himself. So that we do not have to get righteousness which we ourselves manufacture; but to make the matter doubly sure, the Lord imparts to us in himself the faith by which we appropriate his righteousness. Thus the faith of Christ must bring the righteousness of God, because the possession of that faith is the possession of the Lord himself. This faith is dealt to every man, even as Christ gave himself to every man. Do you ask what then can prevent every man from being saved? The answer is, Nothing, except the fact that all men will not keep the faith. If all would keep all that God gives them, all would be saved.

Within and Without .-This righteousness of God, which is by the faith of Jesus Christ, is unto, literally into, and upon all them that believe. Man's own righteousness, which is of the law, is only on the outside. Matt. 23:27, 28. But God desires truth in the inward parts. Ps. 51:6. "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart." Deut. 6:6. And so the promise of the new covenant is, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." Jer. 31:33. He does it, because it is impossible for man to do it. The most that men can do is to make a fair show in the flesh, to gain the applause of their fellow men. God puts his glorious righteousness in the heart. But he does more than that, he covers men with it. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." Isa. 51:10. "He will beautify the meek with salvation." Ps. 149:4. Clothed with this glorious dress, which is not merely an outward covering, but the manifestation of that which is within, God's people may go forth, "fair as the moon, clear as the sun; and terrible as an army with banners." E. J. W.

January 23, 1896

**"Studies in Romans. The Justice of Mercy" *The Signs of the Times*
22, 4.**

E. J. Waggoner

The last lesson showed us that since all men are declared guilty by the law, there can be no righteousness in the law for any man, and that, as a consequence, if men were left alone with the law, there would be no hope for any. The law is only the written statement of the righteousness of God, and therefore can impart no righteousness; but God is a living God, and his righteousness is a living righteousness; his Spirit has all-pervading power, and therefore he can put his own righteousness into and upon all that believe; for faith is the reception of God into the heart. In the reception of this righteousness

"There is no difference; 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; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:22-26.

Questioning the Text

How is the righteousness of God manifested apart from the law?

"By faith of Jesus Christ."

In whom is it manifested?

"Unto all and upon all them that believe."

What distinction is made between people?

"There is no difference."

Why not?

"For all have sinned."

In sinning, of what have men come short?

"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

While in this state, what do those who believe receive?

"Being justified."

How justified?

"Freely."

By what?

"By his grace."

Through what?

"Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

How did this come about?

"Whom God hath set forth."

What for?

"To be a propitiation."

By what means?

"Through faith in his blood."

What does he declare?

"To declare his righteousness."

Whose righteousness does he declare?

God's righteousness-the righteousness of him who set him forth. See Ps. 40:6-10.

For what is God's righteousness declared in Christ?

"For the remission of sins that are past."

Of what is this a manifestation?

"The forbearance of God."

Why is it that God's own righteousness is declared for the remission of sins?

"That he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

"No Difference." -In what is there no difference? There is no difference in the way in which men receive righteousness. And why is no difference made in the manner of justifying men? Because "all have sinned." Peter, in relating to the Jews his experience in first preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, said, "God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." Acts 15:8, 9. "Out of the heart of men," not of one class of men, but of all men, "proceed evil thoughts," etc. Mark 7:21. God knows the hearts of

all men, that all are alike sinful, and therefore he makes no difference in the Gospel to different men.

"One Blood."-This lesson is one of the most important to be learned by the missionary, whether laboring at home or abroad. Since the gospel is based on a principle that there is no difference in men, it is absolutely essential that the gospel worker should recognize the fact, and always keep it in mind. God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." Acts 17:26. Not only are all men of one blood, but they are also of "one kind of flesh." 1 Cor. 15:39. The great burden of the Epistle to the Romans, as has appeared up to this point, is to show that so far as sin and salvation therefrom are concerned, there is absolutely no difference between men of all races and conditions in life. The same Gospel is to be preached to the Jew and to the Gentile, to the slave and to the freeman, to the prince and to the peasant.

Coming Short. -People are fond of imagining that what are called "shortcomings" are not so bad as real sins. So it is much easier for them to confess that they have "come short" than that they have sinned and done wickedly. But since God requires perfection, it is evident that "shortcomings" are sins. It may sound pleasanter to say that a bookkeeper is "short" in his accounts, but people know that the reason for it is that he has been taking that which is not his, or stealing. When perfection is the standard, it makes no difference in the result, how much or how little one comes short, so long as he comes short. The primary meaning of sin is "to miss the mark." And in an archery contest, the man who has not strength to send his arrow to the target, even though his aim is good, is a loser just as surely as he who shoots wide of the mark.

"The Glory of God." -From the text we learn that the glory of God is his righteousness. Notice, the reason why all have come short of the glory of God is that all have sinned. The fact is plain that if they had not sinned they would not have come short of it. The coming short of the glory itself consists in sin. Man in the beginning was "crowned with glory and honor" (Heb. 2:7) because he was upright. In the fall he lost the glory, and therefore now he must "seek for glory and honor and immortality." Christ could say to the Father, "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them," because in him is the righteousness of God which he has given as a free gift to every man. It is the part of wisdom to receive righteousness; and "they that be wise shall shine."

"Being Justified." -In other words, being made righteous. To justify means to make righteous. God supplies just what the sinner lacks. Let no reader forget the simple meaning of justification. Some people have the idea that there is a much higher condition for the Christian to occupy than to be justified. That is to say, that there is a higher condition for one to occupy than to be clothed within and without with the righteousness of God. That can not be.

"Freely." -"Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." That is, let him take it as a gift. So in Isa. 55:1: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." It was the Epistle to the Romans that accomplished the Reformation in Germany. Men had been taught to believe that the way to get righteousness was to purchase it either by hard work or by the

payment of money. The idea that men may purchase it with money is not so common now as then; but there are very many who are not Catholics who think that some work must be done in order to obtain it.

Making Prayer a Work .-The writer was once talking with a man in regard to righteousness as the free gift of God, the man maintaining that we could not get anything from the Lord without doing something for it. When asked what we must do to win forgiveness of sins, he replied that we must pray for it. It is with this idea of prayer that the Roman or Hindu devotee "says" so many prayers a day, putting in an extra number some days to make up for omissions. But the man who "says" a prayer, does not pray. Heathen prayer, as for instance when the prophets of Baal leaped and cut themselves (1 Kings 18:26-28), is work; but true prayer is not. A man comes to me and says that he is starving. Afterwards he is asked if anything was given him, and he says that he received some dinner, but that I made him work for it. When asked what he had to do for it, he replies that he asked for it. He could hardly make any one believe that he worked for his dinner! True prayer is simply the thankful acceptance of God's free gifts.

Redemption in Christ Jesus .-We are made righteous "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." That is, through the purchasing power that is in Christ Jesus, or "through the unsearchable riches of Christ." Eph. 3:8. This is the reason why it comes to us as a gift. Some one may say that everlasting life in the kingdom of God is too great a thing to be given to us for nothing. So it is, and therefore it had to be purchased,

52

but since we had nothing that could buy it, Christ has purchased it for us and he gives it to us freely, in himself. But if we had to purchase it from him, we might as well have bought it in the first place, and saved him the task. "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." Gal. 2:21. "Ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ." 1 Peter 1:18, 19, R.V. The blood is the life. Lev. 17:11-17. Therefore the redemption that is in Christ Jesus is his own life.

Christ Set Forth .-Christ is the one whom God has set forth to declare his righteousness. Now since the only righteousness that is real righteousness is the righteousness of God, and Christ is the only one who has been ordained of God to declare it upon men, it is evident that it can not be obtained except through him. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12.

A Propitiation .-A propitiation is a sacrifice. The statement then is simply that Christ is set forth to be a sacrifice for the remission of our sins. "Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Heb. 9:26. Of course the idea of a propitiation or sacrifice is that there is wrath to be appeased. But take particular notice that it is we who require the sacrifice, and not God. He provides the sacrifice. The idea that God's wrath has to be propitiated in order that we may have forgiveness finds no warrant in the Bible. It is the height of absurdity to say that God is so angry with men that he will not

forgive them unless something is provided to appease his wrath, and that therefore he himself offers the gift to himself, by which he is appeased. "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death." Col. 1:21, 22.

Heathen and Christian Propitiation .-The Christian idea of propitiation is that set forth above. The heathen idea, which is too often held by professed Christians, is that men must provide a sacrifice to appease the wrath of their god. All heathen worship is simply a bribe to their gods to be favorable to them. If they thought that their gods were very angry with them, they would provide a greater sacrifice, and so human sacrifices were offered in extreme cases. They thought, as the worshipers of Siva in India do to-day, that their god was gratified by the sight of blood. The persecution that was carried on in so-called Christian countries in times past and is to some extent even now, is but the outcropping of this heathen idea of propitiation. Ecclesiastical leaders imagine that salvation is by works and that men by works can atone for sin, and so they offer the one whom they think rebellious as a sacrifice to their god not to the true God, because he is not pleased with such sacrifices.

Righteousness Declared .-To declare righteousness is to speak righteousness. God speaks righteousness to man, and then he is righteous. The method is the same as in the creation in the beginning. "He spake, and it was." "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph. 2:10.

God's Justice in Redemption .-Christ is set forth to declare God's righteousness for the remission of sins, in order that he might be just and at the same time the justifier of him who believes in Jesus. God justifies sinners, for they are the only ones who need justification. The justice of declaring a sinner to be righteous lies in the fact that he is actually made righteous. Whatever God declares to be so, is so. And then he is made righteous by the life of God given him in Christ. The sin is against God, and if he is willing to forgive it, he has the right to do so. No unbeliever would deny the right of a man to overlook a trespass against him. But God does not simply overlook the trespass; he gives his life as a forfeit. Thus he upholds the majesty of the law, and is just in declaring that man righteous who was before a sinner. Sin is remitted sent away from the sinner, because sin and righteousness can not exist together, and God puts his own righteous life into the believer. So God is merciful in his justice, and just in his mercy.

"There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in his justice,
That is more than liberty."
E. J. W.

February 6, 1896

**"Studies in Romans. Establishing the Law" *The Signs of the Times*
22, 6.**

E. J. Waggoner

We now come to the close of the third chapter of Romans. We found that righteousness is the free gift of God unto every one who believes. It is not that God gives a man righteousness as a reward for believing certain dogmas; the Gospel is something entirely different from that. It is this, that true faith has Christ alone as its object, and it brings Christ's life actually into the heart; and therefore it must bring righteousness. This act of mercy on the part of God is eminently just, because in the first place the sin is against God, and he has a right to pass by offences against him; and, further, it is just, because he gives his own life as an atonement for the sin, so that the majesty of the law is not only maintained, but is magnified. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Ps. 85:10. God is just and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus. All righteousness is from him alone.

"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also; seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law." Rom. 3:27-31.

Questioning the Text

What have we previously learned as to the condition of all men?

"Guilty before God." "For all have sinned."

What is God to them that believe?

"The justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

How does he justify those who have sinned?

"Freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

What righteousness does the man so justified have?

"The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ."

Where is boasting then?

"It is excluded."

By what law? of works?

"Nay; but by the law of faith."

What then is the conclusion?

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

Is God the God of the Jews only? is he not of the gentiles also?

"Yes, of the Gentiles also."

What is the proof?

"Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith."

Do we then make void the law through faith?

"God forbid [Not by any means]; yes, we establish the law."

No Boasting.-Since righteousness is a free gift of God through Jesus Christ, it is evident that no one can justly boast of any righteousness that he has. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." Eph. 2:8, 9. "Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" 1 Cor. 4:7.

What Boasting Proves .-"Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith." Hab. 2:4. Boasting therefore is an evidence of a sinful heart. But suppose a man boasts of his righteousness, as, for instance, when a man says that he has lived without sin for so many years? "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." 1 John 1:8. But are not the grace and power of God manifested in Christ to cleanse and keep us from sin? Most certainly; but only when in humility we acknowledge that we are sinners. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9. When we say that we have no sin, that very thing is evidence that we have; but when with faith in the word of the Lord we say that we are sinners, then the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin. In the plan of salvation there is no place for human pride and boasting.

No Boasting in Heaven .-The result of boasting in heaven is seen in the case of Satan. Once he was one of the covering cherubs above the throne of God. But he began to contemplate his own glory and goodness, and his fall was the consequence. "Thou hast sinned; therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God; and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness." Eze. 28:16, 17. If the saints after their translation should begin to boast of their sinlessness, they would be as bad as they ever were. But that will never be. All who are admitted to heaven will have fully learned the lesson that God is all and in all. There will not be a voice or a heart silent in the song of praise, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever."

The Law of Works .-The law of works does not exclude boasting. If a man were justified by works, he would have whereof to boast over another who had the same privilege, but did not use it. In that case the righteous could boast over the wicked; and people would continually be comparing themselves with one another to see who had done the most. The law of works is simply the Ten Commandments in form only. Compliance with the law of works enables one to

83

appear outwardly righteous, while within he is full of corruption. Yet the one who follows the law of works is not always necessarily a hypocrite. He may have an earnest desire to keep the commandments, but may be deceived into thinking that he can work them out of himself.

The Law of Faith .-This has for its object the same thing as the law of works, namely, the commandments of God, but the result is different. The law of works

deceives a man with a form; the law of faith gives him the substance. The law of faith is the law "as it is in Jesus." The one may be a sincere attempt to keep the law; the other is the actual accomplishment of that desire, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. The Ten Commandments as given by the Lord are only a law of faith, since God never designed that they should be taken in any other way; and he never expected that anybody could get righteousness from them in any other way than by faith. The law of works is man's perversion of the law of God.

Faith without Works .-"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Because there is no other means by which he could be justified! We have before seen that all men are sinners, and that no man has power in himself to perform the deeds of the law, no matter how strong his desires. "Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." Rom. 2:13. But "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Rom. 3:20. Therefore whoever is justified, or made righteous at all, must be made righteous by faith alone, wholly apart from the deeds of the law. This is of universal application. It means that justification, first, last, and all the time, is by faith alone. The Christian can not be justified by works any more than the sinner can be. No man can ever get so good and strong that his own deeds can justify him.

Faith and Works .-But that is not to say that works have nothing to do with faith. Justification means making just, or making righteous. Righteousness is right doing. Faith which justifies, therefore, is faith which makes a man a doer of the law, or, rather, which puts the doing of the law into him. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph.. 2:10. "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Phil. 2:13. "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly. That they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works." Titus 3:8. A man is not justified by faith and works, but by faith alone, which works.

One God for All .-There is but "one God and Father of all." Eph. 4:6. He "hath made of one blood all nations of men," "for we are also his offspring." Acts 16:26, 28. "There is no respect of persons with God." Rom. 2:11. "In every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." Acts 10:35. The Scripture saith: "Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." Rom. 10:11, 12.

One Means of Justification .-The fact that justification is only by faith, and that God "commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30), shows that God regards Jew and Gentile alike. Nor is there any evidence that he ever did put any difference between them. A believing gentile was always accounted righteous, and an unbelieving Jew was never considered by the Lord any better than any other unbeliever. Remember that Abraham, the father of the whole Jewish nation, was a Chaldean. The Jews were related to the Chaldeans who remained in their native land, just as surely as they were to one another in the land of Canaan.

Unfortunately, they forgot this; but they are not the only ones in the world who have forgotten that all men are their brethren.

In the statement, "It is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith," there is no need of stumbling over the prepositions. Bear in mind how often we use the words "by" and "through" interchangeably, to indicate means, and there will be no difficulty. The emphatic word is "faith." Both circumcision and uncircumcision are justified through, or by means of, faith.

Making Void the Law .-Making void the law does not mean abolishing it. There is no question as to the perpetuity of the law. It is so plainly eternal that the apostle Paul never wastes space in arguing about it. The only question is as to how its claim may be satisfied. The Saviour said that the Jews made the commandment of God of none effect through their tradition. So far as they were concerned, they made it void. No man could by any action or lack of action abolish or in any way affect the law of God. But anybody may by his unbelief obliterate it from his own heart. The question then is, Do we by faith make the law of God of none effect? Or, more plainly still, Does faith lead to the transgression of the law? The answer is, "Not by any means."

Establishing the Law .-That which has been said in regard to making void the law of God will apply here also. That is, no action of man can make the law anything different from what it actually is. It is the foundation of the throne of God, and as such it will ever abide, in spite of demons and men. But it is left for us to say whether or not we will have it obliterated from our hearts, or have it established there. If we choose to have it established in our hearts, we have only to accept Christ by faith. Faith brings Christ to dwell in the heart. Eph. 3:17. The law of God is in the heart of Christ (Ps. 40:8), so that the faith which brings Christ into the heart establishes the law there. And since the law of God is the establishment of his throne, the faith which brings the law into the heart, enthrones God there. And thus it is that God works in men "both to will and to do of his good pleasure." E. J. W.

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"Studies in Romans. The Blessing of Abraham" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 7.

E. J. Waggoner

The ultimate object of studying any Bible book in detail is to be able to take in the entire book at one glance. The second chapter and the first portion of the third of Romans have given us the information that all men are in the same deplorable condition. Then comes the brighter side in the last part of the third chapter, in which the free grace of God is set forth in Christ as the Saviour of sinners. And now in the fourth chapter we have the final argument concerning justification by faith.

The Case of Abraham

"What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also; and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised." Rom. 4:1-12.

Questioning the Text

What is the theme for consideration in this chapter?
What "Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found."
What would Abraham have if he were justified by works?
"If Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory."
But can he glory?
"Not before God."
How is this proved?
By "the Scripture."
"What saith the Scripture?"
"Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."
What was counted unto him for righteousness?
His faith.
How would the reward be reckoned if it were the reward of works?
Not "of grace, but of debt."
How is it to him that worketh not?
"His faith is counted for righteousness."
Whom does God justify?
"The ungodly."
Who describes this blessedness?
"David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works."
In what words?

"Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."

What important question arises here?

"Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also?"

What gives rise to this question?

"For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness."

How was it reckoned to Him? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision?

"Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision."

What did Abraham receive?

"He received the sign of circumcision."

What was the value of this sign?

"A seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had."

When did he have this righteousness of faith?

"Yet being uncircumcised."

Why was his faith reckoned to him for righteousness when he was yet uncircumcised?

"That he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised."

Of whom else is he the father?

"The father of circumcision."

To what circumcised ones is he the father?

"To them who are not of the circumcision only."

What must the circumcised children of Abraham necessarily have in addition to their circumcision?

"That faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised."

"As Pertaining to the Flesh." -Abraham was not the father, or ancestor, according to the flesh, of all those to whom Paul addressed the epistle. The question under consideration is justification by faith. If now it can be shown that even Abraham received no righteousness through the flesh, but that it was only by faith, the case will be practically settled.

Glorying .-If in the plan of salvation there were any such thing as righteousness by works, then there would be provision made for boasting. For if one may be saved by works, then all men may be; and then those who were saved might boast of their superiority to others in like circumstances. But we have already learned that boasting is excluded. "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence."

Glorying In, and Glorying Before .-If Abraham were justified by works, he might

glory; but the fact is that he can not glory before God; and the proof of this is found in the words of Scripture: "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." A man can be justified by works when it can be shown that he has done no wrong. In that case he needs no faith; his works speak for themselves. But Abraham was justified by faith, and therefore it is evident that he was not justified by any works. He who is justified only by the works of God, will glory only in those works. That is glorying in God, and is far different from glorying before God.

Paul and James .-Here is where nearly everybody quotes the words of James, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" James 2:21. Unfortunately this text is usually quoted as a disparagement of the words of Paul. It seems to be taken for granted that there is a contradiction between Paul and James; and sympathy naturally leans to James, because people like to believe that there is some merit in their own works, and they imagine that this is what James teaches. Indeed, there are some who hold that James wrote for the purpose of correcting Paul's "extreme views" of justification by faith. We may well throw all such foolish and wicked ideas to the winds. No one need hope to come to an understanding of the Scriptures until he approaches them with the settled conviction that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God." The Holy Spirit does not at one time inspire words which must later on be corrected.

Faith Working .-The trouble with those who thus read the words of James is that they suppose that the apostle says that Abraham was justified by his own works of faith. "Seest thou how faith wrought?" That is ever the mark of living faith, as the apostle is showing. And that is just the statement of the apostle Paul. The last verse of the third chapter of Romans tells us that by faith we establish the law. Moreover, the very term "justification" shows that faith performs the requirement of the law. Faith makes a man a doer of the law, for that is the meaning of the term "justification by faith." So in James we read that the works of Abraham simply showed the perfection of his faith. "And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness." The apostle James, therefore, teaches the same kind of justification that Paul does. If he did not, one or the other or both of them would be discredited as apostles. Justification by faith which works is the only kind of justification known in the Bible.

Debt and Grace .-"Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." It is necessary to keep in mind what the apostle is writing about. The subject is the means by which a man is justified. To him that works for justification, the reward of righteousness is not a gift of grace, but the payment of a debt. That is, it would be so if there were any righteousness by works. In that case, the man would come to the Lord and demand of him his due. But no man can put the Lord under obligation to him. "Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?" Rom. 11:35. If any one could do something for the Lord for which the Lord would be under obligation to him, then all things would not be from him. That is to say, the idea of justification by works is opposed to the fact that God is the Creator of all things. And, conversely, the

recognition of God as Creator is the acknowledgement that righteousness comes from him alone.

Justifying the Ungodly .-God justifies the ungodly. No others need justification. But mark that he does not justify ungodliness. That would be to call evil good, and to deny himself. But he justifies or makes righteous the ungodly, and that is just what they need. He justifies the believing sinner by making him a new man in Christ Jesus, and this he can do and still be just. To make a new man in righteousness is perfectly in harmony with his own character as Creator.

Working Not .-"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Bear in mind that justification is the subject under consideration. When the apostle speaks of not working, it is evident that he means not working in order to be justified. A man is not made just by works, but the just man works yet always by faith. "The just shall live by faith." It is faith that makes him continue to live justly. The reality of the works of faith is made more prominent in the latter part of this chapter.

The Blessedness Described .-The blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works is the blessedness of sins forgiven, and of freedom from the power of sin. God will not impute sin to the man who lives by faith in Christ, so that Christ's works are his works. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him; . . . for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him." Col. 2:6-10.

Blessings to Jew and Gentile .-This blessedness comes alike to the circumcision and to the uncircumcision. We have here a repetition of the truth set forth in the third chapter, namely, that there is no difference in the matter of justification. Abraham is the father of the Jewish nation after the flesh, but the blessing which he received was while he was uncircumcised, the same as any other gentile. Therefore he can be the father of both the Jews and the gentiles. His blessing was received by faith, and therefore "they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." Gal. 3:9.

How the Blessing Comes .-We have some time ago seen that the blessing came to Abraham through Christ. In another place the apostle Paul tells us that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree; that the blessing of Abraham might come on the gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Gal. 3:13, 14. Whatever was promised to Abraham was all contained in the blessing which David described. God sent his Son to bless us in turning every one of us away from our iniquities. Acts 3:26. It is the cross of Christ that transmits the blessings of Abraham to us. Therefore the blessings are spiritual. None of the blessings promised to Abraham were merely temporal. And this further shows that the inheritance promised to Abraham and his seed is only to those who are the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Circumcision is Nothing .-The advantage of those who are circumcised was that to them were intrusted the oracles of God; but that did not come to them through circumcision. Circumcision was only a sign; it was not the thing itself. It was given to Abraham as a token of the righteousness by faith which he already

possessed. Therefore it could not signify anything more to anybody else. If any who were circumcised did not have righteousness, then their circumcision did not signify anything. "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God." 1 Cor. 7:19. So Abraham was the father of the circumcised, provided they were not of the circumcision only, but had righteousness by faith, which is the one necessary thing.

Everything in Christ .-Speaking of Christ, the apostle says, "All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." 2 Cor. 1:20. There is no promise of God to any man

100

that ever lived on earth, or that will ever live, except through Jesus Christ. The promises to Israel, especially, which most concern us are those that were first made to Abraham. But "he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness." Gen. 15:6. Therefore "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal. 3:29. So, then, the promise to Israel come through the cross of Christ; and none are Israel except those who have personal, saving faith in him. E. J. W.

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"Studies in Romans. The Blessing of Abraham" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 8.

E. J. Waggoner

In our lesson last week we began the study of Abraham as a special illustration of the doctrine of justification by faith. We found that Abraham could not glory before God, because he was justified by faith only, and not at all by works. But the verses which follow will involve a sufficient review of the first part of the chapter, and therefore we will at once proceed to the study of

The Inheritance and the Heirs

"For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect; because the law worketh wrath; for where no law is, there is no transgression." Rom. 4:13-15.

Questioning the Text

What promise was made to Abraham?

"That he should be the heir of the world."

To whom was this promise made?

"To Abraham" and "to his seed." "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made." Gal. 3:16.

Who is the seed?

"He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ." Gal. 3:16.

Is Christ in his own person the only seed?

"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal. 3:29.

Of what are Abraham and his seed heirs?

"Of the world."

On what basis was this inheritance promised?

"The promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith."

If they which are of the law be heirs, what is the result?

"Faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect."

Why so?

"Because the law worketh wrath."

If there were no law, what would there not be?

"Where no law is, there is no transgression."

Why is it, then, that the law worketh wrath?

Because "by the law is the knowledge of sin." Rom. 3:29.

Where Is the Promise?

A very natural inquiry upon reading the thirteenth verse would be, Where is there any promise that Abraham and his seed should be heirs of the world? Many think that no such promise is contained in the Old Testament. But there can be no doubt about the matter, for the apostle says that there was such a promise. If we have not found it, it is because we have read the Old Testament too superficially, or with minds biased by preconceived opinions. If we consider the connection, we shall have no difficulty in locating the promise.

Of what is the apostle speaking in this connection? Of an inheritance through the righteousness of faith, and also of the fact that circumcision was given to Abraham as a seal of this righteousness which he had by faith, and therefore as the seal of the inheritance which was to come thereby. Where in the Old Testament do we find the account of the giving of circumcision, and of a promise in connection therewith? In the seventeenth chapter of Genesis. Then that must be the place for us to look for the promise that Abraham should be the heir of the world. Let us turn and read:

"And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. . . . And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you." Gen. 17:7-11.

The reader will at once say: "Yes; it is plain enough that there is a promise here; but what we are looking for is the promise that Abraham and his seed should inherit the earth; and I do not see that here. All that I can see is a promise

that they should inherit the land of Canaan." But it is certain from the connection in Romans that we are on the right track, and we shall soon see that this is indeed the promise that Abraham and his seed should be heirs of the world. We must study the details of this promise. And first let us note the fact that the inheritance promised in this place is

An Everlasting Inheritance

The Lord said to Abraham, "I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession." Note well that both Abraham and his seed are included in all the promise. The inheritance is not to be merely in the possession of Abraham's seed forever, but Abraham himself is to have it for an everlasting possession. But the only way in which both Abraham and his seed may have everlasting possession of an inheritance, is by having everlasting life. Therefore we see that in this promise to Abraham we have the assurance of everlasting life in which to enjoy the possession.

This will appear still more clearly when we consider that the inheritance is

An Inheritance of Righteousness

"For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." Rom. 4:13. That is just what we have in the promise recorded in the seventeenth of Genesis. For that covenant was sealed by circumcision (see verse 11), and circumcision was the seal of righteousness by faith. See Romans 4:11.

Someone may say that this does not appear from the Old Testament itself, and that therefore the Jews could not be expected to have understood it; we have the New Testament to enlighten us. It is true that in studying the Old Testament we owe much to the New Testament, but it is also a fact that there is no new revelation in it. One may see from the Old Testament alone that the inheritance promised to Abraham and to his seed was only on the condition of righteousness by faith.

This is the natural conclusion from the fact that the inheritance is to be an everlasting possession. Now the Jews well knew that everlasting life belongs to the righteous alone. "The righteous shall never be removed; but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth." Prov. 10:30. "For evildoers shall be cut off; but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth." Ps. 37:9. "For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off." Verse 22.

The fifth commandment reads, "Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." The keeping of the commandments has never made any difference in the length of men's lives in this present world. But the inheritance which God promised to Abraham is one that will be everlasting because of the righteousness of its possessors.

The Promise and the Resurrection

Another point from the promise is recorded in Genesis, if we read carefully. The promise was to Abraham and to his seed. Now Stephen stated as a well-known fact that Abraham did not have so much of the promised land as he could set his foot on. Acts 7:5. We may learn this from the Old Testament record, because we are told that he had to buy from the Canaanites, whom God had promised to drive out, a spot of land in which to bury his wife. As for his immediate descendants, we know that they dwelt in tents, wandering from place to place, and that Jacob died in the land of Egypt.

Further than this, we read the words of David, whose reign was at the time of the highest prosperity of the children of Israel in the land of Canaan: "Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears; for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were." Ps. 39:12. See also his prayer at the consecration of the gifts to the temple, when Solomon was made king. 1 Chron. 29:15.

Still further, and this is most positive of all, we have the words of God to Abraham when he made the promise. After telling him that he would give the land of Canaan to him and to his seed, the Lord said that his seed should first be slaves in a strange land. "And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again." Gen. 15:7, 13-16. Thus we see that Abraham was plainly told that he should die before he had any inheritance in the land, and that it would be at least four hundred years before any of his seed could inherit it.

But Abraham died in faith, and so did his seed. See Hebrews 11:13. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but

116

having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." They died in faith, because they knew that God could not lie. But since God's promise must be fulfilled, and they did not receive the promised inheritance in this present life, we are shut up to the conclusion that it can be obtained only through the resurrection from the dead.

This was the hope that sustained the faithful Israelites. Abraham had faith to offer Isaac upon the altar because his faith was in God's power to raise the dead. When Paul was a prisoner on account of "the hope and resurrection of the dead" (Acts 23:6), he said, "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come." And then, to show the reasonableness of this hope, he asked, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" Acts 26:6-8.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the pledge and surety of the resurrection of those who believe on him. See 1 Corinthians 15:13-20. The apostles "preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead." Acts 4:2. And one of them says for our benefit, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus

Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." 1 Pet. 1:3-5. And then he adds that this faith is tried that it may "be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

And this brings us to the conclusion of the matter, namely, that the promise to Abraham and to his seed that they should be heirs of the world, is

The Promise of Christ's Coming

The apostle Peter says that it is necessary to remind us of the words that were spoken by the holy prophets because "there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." Therefore they do not believe in the promise at all.

But they do not reason well, "for this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water, whereby the world that then was being overflowed with water, perished; but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." 2 Pet. 3:5-7.

Take notice that not only has the promise something to do with the fathers, but it concerns the whole earth. The complaint of the scoffers is that since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. But the apostle shows that when they say so they shut their eyes to the fact that the same word that in the beginning made the heavens and the earth, also destroyed the earth by the flood. Also the earth is by the same word now preserved until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men, when it will be destroyed by fire. "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Pet. 3:13.

According to What Promise?-Why, according to the promise to the fathers, which was that Abraham and his seed should inherit the earth. It has been a long time, as men count, since that promise was made, but "the Lord is not slack concerning his promise." It has not been so long since it was made that he has forgotten it; for "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." The reason why he has waited this long is that he is not willing that any should perish in the fires that will renew the earth, but he desires that all should come to repentance.

And so we find that we have as great an interest in the promise to Abraham as he himself had. That promise is still open for all to accept. It embraces nothing less than an eternal life of righteousness in the earth made new as it was in the beginning. The hope of the promise of God unto the fathers was the hope of the coming of the Lord to raise the dead, and thus to bestow the inheritance. Christ was once here on the earth, but then he did not have any more of the inheritance

than Abraham had. He had not where to lay his head. God is now sending his Holy Spirit to seal the believers for the inheritance, even as he did to Abraham; and when all the faithful shall have been sealed by the Spirit, "he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." Acts 3:20, 21. E. J. W.

February 27, 1896

"Studies in Romans. The Surety of the Promise" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 9.

E. J. Waggoner

In our last lesson we learned what Abraham found, and how he found it. At the same time we have learned what God has promised us as well as Abraham, if we believe his word. God has promised to every man who believes him nothing less than the freedom of the world. This is not an arbitrary thing. God has not said that if we will believe certain statements and dogmas, he will in return give us an everlasting inheritance. The inheritance is one of righteousness; and since faith means the reception of the life of Christ into the heart, together with God's righteousness, it is evident that there is no other way in which the inheritance can be received. This is further made clear by a statement in the last section, which was not noted, namely, that

"The Law Worketh Wrath." -Therefore whoever thinks to get righteousness by the law is putting his trust in that which will destroy him. God has promised a grant of land to every one who will accept it on his conditions, namely, that he shall also accept the righteousness which goes with it, because righteousness is the characteristic of the land. Righteousness is to "dwell" in it. But this righteousness can be found only in the life of God, which is manifested in Christ. Now the man who thinks that he himself can get righteousness out of the law is in reality trying to substitute his own righteousness for God's righteousness. In other words, he is trying to get the land by fraud. Therefore when he comes in the court to prove his claim to the land, it appears that there is a criminal charge against him; and he finds "wrath" instead of blessing. "Where no law is, there is no transgression;" but there is law everywhere, and therefore transgression. All have sinned, so that the inheritance can not be by the law.

"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations), before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb; he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to

God; and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who

131

was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Rom. 4:16-25.

Questioning the Text

What have we already found the inheritance to be?

"The world."

And how is it to be obtained?

"Through the righteousness of faith."

If it were of works, what would be the result?

"Faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect."

Why?

"Because the law worketh wrath."

Why is the inheritance of faith?

"That it might be by grace."

To what end?

"To the end the promise might be sure to all the seed."

Of whom is Abraham the father?

"The father of us all."

Before whom?

"Before him whom he believed, even God."

According to what scripture?

"As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations."

How could God say to Abraham before he had any child, "I have made thee a father of many nations"?

He "quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things that be not as though they were."

How did Abraham receive the promise of God?

"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief."

In what was he strong?

He "was strong in faith, giving glory to God."

Of what was he persuaded?

"Fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform."

What was the result?

"Therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness."

For whose sake was this written?

"For us also."

Why for our sakes?

"To whom it shall be imputed."

What shall be imputed?

That which was imputed to Abraham, namely, righteousness.

On what condition will it be imputed to us also?

"If we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead."

Why was he delivered to death?

He "was delivered for our offenses."

For what purpose was he raised again?

He "was raised again for our justification."

Sure to All .-Since the inheritance is through the righteousness of faith, it is equally sure to all the seed, and equally within the reach of all. Faith gives all an equal chance, because faith is just as easy for one person as for another. God has dealt to every man a measure of faith, and to all the same measure, for the measure of grace is the measure of faith, and "unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Eph. 4:7. Christ is given without reserve to every man. Heb. 2:9. Therefore, as the same measure of faith and grace is given to all men, all have an equal opportunity to gain the inheritance.

Jesus Is the Surety .-Faith makes the promise sure to all the seed, because it has Christ alone for its object, and he is the surety of the promises of God. 2 Cor. 1:20. We read also of the oath of God, by which Jesus was made high priest, that "by so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament," or covenant. Heb. 7:22. Now Jesus was not given for a certain class, but for all without distinction. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. Jesus by the grace of God tasted death for every man. Heb. 2:9. He says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37. Christ dwells in the heart by faith. Eph. 3:17. Therefore, since Christ is the surety of the promise, it must be sure to every one who believes.

The Oath of God .-It may seem to some a little far-fetched to say that the oath by which Jesus was made priest is the surety of the promise to Abraham. But a little consideration will enable any one to see that it can be no other way. In the sixth chapter of Hebrews we read: "When God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee. . . . God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

For Our Sakes .-Why did God confirm his promise to Abraham by an oath? That we might have a strong consolation. It was not for Abraham's sake, because Abraham believed fully without the oath. His faith was shown to be perfect before the oath was given. It was altogether for our sakes. When does that oath give us strong consolation? When we flee for refuge to Christ as priest in the most holy place. Within the vail he ministers as high priest; and it is the oath of God that gives us courage to believe that his priesthood will save us. Then our consolation

comes from Christ's priesthood, and so from the oath which made him priest. Therefore the oath of God to Abraham was identical with the oath that made Christ high priest. This shows most plainly that the promise of God to Abraham is as wide as the gospel of Christ. And so our text, speaking of the righteousness that was imputed to Abraham, says, "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead."

The Power of God's Word .-God "calloeth those things which be not as though they were." Sometimes men do the same thing, but we soon lose confidence in them. When men speak of things that are not as though they were, there is only one proper name for it. It is a lie. But God calls those things that be not as though they were, and it is the truth. What makes the difference? Simply this: Man's word has no power to make a thing exist when it does not exist. He may say that it does, but that does not make it so. But when God names a thing, the very thing itself is in the word that names it. He speaks, and it is. It was by this power of God that Abraham was made the father of many nations, even of us, if we believe that Jesus died and rose again.

Quickening the Dead .-It is by the power of God's word which can speak of those things that be not as though they were and have it true, that the dead are raised. His word makes them live. It was Abraham's faith in the resurrection of the dead that made him the father of many nations. God's oath to Abraham was on the occasion of his offering Isaac. Gen. 22:15-18. And "by faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called; accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead." Heb. 11:17-19.

Righteousness and Resurrection .-The righteousness which was imputed to Abraham will be imputed to us also if we believe on him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. Therefore it follows that righteousness was imputed to Abraham because of his faith in the resurrection of the dead, which comes only through Jesus. Acts 4:2. That was what the apostles preached the promises to the fathers. The power by which a man is made righteous is the power of the resurrection. See Philippians 3:9-11. This power of the resurrection, which works righteousness in a man, is the surety of the final resurrection to immortality at the last day by which he enters upon his inheritance.

Not Weakened in Faith .-Some versions of Rom. 4:19 give the idea, "Without being weakened in faith, he considered his own body now as good as dead." That is to say, after God had made the promise to him, a full consciousness of his weakness and of all the difficulties and seeming impossibilities in the way did not have any effect in weakening his faith. Nothing is impossible with God, and there are no difficulties for him. Whenever a person is inclined to doubt the possibility of his salvation, let him stop and consider that God made the world by his word, and that he raises the dead, and that it is by that same power that God will save him if he is willing. To doubt God's promise to deliver us from all evil is to doubt the fact that he created all things by his word, and that he is able to raise the dead. E. J. W.

March 5, 1896

"Studies in Romans. 'Saved by His Life'" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 10.

E. J. Waggoner

We have now passed through the first four chapters of Romans. The third chapter sums up the argument that all men, whether called Jews or gentiles, whether so-called heathen or professed Christians, are to be judged by the same law, and that all are alike guilty. The law is universal in its jurisdiction, and as it condemns all, none can get righteousness by it, although it is the statement of the righteousness of God. But God has promised righteousness to men, therefore they must get it aside from the works of the law, namely, in Christ. In his blood there is redemption for Jew and gentile alike. A man is made a doer of the law by faith alone, without the deeds of the law. This is the mystery of the Gospel. It is Christ in men, the hope of glory, and God in Christ working his own righteousness.

The fourth chapter has taken up the case of Abraham as an illustration of righteousness by faith. The faith which was imputed to him, faith in the death and resurrection of Christ, will bring us the same righteousness, and make us heirs with him of the same promise. But the fourth chapter is really a parenthetical illustration, so that the fifth begins where the third closes. We therefore proceed with the subject of

Righteousness by Faith

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Rom. 5:1-10.

Questioning the Text

What have the preceding chapters set before us?

Justification by faith.

Being justified by faith, what do we have?

"We have peace."
What peace do we have?
"We have peace with God."
Through whom do we have peace?
"Through our Lord Jesus Christ."
What else do we have through him?
"We have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand."
What do we therefore do?
"Rejoice in hope of the glory of God."
What else?
"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also."
Why do we glory in tribulations?
"Knowing that tribulation worketh patience."
What does patience work?
"And patience, experience."
What comes with experience?
"And experience, hope."
And what does hope not do?
"Hope maketh not ashamed."
What therefore must hope do?
It must give boldness.
How does it give this boldness?
"Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts."
How is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts?
"By the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."
What evidence have we that God will give us all these blessings?
"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."
For whom did Christ die?
"Christ died for the ungodly."
In what condition were those for whom Christ died?
"Without strength."
What is the greatest love known to man?
"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." John 15:15. Compare with Rom. 5:7.
But what is the love of God for us?
"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
When did Christ die for us?
"While we were yet sinners."
Since we were sinners, in what relation did we stand to God?
"Alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works." Col. 1:21. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." Rom. 8:7.
What did Christ do for us when we were enemies?
"Died for us."
What does the death of Christ do for us?

"When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son."

If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, of what may we be much more sure?

"Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

Faith Works Real Righteousness.- The first verse of the fifth chapter begins with "therefore." The word indicates that what follows is a natural conclusion of what goes before. What has gone before? The story of what Abraham gained by faith. He gained righteousness by faith, but it was by faith in the promise that he should have a son. That son was the child of faith. But the same faith that resulted in the birth of Isaac, also brought righteousness to Abraham. And the same will also be imputed to us, if we have the same faith. Therefore, we are taught that the righteousness of faith is as real as was the son that was born to Abraham through faith. Righteousness by faith is not a myth.

Peace .-What is peace? Most people have

147

the idea that it is a sort of ecstatic feeling. They think that peace with God means an indescribable heavenly feeling; and so they always look for that imaginary feeling as evidence that they are accepted with God. But peace with God means the same thing that it means with men: it means simply the absence of war. As sinners we are enemies of God. He is not our enemy, but we are his enemies. He is not fighting against us, but we are fighting against him. How then may we have peace with him? Simply by ceasing to fight, and laying down our arms. We may have peace whenever we are ready to stop fighting.

"Peace with God." -Note that when we have peace with God we are not simply at peace with him, but we have his peace. This peace has been left on the earth for men; for the Lord has said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." John 14:27. He has given it to us. It is ours, therefore, already. It has always been ours. The only trouble has been that we have not believed it. As soon as we believe the words of Christ, then we have in very deed the peace which he has given. And it is peace with God, because we find the peace in Christ, and Christ dwells in the bosom of the Father. John 1:18.

Peace and Righteousness .-"Great peace have they which love thy law." Ps. 119:165. "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. Righteousness is peace, because our warfare against God was our sins that we cherished. God's life is righteousness, and he is the God of peace. Since the enmity is the carnal mind and its wicked works, peace must be the opposite, namely, righteousness. So it is simply the statement of an obvious fact, that being justified by faith we have peace with God. The righteousness that we have by faith carries peace with it. The two things can not be separated.

Peace and Feeling .-The question is asked, "Can one have peace with God and not have a feeling of peace?" What says the Scripture? "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." What brings the peace? The faith. But faith is not feeling. If it were necessarily the case that there must be a certain feeling with peace, then if we did not have that feeling we should know that we were not

justified; and then justification would be a matter of feeling, and not of faith. The verses which follow show us that we may have peace in tribulation as well as when everything goes smoothly.

Glory in Tribulations .-This does not mean that we are to seek for martyrdom, as some in the early centuries did. But it means, as it says, that in the midst of tribulations our peace and joy continue the same. This must necessarily be the case with peace that comes by faith. Peace that depends on feeling will depart as soon as we begin to feel tribulation. But nothing can make any difference with the peace that comes by faith. "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." John 16:33.

Tribulation Worketh Patience .-What is patience? It is endurance of suffering. The root of the word "patience" means suffering. We see this in the fact that one who is ill is called "a patient." That is, he is a sufferer. People often excuse their petulance by saying that they have so much to endure. They think that they would be patient if they did not have to suffer so much. No, they would not be. There can be no patience where there is no suffering. Trouble does not destroy patience, but develops it. When trouble seems to destroy one's patience, it is simply showing the fact that the person had no patience.

When Does It Work? -The statement is that tribulation worketh patience. Yet there are many who become more and more irritable the more trouble they have. It does not work patience with them. Why not? Simply because they are not in the condition that the apostle is describing. It is only those who are justified by faith that tribulation works patience. Nothing but faith in God can keep one perfectly patient under all circumstances.

Will It Always Work? -Yes, invariably. "Well," says one, "I am sure that anybody would be impatient if he had as much to trouble him as I have." Question: Would Christ become impatient if he had the things to endure that you have? Did he not have as much to endure, and more? You must admit that he did. Was he impatient? "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth." Isa. 53:7. Then if he were in your place, he would be patient. Why, then, do you not let him be in your place? Faith brings Christ into the heart, so that he is identified with us, and therefore he bears the burdens. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee; he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." Ps. 55:22.

"All Patience." -There is no limit to the patience that comes by faith in Christ. This is the inspired prayer: "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." Col. 1:10, 11. That is, we may be so strengthened by the glorious power by which Christ endured suffering, that we may have all patience even though suffering long, and may rejoice in the midst of it.

Patience Works Experience .-In what does it work experience? It works experience in the peace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Many people confuse Christian experience with Christian profession. They speak of having

had so many years of "Christian experience," when it may be that they have never really experienced the blessedness of the life of Christ. They have made a profession of religion; but real experience means the actual proving of the power of the life of Christ. When one has that experience, it is not a difficult matter for him to tell something of his experience when occasion calls for it.

"Not Ashamed." -Hope makes not ashamed. Why? Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." 1 John 2:28. "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, so are we in this world." 1 John 4:17. There can not possibly be a more trying day than the day of judgment. Therefore it is certain that those who will then not be ashamed or afraid, will have boldness now. And he who has boldness with God ought certainly not to be afraid of man.

"The Love of God." -The reason why hope makes not ashamed is that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Note that it does not say love for God, but the love of God. What is the love of God? "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." 1 John 5:3. The Holy Spirit, then, puts into our hearts obedience to the law of God; and it is that which gives us boldness in the day of judgment, and at all other times. It is sin that makes men afraid. When sin is taken away, then fear is gone. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth; but the righteous are bold as a lion." Prov. 28:1.

"Christ Died for the Ungodly." -"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." 1 Tim. 1:15. "This man receiveth sinners." Luke 15:2. Strange that people will allow a sense of their sinfulness to keep them away from the Lord, when Christ came for the one purpose of receiving and saving them. He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him (Heb. 6:25); and he says that those who come to him he will in no wise cast out (John 6:37).

"Without Strength." -It was when we were yet without strength, that Christ died for the ungodly. Of course; because he died for the purpose that we might be strengthened with might by the Spirit. If he waited for us to gain some strength before giving himself for us, then we should be lost. When were we without strength? Just now; and even now Jesus Christ is set forth evidently crucified among us. Gal. 3:1. "Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength." Isa. 45:24.

Righteous and Good .-"For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to

die." Our English translation does not indicate the difference between the two words used here. The righteous man is the just man, the man who is careful to give every one his due. The good man is the benevolent man, the one who has done us many favors, and who does for us more than we could justly claim. Now, no matter how just a man may be, his integrity of character would scarcely lead one to die for him. Yet it is possible that for a man of great kindness some would even dare to die.

The Greatest Love .-That is the highest measure of love among men. One may lay down his life for his friends, "but God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners," and therefore enemies, "Christ died for us."

"For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind."

"Reconciled by His Death." -God is not our enemy, but we are or have been enemies to him. Therefore he does not need to be reconciled to us, but we need reconciliation to him. And he himself, in the kindness of his heart, makes the reconciliation. We "are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Eph. 2:13. How so? Because it was sin that separated us from him, and made us enemies; and "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 1:7. Being cleansed from sin, we must necessarily be reconciled to God.

The Gift of Life .-"The life of the flesh is in the blood." "For it is the life of all flesh." Lev. 17:11, 14. In that Christ shed his blood for us, he gave his life for us. But inasmuch as the blood is applied to us, to cleanse us from all sin, he gives his life to us. In the death of Christ therefore, if we are crucified with him, we receive his life as a substitute for our sinful life, which he takes upon himself. Our sins are remitted through faith in his blood, not as an arbitrary act, but because by faith we exchange lives with him, and the life which we get in exchange has no sin. Our sinful life is swallowed up in his boundless life, because he has life so abundantly that he can die because of our transgressions, and still live again to give life to us.

"Saved by His Life." -Christ did not go through the pangs of death for nothing, nor did he give his life to us for the purpose of taking it away again. When he gives us his life, he designs that we shall keep it forever. How do we get it? By faith. How do we keep it? By the same faith. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." Col. 2:6. His life can never end, but we may lose it by unbelief. For let it be remembered that we have not this life in ourselves, but "this life is in his Son." "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." 1 John 5:11, 12. We keep the everlasting life by keeping Christ. Now it is a very simple proposition that if we have been reconciled to God by the death of Christ,-if his life has been given to us for the remission of our sins, then we shall much more be saved by that life since he has risen from the dead. People sometimes say that they can believe that God forgives their sins, but they find it difficult to believe that he can keep them from sin. Well, if there is any difference, the latter is the easier of the two; for the forgiveness of sins requires the death of Christ, while the saving from sins requires only his continued life.

By What Life? -By the life of Christ, and he has but one. He is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." Heb. 13:8. It is by his present life that we are saved, that is, by his life in us from day to day. But the life which he now lives is the very same life that he lived in Judea eighteen hundred years ago. He took again the same life that he laid down. Think what was in the life of Christ, as we have the record in the New Testament, and we shall know what ought to be in

our lives now. If we allow him to dwell in us, he will live just as he did then. If there is something in our lives that was not then in his, we may be sure that he is not living it in us now. E. J. W.

March 12, 1896

"Studies in Romans. The Free Gift" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 11.

E. J. Waggoner

In the portion of the fifth chapter that we have already studied, we learned of the wonderful love of God, so great that he gave himself for his enemies, in order that they might be reconciled to him; and that, as in the death of Christ we receive the life of God, and are thereby one with him, so by the continuation of that life in us we are saved from sin. Without any further review, we may proceed with the following verses, which present

A Series of Contrasts

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (for until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift; for if through the offence, so also is the free gift; for if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift; for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification. For if by one man's offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Rom. 5:12-19.

Questioning the Text

How did sin enter into the world?

"By one man sin entered into the world."

What did sin bring with it?

"And death by sin."

Upon how many did sentence of death pass?

"And so death passed upon all men."

Why?

"For that all have sinned."

What then was the fruit of that first offense?

"By the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation."

But what else comes just as extensively?

"The free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."

By what means did it come?

"By the righteousness of one."

How only does righteousness come?

"By the obedience of one."

Joy in God .-The eleventh verse should

164

have been included in last week's lesson, as the thought is the same as in the preceding verses. By the same life by which we receive the reconciliation and salvation, "we also joy in God." Christ's life is a joyous life. When David had fallen, he prayed, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit." Ps. 61:12. The brightness of the heavens, the beauty of the infinite variety of flowers with which God clothes the earth, and the glad songs of the birds, all indicate that God delights in joy and beauty. Brightness and song are but the natural expressions of his life. "Let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee." Ps. 5:11.

There is probably no passage in Romans more difficult to understand than verses 12-19. The reason is that there is so long a parenthesis in the midst of the main statement, and there is so much repetition of the same form of expression. There is really no greatly involved argument. In this study we shall not attempt to deal with every particular, but will note the main thought running through the whole, so that the reader can read and study it more satisfactorily for himself.

First Principles .-It will be seen from verse 12 that the apostle goes back to the very beginning. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." There can never be any presentation of the Gospel, if these facts are ignored. The story of the fall of man must be as literally true as the story of the cross; for the latter depends entirely upon the former.

Death by Sin .-Death came by sin, because sin is death. Sin, when it is full grown, bringeth forth death. See James 1:15. "To be carnally minded is death." Rom. 8:6. "The sting of death is sin." 1 Cor. 15:56. There could be no death if there were no sin. Sin carries death in its bosom. So it was not an arbitrary act on the part of God that death came upon men because of sin. It could not possibly be otherwise.

Righteousness and Life .-"To be spiritually minded is life and peace." Rom. 8:6. "There is none good but one, that is, God." Matt. 19:17. He is goodness itself. Goodness is his life. Righteousness is simply God's way. Therefore righteousness is life. It is not merely a conception of what is right, but it is the right thing itself. Righteousness is active. As sin and death are inseparable, so are righteousness and life. "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil." Deut. 30:15.

Death Passed upon All Men .-Note the justice here. Death passed upon all men, "for that all have sinned." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall

not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." Eze. 18:20. And this is also a necessary consequence of the fact that sin contains death in it, and that death can not come in any other way than by sin.

The Conclusion .-It will be noticed that the twelfth verse begins a proposition that is not completed. Verses 13-17 are parenthetical; we must pass on to the eighteenth verse to find the conclusion. But as the mind would naturally lose the first part of the statement on account of the long parenthesis, the apostle repeats the substance of it, so that we may perceive the force of the conclusion. So the first part of verse 18 is parallel to verse 12. "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men to condemnation." The conclusion is, "Even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."

The Reign of Death .-"Death reigned from Adam to Moses." That does not imply that death did not reign just as much afterwards. But the point is that Moses stands for the giving of the law; "for the law was given by Moses." John 1:17. Now since death reigns through sin, and sin is not imputed when there is no law, it is evident from the statement that "death reigned from Adam to Moses," that the law was in the world just as much before Sinai as it was afterwards. "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law." 1 Cor. 15:56. There can be no sin imputed when there is no law; but wherever there is sin, there death reigns.

Adam a Figure .-"Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come." How is Adam a figure of Him that was to come, namely, Christ? Just as the following verses indicate, that is, Adam was a figure of Christ in that his action involved many besides himself. It is evident that Adam could not give his descendants any higher nature than he had himself, so Adam's sin made it inevitable that all his descendants should be born with sinful natures. Sentence of death, however, does not pass on them for that, but because they have sinned.

A Figure by Contrast .-Adam is a figure of Christ, but only by contrast. "Not as the offence, so also is the free gift." Through the offence of one many are dead; but through the righteousness of One, many receive life. "The judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ." There is contrast all the way through. Everything that came through Adam's fall is undone in Christ; or, better still, all that was lost in Adam is restored in Christ.

"Much More." -This might be taken as the key-note of this chapter. Not only is everything that is lost in Adam restored in Christ, but "much more." "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." And there is no chance of finding fault with the inevitable fact that we are inheritors of a sinful nature through

Adam. We can not complain that we are unjustly dealt with. It is true that we are not to blame for having a sinful nature, and the Lord recognises the fact. So he provides that just as in Adam we were made partakers of a sinful nature, even so in Christ we shall be made partakers of the divine nature. But "much more." "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ." That is, the life of which we are made partakers in Christ is much stronger for righteousness than the life which we received from Adam is for unrighteousness. God does not do things by halves. He gives "abundance of grace."

The Condemnation .-"Death passed upon all men;" or, as stated later, "judgment came upon all men to condemnation." "The wages of sin is death." Rom. 6:23. All have sinned, and, therefore, all are in condemnation. There has not a man lived on earth over whom death has not reigned, nor will there be until the end of the world. Enoch and Elijah, as well as those who shall be translated when the Lord comes, are no exceptions. There are no exceptions, for the Scripture says that "death passed upon all men." For the reign of death is simply the reign of sin. "Elias was a man of like passions with us." Enoch was righteous only by faith; his nature was as sinful as that of any other man. So that death reigned over them as well as over any others. For be it remembered that this present going into the grave, which we so often see, is not the punishment of sin. It is simply the evidence of our mortality. Good and bad alike die. This is not the condemnation, because men die rejoicing in the Lord, and even singing songs of triumph.

"Justification of Life." -"By the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." There is no exception here. As the condemnation came upon all, so the justification comes upon all. Christ has tasted death for every man. He has given himself for all. Nay, he has given himself to every man. The free gift has come upon all. The fact that it is a free gift is evidence that there is no exception. If it came upon only those who have some special qualification, then it would not be a free gift. It is a fact, therefore, plainly stated in the Bible, that the gift of righteousness and life in Christ has come to every man on earth. There is not the slightest reason why

165

every man that has ever lived should not be saved unto eternal life, except that they would not have it. So many spurn the gift offered so freely.

"The Obedience of One." -By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous. Men are not saved through their own obedience, but through the obedience of Christ. Here is where the skeptic cavils, and says that it is not just that one man's obedience should be counted as another's. But the man who rejects the counsel of the Lord does not know anything about justice, and is not qualified to speak in the case. The Bible does not teach us that God calls us righteous simply because Jesus of Nazareth was righteous eighteen hundred years ago. It says that by his obedience we are made righteous. Notice that it is present, actual righteousness. The trouble with those who object to the righteousness of Christ being imputed to believers is that they do not take into

consideration the fact that Jesus lives. He is alive today, as much as when he was in Judea. "He ever liveth," and he is "the same yesterday and to-day, and forever." His life is as perfectly in harmony with the law now as it was then. And he lives in the hearts of those who believe on him. Therefore it is Christ's present obedience in believers that makes them righteous. They can of themselves do nothing, and so God in His love does it in them. Here is the whole story: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Gal. 2:20.

Why Not All?- The text says that "by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." Some one may ask, "Why are not all made righteous by the obedience of One?" The reason is that they do not wish to be. If men were counted righteous simply because One was righteous eighteen hundred years ago, then all would have to be righteous by the same obedience. There would be no justice in counting righteousness to one and not to all, if it were in that way. But we have seen that it is not so. People are not simply counted righteous, but actually made righteous, by the obedience of Christ, who is as righteous as he ever was, and who lives today in those who yield to him. His ability to live in any human being is shown in the fact that he took human flesh eighteen hundred years ago. What God did in the person of the Carpenter of Nazareth, he is willing and anxious to do for every man that believes. The free gift comes upon all, but all will not accept it, and therefore all are not made righteous by it. Nevertheless, "many" will be made righteous by his obedience. Who will be one of the many?
E. J. W.

March 19, 1896

"To God? Or to CÊsar?" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 12.

E. J. Waggoner

When the Jews sought to entrap Jesus into committing Himself to opposition to the evil government, by asking Him if it was lawful to give tribute unto CÊsar, He asked them to show Him the tribute money, and they brought Him a penny. "And He saith unto them, whose is this image and superscription? They say unto Him, CÊsar's. Then saith He unto them, Render therefore unto CÊsar the things which are CÊsar's; and unto God the things that are God's." Matt. 22:19-21.

The completeness of this answer was recognized even by the enemies of Jesus; for when they had heard it, "they marveled, and left Him, and went their way." It settled the question as to what belongs to CÊsar, or human governments, and what to God. Everything that belongs to CÊsar is to be given to him, and that which belongs to God is to be held as sacred to Him. That is but simple justice; no one can gainsay the statement that every one should have what belongs to him.

From this distinction, what may we learn as to ourselves and our service? The Scriptures furnish the answer, by telling us to whom we belong. The Apostle Paul but repeated the statement of Christ, when he said, "Render therefore to all their

dues; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor." Rom. 13:7. Yet he did not include himself and his service as belonging to C sar, and to be rendered to him; for when he was in the hands of C sar's soldiers, on the way to Rome, he said, "There stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve." Acts 27:23.

Writing to the church at Corinth, and to us all, as well, he said, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price." 1 Cor. 6:19, 20.

If we are not our own, whose are we? Why, we belong to Him who has bought us. But that was not C sar nor any other earthly name. No; "for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."

We are the Lord's because He bought us with a price, and that price was His life. Were we were "not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold," "but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." 1 Peter 1:18, 19. He "gave Himself for us." Titus 2:14.

Jesus gave His life for us. He gave Himself for us in death, and He ever liveth to make intercession for us. Therefore since He died and lives for us, it necessarily follows that "whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." The service of our lives belongs to Him, and if we die, it is to be only to His glory, and not to that of any man or any society of men. All is to be to the glory of God, whose we are.

The Christian, therefore, may, at the demand of the state, give it his money, for that bears the image and superscription of the state. But he cannot give himself to the state, for he bears the image of God. He belongs to God, who has bought him, and he must render unto God that which is God's. To give himself to the state would be to rob God.

It is true of all men that they belong to God; but it is true Christians in a special sense, since in their case the purchase has been acknowledged and sealed. Not being their own, they are not at liberty to dispose of themselves. God has the sole right to direct their time and their actions. No Christian, therefore, can enter into any service which will put him, as in the case of a soldier, absolutely under the control of some "superior." To say that the giving of oneself to the state, for it to have absolute control of one, is service to God, is to make the State synonymous with God, which is paganism.

Let no one imagine that this means rebellion or any manner of opposition whatever to earthly governments. Far from it. The God whom we serve is "the very God of peace," and therefore we can serve Him only by living quiet and peaceful lives. Earthly governments may make demands upon us that are obviously unjust, but we are not to judge, nor are we sent to reform government; we must submit even to unjust demands, and not do or say anything to the prejudice of the government or its officers. But when it demands ourselves; when it claims supreme authority as to time and service, then we are to remember whose we are. We cannot give ourselves to the State; not because such a

demand interferes with our rights or convenience, but because we are not our own to give.

He who best serves God, best serves man. It is becoming more and more common to reverse this order, and to make the service of God consist solely in a service to man. But

178

it is wrong. God is first, and He alone can tell us how we can serve our fellow-men the best. He who puts man first, will fail to serve either men or God. The correct answer to the question, "Whose are you?" Will enlighten us as to our duty in many difficult situations. E. J. W.

March 26, 1896

"Studies in Romans. Grace and Truth" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 13.

E. J. Waggoner

In studying the two remaining verses of the fifth chapter of Romans, it will be sufficient for our present purpose if we remember that the main thought running through the chapter is life and righteousness. Sin is death, and righteousness is life. Death has passed upon all men, because all have sinned, and the gift of righteousness has come to all men in the life of Christ. Sin is not imputed when there is no law, yet sin was imputed to Adam and to all who lived after him, even till the time of the giving of the law, in the days of Moses.

"Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 5:20, 21.

Questioning the Text

Why did the law enter?

"The law entered, that the offense might abound."

What took place when sin abounded?

"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

Where did sin abound?

Wherever the law was; because the law entered that sin might abound, and sin is not imputed where there is no law.

Then when did sin abound?

When "the law entered."

Then when must grace have superabounded?

At the entering the law.

Why did God provide that where sin abounded, grace might much more abound?

"That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

How has sin reigned?

"Unto death."

How does grace reign?

"Through righteousness."

Unto what?

"Unto eternal life."

Through whom?

Through "Jesus Christ our Lord."

"The Law Entered." -This statement indicates that there was offence before the particular time spoken of as the "entering" of the law. Taking into consideration verses 13, 14, we have no difficulty in seeing that the giving of the law upon Sinai is the time referred to. "Until the law," the time of Moses, and the entering of the law, evidently refer to the one event.

Sin Abounding .-The law entered that the offence already existing might abound. "But sin is not imputed when there is no law." Therefore we must know that the law was in the world before the time spoken of as the "entering" of the law, that is, before it was spoken from Sinai. This is what we learned from verses 13, 14. It was not possible that the law should actually make any more sin than already existed. It could only emphasize it, that is, more plainly show its true nature. It was, as stated in chapter 7:13, it was "that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." There was not one whit more of the law of God in the world after it was spoken from Sinai than there was before; neither was anything that was right before, made sinful by the giving of the law; nor was any act that was sinful before, made more sinful by the giving of the law. But the circumstances under which the law was spoken, tended to show the awfulness of sin, and to impress the hearers with a greater sense of their sinfulness than ever before.

Grace Superabounding .-It would be well if every person knew this fact. We should hear less talk about being discouraged because we are so sinful. Is the heart full of sin? Know that where sin abounds, there does grace much more abound. This is shown in the fact that Christ, who is full of grace, stands at the door of the heart that is sinfulness itself, and knocks for admission. See Rev. 3:15-20. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." 1 Tim. 1:15. When Wesley sang,

"Plenteous grace with Thee is found,
Grace to cover all my sin,"

he had the authority of Romans 5:20 for it!

Grace at Sinai .-Since the law entered that the offence might abound, it is evident that at the very time of the entering of the law the offence must have greatly abounded. There never was a time when the awfulness of sin was made to stand out more prominently. "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Therefore it is as plain as the Scripture can make it, that grace was superabounding at the giving of the law from Sinai. It is a mistake, therefore, to suppose that God designed that any should think that righteousness was to be obtained by their own works of obedience. On the contrary, the law was spoken

to emphasize the boundless grace of God, in pardoning sin, and in working righteousness in men.

The Law and God's Throne .-We read that "righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." Ps. 97:2. Righteousness dwells in his throne. It is the foundation of it. That the law of God is righteousness, even his own righteousness is shown by Isa. 51:6, 7, where God speaks of his righteousness, and says, "Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law." That is, only they in whose heart is God's law, know his righteousness. Therefore his law is his righteousness. And the statement that righteousness is the habitation or establishment of his throne, indicates that the law of God is in his throne. He sits upon the throne of righteousness.

Evidence from the Tabernacle .-The tabernacle built by Moses was for a dwelling place for God. "Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them." Ex. 25:8. In that sanctuary, in the most holy place, was the ark of the testament. This ark is described in Exodus 25:10-22. The cover of the ark was called the mercy-seat. Upon this mercy-seat were the two cherubim of gold. Within the ark, under the mercy-seat, were the tables of the law. See Ex. 25:16-21; Deut. 10:1-5. Between the cherubim, upon the mercy-seat, and above the tables of the law, was where the glory of God was seen, and where God spoke to the people. Ex. 25:22. In 2 Kings 19:15 and Ps. 80:1 God is addressed as sitting between the cherubim. Therefore we learn that the ark of the testament, with the mercy-seat, or the cover, was a representation of the throne of God. As the Ten Commandments were in the ark in the earthly tabernacle, so the Ten Commandments are the very foundation of the throne of God in heaven. We may note, in passing, that since the earthly tabernacle was a figure of the true tabernacle in heaven, therefore we are taught that the law as it stands in heaven, in the throne of God, is identical with the law as spoken from Sinai, and written on the tables of stone that were placed in the ark.

God's Throne and Sinai .-We have learned that the law of God is the very basis of his throne. This is no more than might reasonably be expected, since the basis of any government is its law, and the throne simply stands for the law. Mount Sinai, when the law was spoken from it, was the seat of God's law. It represented the awfulness of the law, since no one could touch it without dying. The Lord was there with all his angels. See Deut. 33:2; Acts 7:53. Therefore Mount Sinai, at the time of the giving of the law, was designed to represent the throne of God. Indeed, it was for the time the throne of God, the place whence the law goes forth, out of which proceed "lightnings and thunderings and voices" (Rev. 4:5), and around which stand "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" of angels. Here again we learn that the righteousness which is the habitation of the throne of God is the righteousness described by the Ten Commandments, just as they were spoken from the top of Sinai, as recorded in Ex. 20:3-17.

The Throne of Grace .-But although the throne of God is the habitation of his law, that law which is death to sinners, yet it is a throne of grace. We are exhorted to "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Heb. 4:16. Note that we are to come to obtain

mercy. Note also that the top of the ark of the testimony, in which were the tables of the law, was called the mercy-seat. It was the place where God appeared to speak to his people, so that the ark of the earthly tabernacle not only represented the throne where God's law is enshrined, but it represented that throne as the throne of grace.

The Law and the Mediator .-We are told that the law was ordained "in the hand of a Mediator." Gal. 3:19. Who was the Mediator in whose hand the law was ordained? "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all." 1 Tim. 2:5, 6. The law, therefore, was given from Sinai by Christ, who is and always was the manifestation of God to men. He is the Mediator, that is, the One through whom the things of God are brought to men. The righteousness of God is conveyed to men through Jesus Christ. The statement that the law was given in the hand of a Mediator, reminds us that where sin abounded grace did much more abound. The fact that the law was in the hand of a Mediator at Sinai shows us this: (1) That God did not mean that any one should suppose that he must get the righteousness of the law by his own power, but only through Christ. (2) That the Gospel of Christ was displayed at Sinai as well as at Calvary. (3) That the righteousness of God which is revealed in the Gospel of Christ, is the identical righteousness that is described in the law as given from Sinai, without the alteration of a letter. The righteousness which we are to obtain in Christ is none other than that.

The Fountain of Life .-In Ps. 36:7-9 we read: "How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life." It is because with God is the fountain of life that he makes those who trust in him to drink of the river of his pleasure. What is that river?-"And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." Rev. 22:1. Think of it! A river flowing out of the throne of God. He is the fountain of life. The invitation is to every one that is athirst to drink of the water of life freely. Revelation 22:17, John 4:10-14, and 7:37-39, will help to an understanding of the matter. We take the living water by receiving the Holy Spirit.

Drinking in Righteousness .-The Saviour says, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." Matt. 5:6. If one is thirsty, how only can he be filled? By drinking. Therefore the Saviour means that we can drink righteousness, if we thirst for it. Remember that God's throne is the seat of righteousness, and that from it flows the river of life, and we shall see the fitness of the assurance that we may drink in righteousness. Since the throne is the seat of righteousness, the river that proceeds from the throne must, so to speak, be charged with the righteousness of the law. Whosoever therefore believes on Christ, and drinks in of his Spirit, must drink in of the righteousness of the law as it is in the throne, or as it was spoken from Sinai.

Drinking at Sinai .-Whoever will read Ex. 17:1-6 together with Deut. 4:10-12 (which show that Horeb and Sinai are the same), will learn that at the very time

when the law was spoken from Sinai, there was a river of water flowing from its base. That river flowed from Christ. 1 Cor. 10:4. Christ, the living Rock, stood upon that rock in the desert, from which the water flowed for the thirst of the people, and he it was from whom it came. With him is the fountain of life. And so we have the complete likeness of the throne of God in Sinai. It was the embodiment of the law of God, so that no one could approach it without death, and yet they could drink the living water that flowed from it. And in this figure we again see that the righteousness which those who accept Christ's invitation are to drink in, is the righteousness that is described in the Ten Commandments.

The Heart of Christ .-Through David Christ spoke thus of his coming to this earth: "Then said I, Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." Ps. 40:7, 8. He said that he had kept his Father's commandments. John 15:10. So closely did he keep the commandments that he observed the seventh-day Sabbath, which is sometimes stigmatized as "the Jewish Sabbath." Canon Knox-Little says, "It is certain that our Lord when on earth did observe Saturday, and did not observe Sunday."-*Sacerdotalism*, p. 75. This is not true because Canon Knox-Little said it, but it is true because the Bible teaches it. It is so clear a fact that there is no chance for discussion about it. We have never yet heard of any one who had the hardihood to assert that Jesus ever kept any other day than the seventh, the day enjoined in the fourth commandment. The keeping of "the Sabbath day according to the commandment" was part of the righteousness which was in the heart of Christ. And since Christ is the same to-day that he ever was, it is in his heart still.

Eternal Life through Christ .-"Even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Christ's life was given for us and to us on the cross. It is by being crucified with him that we live with him. Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6:8. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto

196

himself." 2 Cor. 5:19. In his heart was the law, so that the heart of Christ was really the throne of God. Thus we sing of "Christ enthroned within." When Christ hung upon the cross, "one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." John 19:34. This was the fountain of life, that freely flows for all. It flowed from the heart of Christ, in which the law of God was enshrined. So we find that Sinai, Calvary, and Mount Sion all present the same thing. Sinai and Calvary are not in opposition, but are united. Both present the same Gospel and the same law. The life which flows for us from Calvary, bears to us the righteousness of the law that was proclaimed from Sinai.

Grace Through Righteousness .-Thus we see how grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. Eternal life is in Christ, because his life is the life of the self-existent God, who is "from everlasting to everlasting." But the life of God is the law. The grace of God flows to us through the life of Christ, and bears to us the righteousness of it. Thus in Christ we receive the law as it was ordained, namely, to life. To accept the unspeakable gift of God's grace, therefore, is simply to yield ourselves to him, that Christ may dwell in us, and live in us the righteousness of the law as spoken from Sinai, and treasured in the

throne of God. From Christ that living stream still flows, so that, receiving him, we shall have in us that well of water spring up unto everlasting life. E. J. W.

"The World in Wickedness" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 13.

E. J. Waggoner

The World in Wickedness .-It is true to-day, as the apostle wrote in the early centuries, that "the whole world lieth in wickedness." The same Gospel is needed now that the apostles preached, calling men to a change of heart and life, and to something separate from the course of this world. The course of this world is evil, and it is as impossible to drift along with it and still be in the service of the Lord, as it was in the apostles' days. Many things are labeled Christian that are not, and many courses of

197

conduct are sanctioned by professedly Christian sentiment that are utterly opposed to Christ and his life. The nations of Christendom are arming for war as never before, and still we hear about Christian nations. The fact that no nation can exist in this wicked world without the employment of physical force and all the refined developments of the fighting art, shows that there can be no such thing as a Christian nation in this present evil world. The citizens of Christ's kingdom are told by their Lord to love their enemies, bear patiently with the oppressor, and suffer violence, if need be, without retaliation. It is thought by many nowadays that the principles which Christ taught are not applicable to the practical affairs of life. But he lived them in his day, and the same life is the Christian's life to-day. E. J. W.

April 2, 1896

"Studies in Romans. Crucified, Buried, and Raised" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 14.

E. J. Waggoner

In beginning the study of the sixth chapter of Romans, it must be remembered that we have but a continuation of the fifth. The subject of that chapter is superabounding grace, and the gift of life and righteousness by grace. As sinners we are enemies of God, but are reconciled, that is, freed from sin, by receiving the righteousness of Christ's life, which has no limit. No matter how greatly the sin may abound, grace does much more abound" "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." This brings us to a consideration of the particulars of our

Union with Christ

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ

was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of

211

his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6:1-11.

Questioning the Text

For what purpose did the law enter?

"The law entered, that the offence might abound." Rom. 5:20.

But what do we find when the offense abounds?

"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Verse 20.

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?"

"God forbid." (Not by any means.)

And why not?

"How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

If we have been baptized into Jesus Christ, into what were we baptized?

"So many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death."

What does baptism mean?

"We are buried with him by baptism into death."

What further?

"That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

If we have been "planted" together in the likeness of his death, what will surely follow?

"We shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

What has taken place?

"Our old man is crucified with him."

Why is the "old man" crucified with Christ?

"That the body of sin might be destroyed."

And what will be the result of that?

"That henceforth we should not serve sin."

From what is he that is dead free?

"He that is dead is freed from sin."

Of what may we be confident if we are dead with Christ?

"That we shall also live with him."

Why have we this confidence?

"Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him."

Why not?

"For in that he liveth, he liveth unto God."

Therefore since we are dead and raised with him, what must be the case with us?

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

An Important Question .-"Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" The student will doubtless recall a similar question in the third chapter, verses 5, 7, and the answer in verses 6, 8. It is another form of the question, "Shall we do evil, that good may come?" The answer must be apparent to all, "Not by any means," for this is really the force of the words improperly rendered, "God forbid." Altho grace superabounds where sin abounds, that is no reason why we should wilfully pile up the sin. That would be most emphatically to receive the grace of God in vain. 2 Cor. 6:1.

The Reason Why .-"How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" It is simply an impossibility, and there is really no question as to whether or not we may do it; for it is certain that if we are dead to sin, we can not live in it at the same time. A man can not at the same time be both dead and alive. Now the previous chapter has emphasized the fact that we are reconciled to God by the death of Christ, and are saved by his life. Reconciliation to God means being freed from sin; so that being "saved by his life" means that we have "passed from death unto life." The life of sin that was enmity has been ended in the life of Christ.

"Baptized into Jesus Christ." -Baptism is the symbol of putting on Christ. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Gal. 8:27. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles." 1 Cor. 12:12, 13.

Where Christ Touches Us .-It is in death that we come into contact with Christ. He touches us at the lowest possible point. That is what makes our salvation so sure, and so sure for every one without any exception. Sin and sickness are tributary to death. Death is the sum of all the evils possible to man. It is the lowest depth, and it is there that Christ comes in contact with us. We become united to him in death. As the greater includes the lesser, the fact that Christ humbled himself even to death proves that there is no ill possible to us that he does not take upon himself.

Baptized into His Death .-"So many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death." And what is it to be baptized into his death? Verse 10 tells us: "For in that he died, he died unto sin once." He died unto sin, not his own, because he had none; but he "bare our sins in his own body on the tree." 1 Peter 2:24. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." Isa. 53:5. Since in that he died, he died unto sin, it follows that if we are baptized into his death, we also die to sin.

A New Life .-"Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more." "If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him." It was impossible for the grave to hold Christ. Acts 2:24. Therefore, just as surely as we are baptized into

the death of Christ, so surely shall we be raised from a life of sin to a life of righteousness in him. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

Crucifixion with Him .-As Christ was crucified, therefore, being baptized into his death means that we are crucified with him. So we read, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Gal. 2:20. Crucified, yet living, because crucified with Christ, and yet he lives. Christ said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." John 14:19. How can we live a new life? We have no power at all of ourselves; but Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father; and in his prayer to the Father he said, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them." John 17:22. Therefore, the power that raised Jesus from the dead is exercised to raise us from the death of sin. If we are willing to allow the old life to be crucified, we may be sure of the new.

"Our Old Man" Crucified .-We shall be in the likeness of his resurrection. If we are crucified with Christ, our sins must also be crucified with Christ, for they are a part of us. Our sins were on him as he was crucified, so of course our sins are crucified if we are crucified with him. But here is a difference between us and our sins when crucified. We are crucified in order that we may live again; our sins are crucified in order that they may be destroyed. Christ is not "the minister of sin" (Gal. 2:17). It was the life of God that raised him from the dead, and in that life there is no sin.

A Separation .-The reader will notice that the separation from sin is in death. That is because death is in sin. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." James 1:15. Therefore nothing less than death will effect a separation. We could not separate ourselves from sin, because sin was our very life. If it had been possible for us to effect the destruction of sin, it could have been only by the giving up of our lives, and that would have been the end of us. That is why there will be no future for the wicked who die in their sins; their life having been given up or rather, taken from them, they are out of existence. But Christ had the power to lay down his life, and to take it again; and therefore when we lay down our lives in him, we are raised again by his endless life. Remember that he does not give us our own life back again, but that he gives us his own life. In that life there never was a sin; and so it is that our crucifixion and resurrection with him is the separation of sin from us. This thought must be borne in mind when we come to study the next chapter.

Living with Him .- "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him." When shall we live with him?-Why, as soon as buried and risen with him, of course. Our life with Christ in the world to come is assured to us only by our living with him now in this world. We are separated from sin, by death with him, in order that we may be joined with him. The reader is asked to bear this in mind also until we come to the study of the next chapter.

"Buried." -"We are buried with him by baptism into death." Baptism, therefore, is burial. If people were content to follow the plain reading of the Scriptures, there never would be a question concerning "the mode of baptism." No one from reading the Bible could ever get any other idea than that baptism is immersion. "*Buried* with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith

of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Col. 2:12. Baptism represents the death and resurrection of Christ, and by it we show our acceptance of his sacrifice; and the very act is an actual burial, in order to make the lesson the more impressive.

Why the Change? -How is it that there has been a change from Scripture baptism to sprinkling? The answer is very easy. Baptism is a memorial of the resurrection of Christ. But "the church," by which is meant the bishops who loved the praise of men more than the praise of God and who wished to curry favor with the "better class" of the heathen, adopted the pagan sun festival. And in order to appear to justify themselves in so doing, they claimed that the rising sun which was worshipped by the heathen was a symbol of the resurrection of "the Sun of Righteousness," namely, Christ, and that by observing Sunday they were celebrating his resurrection. But they did not need two memorials of the resurrection, and so they dropped the one that the Lord had given. In order, however, not to appear to throw baptism away, they claimed that the heathen sprinkling with "holy water" which they very naturally adopted with the heathen sun festival, was the baptism enjoined in the Scriptures. The people trusted in the "fathers" instead of reading the Bible for themselves, and so it was very easy to make them believe that the Bible was obeyed. It is true that there are some who follow the word in regard to immersion, who also observe Sunday; but the two practices are inconsistent. The word is neglected in one particular in order to provide a memorial for an event which they already celebrate in accordance with the word. We are sorry to learn, what however might naturally be expected, that scriptural baptism is falling into disuse among those who observe the first day of the week. It must be the case that sooner or later they will wholly give up one or the other.

E. J. W.

April 9, 1896

"Studies in Romans. Instruments of Righteousness" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 15.

E. J. Waggoner

Read carefully the first verses of the sixth chapter of Romans, before beginning the study of the remaining verses in this lesson. A few words are sufficient to summarize them. They treat of death with Christ, and burial and resurrection with him. In being crucified with him, we give up our own lives, in order that we may be raised with him in his new life. We are then to continue to live with him, since "Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more." The lesson closed with the exhortation, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The closing of the previous lesson at verse 11 was purely arbitrary, since there is really no division in the chapter. The present lesson therefore begins with

An Exhortation

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh; for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6:12-13.

Questioning the Text

How have we learned that we are to regard ourselves?

"Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

If dead to sin but alive unto God, how are we to stand related to sin?

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body."

If sin reign in our body, what do we do?

"Obey it in the lusts thereof."

What further exhortation is given?

"Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin."

To what are we to yield ourselves?

"Yield yourselves unto God."

In what way?

"As those that are alive from the dead."

And what are our members to be?

"Instruments of righteousness unto God."

If we thus yield ourselves as instruments of righteousness unto God, what will be the result?

"Sin shall not have dominion over you."

Why will sin not have dominion over us?

"For ye are not under the law, but under grace."

"What then? shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace?"

"God forbid." Not by any means,-far from it.

Whose servants are we?

"To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are."

What were we formerly, when not under grace?

"The servants of sin."

But what has now been done for us?

"Made free from sin."

How was it that we were made free from sin?

"Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you."

Being made free from sin, what have we become?

"The servants of righteousness."

How are we now to yield our members servants to righteousness?

"As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity."

When we were the servants of sin, from what were we free?

"When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness."

What is the fruit of those things of which we are or should be ashamed?

"The end of those things is death."

But what now that we are made free from sin, and are the servants of God?

"Ye have your fruit unto holiness."

And what is the end?

"The end everlasting life."

What is the wages of sin?

"The wages of sin is death."

And what the gift of God?

"The gift of God is eternal life."

Through whom?

"Through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The Reign of Sin .-In the fifth chapter we learned that the reign of sin is the reign of death, because death comes by sin. But we also learned that the gift of life is offered to all, so that whoever has Christ has life. Instead

229

of death reigning over such, they themselves "shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ." The exhortation, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body," is therefore equal to an exhortation to abide in Christ, or to keep his life. We gained the life by faith, and so we are to keep it.

Whose Servants? -That is very easy to answer. "To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey." If we yield ourselves to sin, then we are the servants of sin, for "whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." John 8:34. But if we yield ourselves to righteousness, then we are the servants of righteousness. "No man can serve two masters." Matthew 6:24. We can not serve both sin and righteousness at the same time. No man can at once be both a sinner and a righteous man. Either sin or righteousness must rule.

Instruments .-We have in this chapter two terms to describe people, namely, servants and instruments. It takes both to illustrate our relation to sin and righteousness. Sin and righteousness are rulers. We are but instruments in their

hands. The kind of work a given instrument will do depends entirely upon the one who uses it. For instance, here is a good pen; what kind of work will it do? It will do good work if it is in the hands of a skilful penman, but in the hands of a bungler its work will be poor. Or, in the hands of a good man it will write only what is good; but in the hands of a bad man it will exhibit that which is evil. But man is not a mere tool. No, not by any means. There is this difference between men and ordinary instruments: the latter have no choice as to who shall use them, while the former have full choice as to whom they will serve. They must yield themselves, not once only, but all the time. If they yield to sin, they will commit sin. If they yield to God, to be instruments in his hands, they can do nothing else but good so long as they are yielded to him.

A Parallel .-In the nineteenth verse we are exhorted to yield ourselves as servants of righteousness just as we have yielded ourselves servants to sin. This being done, we are assured in the following verses that just as surely as the fruit was sin and death when we were yielded to sin, so surely will the fruit be holiness when we yield ourselves servants to righteousness. Yea, even more sure; for "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Righteousness is stronger than sin, even as God is stronger than Satan. God can pluck out of the hands of Satan the soul that cries out for deliverance; but none can pluck God's children out of his hand.

Not under the Law .-Many people are fond of quoting this expression, thinking that it forever absolves them from any observance of the law of God. Strange to say, this expression is used as a cover only for non-observance of the fourth commandment. Repeat the fourth commandment to a man who objects to keeping the Sabbath of the Lord, the seventh day, and he will say, "We are not under the law." Yet that same man will quote the third commandment to a man whom he hears swearing, or the first and second against the heathen, and will acknowledge the sixth, seventh, and eighth commandments. Thus it appears that men do not really believe that the statement that we are not under the law means that we are at liberty to break it. Let us study the whole verse, and its different parts.

What Is Sin? -"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:4. "All unrighteousness is sin." 1 John 5:17. This is definite; let us hold it well in our minds.

What Is Righteousness? -Righteousness is the opposite of sin, because "all unrighteousness is sin." But "sin is the transgression of the law." Therefore righteousness is the keeping of the law. So when we are exhorted to yield our members as instruments of righteousness unto God, it is the same as telling us to yield ourselves to obedience to the law.

The Dominion of Sin .-Sin has no dominion over those who yield themselves servants to righteousness, or to obedience to the law; because sin is the transgression of the law. Now read the whole of the fourteenth verse: "For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace." That is to say, transgression of the law has no place in them who are not under

the law. Then those who are not under the law are those who obey the law. Those who break it, are under it. Nothing can be plainer.

Under Grace .-"Ye are not under the law, but under grace." We have seen that those who are not under the law are the ones who are keeping the law. Those therefore who are under the law are the ones who are breaking it, and who are therefore under its condemnation. But "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Grace delivers from sin. Distressed by the threatenings of the law which we have broken, we flee for refuge to Christ, who is "full of grace and truth." There we find freedom from sin. In him we not only find grace to cover all our sin, but we find the righteousness of the law because he is full of truth, and the law is the truth. Ps. 119:142. Grace "reigns" through righteousness or obedience to the law, unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Wages of Sin .-In the second chapter we learned that those who reject the goodness of God are treasuring up to themselves wrath. Now wrath comes only on the children of disobedience. Eph. 5:6. Those who sin are laying up wages for themselves. "The wages of sin is death." Sin has death in it, therefore "sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." There can be no other end to sin than death, because sin is the absence of righteousness, and righteousness is the life and character of God. Persistent and final choice of sin is therefore choice of complete separation from the life of God, and so from all life, since he is the only source of life. Christ, who is the wisdom of God, says, "All they that hate me love death." Prov. 8:36. Those who suffer death at last will be only those who have worked for it.

The Gift of God .-But we do not work for eternal life. No works that we could do would make the smallest part of payment towards it. It is the gift of God. True, it comes only through righteousness, but righteousness is a gift. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained (prepared) that we should walk in them." Eph. 2:8-10. "O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!" Ps. 31:19. When people sin, God gives them only what they have bargained for. But if any yield themselves as servants of righteousness, he provides the righteousness for them, and gives them eternal life with it, all as a free gift. "The way of the transgressor is hard," but the yoke of Christ is easy, and his burden is light. E. J. W.

April 16, 1896

**"Studies in Romans. Union with Christ" *The Signs of the Times* 22,
16.**

E. J. Waggoner

The seventh chapter of Romans is really all contained in the sixth. He who understands the sixth chapter will have no difficulty with the seventh. Let us

therefore, before beginning with the seventh chapter, recall briefly the points brought out in the last few lessons.

By Christ's obedience we are made righteous. This is because his life is now given to us, and he lives in us. The obedience of Christ which saves us is his present obedience in us. And the obedience is to the law.

This union with Christ we get by being crucified with him. In that death the body of sin is destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin, or, in other words, that we should no more transgress the law. So closely are we identified with sin, it being our very life, that it can not be destroyed without our dying. But in Christ there is no sin, so that while we have a resurrection with him, sin remains dead. So, being raised with him, we live with him, a thing that was formerly impossible on account of sin; sin can not dwell with him.

A Striking Illustration

"Know ye not, brethren (for I speak to them that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." Rom. 7:1-7.

Questioning the Text

To whom does the apostle speak in this chapter?

"I speak to them that know the law."

What are such expected to know about the law?

"That the law hath dominion over a man so long as he liveth."

What illustration of this is given?

"The woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth."

What takes place when the husband dies?

"If the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband."

If while her husband was alive she should be married to another man, what would the law call her?

"An adulteress."

But what if her husband be dead?

"She is no adulteress, though she be married to another man."

Why not?

"She is free from that law."

What personal application is made of this illustration?

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law."

By what means?

"By the body of Christ."

For what purpose?

"That ye should be married to another."

To what other?

"Even to him who is raised from the dead."

To what end?

"That we should bring forth fruit unto God."

What fruit was brought forth when we were in the flesh?

"Fruit unto death."

What was it that produced this fruit unto death?

"The motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death."

What gave them that power?

"The law."

But now what has taken place, since we are married to him that is raised from the dead?

"But now we are delivered from the law."

How is it that we can be married to another, and still be free before the law?

"That being dead wherein we were held."

What is the difference in the service now and then?

"That we should serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter."

What shall we say then? Is the law sin?

"God forbid." Far from it.

What proves that?

"I had not known sin, but by the law."

What special commandment revealed the greatness of sin?

"I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."

The Illustration .-It is a very simple one, and one which every one can understand. The law of God says of man and woman, "They two shall be one flesh." It is adultery for either one to be married to another while the other is living. The law will not sanction such a union. For reasons that will appear later, the illustration cites only the case of a woman leaving her husband. The law unites them. That law holds the woman to the man as long as he lives. If while her husband lives she shall be united to another man, she will find herself under the condemnation of the law. But if her husband dies, she may be united to another, and be perfectly free from any condemnation. She is then "free from the law," although the law has not changed in one particular. Least of all has it been abolished; for the same law

that bound her to the first husband and which condemned her for uniting with another in his lifetime, now unites her to another and binds her to him as closely as it did to the first. If we hold to this simple illustration, we shall have no difficulty with what follows.

The Application .-As in the illustration there are four subjects, the law, the woman, the first husband, and the second husband so also in the application. We are represented as the woman. This is clear from the statement that we are "married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead," which is Christ. He therefore is the second husband. The first husband is indicated in verse 5: "When we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." Death is the fruit of sin. The first husband, therefore, was the flesh, or "the body of sin."

"Dead to the Law." -This is the expression that troubles so many. There is nothing troublesome in it, if we but keep in mind the illustration and the nature of the parties to this transaction. Why are we dead to the law? In order that we might be married to another. But how is it that we become dead in order to be married to another? In the illustration it is the first husband that dies before the woman may be married to another. Even so it is here, as we shall see.

"One Flesh." -The law of marriage is that the two parties to it "shall be one flesh." How is it in this case? The first husband is the flesh, the body of sin. Well, we were truly one flesh with that. We were by nature perfectly united to sin. It was our life. It controlled us. Whatever sin devised, that we did. We might have done it unwillingly at times, but we did it nevertheless. Sin reigned in our mortal bodies, so that we obeyed it in the lusts thereof. Whatever sin wished, was law to us. We were one flesh.

Seeking a Divorce .-There comes a time in our experience when we wish to be free from sin. It is when we see something of the beauty of holiness. With some people the desire is only occasional; with others it is more constant. Whether they recognize the fact or not, it is Christ appealing to them to forsake sin, and to be joined to him, to live with him. And so they endeavor to effect a separation. But sin will not consent. In spite of all that we can do, it still clings to us. We are "one flesh," and it is a union for life since it is a union of our life to sin. There is no divorce in that marriage.

Freedom in Death .-There is no hope of effecting a separation from sin by any ordinary means. No matter how much we may desire to be united to Christ, it can not be done while we are joined to sin; for the law will not sanction such a union, and Christ will not enter into any union that is not lawful. If we could only get sin to die, we should be free, but it will not die. There is only one way for us to be freed from the hateful union, and that is for us to die. If we wish freedom so much that we are willing to be crucified, then it may be done. In death the separation is effected; for it is by the body of Christ that "we" become dead. We are crucified with him. The body of sin is also crucified. But while the body of sin is destroyed, we have a resurrection in Christ. The same thing that frees us from the first husband, unites us to the second.

A New Creature .-Now we see how it is that we are dead to the law. We died in Christ, and were raised in him. But "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God." 2 Cor. 5:17, 18. Now we may be united to Christ, and the law will witness to the union, and sanction it. For not only is the first husband dead, but we also died, so that, although alive, we are not the same creature that we were before. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Gal. 2:20. We are one. The same law that formerly declared us to be sinners now binds us to Christ.

A Different Service .-Now that the union with Christ has been effected, we serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter. In marriage, the woman is to be subject to the husband. So when we were united to sin, we were in all things subject to sin. For a time it was willing service; but when we saw the Lord, and were drawn to him, the service became irksome. We tried to keep God's law, but were bound, and could not. But now we are set free. Sin no longer restrains us, and our service is freedom. We gladly render to Christ all the service that the law requires of us. We render this service because of the perfect union between us. His life is ours, since we were raised only by the power of his life. Therefore our obedience is simply his loyalty and faithfulness in us.

Sin by the Law .-The apostle says that when we were in the flesh, "the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Far from it. The law is righteousness. But it is only by the law that sin is known. "Sin is not imputed when there is no law." "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law." 1 Cor. 15:56. "Sin is the transgression of the law." So there can be no sin but by the law. But the law is not sin; for if it were, it would not reprove sin. To convince of sin is the work of the Spirit of God, and not of Satan. He would make us believe that sin is right.

"Thou Shalt Not Covet." -It once seemed very strange that the apostle should have quoted only this one commandment as the one that convicted him of sin. But the reason is plain. It was because this one includes every other. We learn (Col. 3:5) that covetousness is idolatry. Thus the law ends just where it begins. It is a complete circle, including every duty of every person in the universe. "I had not known lust," or unlawful desire, "except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." Now lust is the beginning of every sin, for "when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin." James 1:15. And sin is the transgression of the law. But the tenth commandment is that one which forbids lust or unlawful desire. Therefore, if it is perfectly kept, all the others must be. And if it is not kept, no part of the law is kept. So we see that in quoting the tenth commandment as that which convinced him of sin, the apostle really included the whole law.

Living with Him .-Before leaving this portion we must call attention to the force of the eighth verse of chapter 6: "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him." We can see how apt this is when we know that it is our death with Christ that frees us from the union with the monster sin, and unites us in marriage to Christ. People get married in order to live together. So we become united to Christ in order that we may live with him here and in the world

to come. If we would live with him in the world to come, we must live with him in this world. E. J. W.

April 23, 1896

"Studies in Romans. The Law of Sin" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 17.

E. J. Waggoner

In the first seven verses of the seventh chapter of Romans we have had the relation which we by nature sustain to sin, and which by grace we afterwards sustain to Christ, represented under the figure of marriage to a first and second husband. The union with the second husband can not take place while the first husband is living; and in this case the marriage is so perfect, the two parties being literally one flesh and blood, that one can not die without the other; therefore we must needs die with sin, before we can be separated from it. But we die in Christ, and as he lives, although he was dead, we also live with him. But in his life there is no sin, and so the body of sin is destroyed, while we are raised. Thus in death we are separated from the first husband, sin, and united to the second husband, Christ.

In the verses which follow the apostle has pictured the struggle with the sin that has become distasteful. It is really an enlargement of that which has been presented in the first verses. It is the story of

The Struggle for Freedom

"Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy,

260

and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is not more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched

man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." Rom. 7:8-25.

Altho this is a long portion of Scripture, it does not need so long treatment as some shorter portions, since there are several repetitions. For instance, the statement in verse 15 is repeated in verses 19 and 20. Verses 17 and 21 are also the same thought, as also verses 18 and 23. The points, however, will doubtless appear very much more clearly by the usual

Questioning the Text

What does the apostle say that sin wrought in him?

"Sin. . . wrought in me all manner of concupiscence."

How did it do this?

"Taking occasion by the commandment."

What was the condition of sin without the law?

"Without the law sin was dead."

But what was the apostle's condition without the law?

"I was alive without the law."

What change occurred when the commandment came?

"When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died."

What did he find the commandment to be?

"The commandment. . . I found to be unto death."

Yet for what was the commandment designed?

It was "ordained to life."

What did sin do?

"Sin. . . deceived me, and. . . slew me."

How had it the power to do this?

"Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me."

What was it that deceived or slew him, the law, or sin?

"*Sin*. . . deceived me, and. . . slew me."

Wherefore what is true of the law?

"The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."

Was then that which was good, namely, the law, made death unto him?

No; "but sin. . . working death in me by that which is good."

Why was this?

"That it might appear sin;" "that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful."

What do we know of the law?

"We know that the law is spiritual."

But what about ourselves?

"But I am carnal."

And therefore in what condition?

"Sold under sin."

What do we call one who is bought and sold?

A slave.

What is the evidence that the one who is carnal is a slave?

"That which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I."

What is shown by the fact that he does the evil that he hates?

"I consent unto the law that it is good."

Therefore who is it in reality that does the evil works?

"It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

To what law is such an one subject?

"I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me."

In what does he delight?

"I delight in the law of God."

How does he delight in the law of God?

"After the inward man."

Then why does he not obey it?

"I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."

In what condition is such an one?

"O wretched man that I am!"

What is his distressed cry?

"Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Is there any hope of deliverance?

"I think God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Sin Personified .-It will be noticed that in this entire chapter sin is represented as a person. It is the first husband to which we are united. But the union has become distasteful, because, having seen Christ and having been drawn to him by his love, we have seen that we were joined to a monster. The marriage bond has become a galling yoke, and our whole thought is how to get away from the monster to which we are united and which is dragging us down to a certain death. The picture presented in this chapter is one of the most vivid in the whole Bible.

The Strength of Sin .-"The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law." 1 Cor. 15:56. "Without the law sin was dead." "Sin is not imputed when there is no law." "Where no law is, there is no transgression." So it is that "sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence." Sin is simply the law transgressed, "for sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:4. Sin has no strength, therefore, except that which it gets from the law. The law is not sin, and yet it binds us to sin, that is, the law witnesses to the sin and will not grant us any escape, simply because it can not bear false witness.

The Law of Life, and the Law of Death .-"The commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." The law of God is the life of God. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matt. 5:48. His life is the rule for all his creatures. Those in whom the life of God is made perfectly manifest, keep his law. It is very evident therefore that the design of the law is life, since it is life itself. But the opposite of life is death. Therefore when the law is transgressed, it is death to the transgressor.

The Deadly Enemy .-"For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." It is not the law that is the enemy, but the enemy is sin. Sin does the killing, for "the sting of death is sin." Sin has the poison of death in it. Sin deceived us so that for a time we thought that it was our friend, and we embraced it and delighted in the union. But when the law enlightened us, we found that sin's embrace was the embrace of death.

The Law Cleared .-The law pointed out the fact that sin was killing us. "Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." We have no more reason to rail at the law than we have to hate the man who tells us that the substance which we are eating, thinking it to be food, is poison. He is our friend. He would not be our friend if he did not show us our danger. The fact that he is not able to heal the illness that the poison already eaten has caused does not make him any the less our friend. He has warned us of our danger, and we can now get help from the physician. And so, after all, the law itself was not death to us, but its office was "that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful."

"The Law Is Spiritual." -"For we know that the law is spiritual." If this fact were more generally recognized, there would be much less religious legislation among so-called Christian nations. People would not try to enforce the commandments of God. Since the law is spiritual, it can be obeyed only by the power of the Spirit of God. "God is Spirit" (John 4:24); therefore the law is the nature of God. Spiritual is opposed to carnal, or fleshly. Thus it is that the man who is in the flesh can not please God.

A Slave .-"But I am carnal, sold under sin." One who is sold is a slave; and the evidence of the slavery in this instance is very plain. Free men do that which they wish to do. Only slaves do that which they do not wish to do, and are continually prevented from doing what they wish to do. "For that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." A more disagreeable position can not be imagined. Life in such a state can be only a burden.

Convicted, but Not Converted .-"If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good." The fact that we do not wish to do the sins that we are committing shows that we acknowledge the righteousness of the law which forbids them. But conviction is not conversion, although a very necessary step to that condition. It is not enough to wish to do right. The blessing is pronounced upon those who do his commandments, and not upon those who wish to do them, or who even try to do them. Indeed, if there were no higher position for a professed follower of the Lord than that described in these verses, he would be in a far worse condition than the careless sinner. Both are slaves, only the latter is so hardened that he finds pleasure in his slavery. Now if one must all his life be a slave, it is better for him to be unconscious of his bondage than to be continually fretting over it. But there is something better; therefore it is a blessing that we are convicted of sin, and that our slavery is thereby made as disagreeable as possible.

Two Laws .-"I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in

my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." Compare this with verse 5. Remember also that all this is written to them that know the law. It is not addressed to the heathen who have not the law, but to those who profess to know God. While knowing the law, we are united in marriage to sin. This sin is in our flesh, since they who are married are one flesh. It is the law that witnesses to the fact that we are sinners, and that will not grant us any escape from it. But we are slaves. Whosoever commits sin is the slave of sin. John 8:34. Therefore it is that the law that will not let us be anything but what we are, is really holding us in bondage. While we are in that condition, it is not to us a law of liberty.

A Body of Death .-We are joined in marriage to sin. But sin has in it death; for "the sting of death is sin." Sin is that with which death kills us. Therefore the body of sin, to which we are joined when in the flesh, is but a body of death. What a terrible condition! Joined in such close union that we are one flesh with that which is in itself death. A living death! And "the strength of sin is the law." It witnesses to our union, and thus holds us in that bondage of death. If there were no hope of escape, we might curse the law for not allowing us to die in ignorance. But although the law seems to be pitiless, it is nevertheless our best friend. It holds us to a sense of the dreadfulness of our bondage until in anguish we cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" We must be delivered, or we perish.

A Deliverer .-The pagan proverb has it that God helps those who help themselves. The truth is that God helps those who can not help themselves: "I was brought low, and he helped me." No one ever cries in vain for help. When the cry goes up for help, the Deliverer is at hand; and so, although sin is working death in us by all the power of the law, we may exclaim, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 15:57. "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Rom. 11:26. "Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." Acts 3:26. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

A Divided Man .-"So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." That is, of course, while in the condition described in the preceding verses. In purpose he serves the law of God, but in actual practice he serves the law of sin. As described in another place, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye can not do the things that ye would." Gal. 5:17. It is not a state of actual service to God, because we read in our next chapter that "they that are in the flesh can not please God." It is a state from which one may well pray to be delivered, so that he can serve the Lord not merely with the mind, but with his whole being. "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." 1 Thess. 5:23, 24. E. J. W.

April 30, 1896

"Studies in Romans. Freedom" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 18.

E. J. Waggoner

We now come to the conclusion of the whole matter. In the eighth chapter of Romans the epistle reaches its highest point. The seventh has presented to us the deplorable condition of the man who has been awakened by the law to a sense of his condition, bound to sin by cords that can be loosened only by death. It closes with a glimpse of the Lord Jesus Christ as the One who alone can set us free from the body of death. This brings us to the state of

Freedom from Condemnation

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh can not please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Rom. 8:1-9.

Questioning the Text

What is the condition of them that are in Christ?

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

How do such walk?

"Not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

From what have we been made free?

"From the law of sin and death."

What has done this?

"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus."

How did God send his Son?

"In the likeness of sinful flesh."

What for?

"For sin."

What did he thus do?

"Condemned sin in the flesh."

For what purpose?

"That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us."

Why could not the law itself do this?

Because "it was weak through the flesh."

How is it then that it can be done in us through Christ?

Because we "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

What is said of those who are after, or according to, the flesh?

"They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh."

What of them that are after the Spirit?

"They that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit."

What is the difference between the flesh and the Spirit.

"These are contrary the one to the other." Gal. 5:17.

What is it to be minding the flesh?

"To be carnally minded is death."

And what to be minding the Spirit?

"To be spiritually minded is life and peace."

Why is it that to be carnally minded is death?

"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God."

In what does its enmity consist?

"It is not subject to the law of God."

Can not the carnal mind be brought into subjection to the law of God?

"Neither indeed can be."

Then what necessarily follows?

"So then they that are in the flesh can not please God."

What is the condition of those in whom the Spirit of God dwells?

"Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you."

What is said of the one who has not this Spirit?

"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

"No Condemnation." -There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ.

Why? Because he received the curse of the law, that the blessing might come on us. Nothing can come to us while we are in him, without first passing through him; but in him all curses are turned to blessings, and sin is displaced by righteousness. His endless life triumphs over everything that comes against it. We are made "complete in him."

"Looking unto Jesus." -Some say, "I do not find this scripture fulfilled in my case, because I find something to condemn me every time I look at myself." To be sure; for the freedom from condemnation is not in ourselves, but in Christ Jesus. We are to look at him, instead of at ourselves. If we obey his orders, and trust him, he takes the responsibility of making us clear before the law. There will never be a time when one will not find condemnation in looking at himself. The fall of Satan was due to his looking at himself. The restoration for those whom he has made to fall, is only through looking to Jesus. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." John 3:14. The serpent was lifted up to be looked at. Those who looked were healed. Even so with Christ. In the world to come the servants of the Lord "shall see his face," and they will not be drawn away to themselves. The light of his countenance will be

their glory and it is in that same light that they will be brought to that glorious state.

Conviction, Not Condemnation .-The text does not say that those who are in Christ Jesus will never be reproved.

"Do you think he ne'er reproves me?
What a false friend he would be
If he never, never told me
Of the faults that he must see!"

Getting into Christ is only the beginning, not the end, of Christian life. It is the entrance to the school where we are to learn of him. He takes the ungodly man with all his evil habits and forgives all his sins, so that he is counted as though he never had sinned. Then he continues to him his own life, by which he may overcome his evil habits. Association with Christ will more and more reveal to us our failings, just as association with a learned man will make us conscious of our ignorance. As a faithful witness, he tells us of our failings. But it is not to condemn us. We receive sympathy, not condemnation, from him. It is this sympathy that gives us courage, and enables us to overcome. When the Lord points out a defect in our characters, it is the same as saying to us, "There is something that you are in need of, and I have it for you." When we learn to look at reproof in this way, we shall rejoice in it, instead of being discouraged.

Law of Life in Christ .-The law without Christ is death. The law in Christ is life. His life is the law of God; for out of the heart are the issues of life, and the law was in his heart. The law of sin and death works in our members. But the law of the Spirit of life in Christ gives us freedom from this. Mark that it is the life in Christ that does this. It does not give us freedom from obedience to the law, for we had that before, and that was bondage, and not freedom. What he gives us freedom from is the transgression of the law.

Christ's Work .-This is made very plain in verses 3 and 4. God sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." There is no fault to be found with it but with us, because we have transgressed it. Christ's work is not to change the law in any particular, but to change us in every particular. It is to put the law into our hearts in perfection, in place of the marred and broken copy.

The Weakness of the Law .-The law is strong enough to condemn, but it is weak, even powerless, with respect to what man needs namely, salvation. It was and is "weak through the flesh." The law is good, and holy, and just, but man has no strength to perform it. Just as an axe may be of good steel, and very sharp, yet unable to cut down a tree because the arm that has hold of it has no strength, so the law of God could not perform itself. It set forth man's duty; it remained for him to do it. But he could not, and therefore Christ came to do it in him. What the law could not do, God did by his Son.

Likeness of Sinful Flesh .-There is a common idea that this means that Christ *simulated* sinful flesh; that he did not take upon himself actual sinful flesh, but only what appeared to be such. But the Scriptures do not teach such a thing. "In

all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining

276

to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." Heb. 2:17. He was "born of a woman, born under the law," that he might redeem them that were under the law. Gal. 4:4, 5, R.V. He took the same flesh that all have who are born of woman. A parallel text to Rom. 8:3, 4 is found in 2 Cor. 5:21. The former says that Christ was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." The latter says that God "made him to be sin for us," although he knew no sin, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

"Compassed with Infirmity." -All the comfort that we can get from Christ lies in the knowledge that he was made in all things as we are. Otherwise we should hesitate to tell him of our weaknesses and failures. The priest who makes sacrifices for sins must be one "who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity." Heb. 5:2. This applies perfectly to Christ; "for we have not an High Priest which can not be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Heb. 4:15. This is why we may come boldly to the throne of grace for mercy. So perfectly has Christ identified himself with us, that he even now feels our sufferings.

The Flesh and the Spirit .-"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit." Note that this depends on the preceding statement, "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." The things of the Spirit are the commandments of God, because the law is spiritual. The flesh serves the law of sin (see the preceding chapter, and Gal. 5:19-21, where the works of the flesh are described). But Christ came in the same flesh, to show the power of the Spirit over the flesh. "They that are in the flesh can not please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of Christ dwell in you." Now no one will claim that the flesh of a man is any different after his conversion from what it was before. Least of all will the converted man himself say so; for he has continual evidence of its perversity. But if he is really converted, and the Spirit of Christ dwells in him, he is no more in the power of the flesh. Even so Christ came in the same sinful flesh, yet he was without sin, because he was always led by the Spirit.

The Enmity .-"The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." The flesh never becomes converted. It is enmity against God; and that enmity consists in opposition to his law. Therefore, whoever opposes the law of God is fighting against him. But Christ is our Peace, and he came preaching peace. "You, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in his sight." Col. 1:21, 22. In his own flesh he abolishes the enmity, so that all who are crucified with him are at peace with God; that is, they are subject to his law, which is in their hearts.

"Life and Peace." -"To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." To be spiritually minded is to have a mind controlled by the law of God, "for we know that the law is spiritual." "Great peace have they which love thy law." Ps. 119:165. "Being justified [made righteous] by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." The carnal mind is enmity against God. Therefore, to be carnally minded is death. But Christ "hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." 2 Tim. 1:10. He has abolished death by destroying the power of sin in all who believe in him; for death has no power except through sin. "The sting of death is sin." 1 Cor. 15:56. So that even now we may joyfully say, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." E. J. W.

May 14, 1896

"Studies in Romans. Sons of God" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 20.

E. J. Waggoner

The eighth chapter of Romans is full of the glorious things that God has promised to them that love him. Freedom, the Spirit of life in Christ, sons of God, heirs of God and with Christ, glory and victory, are the words that outline the chapter. Our last lesson closed with the ninth verse, but we will include it in the present lesson in order to get the connection better.

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you,

307

the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Rom. 8:9-17.

Questioning the Text

What have we learned to be impossible for them that are in the flesh?

"They that are in the flesh can not please God."

Then how can we serve the Lord?

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit."

How is it that we are "in the Spirit"?

"If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you."

What if one has not this Spirit?

"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

But if Christ by his Spirit be in us, then what?

"The body is dead."

Why is the body dead?

"Because of sin."

And the Spirit?

"The Spirit is life because of righteousness."

Of what may we be sure if the Spirit of God dwells in us?

"He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

In the first chapter we learned that we are debtors; but to what do we owe nothing?

"We are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh."

For what only can the flesh give us?

"If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die."

How shall we live?

"If ye. . . do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

How are we to mortify the deeds of the body?

"Through the Spirit."

Who are the sons of God?

"As many as are led by the Spirit of God."

What spirit have we not received from the Lord?

"Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear."

What Spirit have we received?

"Ye have received the Spirit of adoption."

What does this Spirit enable us to do?

"Whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

To what does the Spirit witness?

"That we are the children of God."

What necessarily follows?

"If children, then heirs."

Whose heirs?

"Heirs of God."

With whom do we have common heirship?

"Joint-heirs with Christ."

Since we are joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, what shall we enjoy with him?

"We may be also glorified together."

Under what conditions?

"If so be that we suffer with him."

Opposing Forces .-The flesh and the Spirit are in opposition. These are always contrary the one to the other. The Spirit never yields to the flesh, and the flesh never gets converted. The flesh will be of the nature of sin until our bodies are changed at the coming of the Lord. The Spirit strives with the sinful man, but he yields to the flesh, and so is the servant of sin. Such a man is not led by the

Spirit, although the Spirit has by no means forsaken him. The flesh is just the same in a converted man that it is in a sinner, but the difference is that now it has no power, since the man yields to the Spirit, which controls the flesh. Although the man's flesh is precisely the same that it was before he was converted, he is said to be not "in the flesh," but "in the Spirit," since he through the Spirit mortifies the deeds of the body.

Life in Death .-"And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." Here we have the two individuals of which the apostle speaks in 2 Cor. 4:7-16. "For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." Then he says that "though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." Though our body should fail and be worn out, yet the inward man, Christ Jesus, is ever new. And he is our real life. "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Col. 3:3. This is why we are not to fear them that can kill only the body, and after that have no more that they can do. Though the body be burned at the stake, wicked men can not touch the eternal life which we have in Christ, who can not be destroyed. No man can take his life from him.

The Surety of the Resurrection .-"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Jesus said of the water that he gave, which was the Holy Spirit, that it should be in us a well of water springing up unto eternal life. John 4:14; compare John 7:37-39. That is, the spiritual life which we now live in the flesh by the Spirit is the surety of the spiritual body to be bestowed at the resurrection when we will have the life of Christ made manifested in immortal bodies.

Not Debtors to the Flesh .-"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh." We are indeed debtors, but we do not owe anything to the flesh. It has done nothing for us, and can do nothing. All the work that the flesh can do avails nothing, for its works are sin and therefore death. But we are debtors to the Lord Jesus Christ, "who gave himself for us." Consequently, everything must be yielded to his life. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

Sons of God .-Those who yield to the strivings of the Spirit, and continue so to yield, are led by the Spirit; and they are the sons of God. They are taken into the same relation to the Father that the only-begotten Son occupies. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon 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." If we are led by the Spirit of God, we are now just as much the sons of God as we can ever be.

Sons Now .-There is a notion held by some people that no man is born of God until the resurrection. But this is settled by the fact that we are now sons of God. "But," says one, "we are not yet manifested as sons." True, and neither was Christ when he was on earth. There were but very few that knew him to be the

Christ, the Son of the living God. And they knew it only by revelation from God. The world knows us not, because it knew him not. To say that believers are not sons of God now because there is nothing in their appearance to indicate it, is to bring the same charge against Jesus Christ. But Jesus was just as truly the Son of God when he lay in the manger in Bethlehem, as he is now when sitting at the right hand of God.

The Spirit's Witness .-"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the children of God." How does the Spirit witness? This is answered in Heb. 10:14-17. The apostle says that by one offering he hath perfected them that are sanctified, and then says that the Holy Spirit is a witness to this fact when he says, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." That is to say, the Spirit's witness is the word. We know that we are children of God, because the Spirit assures us of that fact in the Bible. The witness of the Spirit is not a certain ecstatic feeling, but a tangible statement. We are not children of God because we feel that we are, neither do we know that we are sons because of any feeling, but because the Lord tells us so. He who believes has the word abiding in him, and that is how "he that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." 1 John 5:10.

No Fear .-"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." 2 Tim. 1:7. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." 1 John 4:16-18. Christ gave himself to deliver them who through fear of death were all their life subject to bondage. Heb. 2:15. He who knows and loves the Lord can not be afraid of him; and he who is not afraid of the Lord has no need to be afraid of any other person or thing. One of the greatest blessings of the Gospel is the deliverance from fear, whether real or imaginary. "I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears." Ps. 34:4.

Heirs of God .-What a wonderful inheritance that is! It does not merely say that we are heirs of what God has, but that we are heirs of God himself. Having him we have everything, as a matter of course; but the blessedness consists in having him. "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup." Ps. 16:5. This is the fact; it is a thing to be meditated upon rather than talked about.

Joint-heirs with Christ .-If we are sons of God, we stand on the same footing that Jesus Christ does. He himself said that the Father loves us even as he loves him. John 17:23. This is proved by the fact that his life was given for ours. Therefore the Father has nothing for his only-begotten Son that he has not for us. Not only so, but since we are joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, it follows that he can not enter upon his inheritance before we do. To be sure, he is sitting at the right hand of God. But God in his great love for us "hath quickened us together with

Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places." Eph. 2:4-6. The glory which Christ has he shares with us. John 17:22. It means something to be a joint-heir with Jesus Christ! No wonder the apostle exclaims, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."

Suffering with Him .-"If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." Heb. 2:18. Suffering with Christ means, therefore, enduring temptation with him. The suffering is that which comes in the struggle against sin. Self-inflicted suffering amounts to nothing. It is not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh. Col. 2:23. Christ did not torture himself in order to gain the approval of the Father. But when we suffer with Christ, then we are made perfect in him. The strength by which he resisted the temptations of the enemy is the strength by which we are to overcome. His life in us gains the victory.

The remainder of the verse, concerning being glorified together, may well be left until next week, since it forms the principal part of the verses which follow. E. J. W.

May 21, 1896

"How to Be Free from Want" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 21.

E. J. Waggoner

Who would not be glad if he could be assured that he could have everything he wanted? How many people there are who are filled with unsatisfied longings! This is a world of want and woe. It is not only those who have no money who are in want. Often those who suffer the most from unsatisfied desires are those whose money is reckoned by millions. They want more.

Well, there is a sure way by which every man may have all that he wants,- may have every desire gratified. Here it is: "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." Ps. 37:3, 4.

It is a sure thing. Whoever delights in the Lord will have everything he wants. "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly," or sincerely; and those who delight in the Lord will want nothing but that which is good. Christ himself is the surety for the fulfillment of this promise. He says, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." John 15:7. He has an unlimited supply; for the apostle assures us, "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Phil. 4:19. His riches are unsearchable. Why will men persist in being in want, when they might have abundance? E. J. W.

**"Studies in Romans. Glorified Together" *The Signs of the Times* 22,
21.**

E. J. Waggoner

In the preceding verses of the eighth chapter of Romans we have seen how we are adopted into the family of God as sons, and made joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit establishes the bond of relationship. It is the "Spirit of adoption," the Spirit proceeding from the Father as the representative of the Son, that proves that we are accepted as brethren of Jesus Christ. Those who are led by the Spirit must be even as Christ was in the world, and are therefore assured of

An Equal Share

in the inheritance with Christ. For "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." Rom. viii. 17-25.

Questioning the Text

To what does the Spirit bear witness?

"That we are the children of God."

If we are children, then what are we?

"If children, then heirs."

Heirs of whom?

"Heirs of God."

With whom do we share this heirship?

"Joint heirs with Christ."

What did Christ inherit on this earth?

"He was oppressed, and He was afflicted." Isa. 53:7.

Then if we are joint heirs, what must we do?

"Suffer with Him."

What else will also be sure?

"We may be also glorified together."

What may we know of the sufferings of this present time?

They "are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

For what does the material creation wait?

"For the manifestation of the sons of God."

To what was the creation made subject?

"To vanity."

How?

"Not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope."

What is the hope?

"The creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption."

Into what will it be delivered?

"Into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

What is the condition of the whole creation at the present time?

"The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."

What besides the lower creation is in this condition?

"Ourselves also."

For what do we groan?

"For the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

What have we received as a surety that the body will be redeemed?

"The firstfruits of the Spirit."

By what are we saved?

"By hope."

For what do we hope?

"For that we see not."

What does hope lead us to do?

"We with patience wait for it."

Suffering .-Christ's life on earth was one of suffering. He was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." He "suffered, being tempted," but His sufferings were not all in the mind alone. He knew physical pain; "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases." Matt. 8:17. R.V. He suffered hunger in the wilderness; and His works of love were done at the expense of much bodily pain and weariness. The sufferings which He endured at the hands of the rough soldiers in connection with His mock trial, and His crucifixion, were simply a continuation in another form of what He had endured throughout His whole life on earth.

Glory Following Suffering .-In all the prophets, the Spirit of Christ was witnessing and testifying of "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." 1 Peter 1:11. When Christ, after his resurrection, talked with the two disciples on the way to

323

Emmaus, he said. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." Luke 24:26, 27. We know that the first part of those prophecies was fulfilled, and therefore must know that the rest are as sure. As surely as Christ suffered, so surely will the glory follow.

Suffering Together .-Our suffering is to be "with Him." We are not to suffer alone. But we could not suffer eighteen hundred years ago, before we were born.

Therefore it follows that Christ still suffers. Otherwise we could not suffer with him. Read what is said of his connection with ancient Israel: "In all their affliction He was afflicted." Isa. 63:9. So in Matthew 25:35-40 we learn that Christ suffers or experiences relief whenever his disciples suffer or are relieved. He is the head of the body. Now if when one member suffers all the members suffer with it (1 Cor. 12:26), how much more must that be true of the Head! So we read of Christ that even now, as high priest, he is "touched with the feeling our infirmities." Heb. 4:15. A high priest must be one "who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that He Himself also is compassed with infirmity." Heb. 5:1, 2. So we learn that Christ has never divested Himself of the human nature which he took upon Himself, but that he is still identified with suffering, sinful men. It is a glorious truth, to be recognized and confessed, that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." 1 John 4:2.

Glorified Together .-"If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." Christ does not have anything that is not for us equally with Him. His prayer was, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am." John 17:24. And he says, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." Rev. 3:21. Whatever He has, we have, and we have it when he has it, since we are joint-heirs with Him.

Glory Now .-The above statement may at first sight seem to be untrue. It is the common idea that Christ is glorified long before those who are fellow-heirs with him. One text is sufficient to settle this matter: "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed." 1 Pet. 5: 1. Peter declared himself to be a partaker of the glory. This was because he believed the saying of Christ, in his prayer for his disciples, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them." John 17:22. If Christ has glory now, his disciples share it also. Again we have the words of the apostle Peter. Speaking of Christ, he says, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." 1 Peter 1:8.

Grace and Glory .-The apostle John tells us that although we are now the sons of God the world knows us not, because it knew not Christ. There was nothing in the appearance of Christ on earth to indicate that he was the Son of God. Flesh and blood did not reveal that fact to anybody. To all appearance He was but an ordinary man. Yet all the time He had glory. We read that when he turned the water into wine He "manifested forth His glory." John 2:11. His glory was manifested in the form of grace. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." John 1:14. The grace with which God strengthens His people is "according to the riches of his glory." Eph. 3:16. Whoever is in Christ is chosen "to the praise of the glory of his grace." Eph. 1:6. Grace is glory, but glory veiled so that mortal eyes may not be dazzled by it.

Glory to be Revealed .-"The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." The glory is for us to possess now, but it will be revealed only at the coming of Christ. It is then that his glory will be revealed (1 Peter 4:13), and then our trials will "be found unto praise

and honor and glory." Christ's glory has not yet been revealed, except to the chosen three on the mount of transfiguration. At that time the glory that Christ already possessed was allowed to shine forth. He appeared then as he will appear when he comes. But to the mass of mankind there is no more evidence now that Jesus is the Son of God than there was when he was before Pilate's judgment seat. Those however who see it by faith and who are not ashamed to share His sufferings, also share His hidden glory; and when He shall appear in his glory, "then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Matt. 13:43. That will be "the manifestation of the sons of God." Then for the first time Christ will be manifested to the world as the Son of God, and those who are His will be manifested with Him.

The Hope of Creation .-The word "creature" in verses 19-21 means the creation; this may be seen from verse 22 where we read of the whole creation as groaning, waiting to be delivered from that to which it has been made subject. When man sinned, the earth was cursed on his account. See Gen. 3:17. The earth had done no sin, but it was made to share the fall of man, to whom it had been given. A perfect earth was not the dwelling-place for sinful man. But it was made subject to vanity in hope. God made the earth perfect. "He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited." Isa. 45:18. And He "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." Eph. 1:11. Therefore the earth is sure to be glorified as it was in the beginning. "The creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God."

Adoption and Redemption .-Both the earth and we are "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." The earth waits for it, because it can not be relieved of its curse until we are set forth as sons of God, and therefore lawful heirs. The Holy Spirit is the pledge of this heirship. The Spirit seals us as heirs, "unto the day of redemption." Eph. 4:30. It is to us a witness that we are children of God, but the witness is not accepted by the world. They know not the children of God. But when that glory which He has given us is revealed, and our bodies are redeemed from destruction and made to shine like His glorious body, then there will be no doubt in the minds of any. Then even Satan himself will be obliged to acknowledge that we are God's children, and therefore rightful heirs of the glorified earth.

Hope and Patience .-Hope, in the Bible sense, means something more than mere desire. It is certainty, because the ground of the Christian's hope is the promise of God, which is backed by his oath. There is nothing that our eyes can see to indicate that we are the sons of God. We can not see our own glory, and that is why we are charged not to seek it here. We can not see Christ, yet we know that he is the Son of God. That is the assurance that we are also sons of God. If there were any uncertainty, then we could not wait with patience. We should be uneasy, and should worry. But, although the natural eye can not see any indication that we are owned as God's children, faith and hope assure us of it, and so we with patience wait for that which is unseen. E. J. W.

May 28, 1896

"Studies in Romans. Something Worth Knowing" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 22.

E. J. Waggoner

The preceding lessons have shown us that the possession of the Holy Spirit marks our relation to God as sons. It is the pledge of the life and inheritance to come.

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which can not be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose." Rom. 8:26-28.

Questions on the Text

What does the Spirit do for us?

"The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities."

Why is this necessary?

"We know not what we should pray for as we ought."

How therefore does the Spirit help us?

"The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us."

In what way?

"With groanings which cannot be uttered."

What does he who searches the hearts know? "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit."

Who searches the hearts?

"I the Lord search the heart." Jer. 17:10.

Why does the Lord know the mind of the Spirit?

"Because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

What then do we know?

"We know that all things work together for good."

To whom?

"To them that love God."

How are such ones called?

"Called according to his purpose."

"Praying in the Spirit"

"And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity; for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

The heart is deceitful above all things, and none can know it except God. Jer. 17:9, 10. That in itself is sufficient reason why we do not know what we should pray for. Moreover, we do not know the things that God has to give us; and even if we did, our lips could not describe them, for "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. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 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. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." 1 Cor. 2:9-12.

God desires to give to us "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Eph. 3:20. Of course a petition for such things can not be put into words. The next clause however says that it is "according to the power that worketh in us;" and the sixteenth verse tells us that the power that works in us is the Spirit. Thus we find the same thing that we read in the eighth of Romans and the second of 1 Corinthians.

"The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." Therefore the Spirit knows just what the Lord has for us. The deepest thoughts are too great for language, and so the Spirit makes intercession for us with groanings that can not be uttered. But, although there is no articulate speech "he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." The Lord knows that the Spirit asks for just the things that he has to bestow. He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that whatever is asked according to God's will is granted. 1 John 5:14, 15.

Now note how this statement in regard to prayer fits in with what goes before in the eighth of Romans. God has given us his Spirit to be in us, to lead us, and to direct our lives. The possession of the Spirit of God proves that we are the sons of God. Being sons, we can come to him to ask for things to supply our need, with all the confidence of a child to a parent. But while we have all confidence, our thoughts are as the earth is below the heaven. Isa. 45:8, 9. Not only are our thoughts feeble, but our language is still more so. We can not give proper expression even to the little that we do realize. But if we are the sons of God, we have in us his own representative, who helps our infirmity and who is able to take of the things of God to give to us. What wonderful confidence this should give us in praying to God; and especially should it give confidence to those who are particularly infirm in regard to language! It makes no difference if one has a very limited vocabulary, if he stammers, or even if he is dumb; if he prays in the Spirit, he is sure to receive all that he needs, and more than he can ask or think.

With these facts before us, how much more forcible becomes the exhortation of the apostle, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." Eph. 6:18.

All Things for Good

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God." Without this knowledge we could not have

339

that confidence in prayer that we ought to have and that is indicated in the preceding verses. Whoever knows the Lord must love him, for he is love. And the Spirit reveals him to us. Whoever knows that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," can not fail to love him. And then all things work together for good to him.

Take notice that the text does not say that all things shall work together for good to them that love God, but that they do so work now in this present time. Everything as it comes is good to those who love and trust the Lord. Many people lose the blessing of this assurance by reading it as though it were for the future. They try to be resigned to troubles that come by thinking that by and by some good will come from them; but in that case they do not get the good that God gives them.

Note further that the text does not say that we know how all things work together for good to them that love God. People in trouble often sigh piously and say, "Well, I suppose that it is all for good, but I can't see how." Of course not; and they have no business to see how. It is God that makes them work good, because he alone has the power. Therefore it is not necessary for us to know anything about how it is done. The fact is knowledge enough for us. God can overrule all the plans of the devil, and can make the wrath of man to praise Him. Our part is to believe. There is no trust in the Lord if we must see how He does everything. Those who must be able to see how the Lord works, show that they can not trust Him out of sight, and thus they give Him a bad name to the world.

Called of God

God has called everybody to come to Him. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Rev. 22:17. God is no respecter of persons; he desires that all men shall be saved, and so he calls them all.

Not only does he call us, but he draws us. No man can come to him without being drawn, and so Christ is lifted up to draw all to God. he tasted death for every man (Heb. 2:9), and through him all men have access to God. He has destroyed in his own body the enmity, the wall that separates men from God, so that nothing can keep any man from God unless that man builds up again the barrier.

The Lord draws us, but does not employ force. He calls, but does not drive. It remains therefore for us to make our "calling and election sure" by yielding to the influence that God throws round us. He says, "Follow me," and we must make the calling effectual by following Him.

Purpose of the Calling

God calls us "in the grace of Christ." Gal. 1:6. "He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." Eph. 2:4. Still further, we read that he hath "called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." 2 Tim. 1:9. In our text in Romans we learned that those who love God are the "called according to his purpose." His purpose is that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. If we yield to his purpose, he will see that it is carried out.

God designed man for a companion for himself. But there is no true companionship where there is restraint. Therefore, in order that man might associate with him on terms of intimacy, he made the will of man as free as his own. God can not work against his own purpose; and therefore he not only will not, but he can not, force the will of man. All men are as absolutely free to choose as is God himself; and when they choose to yield to the call of God, His purpose of grace is wrought out in them by the power by which he is able to make all things work together for good. E. J. W.

June 11, 1896

"Studies in Romans. The Unspeakable Gift" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 23.

E. J. Waggoner

Our study this week is inseparably connected with that of last week. Only lack of space prevented the verses of each being studied together. The student, however, will read very thoughtfully the preceding verses before beginning this present study, thus preserving the connection. We have learned about our relation to God through the Spirit, and of the help which the Spirit gives us in prayer, as well as of the assurance that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose." The grounds for that assurance are infinitely strengthened in the verses that follow:-

"For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them he also called; and whom He called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 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. viii. 29-32.

Questions on the Text

How may we be sure that all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to his purpose.

"For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son."

Why did he predestinate them to be conformed to the image of His Son?

"That he might be the firstborn among many brethren."

What is said of those whom he thus predestined?

"Them He also called."

What of those whom he called?

"Them he also justified."

And what of those whom he justified?

"Them he also glorified."

What shall we then say to these things?

"If God be for us, who can be against us?"

What has God done, to show that He is for us?

"Spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all."

What then must necessarily follow?

That He must "with him also freely give us all things."

Foreknowledge and Foreordination

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." The word "predestinate" is the same as "foreordain," which is found in the Revised Version. Volumes of speculation have been written about these terms, but a few words are sufficient to set forth the facts. With respect to these, as well as the other attributes of God, it is sufficient

355

for us to know the fact. With the explanation we have nothing to do.

It is plainly set forth in the Scriptures that God knows all things. Not only does he know the things that are past, but he sees the future as well. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." Acts 15:18. "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thought afar off." Ps. 139:1, 2. Thus God can tell what people even yet unborn will do and say.

This does not make God responsible for the evil that they do. Some have foolishly thought it necessary to apologize for the Lord and to relieve him of the charge that if he is omniscient He is responsible for the evil if he does not prevent it, by saying that He could know if he wished, but that he chooses not to know many things. Such a "defense" of God is both foolish and wicked. It assumes that God would be responsible for the evil if he knew it beforehand and did not prevent it, and that in order not to be in a position to prevent it, he deliberately shuts his eyes from it. Thus their "defense" really puts the responsibility for all evil upon God. Not only so, but it limits Him. It makes him like a man.

God knows all things, not by study and research as man learns the little he knows, but because he is God. He inhabits eternity. Isa. 57:15. We can not understand how this can be any more than we can understand eternity. We must

accept the fact and be not only content, but glad, that God is greater than we. All time, past, present, and future, is the same to Him. It is always "now" with God.

The fact that God knew the evil that men would do, even before the foundation of the world, does not make him responsible for it, any more than the fact that a man can see by means of a telescope what a man is doing ten miles distant makes him responsible for that other one's actions. God has from the beginning set before people warnings against sin, and has provided them with all the necessary means for avoiding it; but he can not interfere with man's right and freedom of choice without depriving him of his manhood and making him the same as a stick.

Freedom to do right implies freedom to do wrong. If a man were made so that he could not do wrong, he would have no freedom at all, not even to do right. He would be less than the brutes. There is no virtue in forced obedience, nor would there be any virtue in doing that which is right if it were impossible to do wrong. Moreover, there could be no pleasure or satisfaction in the professed friendship of two persons if one associated with the other just because he could not avoid it. The joy of the Lord in the companionship of his people is that they of their own free-will choose him above all others. And that which is the joy of the Lord is the joy of his people.

The very ones who rail against God for not preventing the ills that he foresees since he is all-powerful, would be the very first to charge him with cruelty if he did arbitrarily interfere with their freedom and make them do that which they do not choose. Such a course would make everybody unhappy and discontented. The wisest thing for us to do is to stop trying to fathom the ways of the Almighty, and accept the fact that whatever he does is right. "As for God, his way is perfect." Ps. 18:30.

About Predestination

The text shows that "whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." God's thoughts toward men are thoughts of peace, and not of evil. Jer. 29:11. He ordains peace for us. Isa. 26:12. We read nothing about men being foreordained to destruction; the only thing that God has predestinated is that men should be conformed to the image of his Son.

But it is only in Christ that we become conformed to his image. It is in him that we come "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Eph. 4:13. Therefore it is that men are foreordained or predestinated only in Christ. The whole story is told in the following passage of Scripture:-

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good-pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."

Everything is in Christ. We receive all spiritual blessings in him; we are chosen in him unto holiness; in him we are predestinated unto the adoption of children; in him we are accepted; and in him we have redemption through his blood. "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. 5:9.

That is God's purpose and foreordination concerning man. Still further, "whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." Whom did he foreknow? There can be no limit; he must have foreknown all. If there were any exception, then God would not be infinite in knowledge. If he foreknows one person, then he foreknows every person. There has not been a person born into the world whose birth God did not foreknow. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Therefore, since every person has been known to God even before the foundation of the world, and those whom he foreknew he predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son, it follows that God has purposed salvation for every soul that has ever come into the world. His love embraces all, without respect of persons.

"Then everybody will be saved, no matter what He does," some one will say. Not by any means. Remember that the purpose of God is in Christ. It is only in him that we are predestinated. And we are free to choose for ourselves whether we will accept him or not. Man's will has been forever set free, and God himself will not presume to interfere with it. He holds sacred the choice and will of each individual. He will not carry out His own purpose contrary to man's will. His will is to give man whatever man decides will best please him. So he sets before man life and death, good and evil, and tells him to choose which he will have. God knows what is best, and has chosen and prepared that for man. He has gone so far as to fix it beyond all possibility of failure, that man shall have that good thing if he chooses it. But the wonderful kindness and courteousness of the great God is seen in this, that He defers in everything to man's wishes. If man, in his turn, will but defer to God's wishes, there will be the most delightful and loving companionship between them.

Called, Justified, Glorified

"Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." This is completed action. We need not stumble over it, if we will but remember that everything is in Christ. In Christ we have already been blessed with all spiritual blessings. All men are called to that which God has prepared for them, but none are "the called according to his purpose" unless they have made their calling and election sure by submitting to his will. Such ones are predestinated to be saved. Nothing in the universe can hinder the salvation of any soul that accepts and trusts the Lord Jesus Christ.

And all such are justified. The death of Christ reconciles us to God. "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John 2:2. His death has secured pardon and life for all. Nothing can

keep them from salvation except their own perverse will. Men must take themselves out of the hand of God, in order to be lost. Much more, then, those who accept the sacrifice, are justified. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

"And whom he justified, them he also glorified." Have we not read in the prayer of Christ for his disciples, not only for those who were with him in the garden, but also for all them that should believe on him through their word and therefore for us, "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them"? Peter said that he was a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. God has left nothing undone. Everything that Christ has we have if we accept him. All that remains is that it should be revealed. "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." When God asks concerning his people, "What could have been done more to

356

my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" who shall presume to say that there is something that he has overlooked?

All Things Ours

But we have anticipated the apostle. Hear him: "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? If God be for us, who can be against us? 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?"

How shall He not? That is, How can he avoid giving us all things? In giving Christ for and to us, God could not do otherwise than give us all things, "for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist." Col. 1:16, 17.

"Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." 1 Cor. 3:21-23. This, then, answers the question, "Who can be against us?" Everything is for us. "All things are for your sakes." 2 Cor. 4:15.

A general once telegraphed to the seat of government, "We have met the enemy, and they are ours." This is what every child of God is privileged to say. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 15:57. "This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith." 1 John 5:4. This is what makes us know that all things work together for good to them that love God. No matter how dark and forbidding the things may seem, if we are in Christ, they are for us, and not against us. E. J. W.

June 18, 1896

"Studies in Romans. The Glorious Persuasion" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 24.

E. J. Waggoner

We come now to the close of the eighth chapter of Romans. It is the Pisgah of the epistle, for from it the eye of faith sees the promised land a certainty. Perhaps at this point a very brief summary of the ground already passed over may be profitable. The following is perhaps about as briefly as it can be put.

In the first chapter we have the theme of the epistle put in a few words, the gospel of Christ, the power of God unto salvation. It is to both Jew and gentile, and has been made known to all through the works of God. The condition of men who have refused to learn of God is then described.

The second chapter shows us that at heart all are the same; that all are to be judged by one and the same standard; and that knowledge and high profession do not in themselves recommend any one to God. Obedience to God's law is the only mark of an Israelite indeed and an heir of God.

The third chapter emphasizes the preceding points, and especially that there are no obedient ones. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin." But there is nevertheless hope for all, because the righteousness of the law is put within and upon all who believe in Christ, so that a man is made a doer of the law by faith. One God justifies both Jews and Gentiles alike through faith. Faith is not a substitute for obedience to the law, but insures the doing of it.

The fourth chapter we have Abraham set forth as an illustration of righteousness gained by faith. We learn also that faith in Christ's death and resurrection is the only way by which to inherit the promise to the fathers, which promise embraced nothing less than the possession of the earth made new. The blessing of Abraham is the blessing that comes by the cross of Christ. And since the promise to Israel was only the repetition of the promise to Abraham, we learn that Israel consists of those in every nation who gain the victory over sin through the cross of Christ.

Abounding love and grace, and salvation through the life of Christ, may serve as the barest outline of chapter 5.

New creatures in Christ may serve to bring to the mind of the faithful reader the main thought of the sixth chapter. It sets forth death, burial, resurrection, and life with Christ.

In the seventh chapter we learn how close is the union between Christ and believers. They are married to him, so that they are "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." The struggles by which freedom is secured from the first husband the body of sin, are vividly portrayed.

The eighth chapter, the crown of the book, describes the blessings of the free-born son of God. The hope of future immortality is the actual possession, through the Spirit, of the present life and glory of Christ. Those who are in Christ are predestined to eternal glory. And thus we are brought to

The Shout of Triumph

"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 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? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 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. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom. 8:31-39.

Everything for Us

The apostle has asked, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" The answer must be, "No one." God is greater than all, and none can pluck anything out of his hand. If he who has power to make all things work together for good is for us, then it is certain that everything must be for us.

But the question often arises in the minds of people, "Is God really for us?" People often wickedly charge Him with being against them; and even professed Christians sometimes think that God is working against them. When troubles come, they imagine that God is fighting against them. Now that question is forever settled by one fact, and that is, that God is he who gives himself for us, and who justifies. Read the question and answer:-

"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 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."

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's own chosen? Shall God, who justifies them? Impossible. Well, God is the only one in the universe who has the right to lay anything to the charge of any; and since he justifies instead of condemning, we must be free. We are free if we believe it. Whom does he justify? "The ungodly." That leaves no doubt but that he justifies us.

And what about Christ? Will he condemn us? How can he, when he gave himself for us? But he gave himself for us, according to the will of God. Gal. 1:4. "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." John 3:17. He is risen again for our justification, and he is at the right hand of God for us. He interposes himself between us and the death that we have deserved. Then there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

"But," says one, "Satan comes to me and makes me feel that I am such a sinner that God is angry with me, and that there is no hope for me." Well, why do

you listen to him? You know his character. "He is a liar and the father of it." What have you to do with him? Let him accuse all he will; he is not the judge. God is the judge, and he justifies. Satan's sole object is to deceive men, and allure them into sin, making them believe that it is right. Be sure, then, that he never tells an unforgiven man that he is a sinner. God does that by his Spirit, in order that the guilty man may accept the pardon that he freely offers.

The case then stands thus: When God tells a man that he is a sinner, it is in order that the man may receive his pardon. If God says that a man is a sinner, then he is a sinner, and ought to acknowledge it, but "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." And this is true, no matter who tells us that we are sinners. Suppose that Satan tells us that we are sinners; we do not need to parley with him, or to stop a moment to discuss the question; we can let the accusation go, and comfort ourselves with the assurance that the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin. God doesn't condemn even when he convicts of sin; and nobody else has any business to condemn. If they do condemn, their condemnation does not amount to anything. Therefore there is no condemnation to those who trust the Lord. Even Satan's accusations may serve as encouragements to us; for we may be sure that he will never tell a man that he is a sinner, so long as that man is in his power. Since God is for us, everything is for us.

Everlasting Love

"The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." Jer. 31:3. Since this is so, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" His love is everlasting, and knows no change. And his love is for us; therefore nothing can separate us from it. Our own deliberate choice can reject it, but even then his love continues the same; only we have in that case removed ourselves from it. "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he can not deny himself." 2 Tim. 2:13.

Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword, separate us from the love of Christ? Impossible, since it was in those very things that his love for us was manifested. Death itself can not separate us from his love, since he so loved us that he gave himself to die for us. Death is the pledge of his love. Sin, that separates us from God, does not separate us from his love, for "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "Him who knew no sin be made to be sin on our behalf; that

371

we might become the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor. 5:21.

"In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." It must be so, since everything is for us. Since Christ suffered hunger, and distress, and peril, and even death itself, in order that he might deliver us, all those things are for us. It was through death that he gained the victory for us; therefore even in death we gain an overwhelming victory. Those whom Satan

persecutes even to death, gain the greatest victory over him. That which seems to be a victory for Satan, is his most crushing defeat.

Behold what a wonderful provision God has made for our salvation! It is easy enough to see that if Satan did not trouble us at all, we should be saved. If our enemy would leave us entirely alone, we should have no trouble. So on that side we are safe. But he will not leave us alone. He goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Very well, God has so ordered it that even his attempts to destroy us help us along. Death is the sum of all the ills that Satan can bring upon us, and even in that we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

A Good Persuasion

"For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." Isa. 30:15. "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." Heb. 3:14. Our faith is the victory. God alone is our strength and salvation. Therefore our strength consists in confidence in him. "Trust ye in the Lord forever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." Isa. 27:5.

The apostle Paul had been "in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft." He says: "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." 2 Cor. 11:24-27. Surely he is one who can speak with the authority of great experience. Hear, then, what he says:

"Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

No Fear for the Future

Only to those who willfully reject the love of God is there "a fearful looking for of judgment." Christ says to us, "Be not therefore anxious for the morrow." He does not desire that we should have our minds filled with fear and anxious forebodings. Some people can never be at rest, even under the most delightful circumstances, because they are afraid that something terrible will happen by and by. Now it makes no difference what may come, since neither things present nor things to come can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our

Lord. We are assured that things to come, as well as things present, are ours. 1 Cor. 3:22. Therefore in Christ we may sing:-

"Let good or ill befall,
It must be good for me,
Secure of having Thee in all,
Of having all in Thee."
E. J. W.

June 25, 1896

"The Knowledge of Christ" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 25.

E. J. Waggoner

"The Knowledge of Christ." -"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 3:18. The trouble with so many people is that they do not know the value of the treasure which they have received. They receive Christ, and are blessed; then, by reason of not increasing in the knowledge of him, they are conscious of a great lack, and so hastily conclude that the gift which they have received is not great enough, and that God must have another to reserve for them-as though God had any greater gift than Christ, or that when he gave Christ, he made some reservation. No; with him he freely gives us "all things." If we have received Christ, our part is to study him, that we may know that in him all our wants are supplied.

"Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly [places]." Eph. 1:15-20. E. J. W.

July 9, 1896

"Studies in Romans. Who Are Israelites?" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 27.

E. J. Waggoner

The ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of Romans are devoted especially to the answer to this question, so that only a portion of it can be dealt with in this article. The matter has, however, been so clearly indicated in the studies of the second, third and fourth chapters, that we may pass over this ground more rapidly than we otherwise should. This does not mean that the chapters themselves should be dismissed with slight study, for there is no part of the Bible

that has more to yield to the patient student; but our work of leading the student to it may be the more quickly done, in consequence of what has already been done.

At first sight it would seem that the subject of the epistle is entirely changed. A more general view will show us that the apostle here carried out the original subject, showing who are heirs of God's promise, and how only it is to be obtained.

Paul's Love for His Brethren

"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh; who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel; neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children; but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise, at this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth); it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will be hardeneth." Rom. ix. 1-18.

This is a long portion of Scripture for study, but if it is diligently questioned, to see exactly what it says, it will not be found so difficult as it is usually thought. We can put only a few of the many

Questions on the Text

that might and should be asked.

What burden does the apostle say that he carried continually?

"I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart."

For whom did he have this sorrow?

"For my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

How great was his love and sympathy for them?

"I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren."

Who were these brethren?

"Israelites."

What privileges did they have?

"The adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises," and "the fathers."

What other great honor was theirs?

"Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came."

If their condition was so bad, notwithstanding all the promises, how could the integrity of God's word be shown?

"For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel."

Who only of Abraham's descendants are the seed?

"In Isaac shall thy seed be called."

What is said of the children of the flesh?

"These are not the children of God."

Who are the seed?

"The children of the promise are counted for the seed."

What shows that the children are "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"?

"When Rebecca also had conceived, . . . the children being not yet born. . . . it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the young."

How did the verdict in after years agree with this?

"Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

Is there then unrighteousness with God?

"God forbid." Not by any means. He "without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's works." 1 Peter i. 17.

On what then does every man's salvation depend?

"It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy."

For what purpose did God say to Pharaoh that He had raised him up?

"That I might show My power in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth."

What is the conclusion?

"Therefore He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth."

Both Jews and Greeks .-Altho Paul was "the apostle of the Gentiles," he did not forget his "kinsmen according to the flesh." Wherever he went he sought out the Jews first, and preached to them. To the elders of Ephesus he said, "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Acts 20:20, 21. Paul's solicitude for all classes, even for those who were personally strangers to him, shows, more than anything else, his likeness to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Israel's Advantage .-"What advantage then hath the Jew?" "Much every way; chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." Rom. 3:1, 2. So here we read a wondrous list of things that pertain to Israel: the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises. A terrible thing it is indeed to prove unfaithful amid such inestimable privileges!

"Salvation Is of the Jews." -Thus said Jesus to the woman of Samaria at the well. John 4:22 "Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came." The Bible was written by Jews, and a young Jewess was the mother of our Lord. As man, Christ was a Jew, of the tribe of Judah. When we read that "we are saved by His life," we know that it is by His life as a Jew. There is no divine gift and blessing for man that was not "to the Jew first," and for the knowledge of which we are not indebted to the Jews.

Nothing from the Gentiles .-The Apostle Paul says of the "Gentiles in the flesh," that they are "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Eph. 2:11, 12. The covenants, the promises, even Christ himself, all belong to the Jews, and not to the Gentiles. Therefore whoever is saved must be saved as a Jew. "God at the first did visit the Gentiles *to take out of them a people* for his name." Acts 15:14.

Accursed from Christ .-It makes no difference whether we use the word "accursed," or "anathema," or "separated." All mean the same thing, and express the most deplorable condition. To be without Christ is to be without hope and without God in the world. Eph. 2:12.

It was in that condition that Paul would have been willing to be placed for his brethren according to the flesh, if it would have done them any good. What does that show? Simply this, that Israel according to the flesh was, and is, in just that condition accursed from Christ, "having no hope, and without God in the world." But since all the promises of God are in Christ (2 Cor. 1:20), those who are separate from Christ have no part in the promises; and therefore we learn anew the fact that Israel after the flesh, as a nation of earth, have not and never had any claim upon God above other nations; that God never made any special promises to Israel after the flesh, more than to any other people.

In the wish that Paul expressed, he showed how completely he was given up to the Lord, and how much he shared in his Spirit. Christ gave himself for men, consenting even to be separated from God, in order that he might reach and save the lost. There is none other name under heaven whereby men

419

can be saved, and consequently Paul's being accursed would not have saved his brethren, as he very well knew. But he simply showed how desperate was the case of the Jews, and how great was his solicitude. While no human sacrifice can avail, men are privileged to share Christ's sufferings for others. Paul says of himself, "who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church." Col. 1:24.

Circumcision Made Uncircumcision .-We have before read the words, "If thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision." Rom. 2:25. This language was addressed to the Jews, who in the same connection were charged with breaking the law. Rom. 2:17-24. In the thirty-first verse of this present chapter we also are told that Israel did not attain to the law of righteousness. And the reason is that they did not accept Christ, through whom alone the righteousness of the law can be obtained. So again we find that Israel, Paul's "kinsmen after the flesh," were not Israelites at all, but Gentiles, separate from Christ, "having no hope, and without God in the world."

No Failure in the Promise .-This is a sad state of things. All the promises belong to Israel, and there is nothing from God for any other nation, and yet the very people known as Israel are accursed from Christ. Nevertheless the word of God has not failed, "for they are not all Israel, which are of Israel." The unbelief of some can not make the faith of God without effect. Rom. 3:3. If every literal descendant of Jacob were lost, that would not weaken in the least God's promises to Israel, since the true Israelites are only those who believe the promises.

The Seed of Abraham .-"In Isaac shall thy seed be called." Isaac was the child of promise; therefore those who believe the promises of God are the seed of Abraham. To the Jews who were self-satisfied because of their descent, John the Baptist said, "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." Matt. 3:9. He could do that as easily as he could make man in the beginning from the dust of the earth.

The Flesh and the Promise .-"They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." This text alone should forever set at rest the speculations about the return of the Jews to old Jerusalem, in order that God's promises may be fulfilled. Still more should it put an end to the absurd notion that any nation, as England or America, constitutes Israel, and is heir to those promises of God.

God's Foreknowledge .-When the children were not yet born, and had done neither good nor evil, it was said of them, "The elder shall serve the younger." God knows the end from the beginning, and could tell what each one would do. The choice was in accordance with what is said of God, "who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." 2 Tim. 1:9.

"Esau Have I Hated." -This was not written until many years after the death of both Jacob and Esau. "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord; yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness." Mal. 1:2, 3. Of his descendants it is said that they shall be called, "The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever." Verse 3. And why? "Thus saith the Lord, For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath forever." Amos 1:11. Jacob, on the other hand, while no

better by nature than Esau, believed the promises of God, and was by them made partaker of the divine nature and thus an heir of God and a joint heir of Jesus Christ.

No Unrighteousness with God .-Mark well verses 14-17 for evidence that there is no arbitrariness in God's choice. It is all of mercy. "He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." So it is all of "God that sheweth mercy." The earth is full of the mercy of the Lord (Ps. 119:64), and "His mercy endureth forever."

God's Purpose for Pharaoh .-The case of Pharaoh is cited by the apostle as an illustration of the statement that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." "For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show My power in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth."

It is immaterial whether this refers to the bringing of Pharaoh to the throne, or to the preserving of him up to that time. One thing is certain: it does not teach us, as is commonly supposed, that God brought Pharaoh to the throne for the purpose of wreaking his vengeance upon him. It is astonishing that any professed Christian could ever have dishonored God by such a charge against him.

The purpose of God in raising Pharaoh up, or causing him to stand, was that he might show to him and in him his power, and that his name might be declared throughout all the earth. This purpose was accomplished in the destruction of Pharaoh because of his stubborn resistance. But it would have been accomplished just as well, and much better for Pharaoh if he had listened to the word of God. Pharaoh saw God's power, but would not believe. If he had believed, he would have been saved, because the power of God is salvation to every one that believeth.

Pharaoh had an imperious will. His one great characteristic was steadfastness, pertinacity degenerating into stubbornness. But who can estimate the power for good that Pharaoh would have been if his will had been yielded to the Lord? To yield to the Lord would have meant a great sacrifice, as men count sacrifices, but no greater than that which Moses had made. Moses had given up the same throne, to cast in his lot with God's people. A wonderful and honorable position was offered to Pharaoh, but he knew not the day of his visitation. It involved humiliation, and he rejected it. As a consequence he lost everything; while Moses, who chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, and to share the reproach of Christ, has a name and a place that will endure throughout eternity. The mercies of God rejected turn into curses. "For the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them; but the transgressors shall fall therein." Hos. 14:9. E. J. W.

July 16, 1896

"Studies in Romans. 'Accepted in the Beloved'" *The Signs of the Times 22, 28.*

E. J. Waggoner

In our last study, embracing the first part of the ninth chapter of Romans, we learned something further in regard to God's purpose and election. We learned that the Jews by nature were never any more the people of God than any other people, and that apart from Christ they were as much accursed as were the veriest heathen that ever lived.

We learned also that although God did make choice of certain ones, specially named, who afterwards attained great eminence as children of God, the choice was not arbitrary. Jacob was chosen before he was born, but no more than all other men are. God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ, "according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." Eph. 1:3-7.

"So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God, that showeth mercy." As proof of this, the apostle cited the case of Pharaoh, who was chosen in Christ just as much as Jacob was, and just as much as we are. He was chosen to the praise of the glory of the grace of God, that he might show forth the excellencies of the Lord; but he obstinately refused to submit. But God will be praised even by the wrath of men, if they are not willing to praise Him voluntarily, and so God's name and power were made known through Pharaoh's stubbornness. It would have been better if the proud king had yielded himself to the design of God, instead of having that design worked out in spite of him. But the lesson that we are to learn is that every man in every nation under heaven has been chosen in Christ, and that none have been chosen in any other way, and that this choice is that they should be adopted as sons. In this choice the Jews have no advantage over others, but are on an equality with them, as is further shown by the remainder of the chapter:-

"Thou wilt then say unto me, Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As He saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not My people, and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God. Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved; for He will

finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness; because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrah. What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling-stone; as it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone and rock of offence; and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." Rom. 9:19-33.

We will omit the usual questions on the text, leaving the reader to press that matter as closely as possible, and will proceed at once to note a few of the lessons set forth in the text.

Replying Against God .-This is a very common thing, and its commonness has caused most people to lose sight of its wickedness. The man who begins indignantly to ask, "Why does God do so and so?" or to say, "I can't see the justice in such a course," as though he were especially and personally affronted, makes it impossible for himself to understand even that which a mortal may comprehend of God. It is very foolish and wicked to blame Him because we are not equal to Him in wisdom. The only way to come to the knowledge of the little that may be understood of God is to settle it once for all that He is just and merciful, and that everything He does is for the good of His creatures. Reverence, and not clamorous questioning, becomes a creature in the presence of the infinite God. "Be still, and know that I am God." Ps. 46:10.

The Potter and His Vessels .-The one who thinks himself competent to criticise the Lord thinks that he has a sure case against him in verses 21-24 of this chapter. "Surely," says he, "this text teaches us that God has made some men to be saved, and others to be destroyed." Most certainly we find nothing of the kind! There is a vast difference between what the text actually says, and what men imagine that it says. The potter has power over the clay, and so the Creator has power over his creatures, of natural and unquestionable right. Consider the figure. The potter has power over the clay to make one vessel to honor and another to dishonor. Very true; but who in the world ever heard of a potter who busied himself making vessels for the sole purpose of destroying them? He makes vessels of different kinds for various purposes, but they are all intended for use, and not for destruction. So God never made anyone for the purpose of destroying him.

God's Longsuffering .-The fact that God does not plan the destruction of any one is

435

shown in that He hesitates long before allowing any to suffer the destruction which their own evil deeds have justly earned. He "endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." They fitted themselves for destruction after their hardness, by treasuring up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath. Rom. 2:5. Note that God endured with much long-suffering these "vessels of wrath." Now we are to "account that the long-suffering of our

Lord is salvation." 2 Peter 3:15. He "is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Verse 9. The fact, therefore, that God endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath, even after they were fitted to destruction, shows that he longed for their salvation, and would give them every possible chance for it.

"Whom He Hath Called." -God's long-suffering is also for the purpose of making known the riches of His glory "on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory." And who are these? "Even us, whom He hath called." And who are they who are called? Are they of some particular nation? "Not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles." The entire chapter is a vindication of God's choice of men even before their birth, as illustrated in the case of Jacob; and this verse shows that the choosing of Jacob did not mean that God had special privileges for the Jewish nation, but that He bestows His favors impartially on Jews and Gentiles alike, if they will accept them.

God's People .-This is still further shown by verses 25, 26: "As He saith also in Osee [Hosea i. 9, 10], I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people; there shall they be called the children of the living God." God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. The apostle Peter described this visit in these words: "God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." And further, "We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they." Acts 15:7-11. And so "there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." Rom. 10:12.

The Remnant .-"Isaiah also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved." Therefore "at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." Rom. 11:5. No matter how many there may be who can trace their genealogy to Jacob according to the flesh, it is only they who are willing subjects of the grace of God who will be saved. There is positively no chance for boasting save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Gentiles Ahead .-The Jews professed to keep the law, but did not; the Gentiles were not associated with the law, yet they met its requirements. Now, if the reader will recall Rom. 2:25-29, he will see that real circumcision consists (and always did consist) in keeping the law. Therefore since the Gentiles by their faith kept the law, and the Jews through their lack of faith did not keep it, it appears that they had changed places; the Gentiles were really "Jews," and the Jews by nature were the same as the heathen.

Missing the Mark .-The Jews followed after the law of righteousness, but did not attain to it. Why not? "Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law." How forcibly this sets forth that of which the entire epistle is a demonstration, namely, that faith does not clear one from its transgression, but that by faith alone can the law be kept! The Jews are not blamed for following after the law of righteousness, but for not following after it in the right way. It is

not by works, but by faith, that the works which the law requires can be attained. That is to say that bad works can not produce good works; good can not come of evil. There is no discount upon good works. They are the most necessary things in the world. They are the result of the keeping of the law by faith. But there can not by any possibility be good works without faith; for "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Rom. 14:23.

The Stumbling-Stone .-Do not fail to connect the last part of this chapter with the first part. Remember that the beginning presents Israel according to the flesh as accursed from Christ. To them pertained, among other things, the giving of the law, but they came miserably short of it. Why? "For they stumbled at that stumbling-stone." What stumbling-stone? Christ. They were in the very same condition that so many people are to-day, they would not believe that the promises of God to Israel were wholly and solely in Christ. They thought, as many professed Christians now do, that God honored them for their own sake, without any regard to Christ. Christ is the stumbling-stone over which all stumble who regard the promises to Israel as made to a certain earthly nation, to the exclusion of all others.

A Sure Foundation .-Strange to say, that very stumbling-stone is a stepping-stone, and a sure foundation. That over which some fall, is the means of lifting up and building up others. "The ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them; but the transgressors shall fall therein." Hosea 14:9. Christ is a rock of offence to those who disbelieve, but a sure foundation to those who have faith. He is "the Holy One of Israel," "the King of Israel," "the Shepherd of Israel," and at the same time the fold, and the door into the fold. Without him there could be no such thing as a nation of Israel. Those who think to claim an inheritance in Israel because of their birth and without respect to Christ, will be ashamed at the last because whosoever comes not in at the door, the same will be proved to be "a thief and a robber." But "whosoever believeth on him shall not be put to shame," because his faith will show him to be Abraham's seed, and thus an heir of God according to the promise. E. J. W.

July 23, 1896

"Studies in Romans. The Glorious Gospel" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 29.

E. J. Waggoner

Let it be remembered that the ninth chapter of Romans sets forth the condition of Israel according to the flesh-they who are called Israel. They are "accursed from Christ." They "followed after the law of righteousness," but did not attain to righteousness, because they sought it not by faith, but by works. The Gentiles, therefore, gained the precedence over them, because they sought righteousness in the right way, namely, by faith. Thus were fulfilled the words of Christ to the self-righteous Jews: "The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you;" and again, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Matt. 21:31, 43.

But the Lord did not cast off his people because they stumbled at the Stone which he had placed for a foundation. He endured with much long-suffering even the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. So the apostle continues:-

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven (that is, to bring Christ down from above); or, Who shall descend into the deep (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the Gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." Rom. 10:1-21.

This is quite a long portion of scripture, yet it is all so closely connected that it seems necessary to consider the whole at one study. Of course our study must be only in outline, just to prepare the way for further study; and we can afford room for only a few of the usual

Questions on the Text

What was Paul's earnest desire for Israel?

"That they might be saved."

What good thing did he testify that they had?

"They have a zeal of God," or *for* God.

But in what essential thing was it lacking?

It was "not according to knowledge."
Of what were they ignorant?
"Ignorant of God's righteousness."
What did this ignorance lead them to do?
To seek "to establish their own righteousness."
What was the result?
"They did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God." R.V.
Where only can the end of the law be found?
"Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."
What is the description of the righteousness which is of faith?
"The word is very nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart."
On what terms will anyone be saved?
"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead."
How then does righteousness come?
"With the heart man believeth unto righteousness."
Who will be saved?
"Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord."
What is necessary in order that men call on the Lord?
That they should believe.
And what is necessary in order that they may believe?
That they should hear.
And how only can they hear?
When some are sent to preach.
Has this condition been met?
"It is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things."
Have men obeyed this Gospel message?
"Isaiah says, "Lord, who hath believed our report?"
How do faith and hearing come?
"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
Although they have not all believed, have they not all heard?
"Yes verily."
What evidence is there of this?
"Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."
What was the result of this preaching?
"I was found of them that sought Me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after Me."
Did God therefore leave Israel to their own destruction?
"To Israel He saith, All day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people."
Zeal without Knowledge .-"It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing." Zeal is very necessary to the accomplishment of anything; but zeal without knowledge is like a wild horse without bit or bridle. There is plenty of activity, but it is of no use. Or it is like the man who displays great zeal and earnestness in

reaching a certain place, but who is traveling in the wrong direction. No matter how zealous a man may be, he will never reach a place that is north of him by traveling southward. Ignorance nullifies zeal. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Hosea iv. 6.

Israel's Ignorance .-They were "ignorant of God's righteousness." It is a kind of ignorance that did not cease with the generation then living, and which is not confined to any certain people. But that which made it so much worse in this instance was that this ignorance of God's righteousness was coupled with the highest profession of serving him.

God's Righteousness .-The righteousness of God is something besides a name. It is something far different from a form of words, or even the mere statement of a law. It is nothing less than the life and character of God. As there can not be sweetness apart from something that is sweet, so there is no such thing as abstract righteousness. Righteousness must necessarily be connected with some living being. But God alone is righteous. See Mark 10:18. Therefore wherever righteousness is, there God must be active. Righteousness is the essential characteristic of God.

Form and Fact .-The Jews had "the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law;" but they had not the truth itself. The law of God, as written on the tables of stone, or in a book, is as perfect as it could possibly be. But there was just the same difference between that and the real law that there is between a photograph of a man and the man himself. It was but a shadow. There was no life in the written characters, and they could not do anything. They were simply the statement of that which exists only in the life of God.

Empty Righteousness .-The Jews very well knew that the words on the stone or in the book could not do anything; and since they were ignorant of the righteousness of which those words were but the description, they went about to establish a righteousness of their own. This they would never have done if they had not been ignorant of God's righteousness. Of that the psalmist says, "Thy righteousness is like the great mountains." Ps. 26:6. They were trying to produce from themselves the essential attribute of God. Such an effort, no matter how great the zeal, could end only in miserable failure. Saul of Tarsus was "more exceedingly zealous of the traditions" of the fathers than any others of his class, yet when he came to a right understanding, those things that were gain to him he was obliged to count but loss. That is, the more he did to establish his own righteousness, the worse off he became.

Submitting to Righteousness .-If the Jews had not been ignorant of God's righteousness, they would not have attempted to establish a righteousness of their own. They tried to make God's righteousness submit to them, whereas they should have submitted to it. God's righteousness is active. It is his own life. Just as the air will rush into any place where there is an opening, so the righteous life of God will fill every heart that is open to receive it. When men try to handle the law of God, they invariably pervert it, and fit it to their own ideas; the only way to have its perfection appear is to submit to it, allowing it to rule. Then it will work itself out in the life. "It is God which worketh in you both

to will and to do of his good-pleasure." Phil. 2:13.

The End of the Law .-"Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." 1 Tim. 1:5. Charity is love, and "love is the fulfilling of the law." Rom. 13:10. Therefore the end of the law is its perfect fulfilment. That is self-evident. It makes no difference in what sense the word "end" is taken. Suppose it be used in the common sense of "object." It is very plain that the things which it requires shall be done. Or use the word "end" in the ordinary sense of the farthest extent, and we have the same thing. You arrive at the end of a law only when you reach the utmost limit of its requirement.

Christ the End of the Law .-We have seen that the end or object of the law is the righteousness which it requires. So it is said that Christ is the end of the law "for righteousness." The law of God is the righteousness of God. See Isa. 51:6, 7. But this righteousness is the real life of God himself, and the words of the law are only the shadow of it. That life is found only in Christ, for he alone declares the righteousness of God. Rom. 3:24, 25. His life is the law of God, since God was in him. That which the Jews had only in form, is found in fact only in Christ. In him the end of the law is found. Does any one say that "the end of the law" means its abolition? Very well; when they find the abolition of Christ, they will have found the abolition of the law, and not before. Only a study of the life of Christ will reveal the righteousness which the law of God requires.

To Whom? -To whom is Christ the end of the law for righteousness? "To every one that believeth." Christ dwells in the heart by faith. Eph. 3:17. The perfect righteousness of the law is found only in him. It is in Him in absolute perfection. Therefore since Christ dwells in the heart of the believer, in Him only is the end of the law attained. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." John 6:29. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness."

Doing to Live and Living to Do .-The righteousness which is of the law, that is, men's own righteousness (see Phil. 3:9), is on the principle of doing something in order to live. The mere statement of the case is sufficient to show its impossibility; for life must necessarily precede action. A dead body does not do something in order that it may live, but it must be given life in order that it may do something. Peter did not tell the dead Dorcas to do some more charitable work, to sew some more garments, in order that she might live, but in the name of Jesus he restored her to life, in order that she might pursue her good works. The man that doeth those things shall live in them, but he must first live before he can do them. Therefore the righteousness which is of the law is but an empty dream. Christ gives life, even the eternal and righteous life of God, which works righteousness in the soul that it has quickened.

Christ the Word .-Verses 6-8 of this chapter are a direct quotation from Deut. 30:11-14. Moses had been rehearsing the law to the people, and exhorting them to obedience, and told them that the commandment was not "far off," so that they needed to send some one to bring it to them, "but the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." Paul, writing by inspiration of the Spirit, quotes the words of Moses, and shows that they refer to Christ. Christ is the Word, the commandment, which is not "far off," which needs

not to be brought down from heaven, nor to be raised from the dead. Let the reader compare these two portions of Scripture very carefully, and he will clearly see that the real commandment of the Lord is nothing less than Christ.

Law and Life .-This truth was not necessarily hidden till the New Testament was written. The thoughtful Jew in the days of Moses could clearly understand that only in the life of God could the righteousness of the law be found. Moses said: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live; that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him; for he is thy life, and the length of thy days." Deut. 30:19, 20. In setting the law before the people, Moses set before them the life of God, and that is to be found only in Christ. "I know that his commandment is life everlasting." John 12:50. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John 17:3.

The Word Very Near .-Remembering that the word is Christ, we read, "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach." Is Christ so near as that? Indeed he is; for he himself says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." Rev. 3:20. It is not alone to the good that he is near, but he is "not far from every one of us." Acts 17:27. So near is he that "in him we live, and move, and have our being." We can not reach out our hand without finding him. Christ is in the heart even of wicked men, waiting for them to recognize the fact that already exists, and will in all their ways acknowledge him; then He will dwell in their hearts "by faith." He will then direct them in all their ways. In nothing is the love of Christ more fully shown than in His dwelling with sinful men, and enduring all their hatefulness, in order that by his patience he may win them from their evil ways.

Belief in the Resurrection .-"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." He "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Rom. 4:25. And "He died for all." He tasted death for every man. Therefore He was raised for the justification of every man. To believe in the heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, is to believe that he justifies me. The one who does not believe that Jesus does cleanse him from sin, does not really believe that God has raised him from the dead; for we can not believe in the resurrection of Jesus, without believing that for which He was raised. The resurrection of Jesus is much less generally believed than is commonly supposed.

Not Ashamed .-The root of the word "believe" indicates a foundation, something upon which one can build. To believe on Jesus is to build upon Him. He is the tried Stone, the sure Foundation, the Rock. Isa. 28:16. Whosoever builds upon Him will not be obliged to flee in confusion when the rain descends, and the floods come, and the winds blow and beat upon his house; for He is the Rock of Ages.

No Difference .-The keynote of the Gospel call is "whosoever." "God so loved the world, that he gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him

should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Rev. 22:17. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." No distinction is made; "for there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek." Read again the second and third chapters of Romans, and the fourth also. Indeed, the whole book of Romans gives a death-blow to that wicked idea that God is partial, and that he favors some people more than others. The idea that God has special blessings for one nation of earth that he has not for others, no matter whether that one nation be called Jews, Israelites, Anglo-Saxons, Englishmen, or anything else, is a direct denial of the gospel of the grace of God.

The Gospel to All .-The thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth verses show the steps necessary for salvation. First, men must call upon the Lord. But in order to call upon him, they must believe in him. But they can not hear without someone being sent. But preachers have been sent, yet all have not believed and obeyed, although they have all heard. What have they all heard?-They have all heard the word of God. In proof of this, the apostle says that faith comes by hearing the word of God, and adds: "Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." All in the world have heard, and there is no excuse for unbelief on the part of any. Read again Romans 1:16-20.

Glorious Preachers .-The Gospel of Christ is "the glorious Gospel." It shines its way into the heart. See 2 Cor. 4:4. So it is fitting that those who preach it should be arrayed in glory. The sun, moon, and stars are the beautiful "preachers" whose words have gone to the ends of the world. They preach the glorious Gospel of Christ. They are a continual example of the right way to preach the Gospel they shine forth the glory of God. So the apostle says to us who have heard and believed the word, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of the darkness into his marvelous light." 1 Pet. 2:9. The Gospel is the revelation of God to men. "God is light," therefore the proclaiming of the Gospel consists in showing forth His light. "Let your

453

light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt. 5:16. E. J. W.

July 30, 1896

"Studies in Romans. All Israel Saved" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 30.

E. J. Waggoner

We now come to the eleventh chapter of Romans, the closing up of the special discussion of Israel. In each of these three chapters we are plainly shown that the Gentiles, if they believe, have an equal share with the Jews, and that the latter forfeit all the privileges of the people of God through unbelief. Nothing could show more plainly than do these chapters that all men are on a level, and that the promises of God are to all who believe, irrespective of birth or nation.

Since this chapter is long, and we wish to present it all at one view, we do not reproduce the text, but urgently request the reader to study the chapter through carefully, reading it several times, before going further.

Not a Castaway .-The Apostle Paul knew that God had not cast off his people, the lineal descendants of Abraham, and his proof was the fact that he himself was accepted with God. If the Jewish nation had been cast off by the Lord, then there would have been no hope for Paul, because he was "an Hebrew of the Hebrews." The words "God forbid" mislead some people. The idea obtains that Paul was praying that the Lord would not cast off his people, lest he also should be cast away. Instead of "God forbid," read, "by no means." Then all is clear. Thus: "I say then, Hath God cast away his people? By no means." How do you prove that? Why, "I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin."

Who Are Rejected? -Although God had not cast away his people, they were in a bad way. The fact that God had not cast them off, did not prove that they would be saved. Paul intimated that there was danger that even he, after he had preached to others, might be a castaway. 1 Cor. 9:27. The case, however, lay wholly in his own hands. There was no danger that God would cast him away against his will. We have the words of the Lord, 'Him that cometh to me I will in nowise cast out.' John 6:37. And all may come; for he says also that "whosoever will" may come. God casts no one off; but if they utterly reject him, then, since he forces no one, he has no alternative but to leave them to themselves. "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; . . . therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them." Prov. 1:24-32. God stretches forth his hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people (Rom. 10:21), and they have it in their own power to say if they will be saved. God accepts everybody; the only question is, Will they accept him?

The Remnant .-In the illustration from Elijah's time, we learn something further about the matter of acceptance and rejection. It seemed then as though all Israel had departed from the Lord, but there were seven thousand men who had not acknowledged Baal. "Even so at this present moment there is a remnant according to the election of grace." The grace of God appears to all men, and is extended to all. Those who accept the grace are the elect, no matter of what tribe or nation they are. Although the plan of salvation embraces all the world, it is a sad fact that but few of any people or generation will accept it. "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved."

The Olive Tree .-While there are single expressions in the eleventh chapter of Romans that are difficult to understand, the chapter as a whole is very simple. Under the figure of an olive tree, the people of God are represented, and by the figure of grafting, the relation of all men to God is shown. Before going into the particulars of this illustration, we must for a moment consider the

"Commonwealth of Israel." -In the second chapter of Ephesians we learn that as Gentiles, the Ephesians had been "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel," "having no hope, and without God in the world." That is, those who are not of the commonwealth of Israel are without God; or, those who are without God are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. Now Christ is the only manifestation of God to man, and "he came unto his own, and his own received him not." John 1:11. Therefore the mass of the Jewish nation were without God, just as surely as the heathen were, and consequently were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. The same chapter of Ephesians tells us that Christ came to reconcile both Jews and Gentiles unto God, showing that both were separate from him. Still further in the same chapter we learn that the commonwealth of Israel is the "household of God," and is composed of saints, those who are reconciled to God. Only such are not "strangers and foreigners" from Israel.

The Origin of Israel .-The name originated that night when Jacob wrestled with the Lord, and finally by his faith obtained the blessing that he sought. He could not gain anything whatever by his physical strength; indeed, one touch by the Lord was sufficient to make him utterly helpless; but it was when, in his utter helplessness, he cast himself in simple faith on the Lord, that he gained the victory, and was named Israel prince of God. This title was applied to all his descendants, although it strictly belonged only to those who had living faith in God, just as we use the term "Christian" of those who are in "the church," with no thought of asserting that they really know the Lord.

A Righteous Nation .-Much is said of the unbelief of the children of Israel; but there were times when they as an entire nation had faith to a marked degree. One instance will suffice at present. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed

469

about seven days." Heb. 11:30. Thirteen times the whole host marched round the city, seemingly to no purpose, without a murmur. Such faith showed that they were then a righteous nation, in close union with God; because, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. 5:1. Then their name truly indicated their character; they were Israelites indeed. They were walking "in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham."

Severed Branches .-But they did not keep the faith. "We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." Heb. 3:14. This they did not do, and so they became "without Christ," "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel." Eph. 2:12. In Romans 11:17 the apostle asks, What "if some of the branches be broken off?" etc., not meaning, however, to imply that some were not broken off, as we learn from what follows. For he says, "Because of unbelief they were broken off" (verse 20), and again, "God hath concluded them all in unbelief" (verse 32), thus showing that all were broken off. So we find the people who were "beloved for the fathers' sakes" (verse 28) and who had at one time in their history been "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26) reduced through their unbelief to the level of those who had never known God.

Grafted Branches .-All the branches of the olive tree Israel were broken off through unbelief. To supply their places God took branches from the wild olive

tree the Gentiles and grafted them on. This grafting was "contrary to nature" (verse 24), since it was wholly a work of grace. If it had been according to nature, then the branches would have borne natural fruit, and there would be no gain from the grafting, since the natural fruit was bad. See Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 2:1, 2. But a miracle was wrought by grace, and the branches that were grafted in partook of the nature of the root. The fruit of the grafted-in branches is no more natural, but that of the Spirit. Gal. 5:22, 23.

A Reunion .-We must remember that God did not cast off his people. They fell away through unbelief. "They also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able to graff them in again." Verse 23. The Jew has as good a chance as the Gentile. "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." Rom. 10:12. Christ came "that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross," and "through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." Eph. 2:16, 18.

No Change of Plan .-Let us not forget that in thus grafting in the Gentiles to take the place of rebellious Israel, there has been no change in God's plan. It was all included in the original promise to Abraham. "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached the Gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." Gal. 3:7, 8. In the beginning God made Adam, the father of the human race. Adam was the son of God (Luke 3:38); therefore all his descendants are by right God's people. He did not cast them off because they sinned. His love embraced the world (John 3:16), and it did not contract in the days of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The only advantage of Israel was that they had the privilege of carrying the glorious Gospel to the Gentiles, for whom it was always designed as much as for them.

Visiting the Gentiles .-The Gentiles, as well as the descendants of Jacob, were from the beginning intended to become Israel. This was shown at the conference in Jerusalem. Peter told how he had been divinely sent to preach the Gospel to them, and that God put no difference between them and the Jews. Then James said: "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." Acts 15:14-18. See also Amos 4:11-15.

From the above we learn that the "tabernacle of David," the house or kingdom of David, is to be restored through the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles, and that this is according to the mind of the Lord from the beginning of the world. What these scriptures need is not comment, but believing thought.

"The Fullness of the Gentiles." -"Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in." Rom. 11:25. Until the fullness of the Gentiles "be come" into what place? Into Israel, of course; for it is by the bringing in of the fullness of the Gentiles that "all Israel shall be saved." When will the

fullness of the Gentiles "be come" in? The Lord himself furnishes the answer: "This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Matt. 24:14. God is visiting the Gentiles, "to take out of them a people for his name." By them Israel is to be made full or complete. As soon as this work of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles is finished, then the end will come. There will then be no more preaching to anybody, not to the Gentiles, because they will all have made the final decision; and not to the Jews, because then "all Israel shall be saved." There will then be no more need of the Gospel; it will have accomplished its work.

All through Christ .-Note carefully verses 25-27. When the fullness of the Gentiles shall have been brought in, "all Israel shall be saved." Indeed, it is only by the bringing in of the Gentiles that all Israel will be saved. And this will be a fulfillment of that which is written, "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Only through Christ can Israel be saved and gathered; and all who are Christ's are Israel; for "if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal. 3:29.

Taking Away Sin .-There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, who shall turn away ungodliness from Israel. Christ is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29. "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John 2:2. The high priest Caiaphas spoke by the Spirit "that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." John 11:51, 52. So Peter, speaking in the temple at Jerusalem, said: "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." Acts 3:25, 26. The blessing of Abraham is the forgiveness of sins through Christ; and people of all nations become Israelites indeed by the taking away of iniquity.

All of Faith .-It was through faith that Jacob became Israel. It was through unbelief that his descendants were broken off from the stock of Israel. It is through faith that the Gentiles are grafted in, and only by faith that they stand; and it is through faith that the Jews may become reunited to the parent stock. Faith in Christ is the only thing that makes one an Israelite, and only unbelief cuts one off from being an Israelite; this was fully shown by Christ when he marveled at the faith of the centurion, saying; "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness." Matt. 8:10-12.

All in Prison .-"God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." The word "conclude" means literally "to shut up," as indicated in the margin. He hath "shut them all up together."

So in Gal. 3:22 we read that "the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." And the next verse speaks of all being "shut up" and guarded by the law. Both Jews and Gentiles "are all under sin." Rom. 3:9. All are shut up in prison together, with no hope of escape except by Christ, "the Deliverer," who proclaims "liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Isa. 61:1. He comes as the deliverer "out of Zion," bringing the freedom of "Jerusalem which is above." Gal. 4:26. All therefore who accept the liberty wherewith Christ makes free, are the children of Jerusalem which is above, heirs of heavenly Canaan, members of the true commonwealth of Israel.

Wonderful Knowledge .-"By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities," says the Lord. Isa. 53:11. Thus by forgiving sins he will build the walls of Jerusalem (Ps. 51:18), and restore her captive children. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and His ways past finding out!" Let no one, therefore, presume to criticize God's plan, or to reject it because he can not understand it. "For who hath been his counselor?" "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things; to whom be glory forever. Amen." E. J. W.

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"Studies in Romans. Some Practical Exhortations" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 31.

E. J. Waggoner

We have now finished that which might be called the argumentative portion of the Epistle to the Romans. The five chapters which follow are devoted to exhortations to the church. Those in the chapter before us are very simple, but will be much better understood if read in connection with that which immediately precedes. Accordingly, we preface our reading of the twelfth chapter with the last four verses of the eleventh:

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto Him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things; to whom be glory forever. Amen. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us,

whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Rom. 11:33-36; 12:1-21.

Questions on the Text

What is the truth concerning the Lord?

"Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things."

What therefore is the reasonable thing for men to do?

"Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God."

What will be done for us if we thus yield ourselves?

"Not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think."

How should men think of themselves?

"Think soberly."

What induces soberness of thought?

"The measure of faith."

From whom does faith come?

"God hath dealt. . . the measure of faith."

To whom has God dealt the measure of faith?

"To every man."

What is the relation of men in Christ?

"One body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

How should Christians feel towards persecutors?

"Bless them which persecute you."

What should be our sympathies?

"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."

How far is it possible for me to live at peace with all men?

"As far as lieth in you."

With what is evil to be overcome?

"With good."

A Logical Conclusion .-The closing verses of the eleventh chapter set forth the infinite, unsearchable power and wisdom of God. Nobody can add anything to him. No one can put God under obligations to Him. No one can give him something for which He should receive something in return. "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things." "He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." "In him we live, and move, and have our being." Acts 17:25, 28.

This being so, it is but reasonable that all should yield their bodies to him, for him to control. He alone has the wisdom and the power to do it properly. The word "reasonable" is, literally, "logical." The logical result of acknowledging God's power and wisdom and love, is to submit to him. He who does not yield to God, virtually denies His existence.

Exhorting and Comforting .-It is interesting to know that the Greek word rendered "beseech" is from the same root as "the Comforter," applied to the Holy Spirit. It is the word used in Matthew 5:4, "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be *comforted*." It occurs also in 1 Thessalonians 4:18, "*Comfort* one another with these words." The following passage contains the word several times, as indicated: "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all *comfort*; who *comforteth* us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to *comfort* them which are in any trouble, by the *comfort* wherewith we ourselves are *comforted* of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our *consolation* also aboundeth by Christ." 2 Cor. 1:3-5. The fact that the Greek word for "exhort," or "beseech," is identical with that for "comfort," may give a new force to the exhortations of the Spirit of God.

There is comfort in the thought that God is all-powerful. Therefore there is comfort in all his exhortations and commandments, since he does not expect us to act in our own strength, but in his. When he utters a command, it is but the statement of what he will do in and for us, if we yield to his power. When he reproves, he is simply showing to us our need, which he can abundantly supply. The Spirit convicts of sin, but is always the Comforter.

Power and Mercy .-"God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God. Also unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy." Ps. 62:11, 12. "God is love." Therefore his power is love, so that when the apostle cites the power and wisdom of God as the reason why we should yield to him, he exhorts us by the mercies of God. Never forget that all the manifestation of God's power is but the manifestation of his love, and that love is the power by which he works. Jesus Christ, in whom God's love is revealed (1 John 4:10), is "the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:24).

True Nonconformity .-In England, religious people have often been divided into two classes: Churchmen and Nonconformists. Now every true Christian is a non-conformist, but not in the sense that the word is ordinarily used. "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds." When those who call themselves Nonconformists adopt worldly methods, and engage in worldly schemes, then they dishonor the name. "The friendship of the world is enmity with God."

How to Think of Self .-The exhortation to every man is not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think. How highly ought one to think of himself? "Put

them in fear, O Lord; that the nations may know themselves to be but men." Ps. 19:20. "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help." Ps. 146:3. "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" Isa. 2:22. "Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity." Ps. 39:5. "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain." 1 Cor. 3:19, 20. "What is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." James 4:14. "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." Isa. 64:6. "In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." Phil. 2:3.

Faith and Humility .-Pride is the enemy of faith. The two can not live together. A man can think soberly and humbly only as the result of the faith that God gives. "Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith." Hab. 2:4. The man who has confidence in his own strength and wisdom, will not depend upon another. Trust in the

484

wisdom and power of God comes only when we recognize and acknowledge our own weakness and ignorance.

Faith a Gift of God .-We read that God hath dealt the measure of faith to every man. Faith-trust in God-comes from a knowledge of his greatness and our littleness; of his strength and wisdom and our weakness and ignorance; of His righteousness and our sinfulness. God tells us these things, so that we may trust in him.

What Faith Is Given .-That faith which God deals to man is indicated in Rev. 14:12: "Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." God does not give faith to the saints only, any more than he gives the commandments to them alone; but the saints *keep the faith*, and others do not. The faith which they *keep* is the faith of Jesus; therefore it is the faith of Jesus that is given to men.

Faith Given to Every Man .-Every man is exhorted to think soberly, because God hath dealt *to every man* the measure of faith. Many people have a notion that they are so constituted that it is impossible for them to believe. That is a grave error. Faith is just as easy, and just as natural, as breathing. It is the common inheritance of all men, and the one thing wherein all are equal. It is as natural for the child of the infidel to believe as it is for the child of the saint. It is only when men build up a barrier of pride about themselves (Ps. 73:6) that they find it difficult to believe. And even then they will believe; for when men disbelieve God, they believe Satan; when they disbelieve the truth, they greedily swallow the most egregious falsehoods.

In What Measure?- We have seen that faith is given to every man. This may be known also by the fact that salvation is offered to every man, and placed within his grasp, and salvation is only by faith. If God had not given faith to every man, he could not have brought salvation within the reach of all. Now the question is, In what measure has God given every man faith? This is really answered in the fact already learned, that the faith which he gives is the faith of

Jesus. The faith of Jesus is given in the gift of Jesus himself, and Christ is given in his fullness to every man. He tasted death for every man. Heb. 2:9. "Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Eph. 4:7. Christ is not divided; therefore to every man is given all of Christ and all of his faith. There is but one measure.

The Body and Its Members .-"There is one body" (Eph. 4:4), and that is the church, of which Christ is the head (Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:18). "We are members of his body, of His flesh, and of His bones." Eph. 5:30. There are many members in the body, "so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." As in the human body, so in the body of Christ, "all members have not the same office;" yet they are so joined together, and so mutually dependent, that none can boast over the others. "The eye can not say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you." 1 Cor. 12:21. So it is in the true church of Christ; there are no divisions and no boastings, and no member seeks to occupy the place or perform the work of another. No member thinks himself independent of the others, and all have an equal care for one another.

Various Gifts .-"All members have not the same office, and all have not the same gifts. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. . . . And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. . . . For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of Spirits; to another divers kind of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." 1 Cor. 12:4-11.

"The Proportion of Faith." -"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith." As we have seen, there is but "one faith" (Eph. 4:5), and that is "the faith of Jesus." Although there are various gifts, there is but one power behind them all. "All these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit." Therefore, to prophesy or to exercise any other of the gifts "according to the proportion" or measure of faith, is to do it "as of the ability which God giveth." 1 Peter 4:11. "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

"In Honor Preferring One Another." -This can be done only when one is able "in lowliness of mind" to esteem others better than himself. Phil. 2:3. And this can be done only when one knows his own worthlessness. The man who "knows the plague of his own heart" can not think that others are as bad as himself. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who . . . made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant."

How to Treat Persecutors .-Bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not." To curse does not necessarily always mean to use profane language, to swear. To curse means to speak ill. It is the opposite of bless, which means to speak well of. Sometimes men persecute according to law, and sometimes they persecute without any legal warrant; but whether it is "due process of law" or

mob violence, no hard words are to be used against those who do it. On the contrary, they are to be spoken well of. One can not do this without the Spirit of Christ, who prayed for his betrayers and murderers, and who did not venture to bring railing accusation even against the devil. Jude 9. To hold persecutors up to contempt is not according to God's instruction.

Rejoicing and Weeping .-To rejoice with them that rejoice and to weep with them that weep, is not an easy thing for the natural man. Only the grace of God can work such sympathy in men. It is not so difficult to weep with those who are afflicted, but it is often very difficult to rejoice with those who rejoice. For instance, suppose another has received something which we very much desired, and is rejoicing over his gain; it requires much grace to rejoice with him.

Keeping the Peace .-We are to live peaceably with all men if it be possible. But what is the limit of possibility? Some will say that they tried to keep peace until "forbearance ceased to be a virtue," and then they paid the troublesome one in his own coin. Many think that this verse exhorts them to hold out as long as they can, and not to take part in any disturbance until they have had great provocation. But this verse says, "as much as lieth *in you*, live peaceably with all men." That is, there is to be no trouble so far as we are concerned. We can not always keep other people from warring, but we can be at peace ourselves. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee." Isa. 26:3. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. 5:1. "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts." Col. 3:15. "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Phil. 4:7. He who has this abiding peace of God, will never have any trouble with men. E. J. W.

August 13, 1896

**"Studies in Romans. Christians and the State" *The Signs of the Times*
22, 32.**

E. J. Waggoner

We come now to the second of the purely hortatory chapters of Romans, the thirteenth. This chapter contains matter that is of the greatest importance, and which is perhaps the least regarded of any chapter in the book. Without any review we will proceed to read:-

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same; for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For, for this cause pay ye tribute also; for they are God's ministers, attending

continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor. Owe no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to wake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." Romans 13.

In studying this chapter it is necessary to remember that the Epistle is addressed to professed followers of the Lord. "Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will," etc. Rom. 2:17, 18. And again, "Know ye not, brethren (for I speak to them that know the law)." etc. Rom. 7:1. The last part of the chapter also shows the same thing. It is a mistake, therefore, to suppose that this chapter was designed to set forth the duties of earthly rulers, or as a treatise on civil government, or on the relation that the state should occupy to the church. Since it is addressed to professed Christians, it is evident that its object is simply to tell them how they ought to behave towards the governments under which they live.

All Power from God .-"God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God." Ps. 62:11. "There is no power but of God." This is absolutely true, without any exception. The Roman power, even in the days of the infamous and brutal Nero, was as much derived from God as was the Jewish power in the days of David. When Pilate told Christ that he had power to crucify him or to let him go, Christ replied, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above." John 19:11. This fact does not, however, prove that the acts of that power were right, or that God sanctioned them.

This will be the more apparent if we take the cases of individuals. All human power comes from God. It is as true of the heathen as of Christians, that "in Him we live, and move, and have our being;" "for we are also His offspring." Acts 17:28. It can as truly be said of every individual as of governments, that they are ordained, or appointed, of God. He has a plan for every one's life. But that does not make God responsible for all their actions, because they are free to do as they choose, and they rebel against God's plan, and pervert his gifts. The power with which the scoffer blasphemes God is as much from God as is the power with which the Christian serves him. Yet no one can suppose that God approves of blasphemy. Even so we are not to suppose that he necessarily approves the acts of governments, simply because the powers that be are ordained of him.

"Ordained." -Let no one entertain the idea that this word necessarily implies the imparting of some spiritual power. It means nothing more than appointed or

ordered, which we find in the margin. The Greek word from which it is rendered is found in Acts 28:23, where we read that the Jews in Rome appointed a day for Paul to tell them about the Gospel. It could as well be said that they "ordained" a day for him.

God over All .-"The higher powers" are not above the Most High. "Wisdom and might are His; and He changeth the times and the seasons; He removeth kings, and setteth up kings." Dan. 2:20, 21. He set Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, over all the kingdoms of earth (see Jer. 17:5-8; Dan. 2:37, 38); but when Nebuchadnezzar arrogated to himself divine power, he was driven out among the beasts, that he might know that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will" (Dan. 4:32).

Resisting God .-Since there is no power but of God, 'he that resisteth the power withstandeth the ordinance of God; and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment.'" This is a warning against rebellion and insurrection. It is God who removes kings as well as sets them up. Therefore whoever presumes to remove a king is assuming God's prerogative. It is as though he knew better than God when the government should be altered. Unless those who rise up against any earthly government can show a direct revelation to them from heaven appointing them to that work, they are setting themselves against God, by seeking to overthrow his order. They are putting themselves ahead of God.

499

Resisting or Overthrowing .-To resist the civil authority is in the same line as seeking to overthrow it. He who opposes a power with force would overthrow it if the contest were continued and he had the power. This the followers of Christ are strictly forbidden to do.

Christ's Example .-Christ suffered, "leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, He threatened not; but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously." 1 Pet. 2:21-23. It is worth while to remember that Christ was condemned on a political charge, and for political reasons, yet he made no resistance, although He showed that He had power to do so. See John 18:5-11; Matt. 26:51-53. It may be said that Christ knew that his hour had come. True; but he did not resist at previous times. He continually committed himself into the hands of the Father. That is an example for his followers. If they are submissive in God's hands, they can suffer no indignity nor oppression that God does not appoint or allow; no injury can be done them before their hour comes. It is easier to profess faith in Christ than to show real faith by following his example.

Another Striking Example .-Saul had been anointed king of Israel by command of God; but had afterwards been rejected because of his reckless course. Then David was anointed king in his stead. Saul was jealous of David's preferment, and sought his life. David did not resist, but fled. More than once Saul was within David's power, but David would not lift up a hand against him. If there is any excuse for resisting a ruler, David had it. In the first place, if he had done so, it would have been only in self-defense; and, in the second place, he had already been anointed king in Saul's stead. Yet when urged even to consent

to allow another to kill Saul, David said: "Destroy him not; for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless? . . . As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish. The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed." 1 Sam. 26:9-11. And yet Saul was a wicked man, who had cast off allegiance to God, and was not fit to rule.

Subject to God .-God's word admonishes us to be subject to the powers that be, but it never countenances disobedience to God. God has never ordained any power to be above himself. It is the height of folly for us to argue from this chapter that it is the duty of Christians to obey human laws when they conflict with the law of God. God does not grant indulgence to sin; much less does he command us to sin. We are not to be subject to the powers that be instead of to God, but because we are subject to God. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Col. 3:17.

Subjection and Obedience .-Ordinarily subjection implies obedience. When we read that Jesus was subject to his parents, we are sure that he was obedient to them. So when we are exhorted to be subject to the powers that be, the natural conclusion is that we are to be obedient to the laws. But it must never be forgotten that God is above all; that both individual and national power comes from him; and that he has a right to the undivided service of every soul. We are to obey God all the time, and to be subject to human power as well, but always so that it does not involve disobedience to God.

Cannot Serve Two Masters .-"No man can serve two masters. . . . Ye can not serve God and mammon." The reason is that God and mammon are opposite in their demands. Now everybody knows that there have often been human laws that conflicted with God's commandments. There was once a law in America in the days of slavery requiring every man to do all in his power to return fugitive slaves to their masters. But God's word said, "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee." Deut. 23:15. In that case it was impossible to obey the law of the land without disobeying God; and obedience to God made disobedience to the human law absolutely necessary. Men had to make their choice as to whom they would obey. The Christian can not hesitate a moment in his choice. The law that contradicts God's law is nothing. "There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord." Prov. 21:30.

"Every Ordinance of Man." -"Some reader may quote 1 Peter 2:13 as opposed to this. It says, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." Others may say that we are to submit to every ordinance except when it is opposed to God's law. No exception, however, is implied, nor is any necessary. Neither does the text teach obedience to human laws that contradict God's law. The error arises from a misapprehension of the word "ordinance." It is supposed that this word means "law," but a careful reading will show anybody that this supposition is a mistake. Let us read the thirteenth and fourteenth verses carefully: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance [Greek, *creation*] of man for the Lord's sake." Well, what are these ordinances or creations to which we are to be subject? It makes no difference; to all, "whether it be to the king, as

supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him." It is very clear that the text says nothing whatever about laws, but only about rulers. The exhortation is precisely the same as that in the thirteenth of Romans.

Submissive yet Disobedient .-Let the reader follow on in the chapter last quoted from, and he will see that the submission enjoined does not involve obedience to wicked laws. We are exhorted: "Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king." We are to be subject to rightful authority, whether the exerciser of that authority be good and gentle, or froward. Then come the words, "For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully." 1 Pet. 2:17-19. Now a man could not for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully, unless conscience toward God had compelled him to disobey some command laid upon him. This statement, immediately following the exhortation to be submissive, plainly shows that disobedience is contemplated as a probability when those in authority are "froward." This is emphasized by the reference to Christ, who suffered wrongfully, yet made no resistance. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." Isa. 53:7. He was condemned for his loyalty to the truth, which he would not compromise in the least, and yet he was submissive to the authority of the rulers. The apostle says that in this he left us an example, that we should follow in his steps.

Christians and Civil Government .-"For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." Phil. 3:20. Those who through Christ have access by one Spirit unto the Father "are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Eph. 2:19. Let every man concern himself with the affairs of his own country, and not with those of another. For an American to come to England and presume to lecture Parliament for the way in which it conducts the business of Government, or for an Englishman to go to America and distinguish himself by his advice to the authorities, would be the height of impertinence. But if they should begin actively to interfere in the conduct of public

500

affairs, or should stand for office, they would speedily be shown that they had no business there. Let them become naturalized, and then they may speak and act as much as they please; but then they must hold their peace if they return to the country to which they once owed allegiance. No man can be active in the affairs of two governments at the same time. This applies to the government of heaven as related to earthly governments, as well as to different countries on earth. The one who is a citizen of the heavenly country has no business to meddle with the affairs of earthly governments. He must leave that business to those who acknowledge this earth to be their home. If earthly rulers think to regulate the affairs pertaining to the kingdom of God, they are guilty of gross presumption, to say the least. But if they may not of right presume to regulate the affairs of the kingdom of heaven, much less may the citizens of heaven interfere in the affairs of earthly kingdoms.

Making Earth Heaven .-Many Christians and ministers of the gospel seek to justify their dealing in politics by saying that it is their duty to make this earth the kingdom of heaven. In a recent campaign we have heard much about "the regeneration of London," and "making London the city of God." Such language shows a grave misapprehension of what the gospel is. "It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Rom. 1:16. Regeneration is accomplished only by the Holy Spirit working upon individual hearts, and can not be controlled by men. The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of Christ, but only "the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." Rev. 11:15; Isa. 9:7. There will be a new earth, in which only righteousness will dwell, but it will be only after the coming of the day of the Lord, in which the elements shall melt, and ungodly men shall be burned up. 2 Pet. 3:10-13. It will not be brought about by political action, even though ministers of the Gospel be the politicians. The minister of the Gospel has but one commission, namely, "Preach the word." In no other way in the world can men be made better. Therefore the minister who turns his attention to politics is denying his calling.

Keeping the Peace .-We must needs be subject to earthly governments, for conscience' sake; and for this cause also we must pay tribute and perform every duty of that nature that is laid upon us. Taxes may be heavy, and even unjust, but that does not warrant us in rebelling. The apostle James speaks to rich men who oppress the poor, and his language applies as well when they are in public office as when in private life. He says: "Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you." James 5:5, 6. Mark this, the just do not resist. Why not? Because of the injunction: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Rom. 12:18, 19. As subjects of the King of peace, and citizens of His kingdom, they are bound to live peaceably with all men. Hence they can not fight even in self-defense. In this, Christ the Prince of peace is their example.

To Whom a Terror .-Only the evil workers are afraid of rulers. Well-doers have no fear. This is not because all rulers are good; for we know that many are not. "The broad empire of Rome filled the world," and the one who ruled it when Paul wrote to the Romans was the most vile and cruel of all the monsters who governed it. Nero put men to death for the mere pleasure of killing them. Well might he strike terror to the hearts of men; yet the Christians could be calm, because their trust was in God. "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid." Isa. 12:2.

The Whole Duty of Man .-"Owe no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." "Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." 1 John 4:7. "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." 1 John 5:3. To fear God and keep His commandments is the whole duty of man. Eccl. 12:13. Therefore, since he who loves his neighbor from the heart must also love God, and love is the keeping of

his commandments, it is evident that the apostle has set forth in this exhortation the whole duty of man. He who heeds this exhortation can never do anything for which earthly governments can justly condemn him, even though he be ignorant of their laws. He who fulfils the law of love will never come in conflict with the powers that be. If they oppress him, they are fighting not against him but against the King whom he serves.

For Christians, Not for the Powers .-Some have supposed that verses 8-10 define the limit of civil authority, and show that men may legislate concerning "the second table of the law," but concerning no other portion of the law of God. Two things kept in mind will show the fallacy of this. (1) The epistle is not addressed to rulers, but to individual Christians, as a guide for their private conduct. If the duty of rulers were here laid down, they, and not the brethren, would have been addressed. (2) "The law is spiritual," and consequently none of it is within the power of human legislation. Take the commandment, "Thou shalt not covet;" no human power could enforce that, or tell if it was violated. But that commandment is no more spiritual than the other nine. The language is addressed to the brethren, and the sum of it is this. Live in love, and you will wrong no man, and need have no fear of any rulers.

The End Approaches .-The remainder of the chapter is devoted to exhortations that need no comment. Their special force is derived from the fact that "the end of all things is at hand." Therefore we should "be sober, and watch unto prayer." Although living in the night, when darkness covers the earth (Isa. 60:2), Christians are children of the light and of the day, leaving off works of darkness.

Clothed with Christ .-Those who put on the Lord Jesus Christ will not themselves be seen. Christ alone will appear. To make provision for the lusts of the flesh is most unnecessary, since the flesh ever seeks to have its lusts gratified. The Christian has need rather to take heed that it does not assert its own power, and assume control. Only in Christ can the flesh be subdued. He who is crucified with Christ, can say, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Gal. 2:20. And in that case he will conduct himself towards rulers and private persons just as Christ did, "because as he is, so are we in this world." E. J. W.

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**"Studies in Romans. God the Only Judge" *The Signs of the Times* 22,
33.**

E. J. Waggoner

Since the fourteenth chapter consists wholly of practical instruction in Christian living, and has no direct dependence upon the exhortations that have preceded it, we need not now take time to review the previous chapters, but will proceed at once with the text. Let it not be forgotten that this chapter, as well as those which precede, is addressed to the church, and not to those who do not

profess to serve the Lord. In the sixth verse it is plainly shown that all who are spoken of in this chapter are those who acknowledge God as their Lord. The chapter therefore tells how we should regard one another as

Servants of One Common Master

"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things; another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth; for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up; for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more; but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." Rom. 14:1-12.

Questions on the Text

Who are we not to shut away from our company?

"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye."

But how are we not to receive him?

"Not to doubtful disputations." Or, as indicated in the margin, and rendered in some versions, "Not to judge his thoughts."

What illustration of differences of opinions does the apostle give?

"One believeth that he may eat all things, and other, who is weak, eateth herbs." "One man esteemeth one day above another, another esteemeth every day alike."

In what state should every man be?

"Let each man be fully assured in his own mind." R.V.

How are those who differ in opinion not to regard each other?

"Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth."

Why not?

"For God hath received him."

What is that man doing who judges another man?

He is judging "another man's servant."

To whom is the servant responsible?

"To his own master he standeth or falleth."

But will he really fall, if he is indeed a servant of God?

"He shall be holden up."

Why?

"For God is able to make him stand."

What is the lesson that we are to learn in all this?

"None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."

To whom do we live and die?

"Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord."

Whose, then, are we under all circumstances?

"Whose, then, are we under all circumstances?

"Whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."

For what purpose did Christ die and rise again?

"That he might be Lord both of the dead and living."

Why should we not judge or set at naught our brother?

"For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."

What proof is cited for this?

"It is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God."

What, then, must every one of us do?

"Every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

Since God is to judge us all, what reasonable exhortation is given?

"Let us not therefore judge one another anymore."

What should we rather judge?

"That no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."

The School of Christ. -The church of Christ is not composed of perfect men, but of those who are seeking perfection. He is the perfect One, and he sends out the invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." Mat. 11:28, 29. Having called all to come to him, he says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37. As one has said, "God reaches for the hand of faith in man to direct it to lay fast hold upon the divinity of Christ, that man may attain to perfection of character." The faith may be very weak, but God does not reject him on that account. Paul thanked God that the faith of the Thessalonian brethren grew exceedingly (2 Thess. 1:3), which shows that they did not have perfect faith at the first. It is true that God is so good that every person ought to trust him fully; but just because he is so good, he is very patient and forbearing with those who are not well acquainted with him, and he does not turn away from them because they are doubtful. It is this very goodness and forbearance of God that develops perfect faith.

The Pupils Not Masters. -It is not for the pupils to say who shall attend school. It is true that in this world there are schools that are exclusive, in which only a certain set of pupils are allowed. If one inferior in wealth and standing in society should seek to enter, there would be at once an uproar. The students themselves would make so strong a protest against the entrance of the newcomer, that the masters would feel obliged not to receive him. But such schools are not the schools of Christ. "There is no respect of persons with God." He invites the poor and needy, and the weak. It is he, and not the pupils, that decides who shall be admitted. He says, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely," and he asks all who hear to extend the invitation. The only qualification necessary for entering the school of Christ is willingness to learn of him. If any man is willing to do his will, God will receive him and teach him. John 7:17. Whoever sets up any other standard, sets himself above God. No man has any right to reject one whom God receives.

Master and Servant. -Christ said to his disciples: "Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master; and all ye are brethren." "Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ." Matt. 23:8, 10. It is the master who sets the task for each pupil or servant. It is to the master that the servant looks for his reward. Therefore it is the master alone who has the right to give orders, and to pronounce judgment if there is failure. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?" If you have not the power to reward his success, you have not the right to judge his failures.

"God Is the Judge." -"He putteth down one, and setteth up another." Ps. 75:7. "For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us." Isa. 33:22. "There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy; who art thou that judgest another?" James 4:12. The power to save and to destroy determines the right to judge. To condemn when one has not the power to carry the judgment into effect, is but a farce. Such an one makes himself ridiculous, to say the least.

The Spirit of the Papacy. -The apostle Paul describes the apostasy as the revelation of "that man of sin," "the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God," or, "setting himself forth as God." 2 Thess. 2:3, 4. In Daniel 7:25 the same power is described as speaking great words against the Most High, and thinking to change times and laws. To set one's self up against or above the law of God, is the strongest possible opposition to God, and the most presumptuous usurpation of his power. The end of the power that thus exalts itself is this: to be consumed by the Spirit of Christ, and destroyed by the brightness of his coming. 2 Thess. 2:8. Now read in James 4:11: "He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law; but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge." That tells us that whoever speaks evil of his brother, or judges or sets at naught his brother, is speaking against the law of God, and sitting in judgment upon it. In other words, he is putting himself in the place and doing the work of "that man of sin." What else can result, but that he

receive the reward of the man of sin? Surely there is enough in this thought to give us all pause.

All Subjects of Judgment. -"For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." In this statement there is no exception, for it is written, "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." This being the case, it is the strongest reason why we should not judge and condemn one another. Verse 10 gives the fact that we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ as the reason why we should not judge nor despise a brother. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Notice this, that each one is to give account of *himself*, and not of somebody else, to God. In standing before the judgment seat of Christ, we are giving account to God, because Christ is the representative of Divinity in the judgment, as well as in all things. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." John 5:22, 23.

The Time of Judgment. -One reason why we should not judge, is that God is the judge. Another is, that "he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom he hath ordained." Acts 17:31. The Father himself judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son. But even the Son does not sit in judgment now; for he says, "If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not, for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." John 12:47. Therefore, he who presumes to sit in judgment now, not only usurps the place of God, but gets ahead of him. There will be a time when judgment will be committed to the saints of the Most High, but it will be only when the saints possess the kingdom. Dan. 7:22. And those to whom judgment is committed will all be *saints*. 1 Cor. 6:2. None are to judge, except those who are without sin. The man who judges, therefore, declares himself to be without sin. But God is the only one whose testimony in this respect is of any worth; "For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." 2 Cor. 10:18. "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come." 1 Cor. 4:5.

The Word of Judgment. -But altho even Christ does not yet judge, he speaks the word by which men are to be judged, and that is the word of God. He says, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." John 12:48, 49. Altho Christ did not condemn anybody while he was on earth, the word that he spoke often caused those who heard it to be convicted in their own hearts, and self-condemned. "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." John 3:17-19.

Truth and Condemnation. -From the words of Christ, which we have quoted in the paragraph, we clearly see that there is a difference between condemning

men and speaking the truth. Christ was not sent into the world to condemn the world; but he was sent into the world to bear witness to the truth. John 18:37. He did not condemn anybody, yet he declared the truth. So his followers are not to condemn anybody; yet none are his followers except those who speak the truth. If any are not doing the truth, the word of truth will enlighten them as to their acts. If they then persist in error, the word of truth testifies against them. But the one who speaks that word utters no condemnation.

Knowledge of Right and Wrong. -In this manner it by no means follows that a person in order not to condemn, must not explain the knowledge of right and wrong, which God has given him. If he did not, he could not be a witness for the truth. Neither could he do the truth. God's word is truth (John 17:17); therefore the followers of Christ must both by words and actions speak the word of God. That word points out the difference between truth and error. It tells what things ought to be done, and what should not be done. By that word one may, and ought to declare of certain things, "They are sinful." But in so saying, he utters no decision concerning any person. In short, the word of God condemns some now and always, but it does not at all condemn sinners, until the last day. Certainly all can see this clear distinction, and not know what they should do and what they should not do, in order to be in harmony with God's word.

The Law and the Testimony. -"To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isa. 8:20. That is the testimony which we are always to give, let

516

be according to the law of God. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." 1 Peter 4:11. Therefore, while we are not at liberty to condemn, we are at the same time not at liberty to disregard the word of God. We are by no means to assume that it makes no difference what we do, nor are we to give other people the idea that it is of no importance whether they keep the law of God or not. That form of charity which consists in giving away the word of God, or rather, in throwing it away, so as not to say anything contrary to anybody's ideas of prejudices, is a form of charity that finds no warrant in the Bible.

Personal Questions. -Sometimes a person will ask concerning some duty pointed out by the law of God, "Ought I to do that?" The one questioned can only reply, "You ought to obey the Lord, now when you know what the Lord says, why do you ask me if you shall obey? I can not absolve you from obeying God, and if you do obey him, you ought to do it because he says so, and not because a man tells you to." Again, a man sometimes asks, "Do you think that I shall be condemned if I do not keep the Sabbath?" We can only say, "I am not the judge. I have nothing to do with condemnation. You know what the Lord commands, decide for yourself whether or not you can reject his word and be justified." The word of God is the sole guide, the sole standard of authority. Men must be brought face to face with it, and then left there alone with it.

The Law Not Disparaged. -There are many people who seem to be quite familiar with the words of the first part of the fourteenth of Romans, who evidently very seldom read any other part of the epistle. That is, they know that the apostle Paul wrote, "One man esteemeth one day above another, another esteemeth

every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." But they are so unfamiliar with the rest of the epistle that they suppose that this statement does away with the law of the Sabbath. What evidence have we that these words do not in the least degree intimate that the law of God, which includes the fourth commandment, is a matter of indifference? Note the following points, and you will readily see. First, the apostle says in this same chapter that "we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." Second, he says also in the first part of the epistle, that "as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law," "in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ." Rom. 2:12, 16. When the apostle says that we are all to stand at the judgment seat of Christ, and that the law of God is to be the standard of that judgment, it is very evident that he never intends to be understood as saying that it is a matter of no importance whether or not we keep that law.

The Law and the Sabbath. -The fourth commandment of the law by which all men are to be judged, reads thus: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it 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." Ex. 20:8-11. Of this law Jesus said: "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. The Sabbath therefore stands in the law just the same as when it was spoken from Sinai; and the law in which it stands is the law by which men are to be judged at the last day. Therefore it can not be a matter of indifference whether the Sabbath is kept or not; and it must be that the Sabbath, with the rest of the law, is to be proclaimed to all men, in order that they may be prepared for the judgment. This being the case, we very well know that in the fourteenth chapter of Romans the apostle Paul does not convey the least shadow of an idea that the keeping of the Sabbath is a matter of indifference.

"Every Day." -Some one will of course interpose that the apostle says "every day," and that therefore he must necessarily include the Sabbath among things indifferent. Not so fast. In the sixteenth of Exodus we read that the people were told that they were to go out and gather a certain portion of manna "every day;" and yet in the same chapter we are told that they should find none at all on the seventh day. We are not to try to catch the Lord in his own words. When he says that a certain work is to be done every day, we are to know that he excepts, as a matter of course, those days on which he himself has said that work may not be done. When a man says that his children go to school every day, he means of course that they go very school day, and not that they go when there is no school. So when the apostle Paul, writing by inspiration of God, seems to imply that there are certain days which may be regarded or not, as one may choose, we must know that he does not by any means design to convey the idea that the holy Sabbath of the Lord, which was commanded to all men by his own voice, is among those indifferent days.

"Fully Persuaded." -"Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." So far as this statement is concerned, it makes no difference if it is applied to the Sabbath of the Lord. God desires willing, intelligent service. The man who professes to keep the Sabbath of the Lord, and yet is not sure that it is the Sabbath, is not keeping it at all. The law of God is not to be regarded simply as a thing to dodge behind in order to escape the wrath of God. The man who is not sure about the law, but who thinks that he will keep it so as to be on the safe side in the judgment, if it should chance to be the standard in that judgment, is not serving the Lord, but himself. Let a man be fully persuaded in his own mind that "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good," and then let him keep it unto the Lord. If he does not keep it because he knows it to be right, his apparent service is but mockery and sin. E. J. W.

August 27, 1896

"Studies in Romans. Living for Others" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 34.

E. J. Waggoner

In our study last week we learned that the members of the church of Christ are not judges one of another, but fellow-servants of one common Lord. We are not taught that it is a matter of indifference whether or not we keep the commandments of God-quite the contrary, since we are all to appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and be judged by them-but we are taught that in those things concerning which the law of God does not speak particularly, one man's ways are as good as another's. We learned even further that even one who may be faulty with respect to an express commandment, is not to be dealt with harshly, and condemned. Such a course can not help one, and, besides, we have no right to do so, since we are but servants.

We now come to the study of the continuation of the same subject, in Rom. 14:14-23:-

"I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of; for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offense. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

In order to save time and space we will omit the question on the text, leaving each reader to question it for himself. Study each statement carefully, and

consider its connection, as well as the general subject, and what is stated elsewhere in the Bible concerning the same thing. As many errors arise from careless reading of the Bible, and from hasty conclusions from detached statements, as from willful perversion of the word. Possibly many more are the result of lack of proper thought than of deliberate willfulness. Let us therefore always take heed how we read.

Clean and Unclean

The apostle says, "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean." If we consider well the subject under consideration, we shall not wrest this scripture from its connection. The thing presented from the beginning of the chapter is the case of a man with so little real knowledge of Christ that he thinks righteousness is to be obtained by the eating of certain kinds of food, or by not eating certain things. The idea clearly conveyed by the entire chapter is that it is by faith, and not by eating and drinking, that we are saved.

A little consideration of the question of clean and unclean food will help us much. There is a strange idea prevalent, to the effect that things that were at one time unfit for food are perfectly wholesome now. Many people seem to think that even unclean beasts are made clean by the Gospel. They forget that Christ purifies men, not beasts and reptiles.

There were plants that were poisonous in the days of Moses, and those same plants are poisonous now. The very people who seem to think that the Gospel makes everything fit to eat, would be as much disgusted at the thought of eating cats, dogs, caterpillars, spiders, flies, etc., as any Jew would have been in the days of Moses. Instead of finding that a knowledge of Christ reconciles one to such a diet, we find, on the contrary, that it is only the most degraded savages who make use of them for food, and such a diet is both a sign and cause of degradation. Enlightenment brings carefulness in the selection of food.

Now there is no one who can imagine the apostle Paul or any other person of good sense and refinement eating everything that he could possibly find on earth. Although most people think themselves wiser than God in the matter of eating and drinking, there are, as there always have been, certain things universally held to be unfit for food. Therefore when the apostle says that nothing is unclean of itself, he evidently confines his remark to those things which God has provided for man's eating. There are people whose conscience is so poorly instructed that they fear to eat even of things which God has given to be eaten; just as there are some who forbid the eating of "food which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving." 1 Tim. 4:3.

So when the apostle says, "One believeth that he may eat all things," it is evident that the "all things" does not include filth. The idea evidently is that one believes that he may eat everything that is fit to be eaten. But another, having for instance the thought that some of those things may have been devoted to an idol, fears to eat of them lest he should thereby become an idolater. The eighth

chapter of 1 Corinthians makes this whole subject plain, as it runs parallel with the fourteenth of Romans.

This throws light also upon the subject of days. Since the apostle evidently confines his remarks concerning food to that which it is allowable to eat, it is more clear that those days which may be considered as all alike are those days only which God has not sanctified to himself.

The Nature of the Kingdom

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Over that kingdom Christ has been set as King, for God has said, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." Ps. 2:6. Now read further the words of the Father to the Son, whom he has appointed heir of all things: "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Heb. 1:8, 9.

A scepter is the symbol of power. Christ's scepter is a scepter of righteousness; therefore the power of his kingdom is righteousness. He rules by righteousness. His life on earth was a perfect manifestation of righteousness, so that he rules his kingdom by the power of his life. All those who own his life are subjects of his kingdom. No other thing but the life of Christ is the badge of citizenship in the kingdom of Christ.

But with what was Christ anointed King? The text last read says that it was with "the oil of gladness." Then gladness, or joy, is a necessary part of the kingdom of Christ. It is a kingdom of joy, as well as of righteousness. Therefore it is that every subject of that kingdom must be filled with joy. "A gloomy Christian" is as much a contradiction of terms as "a cold sun." The sun is for the purpose of shedding the warmth of which it is composed; so the Christian is for the purpose of diffusing the peace and joy which is a part of his nature. The Christian is not joyful simply because he thinks that he ought to be, but because he has been translated into the kingdom of joy.

"He that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." He who in what things serves Christ? Why, he who serves Christ in righteousness, and peace, and joy. Or, as some translations have it, "He that thus serves Christ." God accepts such service, and men approve. Not only do Christians approve such service, but unbelievers are constrained to approve. The enemies of Daniel were forced to bear witness to the uprightness of his life, when they said that they could find nothing against him except in the law of his God. But that very statement was an approval of the law of his God, obedience to which made him the faithful man that he was.

Unselfishness

Peace is a characteristic of the kingdom. Therefore those who are in the kingdom must follow the things which make for peace. But selfishness never causes peace. On the contrary, selfishness is always the cause of war, and inevitably produces war if it is persisted in. Therefore the subject of the kingdom must always be ready to sacrifice his own desires and ideas in behalf of others. The unselfish person will give up his own ways whenever they interfere with the peace of another.

But do not forget that the kingdom of God is righteousness as well as peace. Righteousness is obedience to the law of God; for "all unrighteousness is sin" (1 John 5:17), and "sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). Therefore, although by the laws of the kingdom one must necessarily up his own wishes in order not to interfere with the feelings of others, by those same laws he is precluded from giving up any of the commandments of God. Obedience to the law of God is that which makes for peace, for we read: "Great peace have they which love thy law." Ps. 119:165. "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. Therefore he who is so "charitable" as to give up

532

any portion of the law of God because some people are displeased with it, is not following the things which make for peace. On the contrary, he is rebelling against the kingdom of Christ.

This again shows us that the Sabbath of the Lord is not under consideration, as one of the things which are to be held as matters of mere personal opinion. The Christian has no option with regard to that. He must keep it. It is not one of the days which the subject of the kingdom may disregard if he wishes. It is one of the things that are obligatory. But there are things which one has the right to do if he wishes, but which he is not obliged to do. For instance, a man has the right to eat his food with the fingers, if he wishes to; but if that annoys his companion, the law of Christ requires him not to do so. And thus it appears that the law of Christ alone, will, if carefully heeded, make a man perfectly courteous. The true Christian is a gentleman in the best sense of that word.

There are many things that are allowable, which some people with faith that is weak, because it is uninstructed, think to be wrong. Christian courtesy, as laid down in the fourteenth chapter of Romans, requires that the better-instructed person should regard the scruples of his weaker brother. To roughly ignore those scruples, although they may be destitute of reason, is not the way to help that brother into a wider liberty. On the contrary, it is the way to discourage him. "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."

Thus it becomes evident that the fourteenth chapter of Romans is simply a lesson in Christian courtesy and helpfulness instead of teaching that the Sabbath, or anything else that pertains to the commandments of God, may be disregarded at pleasure. Consideration is to be shown for "him that is weak in the faith;" but the one who is offended by the keeping of the commandments of God, has no faith at all.

The Limitations of Conscience

"Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God." Faith and conscience pertain to single individuals. No man can have faith for another. No man can have faith enough to serve for two. The teaching of the Roman Church is that certain ones have had more faith than they needed, and have been more righteous than was necessary, so that they can divide with other people; but the Bible teaches that it is impossible for any man to have faith than will serve to save himself. Therefore, no matter how well one man's faith may be instructed, no other man can be judged by it.

We hear a great deal in these days about the public conscience. We are often told that the conscience of one man is outraged by the course of another. But it is with conscience as with faith, no man can have enough for two. The man who thinks that his conscience will serve for himself and for somebody else, has mistaken selfish obstinacy for conscience. It is this mistaken idea of conscience that has led to all the horrible persecutions that have ever been perpetrated in the name of religion. Let Christians all understand that conscience is between themselves and God alone. They are not at liberty to impose even their freedom of conscience upon another; but by the laws of the kingdom of Christ, they are obliged even to refrain at times from exercising their own freedom, out of consideration for others. That is to say, the man who can walk fast, is to help along his weak brother, who is going the same way, but more slowly. But he is not to turn around to please somebody who is walking the other way. E. J. W.

September 3, 1896

"Studies in Romans. The Law of Christ" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 35.

E. J. Waggoner

The fourteenth chapter of Romans presented to us our duty towards those who are weak in the faith, and who have excessively conscientious scruples with regard to things that are in themselves of no consequence. We are not judges of one another, but must all appear before one judgment seat. If we have more knowledge than our brother, we are not arbitrarily to bring him to our standard, any more than he is to bring us down to his. Our greater knowledge rather throws upon us the responsibility of exercising the greater charity and patience. The sum of it all is contained in these verses: "For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offense. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God."

Duty of Helping One Another

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus; that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God." Rom. 15:1-7.

Questions on the Text

What ought the strong to do?

"To bear the infirmities of the weak."

547

What ought such not to do?

"Not to please ourselves."

What are we exhorted to do for our neighbor?

"Let every one of us please his neighbor."

In what way are we to please our neighbor?

"For his good to edification."

Who has set us an example in this respect?

"For even Christ pleased not himself."

What scripture is cited to show this?

"The reproaches of them that reproached thee fall on me." See Ps. 69:9.

For what purpose were the Scriptures of the Old Testament written?

"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning."

With what special object?

"That we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."

In view of the example of Christ, what exhortation is given?

"Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus."

For what purpose?

"That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God."

In concluding this portion of the subject, what exhortation is repeated?

"Wherefore receive ye one another." See chapter 14:1.

How are we to receive on another?

"As Christ also received us."

To what end?

"To the glory of God."

The verses composing this chapter supplement the instruction given in chapter fourteen, and are a continuation of that. Thus, that chapter opens with the exhortation, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye." The last verse of our present study is, "Wherefore receive ye one another," etc.

How Are We to Receive One Another? The answer is, "As Christ also received us." This again emphasizes the statement that the apostle had not the slightest intention in any way of depreciating any one of the Ten Commandments when in the fourteenth chapter he said: "One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Christ did not in the slightest degree make any concessions in the commandments in order to accommodate those whom he would receive. He said, "Think not that I came to destroy the law, or the prophets." Matt. 5:17. Again, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." John 15:10. Christ's commandments and those of the Father are the same, because he says, "I and my Father are one." John 10:30. When a young man wished to follow him, he said to him, "Keep the commandments." Matt. 19:17. Therefore it is evident that in making concessions for the sake of peace and harmony, no concession is to be made in respect to keeping the

This is still further shown by the exhortation, "Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification." We are never exhorted to aid a brother to sin, in order to please him. Neither are we exhorted to close our eyes to a brother's sin, and allow him to go on in it without warning him, lest we displease him. There is no kindness in that. The exhortation is, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him." Lev. 19:17. The mother who would be so fearful of displeasing her child that she would not stop it from putting its hand into the blaze, would be exhibiting cruelty instead of kindness. We are to please our neighbors, but only for their good, not to lead astray.

Going back to the first verse, we find this lesson still more strongly emphasized: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." "For even Christ pleased not himself." Compare this with Galatians 6:1, 2: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such on one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." In bearing the infirmities of the weak, we are fulfilling the law of Christ. But to bear another's burdens does not mean to teach him that he can safely ignore any of the commandments. To keep the commandments of God is not a burden; for "his commandments are not grievous." 1 John 5:3.

Christ bears our burdens, not by taking away the law of God, but by taking away our sins, and enabling us to keep the law. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." Rom. 8:3, 4.

One blessed thing in the service of the Lord is that he does not say, "Go," but, "Come." He does not send us away to labor by ourselves, but calls us to follow him. He does not ask anything of us that he does not himself do. When he says that we ought to bear the infirmities of them that are weak, we should take it as an encouragement, instead of a task laid upon us, since it reminds us of what he does for us. He is the mighty One, for we read, "I have laid help upon One that is

mighty; I have exalted One chosen out of the people." Ps. 89:19. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Is. 53:4, 6.

This is what makes it easy to bear one another's burdens. If we know that Christ bears our burdens, it will become a pleasure for us to bear the burdens of others. The trouble is that too often we forget that Christ is the Burden-bearer, and, being over powered with the weight of our own infirmities, we have still less patience with those of others. But when we know that Christ is indeed the Burden-bearer, we cast our own care upon him; and then when we make the burden of another our own, he bears that too.

God is "the God of patience and consolation." He is "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." 2 Cor. 1:3, 4. He takes upon himself all the reproaches that fall upon men. "The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me." Of the children of Israel it is said, "In all their affliction he was afflicted." Isa. 63:9. The words of Christ are, "Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonor." "Reproach hath broken my heart." Ps. 69:19, 20. Yet in all this there was no impatience, no murmuring. Therefore, as he has already borne the burdens of the world in the flesh, he is fully able to bear ours in our flesh, without complaining; so that we may be "strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." Col. 1:11.

It is this lesson that is taught us throughout all the Scriptures: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." In the book of Job this is made manifest. "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." James 5:11. In the writings of Moses it is as clearly set forth. Christ says: "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not the writings, how shall ye believe my words?" John 5:46, 47. If the Gospel according to Moses is neglected, it will be of no use to read the Gospel according to John, because the gospel can not be divided. The Gospel of Christ, like himself, is one.

Finally, "Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God." Whom does Christ receive? "This man receiveth sinners." How many will he receive? "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." How will he receive them?-"All day long have I stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." And if they come, what assurance have they?-"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Let us learn of him; and remember that, wherever you may open the Scriptures, they are they which testify of him. E. J. W.

September 10, 1896

"Our Rest" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 36.

E. J. Waggoner

Our Rest. -"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." Heb. 4:9.

The Lord's Rest. -This rest, as we learn from the connection, is the Lord's rest. The promise is left us of entering into his rest. Verse 1.

Present Rest. -That rest is not something to which we are to look forward, but it is to be enjoyed in the present. It is a rest that "remaineth." It has existed since the days of old, and has not been withdrawn.

Resting Now. -Evidence of the truth of this is found in the fact that the rest that remains is the Lord's rest. The Lord is not looking forward to a time when he can rest, but is resting now. He calls us to share his rest with him, saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. 11:28.

From the Beginning. -Since what time has this rest been ready for man? The answer is: "The works were finished from the foundation of the world." Heb. 4:3. A finished work means rest; and so we read in the next verse that "God did rest the seventh day from all his works." The Sabbath day-God's rest-is the sign or seal of creation complete and perfect. "God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." Gen. 1:31. And then he rested from his work. From that time-from the close of the sixth day-God's rest has been ready for man.

Edenic Rest. -And at that time man-the new man whom God had created-entered upon that rest. "The Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." Gen. 2:15. "Eden" means "pleasure" or "delight." A very literal rendering of the Hebrew would be that the Lord took the man and "caused him to rest in the garden of delight." Work was given him, but it was work without weariness.

The Rest Lost. -But the man did not continue in that rest. He disobeyed the word of God, and thus lost the rest that was in it. God said, "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground."

The Seal of the Rest. -Nevertheless God's rest remained. The Sabbath-the perfect rest of the new earth-still was left to man as an evidence that God had not cast him away and as a pledge of the rest in the earth again made new. This perfect Sabbath rest, the seal of a new creation, is found in Christ. In him were all things created." Col. 1:16. R. V. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." 2 Cor. 5:17. Since man lost his rest only by sin, he recovers it only by the righteousness of God in Christ.

Rest in Labor. -God's rest, however, does not mean long idleness. Altho God entered into his rest at the creation, Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." John 5:17. He works by means of his word, on the strength of which he rested. If that word works in us, we also shall find rest from labor. "For we are his

workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Eph. 2:10. Just as when God made man and set him to work, yet gave him rest, so when he makes the man new, he makes him new in order that he may work, yet it is restful work.

Rest in Christ. -And that is what the Saviour's call teaches us. When he invites the weary to come to him for rest, he immediately adds, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me." Working yoked up with him, we work with him, and he works in us. His works were all done by the word of God. If we, like him give heed to every word of God, we shall do the works, and find the rest. Who will accept his gracious invitation? E. J. W.

"Studies in Romans. Confirming the Promises" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 36.

E. J. Waggoner

With this number we finish our study of the book of Romans. While the study has covered a long time, and there have been many articles, it has not nevertheless been exhaustive. Indeed, it is impossible to have an exhaustive study of the Bible; for no matter how thoroughly we study any portion of it, we shall still find ourselves but upon the threshold. The more we study the Bible, the more will our best study seem to be only preliminary to further study that will be seen to be necessary. But altho we can not expect ever to exhaust the truth, so that we can say that we have it all, we may be sure that as far as we have gone we have only the truth. And this assurance arises not from any wisdom that we have, but solely from adhering closely to the word of God, and not allowing the alloy of human ideas to mingle with its pure gold.

The portion of Scripture which we have before us in this study, namely, from the eighth verse of the fifteenth chapter of Romans to the close of the sixteenth chapter, is long, but it is difficult to find any place for dividing it, especially since much of it is devoted to personal matters. On account of the length of it, we have not reprinted the text. Many verses will however be found in the course of the lesson, and it is expected that the student will carefully read the entire portion from the Bible itself.

"A Minister of the Circumcision." -Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision." Bear this in mind. Shall we learn from it that he saves only the Jews? By no means, but we must learn from it that "salvation is of the Jews." John 4:22. "Jesus Christ our Lord" was "made of the seed of David according to the flesh." Rom. 1:3. He is the "root of Jesse," which stands "for an ensign of the people," to which the Gentiles seek. Isa. 11:10; Rom. 15:12. The Gentiles who find salvation must find it in Israel. None can find it anywhere else.

"The Commonwealth of Israel." -In writing to the brethren at Ephesus, Paul refers to the time before they were converted as the time when they were "gentiles in the flesh," and says, "At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Eph. 2:11, 12. That is, outside of Israel there is no hope for mankind. They who are "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel" are "without Christ," and "without God in the world." In

Christ Jesus we are brought to God. But being brought to God we are "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Verses 18, 19. Therefore we have two things most clearly and positively taught, namely, That none are saved unless they are of the house of Israel; and, That none are of the house of Israel except those who are in Christ.

Confirming the Promises. -"Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers." That shows that all the promises of God to the fathers were made in Christ. "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen." 2 Cor. 1:20. "To Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ." Gal. 3:16. There was therefore never any promise made to the fathers which was not to be obtained only through Christ, and therefore through the righteousness which is by him.

Christ Not Divided. -Jesus Christ is declared to be a minister of the circumcision. Suppose now we hold that the promises to the fathers mean the natural descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; we should then be shut up to the conclusion that only those natural descendants those who are circumcised can be saved. Or, at least, we should be driven to the conclusion that Christ does something for them that he does not do for the rest of mankind. But Christ is not divided. All that he does for one man he does for every man. All that he does for any he does through his cross; and he is crucified but once. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Therefore since Christ is the minister of the circumcision to confirm the promises made unto the fathers, it is evident that those promises included all mankind. "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him" Rom. 10:12. "Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also; seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith." Rom. 3:29, 30.

The "Tabernacle of David." -At the time when the apostles and elders were assembled in Jerusalem, Peter told how he had been used by the Lord to carry the gospel to the Gentiles. Said he, "God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." Acts 15:8, 9. Then James added, "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." Acts 15:14-18. That is, the house of David is to be built up only by the preaching of the Gospel to the gentiles, and the taking from them of a people for God. And this was the purpose of God from the beginning, as the prophets testify. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Acts 10:43.

"The Blessing of Abraham." -Again we read that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; . . . that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Gal. 3:13, 14. The curse that Christ was made for us, was the cross, as is stated in the words omitted from the text just quoted. Therefore we learn that the promises to the fathers were assured only by the cross of Christ. But Christ tasted death for every man. Heb. 2:9. He was "lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:14, 15. Therefore the promises made to the fathers were simply the promises of the gospel, which is "to every creature." By the cross, Christ confirms the promises made to the fathers, in order "that the gentiles might glorify God for his mercy."

"One Fold, and One Shepherd." -In the tenth chapter of John we find some of the most beautiful, tender, and encouraging words of the Lord Jesus. He is the Good Shepherd. He is the gate by which the sheep enter into the fold. He gives his life to save them. Then he says, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd." Verse 16. Therefore when his work is completed, there will be but one fold, and he will be the Shepherd. Let us see who will compose that flock.

The Lost Sheep. -In the fifteenth chapter of Luke, that wonderful bouquet of blessed illustrations of the love and mercy of the Saviour, Jesus represents his work as that of the shepherd going to seek the lost and wandering sheep. Now who are the sheep that he is seeking? He himself gives the answer: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matt. 15:24. This is emphatic. Therefore it is evident that all the sheep whom he finds, and whom he brings back to fold, will be Israel. And so it is just as evident that the "one fold" will be the fold of Israel. There will be no other fold, since it is to be "one fold." And he will be the Shepherd. To-day, as well as in the days of old, we may pray, "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubim, shine forth." Ps. 80:1.

The Characteristic of the Sheep. -Those who are following Christ are his sheep. But he has "other sheep." There are many who are not now following him, who are his sheep. They are lost and wandering, and he is seeking them. What determines who are his sheep? Hear him tell: "The sheep hear his voice." "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice." "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice." John 10:3, 16, 26, 27. When he speaks, those who are his sheep will hear his voice, and come to him. The word of the Lord is the test as to who are his sheep. Every one therefore who hears and obeys the word of the Lord is of the family of Israel; and those who reject or neglect the word, are eternally lost. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal. 3:29.

"One Faith." -We may now stop to see how this that the apostle has said connects with what he has said in the fourteenth chapter, about Christ's being the minister of the circumcision, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, in order

that the gentiles might glorify God. "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations." Mark this: They who are to be received "as Christ also received us to the glory of God," are those who have the faith. Now there is but "one faith," as there is but "one Lord." Eph. 4:5. And faith comes by hearing the word of God. Rom. 10:17. Since there is to be but one fold, and Christ, the one Shepherd, is not divided, there must be no division in the fold. Disputings, which come from human wisdom and human ideas, are to be left out, and the word of God alone followed. That allows of no disputing, since it tells ever one and the same thing. This is the rule: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." 1 Pet. 1:1-3.

Faith, Hope, Joy, and Peace. -"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." Here we have faith and hope, joy and peace. The God of hope is to fill us with all joy and peace in believing, and this is to be by the power of the Holy Ghost. This connects the present instruction with that of the fourteenth chapter, where we are told that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but

564

righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

The Gospel Commission. -When Jesus was about to leave this world, he told his disciples that they should first receive power by the Holy Spirit, and then, said he, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts 1:8. "To the Jew first, and also to the Greek," but to all alike, and the same gospel to all. So Paul declared that his work as a minister of the Gospel consisted in "testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Acts 20:21. So in our text he tells us that as "the minister of Jesus Christ to the gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God," he had "through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God" "fully preached the gospel of Christ" "from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum." Rom. 15:16-19.

Partaking the Same Spiritual Things. -The apostle, speaking of his desire to visit the Romans, said that he hoped to see them when he took his journey into Spain. "But now," said he, "I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things." A very simple statement, but it shows that the gentiles received nothing spiritual except that which came from the Jews. The spiritual things of which the Gentiles had been made partakers came from the Jews, and were ministered to them by Jews. Both partook of the same spiritual meat, and therefore the gentiles showed their gratitude by ministering to the temporal necessities of the Jews. So here again we see but one fold and one Shepherd.

The God of Israel. -Many times in the Bible God is declared to be the God of Israel. Peter, full of the Holy Spirit, immediately after the healing of the lame man,

said to the people, "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus." Acts 3:13. Even in this age, therefore, God is identified as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of Israel. God desires to be known and remembered, and so we read his words, "Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep; for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed." Ex. 31:13, 16, 17. God is the God of Israel. True, he is the God of the gentiles also, but only as they accept him, and become Israel through the righteousness by faith. But Israel must keep the Sabbath. It is the sign of their connection with God.

Greetings .-Two-thirds of the last chapter of Romans consists of greetings. "Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus." "Likewise greet the church that is in their house." "Greet Mary, who bestowed much labor on us." "Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen." "Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord." "Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved." "Salute Trypena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord." "Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nercus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them." And so the list runs, including both men and women impartially. Let one but read that blessed list, realizing that it shows not only the largeness and heartiness of Paul's sympathy, but also the special care which the Holy Spirit has for each individual member of the household of faith, singling them out by name, and there will be no questioning as to why such things were written.

But one thing is very significant, and that is the fact that there is no mention of Peter, who is claimed to have been "the first Bishop of Rome." We may sometimes learn as much by what the Bible does not say as by what it does say. From what is not said in this place we may learn that so far from being Bishop of Rome, Peter was not in Rome at all when Paul wrote, and that if he was ever in Rome it was after the Epistle to the Romans was written, and long after the church was established and flourishing there. For it is most certain that in saluting the members of the church by name Paul would not have omitted the name of the chief person in it, whose hospitality he had once shared in Jerusalem for fifteen days. Of course there is abundance of the most positive evidence that neither the church of Christ nor the church of Rome was founded upon Peter; but if there were no other, this testimony of the sixteenth chapter of Romans would be sufficient to settle the matter.

In Conclusion .-"Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith; to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen." R.V.

What a magnificent conclusion! It reaches from eternity to eternity. The Gospel of God is the thing of the ages. It was kept secret in the mind of God from times eternal. Christ "was foreordained before the foundation of the world." 1 Pet.

1:19, 20. But now the mystery is "made manifest." Not simply is it made manifest by the preaching of the apostles, but "according to the commandment of the everlasting God," "by the scriptures of the prophets" it is "made known to all nations, for the obedience of faith." The Gospel plan originated in the mind of God in the eternity of the past. Patriarchs, prophets and apostles have worked in unison in making it manifest; and "in the ages to come" it will be both the science and the song of the redeemed "of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," who shall gather with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God, and will say, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." E. J. W.

October 15, 1896

"Assurance in Trial" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 41.

E. J. Waggoner

Assurance in Trial .-The apostle Peter gives us this exhortation: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." (1 Peter 4:12, 13).

It is the thought that when we are tempted we are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that enables us to "count it all joy" when we fall into divers temptations. (James 1:2.) "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." (Heb. 2:18.)

We are to overcome even as Christ himself overcame. "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." (1 Peter 4:1.) It becomes us, therefore, to study carefully the account of the great temptation of Jesus in the wilderness.

In the first place, remember that the great temptation immediately followed the anointing by the Holy Spirit. Let no one therefore think that a wonderful blessing is a pledge of freedom from trial. Rather conclude that God, foreseeing fierce temptations about to assail you, is preparing you to meet them successfully. Satan plies his temptations the most vigorously after one has been greatly helped, because he knows that he may find the soul off his guard. Uzziah "was marvelously helped, till he was strong. But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction." "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

The first recorded words of Satan to Jesus were, "If thou be the Son of God." He would have Jesus doubt his Sonship. There is no way in which Satan causes more people to fall than by leading them to doubt their acceptance with God. And these temptations are the most likely to come, too, just after a great spiritual uplifting. Satan will seek to lead us to doubt our experience, or to think that God has forsaken us.

At such times it is a most blessed thing to know that we have the same assurance that Christ himself had. What was the evidence to him that he was the Son of God?-It was the word of God that came to him after his baptism, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." That same word comes to us, "now are we the sons of God," and calling us "beloved." (1 John 3:2.) "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world." E. J. W.

November 5, 1896

"Reason and Faith" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 44.

E. J. Waggoner

"Finally, brethren, pray for us. . . . that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith." (2 Thess. 3:1, 2.)

From this we learn that the unreasonable man is the man who has not faith. He is both unreasonable and wicked; for "whatsoever is not of faith, is sin." Sin is unreasonable. In the Bible sinners are characterized as foolish persons. "The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding." (Job 28:28).

"With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." (Rom. 10:10). The heart, therefore, and not the head merely, determines whether one is or is not unreasonable. Foolishness is more a matter of the heart than of the head. Some of the most foolish people have very good intellectual faculties, but a depraved heart deceives him.

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Rom. 10:17. The connection between faith and the word is shown by the text first quoted. "Pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you; and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith."

The unreasonable and wicked man is the man who has not faith, and the man who has not faith is the man who does not accept God's word without question. The really reasonable man is not the one who can argue every point, and can answer every question out of his own head, but the man who believes God. An unlettered plowboy may thus have more right reason than a culture philosopher. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord." (Isa. 1:18.) How often that text is used to justify strife and debate and quibbling over the word of God. Many people take it as tho it read, "Come now, and let us argue together, saith the Lord." No, it says, "Let us reason together," and when the Lord begins to talk, the most reasonable thing for man to do is to keep still, except as he responds. Amen.

The remaining portion of the text shows that this is all that is expected of man in reasoning with the Lord. He continues: "Tho your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and

rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." (Isa. 1:18-20.)

Now what can anybody say to that?-Only that he believes and accept it, or that he does not. To say the latter is to say that God is a liar, and that is the height of folly. Manifestly, therefore, when the Lord calls us to come and reason together with him, he means us to listen with reverent humility, and to accept what he says without any gainsaying.

Mind that it is not *our conception* of what God means, that we are to accept. That would be simply to set up our wisdom in opposition to God's which is the height of presumptuous folly. It is to say that we can not venture to accept anything from the Lord without first submitting to the test our superior judgment. But God's mind not to be measured by man's. He is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." (Eph. 3:2). What God is able to do, that he does. He is infinite, and there is not a word or an act of God that does not contain more than the mind of the wisest man can fathom. What impertinent folly, then, to presume to pass God's word through the sieve our feeble intellect before accepting it!

Nicodemus started in on that line with the Lord. When Jesus spoke about the new birth, he asked, "How can these things be," in an endeavor to show that the thing was impossible. He afterwards, however, learned true wisdom by attending to the word. When Jesus spoke about the necessity of eating his flesh, the Jews asked, "How can this man give of his flesh to eat?" They thought that that question settle the matter.

Notice that pure human reasoning, as expressed in the preceding question, is doubt. It is negative. It does not build up anything, but only endeavors to tear down and obstruct. It tends to make more narrow the narrow field of vision, that one already has. But God's thoughts are infinite, and when they are received by simple faith, without any attempt to dissect and analyze them, they expand the mind. There is no limit to the development of the mind that reasons according to the Lord's plan.

The word is given to all; it carried its own credentials, so that faith comes by it; therefore faith is given to all. The only reason why any men have not faith is that they have not kept it. It is both sword and shield-a mighty weapon. "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. 10:4, 5.) E. J. W.

November 12, 1896

"The Healing Touch" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 45.

E. J. Waggoner

One of the most striking of the miracles of Jesus is told in the following few words: "And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy; who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if

thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him." (Luke 5:12, 13.)

Leprosy was one of the most loathsome diseases known to the ancients, and the one the most dreaded. The leper was an outcast, compelled to keep away from even his own family. The disease was a slow, progressive death, the victim's members dropping off one after another until death ended his misery. No other disease more aptly illustrates the defilement of sin; and this man, who was full of leprosy, very closely resembled the description given of the people, by the prophet Isaiah. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." So as we study the miracle of the cleansing of the leper, we may know that we are to learn how we can obey the direction, "Make you clean."

In the first place, the leper had confidence in the power of the Lord to heal him. He said, "Thou canst make me clean." That is a great point. Very few really believe that Jesus Christ can cleanse them from sin. They will admit that he can save from sin in general, -that he can save others, -but they are not convinced that he can save *them*. Let such learn a lesson of the power of the Lord. Hear what the prophet Jeremiah said by inspiration of the Holy Spirit: "Ah Lord God behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee." (Jer. 32:17.)

He who brought the heavens and the earth into existence by the power of his word, can do all things. "But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased." Ps. 115:3. "His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness." (2 Peter 1:3.) "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." (Heb. 7:25.) Christ has been given "power over all flesh." (John 17:2.)

So much for his power. Of that the leper was assured; but he was not sure that the Lord was willing to cleanse him. He said, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." We need not have so much hesitancy as that. We know that he can, and he has given us ample assurance of his willingness. Thus we read that Christ "gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." (Gal. 1:4.) It is the will of God that we should be sanctified. (1 Thess. 4:3.)

Christ comprises everything. He is "the power of God, and the wisdom of God." (1 Cor. 1:24.) All things in heaven and in earth are in him. (Col. 1:16, 17.) Therefore the apostle Paul says: "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.) The willingness of God to cleanse us from sin, is shown in the gift of his only-begotten Son for that purpose. "These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God. And this is the boldness which we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of

him." (1 John 5:13-15, R.V.) So we may "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4:16.), knowing that "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

But the most striking feature of this miracle is the fact that Jesus touched the leper. There was not another person in all the land who would have come within a yard of him. But Jesus "put forth his hand, and touched him." With that touch the hateful disease vanished. It is worth noting that in very many cases Jesus touched those whom he healed. When Peter's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, Jesus "touched her hand, and the fever left her." (Matt. 8:15.) That same evening, "all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them." (Luke 4:40.) In his own country the people were so unbelieving that "he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them." (Mark 6:5.)

706

In Matthew we are assured that this healing of the wick was "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our disease." (Matt. 8:17, R.V.) We know that healing power went from him to the suffering ones who thronged round him to touch him (Luke 6:19); and this scripture assures us that he received into his own person their diseases, in exchange for his healing power. Now we have the blessed assurance that altho he is "passed into the heavens," he has not lost his sympathy with us, but is still "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." He comes close to us in pity, because "he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." In all our sin and degradation, we may have inspiring thought that Jesus does not despise us, and is not ashamed to come into the closest companionship with us, in order that he may help us. The prophet, speaking of God's dealing with ancient Israel, said, "In all their afflictions he was afflicted." (Isa. 63:9.) Even so it is now. As an eagle bears her young on her wings, so the Lord puts himself under his people, bearing all our sin and sorrow. He takes it upon himself, and in him it is lost, by the same process by which at the last "he will swallow up death in victory."

Christ took upon himself the curse. In order that the blessing might come upon us. (Gal. 3:13, 14). Altho he knew no sin, he was made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (2 Cor. 5:21.) He suffered the death to which we were doomed, that we might share his life. And this exchange is made when we come into touch with him, by confessing that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." How much we lose by holding Jesus off as a stranger, or by regarding faith in him as a theory. When we know that he identifies himself with us in our fallen condition, taking upon himself, and from us, our infirmities, how precious becomes the assurance, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

"The healing of the seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain;
We touch Him in life's throng and press,

And we are whole again."
E. J. W.

"Feeling at Liberty" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 45.

E. J. Waggoner

The religion of Jesus Christ is not simply one of emotions. It does not quench feelings, but it consists of more than emotions. It is a fact. It holds good when a person can have no emotions. It holds good when the body is paralyzed, and the nerves are numb,-when there is scarcely enough consciousness left to take notice of anything, and the mind has almost ceased to work. The man who knows Christ does not then have to reason out his hope, but rests in the consciousness of the fact of the life.

It is a glorious truth that the religion of Christ needs not to be reasoned out. We do not have to trace evidence, and weigh arguments to know at any time what it is. This does not mean that God discounts the intellect with which he has endowed his creatures, but that faith is superior to reason. Human reason, not guided by the Spirit of God, leads to folly. Faith is the guide of reason; but the truth of the Spirit of God is not to be reasoned out, else there would be partiality; the kingdom of heaven could not in that case be received by a child as well as by a philosopher. But "the world by wisdom knew not God." (1 Cor. 1:21). The righteousness of God is not revealed to reason, but to faith. When one is at the very point of death, and the brain so sick and sore that it is a positive task to think at all, one can lie perfectly still and *know* that he is accepted, not because he feels that he is, but because God has said so. He need not look about to see if his feelings correspond to the demands, but he can rest in the Lord, knowing that he is in his hands.

There are times, and they will come to every Christian, when he will not *feel* that he is free. He may be depressed in body. The weather often has an effect on people, and at any rate we are all still in the flesh. The flesh is still unconverted, and it will always remain so; for it is enmity against God, and can not be subject to him. It will demand that we serve it in this and that thing, and will demand satisfaction. Then is the time we want to know that we are free. If there is any doubt then we are in danger.

The devil knows the weakness of the flesh, and he will work to regain his position. You say: "I am in doubt, and do not know. The other day in meeting the Lord seemed to set me free; but I do not feel so now. If I were free why should I feel so depressed?" And when we begin to hesitate and temporize, the devil, who is an expert in his art, brings us into discouragement and captivity. It is a fact that the Lord has proclaimed liberty to the captives. He holds the keys still, and the devil never can get hold of them. He has loosed the bonds of every man. David says, "O Lord, truly I am thy servant; . . . thou hast loosed my bonds," and it is true of every soul. There is not a soul in the world who might not say with truth, "Thou hast loosed my bonds;" and it be continued to say it on the authority of God's word, he would continue free; for the Lord has proclaimed liberty to every captive.

It is not a matter for feeling, but for practical use. When the enemy comes to destroy, when the flesh would rise up to assert its domination, then is the blessedness of this word, "I am free." God has freed from that power, and he has power to maintain the freedom. Why should the experience of so many professors be fitful, now rejoicing and then again gloomy and full of doubt? God has declared freedom; will he put us in prison again?

How many times we hear people talking about being in the dark-"it was light, but now it is gloom." They have simply allowed Satan to thrust them into the dark cell, because they wandered near Doubting Castle. Bunyan had the truth of the thing when he told the story of Christian and Hopeful in Doubting Castle. They had been lying there in the dark for a week or more when Christian bethought himself of the key of Promise which he had in his bosom, which opened every door and gate in the castle, and they walked at liberty, because they believed the Lord.

Now why should we be in Doubting Castle when the Lord sets us free and enlightens the gloom? We have the promise that the word is not far off. It is not in heaven, that we should go up to bring it, nor across the sea, that we should send for it. It is nigh thee, even in thy heart. So to every one that key has been given, and all can be free all the time, if they will use it. The Lord never puts us in bondage, and the time for us to assert our liberty is when the enemy would drag us back into captivity. He would be a strange man who, when the notice came to him in prison that he had been pardoned and set free, should wait until he felt free, before walking out at liberty. It would show that he did not believe in the genuineness of the pardon, or that he doubted its authority. It is because people do not believe God, that they refuse to assert their freedom when he proclaims it to every soul. E. J. W.

November 19, 1896

"Hear the Word" *The Signs of the Times* 22, 46.

E. J. Waggoner

Since the religion of Jesus Christ has to do with the heart, the inner life and thought of men, and not merely with outward acts, it is evident that it must deal with individuals, and not with masses. The following texts of scripture plainly show this:-

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Isa. 55:1.

"We see Jesus. . . . crowned with glory and honor, that he by the grace of God should taste death, *for every man*." Heb. 2:9.

"For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work." Mark 13:34.

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

In order that we may properly carry on the work assigned, "*unto every one of us* is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Eph. 4:7. The Spirit distributes gifts for the work, "*dividing to every man severally as he will.*" 1 Cor. 12:11.

For the manner in which men perform the work left them by the Lord, every man is responsible to God alone. "Who art thou that judgest another mans servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up; for God is able to make him stand." Rom. 14:4.

The same principle applies also in matters of faith. "Let *every man* be fully persuaded in his own mind." "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God." Rom. 14:5, 22. Jesus said, "if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." John 12:47. "*Every one of us shall give account of himself to God.*" Rom. 14:12.

Since no man can answer for another in the judgment day, but each one must give account of himself, it is evident that no one can believe for another, or prescribe another's belief. Each man stands accountable to God for himself, independently of priest or minister.

It is further evident, also, that no man can be justified before God for believing something just because some other person does, even though that thing be true. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Rom. 10:10. Faith is the appropriation of the living presence and power of Christ, in his word. Accepting a theory merely, and that, too, on the authority of some other person, is no more like real faith than taking food at another person's hands and putting it in a safe place in the cupboard is like eating.

Some one will ask, "How about *hearing the church*. If each one is to decide his own faith and practice for himself? Is each individual to set himself and his ideas in opposition to the church?" By no means. And this brings up a principle that is too often lost sight of. A few words may suffice to set it forth.

First, let it be understood that "the church" is not a law-making body. "There is one lawgiver," and that is God. The church is composed of members who, altho they have different offices and different work, are in their relation to God absolutely equal. The greatest minister, even tho he was called pope, has no more authority to lay down rules for faith and practice than the poorest and most ignorant child. And a thousand men assembled in council, have no more authority in matters of faith than each man has individually. Truth rests on God's word, and not in numbers in influence.

That which is committed to the church is the word of God. This, and this alone, is to be spoken. This we are to hear. The fact that a number of men are agreed on a certain point, is no evidence that the thing is true. In a matter of faith, one hundred men are as likely to be wrong as one man is; and they are all sure to be wrong if they say anything aside from the word of God. Therefore if "the church" does not speak the word of God, it is no more to be listened to than is any individual.

The "right of private interpretation" is not involved in this question. It is not a matter of interpretation, but of loyalty to the plain word of God. For one man to

accept an interpretation of scripture simply because another man says that it is correct, is to accept that other man as pope; but for each man to set his own judgment and authority against everybody else, and to interpret scripture according to his own judgment, is to make himself a pope, and that is no better. What then shall we do?-Accept the Holy Spirit, the divinely-appointed guide. The gift of the Holy Spirit is to every man, to guide him individually into all the truth, which is the pure word of God.

The Spirit will not lead a man to set himself in opposition to his brethren. He will take the word of God just as it reads, and humbly rest upon it. If all in the church do the same, there will be perfect unanimity because the word says the same thing to every man. But if his brethren do not the same, he will not fight them, nor create a rebellion. The child of God will never resist authority. He will hold to the truth, and if the "authority," whether it be the church or the state, condemns him, he will submit to the condemnation and punishment, yet not compromising the truth. In this way he will be a true follower of the Master, "also, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously;" yet who never swerved in his steadfast witness to the truth.

E. J. W.

The Signs of the Times, Vol. 23 (1897)

January 7, 1897

"Enforcing the Law of God" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 1.

E. J. Waggoner

"For we know that the law is spiritual." Rom. 7:14. Then there can be no fulfilling of the law save in the Spirit. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth." Sometimes people talk about keeping the spirit of the law without the letter, but there is nothing in the Bible about keeping the spirit without the letter. By that expression men mean that they will keep what they think the law means, regardless of what it says. But God knows that the thoughts of man are vain. We are to forsake our own thoughts, as well as our own way. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isa. 55:8, 9. God is Spirit; therefore they that worship Him must do so in the Spirit which He supply. He provides the means, and does not ask us to worship Him in our spirit, or in our conception of His law.

We are not to worship God as we think Him to be, but as He is. And no one, as stated in the text just quoted, can comprehend God, or define the bounds and limits of His will. Then no man can lay down a rule for another, or even for himself. Here is the unlimited word. No man can put a limit on the word of God, or say of any text that he has fathomed its depth, and that he has all the truth

there is in it. No; the word is spiritual, and no man can fathom the depth of the mind of the Holy Spirit. For this reason no man, and nobody of men, is at liberty to put any construction on the word of God, or to change it, or to hold or teach that it means anything different from exactly what it says.

The knowledge of this shuts out everything like religious coercion, persecution, or the laying down of rules for people to follow; for true worship must be rendered in the Spirit which God alone gives. The word must be taken, not in our own spirit, but in the Spirit of God, and that must lead us into larger and larger ideas, and worked in us that which we do not know ourselves. Men have secret faults of which they are utterly unconscious. Not only so, but no man knows the depth of any sin which is brought to his attention, or the fullness of any command which is joined upon him. It is plain, therefore, that no man can measure his own righteousness, nor his own sin. He can simply know that he is a sinner, and that the righteousness of God is given to him. The more of the Lord he knows, the greater sinner he will realize himself to be. Therefore no man or body of men, whether in church or state, can lay down rules by which a man must live; because the field of God's requirements is as unbounded as His own life, and must therefore ever keep increasing to our vision; and though men filled the world with books in the attempt to define everything, there still would be something omitted. The Spirit of God must work its own life in every man. This takes the matter out of the realm of civil government entirely. No human authority whatever can impose the Spirit upon any man, or define the mind of the Spirit. The law of God, which is His righteousness, is the one thing which men are to seek. Christ said, "I know that His commandment is life everlasting." John 12:50. We also are to know the same thing. The law itself is spiritual; it is life everlasting. But life is not a figment, a fancy; it is real, and wherever there is life there must be something living. When we read the commandment is life everlasting, it does not mean that the written characters are life. They simply declare the fact. Everlasting life is in Jesus Christ. "As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." John 5:26. He is the fountain of life. Ps. 36:9; Jer. 2:13.

The commandment or law of God is everlasting life because it is His own life. Then is the life of the Spirit of God; and putting the Spirit of God into the hearts of men puts the life of God there. It is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ, it gives freedom and peace with God. "The Spirit is life, because of righteousness;" and "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Rom. 8:1, 2, 9, 10. Nothing less than the life of Christ is the law of God; and anything contrary to the life of Christ is condemned. Then we can leave the *right* of any body of men to enforce the law of God entirely outside of the question. It is merely a question of *power*. Has it the power to enforce the law of God? Has any government on earth power to take the life of God and put it into the hearts of its subjects? Certainly not.

Then when men do make religious laws, and in force religion upon people, it is certain that they are not enforcing the religion of Christ. Therefore when they do that, those who are loyal to Christ can have no complicity with it whatever. It is paganism, no matter what form of truth there may be. It is but the former without

the power or life. If such enforcement is put in the very terms of the Bible, it is only the more thoroughly pagan; for it is paganism trying to palm itself off as Christianity.

The attempt to enforce the ten commandments, even just as they read, would be the greatest dishonor men could offer to the Lord. It would be saying that the law of God is no better than any man may be of himself. It is the same as saying that a man is all right if he keeps the law so that no man can find fault with him. But the man he merely refrains from the outward violations of the law may be worse than the man who utterly disregards it, and knows he is guilty. In the latter case the man has nothing more in to trust, while in the other, the man is building himself up in his own righteousness, and things that he is all right as long as he keeps a letter so far as men can discern.

But the law is spiritual, and only the power of the Spirit can work righteousness in an individual. The recognition of civil government as having anything to do with the law of God, is directly opposed to the idea of justification by faith. To lay down a rule or law requiring obedience to the law of God, with a penalty for disobedience, is to say to a man, "You could keep it if you would try; but you will not try, and so we will compel you to do it." This is putting man on an equality with God. Anything less than the life of God is sin, and therefore for any power to attempt to enforce any of the precepts of Christ is simply an attempt to compel people to sin, and to hold them in sin.

January 14, 1897

"Letter and Spirit" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 2.

E. J. Waggoner

"But now we are delivered from the law, being dead to that wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." Rom. 7:6, margin.

What is the thing in which we were held, and to which we are now dead?—The seventh chapter of Romans is but an expansion of the sixth chapter, where we read that we are "dead to sin" (verse 2), and that "he that is dead is freed from sin" (verse 7). "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Verse 11.

We are dead unto the sin which held us, because sin also is dead by Christ. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Rom. 6:6. And so "we are delivered from the law." It had been transgressed, and therefore it demanded our death; "for the wages of sin is death." Rom. 6:23. But now that we are dead, it pursues us no further; it has executed the penalty on us, in Christ. "The law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth." When he is dead, there is nothing more that it can do to him.

"I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Gal. 2:20. That is a good reason why the vengeance of the law no longer pursues us. The man who committed the sin is dead, and the man who now lives

is a "new man," walking "in newness of life." The old life was a life of sin; the "new man" is after God "created in righteousness and true holiness." Eph. 4:22-24. Since "the new man has not transgressed the law, he is as a matter of course free.

But the law is not dead. It is as much alive as it ever was. The new man is free from it simply because he is walking in harmony with it. The new man is under as much obligation to keep the law as the old man was; the difference between them is that the new man does his duty, while the old man did not, and could not. The old man was "not subject to the law of God," being opposed to the Holy Spirit. The new man is alive through Christ, who died "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. 8:4.

"If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." Gal. 5:18. But the verse last quoted tells us that "the righteousness of the law is fulfilled" in those who walk after the Spirit. Therefore we are taught most plainly that the only ones who are "not under the law" are those in whom the righteousness of the law is fulfilled. The transgressors of the law are the only ones who are "under the law." Those who are "delivered from the law" are the ones who are keeping it "in spirit and in truth."

This is shown in the statement that we are delivered from the law, in order "that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." We still serve, but as free men, and not as slaves. It is a spiritual service, that is, a real service; for only that which is spiritual is real.

"For we know that the law is spiritual." Rom. 7:14. It follows, therefore, that when we were serving in oldness of the letter, we were not really keeping the law; for since the law is spiritual, it necessarily requires spiritual service. So it is only when we are delivered from the law that we keep it.

Unlike Human Law

The common opinion in regard to the letter and the spirit of the law, is most erroneous. The error arises from supposing that the law of God is similar to human laws. It is quite common to speak of the *spirit* of a law made by man, when all that is meant is the *intent* of the law. Thus: No human law is perfect; its framers can not possibly foresee all the circumstances that may arise to be judged by it. Then, too, the language of the law may be obscure. So the judge often finds it necessary to decide what was the intent of the lawmakers. A man might be technically or literally a violator of a law, while still acting fully in harmony with the intent of its framers. This is what is meant by the mistaken use of the term "letter and spirit," as applied to human laws.

Now the great difference between the nature of human laws and the divine law is that there is no spirit to the former, while the latter is wholly spiritual. Spirit is life; but there is no life in human laws. They can not give life. No man can get anything more out of a human law than he puts into it. If men ignore any human law, then it is said to be "a dead letter." But it has no more life in itself when it is

obeyed than when it is disregarded; the life is in the people, who make their acts conform to the words of the law.

The law of God is wholly different. It is alive whether people regard it or not. It is alive because it is spiritual. The man who serves in "the oldness of the letter" does not really serve at all, because, no matter how good his purpose, or how strong his endeavors, to keep the law, he is simply reproducing himself, and not the law. In trying to do what the law tells him to do, he is merely doing what his own nature allows him to do. While in a carnal state, he is "not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Rom. 8:7.

"The Law Is Life"

But "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:2) gives freedom from this bondage, so that "the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us." The real law is the life of God in Christ, and that gives life. What is termed "the letter" of the law of God is the verbal statement of the law. This is not the law itself, but only the *form* of it, as the apostle said the Jews had "the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law." Rom. 2:20. The verbal statement of the law bears the same relation to the law itself that the photograph of a man has to the man himself. It is but the shadow.

A shadow is the exact image of the substance. The words of the divine law, being "the *form* of knowledge and of the truth," might be compared to a statue, rather than to a photograph. It has the form and features, and differs from the reality only in having no life. So when we speak of the spirit of God's law, we mean the law itself, and not merely the intent of the law. The intent of the law may be learned from the words, since God is not

3

subject to human limitations, but knows what is needed, and can say just what he means.

From the words of the law of God we may know exactly what we should do, for it is a perfect form. But it is only in Christ that we find the living substance. The law in Christ is not only living, but it gives life. It performs itself in those who submit to it, because it is God's own life. It is not less than the letter; it is not something different from the letter; but it is simply the living thing which the letter perfectly describes. E. J. W.

"Whom Shall We Hear?" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 2.

E. J. Waggoner

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." John 5:24, 25.

The voice which we are to hear is always the voice of the Son of God. Only that voice will give life; only they that hear that voice shall live. If man speaks, he is to be but the mouthpiece; the voice is to be God's. "If any man speak, let him

speak as the oracles of God." 1 Peter 4:11. If any one speaks with his own voice, him we are not to hear.

Some of the Samaritans believed on Christ because of what was told them by the woman whom Christ met at the well. But "many more believed because of his own word; and said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." Their faith rested on the true foundation,-Christ's word. No belief that does not rest on this will be enduring.

When many of Christ's disciples turned from him because they could not receive his sayings, and Jesus had asked the twelve if they also would go away, Peter said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." There was none other than Christ who had the words of eternal life; there is none other now. And those who hear his words, believe and *are sure* that he is the Son of God. They have a knowledge that is possessed by none others.

Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." John 10:27. When the true Shepherd "putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers." Verses 4, 5. The true Shepherd "calleth his own sheep by name." This is how they know his voice. He speaks directly to them, to each one individually, and they know it. This is how we know the voice of the Son of God.

And for that voice, and that only, we are to listen. Many voices are crying, many saying, "Lo here!" and "Lo there!" but the Shepherd's voice is different from them all. That is the voice of One whom, when we hear it, we know to be acquainted with us,-with our past lives, and the motives and thoughts and perplexities of our individual hearts. He knows us by name; and if we will hear his voice, he will make known unto us his name. And "his name, through faith in his name," shall make us whole, as it did the cripple at the beautiful gate of the temple. Acts 3:16. E. J. W.

January 21, 1897

"Power and Freedom" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 3.

E. J. Waggoner

Power belongs to the Lord alone. It is not safe to trust men with power. When men have power and use it they always become tyrants. The Lord has all power, and in the thought of that is the most wonderful revelation of love, and kindness, and long-suffering, and freedom.

With absolutely all power, with the hearts of men in his hands, the Creator of men, living in the flesh and giving his life to us, so that we live upon his life, has never exercised his power over against our wills. Such is the Lord. Then no one who knows the Lord, and who yields to him and his power, will have anything of arbitrariness; there will be nothing savoring of force or compulsion in him. No

man who knows the power of God, which is love, will try to compel others to agree with him; and of course no body of men who know the Lord will do so.

It is the Lord's power that is to work in men. That power we see in all the visible creation. There is a mighty power there, as vegetation; but no arbitrariness. That power will work its way out wherever there is an opening; but it works in quietness. That power has dwelt in us, yet never has been exercised against our will. Can we conceive of any freedom greater than that? It is the freedom the Lord has guaranteed to men, and he himself will maintain it.

The very fact that the Lord has never compelled us to do anything, should show us that his will is not something against man. The Lord has revealed his will to us that we may choose it. His will is life and righteousness. When we choose that his will shall be done in us, then he will do it; for he has all power to work it. He "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." And when we give him the privilege, yielding our way to his way, our judgment to his judgment, although he works in us, yet we are still free.

This is religious liberty, the liberty that is to be proclaimed to men. There are many who profess to know the Lord, who are zealous and sincere, who yet do not know the Lord, because they think he is pleased to have them dictate as to how people shall serve him. The only way this can be counteracted, as far as it ever will be, is to proclaim the Lord, and the freedom of the Lord, to everybody.

Those only can proclaim the freedom of the Lord, who knows it. when we recognize the fact that the Lord has been with us all the years, and yet waiting, having all power, and yet refusing to use one particle of it against our will, we shall know what it is that the Lord wants to be proclaimed to men. And this message will be proclaimed in love, for that is the power of the Lord.

It is his power alone that is to be manifested. We stand where Christ stood: "I can of mine own self do nothing." We can say: "His power is dwelling in me, because I am willing it shall. I am zealous of good works. I know his power is sufficient to work them. It have tried to manufacture them, and could not; now I yield to him, that he may work in me that which is good through Christ Jesus."

Then it is his power working in us mightily, and that power will work only that which is persuasive and gentle. There will be no compulsion of others, and the man who knows the Lord will always be a free man. "With freedom hath the Lord made us free." The Gospel proclaims liberty to the captive; let us exercise it, and enjoy it. E. J. W.

"The Greatness of His Gentleness" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 3.

E. J. Waggoner

In the words of Hosea of the Lord says, "I will be as the dew unto Israel." The figure conveys the idea of gentleness, refreshing, and strength. Fresh every evening, the dew what's the fields, and gives the real fighting and strength which vegetation needs for the growth it must make with each day's sun.

Thus it is with grace, and the mercies of the Lord. "They our new every morning." There must be daily growth, and every day we must have the refreshing and reviving from the Lord. He reveals Himself to the bleeding heart

as gently and noiselessly as the dew distills upon the blade of grass; but there is strength in His mercies, that fortifies the soul in distress of sin, and in the heat, "when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall."

There is so much lost to many because they're not content to rest daily and the Lord, and drinking and of His quiet presence. When Job, in his time of affliction, spoke of the days of his strength, when he was eyes to the blind, and feet to blame, and the blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him, he said: "My root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch. My glory was fresh in me." Chapter 29:19, 20. The message to every believer is, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." This glory seen upon the Christian, as fresh and glistening as a dew-bespangled meadow in the morning sun, is the testimony of the Christian life.

The Lord often uses the figure of the dew and the rain to describe the nature of His word,-the word by which we are born again, and grow, and are sanctified. He says by Moses: "My doctrine shall drop is the rain, My speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as showers upon the grass." Deut. 32:2. "For as the rain cometh down. . . so shall My word be." Isa. 55:10, 11.

It is a divinely appropriate simile. Faraday showed that there is stored in a dew drop sufficient electric force to rend a rock. Each drop of dew or rain is bringing life and power into vegetation; and thus the force that would shatter the rock, if pent up, is working itself out in perishing delicate tissues, and caring the water of life to all animate creation.

So it is God's word. "No word from God shall be void of power," said the angel to marry; and the Lord says, "Is not My word. . . like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" The power of the word is the almighty power of God. And there is in it the same combination of power and gentleness, carried to an infinite degree. All the power is for the faint and the weary, and the word comes as a still small voice to the soul. In the heart of the believer it becomes a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. It is everlasting strength, and everlasting consolation.

This mingling of gentleness and strength that is in the word, reproduces itself in those who take the word in its fullness. "I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon." Hos. 14:5. The glory of the Lord is risen upon the believer, and he will reflect the beauty and the grace of Jesus' character. In His meekness and humility, and Divine beauty of soul, He was "the Lily of the valley;" and to those who take Him He brings the same life that He lived. They are made partakers of the Divine nature.

Then there is the infinite strength of His character, which He also shares with those who are His. The life, for beauty, it is as the lily, but for the strength, it casts forth its roots as the cedars of Lebanon. It is rooted and grounded in love, rooted and built up in Him. The firmness and constancy of the character that is rooted in the word cannot be shaken though all the world is removed. It is a rare combination, this blending of consummate gentleness and grace with unflinching firmness and unyielding strength. It can only come as the gift of God.

The Lord works this in the believer; for it is His own way of dealing with His children. His Providences may appear otherwise to the natural heart and eyes,

but in the end every soul that is subdued wholly to God will recognize His infinite tenderness in all His ways. David was a rough and stirring school of instruction, but in the end he was able to say, "Thy gentleness hath made me great."

January 28, 1897

"The Nature of God's Commandment" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 4.

E. J. Waggoner

"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, can not love God whom he hath not seen. And this commandment have we from him. That he who loveth God love his brother also." 1 John 4:20, 21, R.V. A little consideration of the commandments God. Let us first ask a few questions about it.

Does the text teach that whoever loves God is thereby laid under obligations to love his brother also? that if a man loves God and does not love his brother also, he will be punished for violation of law? Manifestly not, from the very statement of the text, that a man can not love God without loving his brother. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen." Since a man can not love God if he does not also have love for his brother, or neighbor, it is evident that the text does not mean that there is a special law enacted for those who love God, requiring them to love their brethren.

Love comes from God. "Every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." Therefore whoever loves God must of necessity love his brother also. He must love all men, for God's love is without respect of persons. And this shows that men can not, as is now quite commonly thought, learn to love God by first loving their fellow-men. Love to God is first. Jesus said: "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Mark 12:29-31.

No man can love his neighbor unless he loves God, because love is of God; and nobody can love God without loving his brother. Love is one. It can not be forced, for the use of force is sure death to love. It must flow spontaneously. Yet we have the statement, "This commandment have we from him. That he who loveth God love his brother also." The thing therefore that we are to learn from this is that the commandment of God is something far different from the commandments of men. Human laws are wholly a matter of force; but God's commandment is that we should love one another, and that can not be a matter of force.

The law of God is love. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous." 1 John 5:3. "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Galatians 5:14. "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor;

therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Rom. 13:8, 10. When God spoke his law, it was because "he loved the people." Deut. 33:2, 3.

It is clear from these scriptures that the law of God is love, even the love of God. But God himself is love. He does not merely have love, but love is the very life of God. Therefore the law of God is his life. And this brings us to the words of Jesus: "For I spake not from myself; but the Father which sent me, he hath given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life eternal." John 12:49, 50, R.V. The commandment of God is life eternal, and to know God is life eternal (John 17:3), showing that the commandment of God is his own life. We know one only as we know his life. So we know God only by knowing his life, and his life is eternal life; but his commandment is life eternal, because his commandment is his life. In other words, the life of God is the law for man.

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." John 1:18. God set forth his Son, in whom was his own life, in order that we might know what the law is. In Christ we have the real, living law.

We read that out of the heart are the issues of life. Now Christ said of himself, "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." Ps. 40: 7, 8. Therefore the life which issued from Christ was the law of God; and as he lived by the Father (John 6:57), we see again that the law of God is his life.

In Christ "all fullness" dwells, even "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." The apostle Paul wrote thus of his prayer: "I bow knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." Eph. 3:14-19.

This is an inspired prayer, and therefore we know that it is the will of God that its requests should be granted. If we but allow Christ to dwell in our hearts, he will bring in all his own fullness which is all the fullness of God. Then from our hearts will issue the same life that issued from the heart of Christ on earth, even the life of God. And so we shall find that this commandment is not grievous, because it is not an arbitrary requirement laid on us, but our very life. It is not something which we are to do by our own strength, but which, if we allow it, will work itself out in us.

How will this life be manifested in us? Just as it was in Christ when he was on earth; for he is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever. When tempted to idolatry, he replied, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Matt. 4:10. Therefore the one in whom is the life of Christ, can not be an idolater.

When the parents of Jesus found him in the temple, asking and answering the questions of the doctors, he was not impatient of control, although he was so wonderfully wise, far exceeding

51

them in respect; but "he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them." Luke 2:51. Therefore the one in whom is the real law of God, in the form of the life of Christ, will honor his father and his mother, as required by the fifth commandment; and he will not find it burdensome to do so.

Jesus said, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." John 18:37. He "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." 1 Peter 2:22. Therefore those in whom he dwells will not only tell the truth, but they will love the truth. They will love the truth so much that they will never seek to parry its force, nor to evade any portion of the truth of God's word.

The tenth commandment says, "Thou shalt not covet." So far was Christ from coveting, that he freely gave up everything that was his own. And so those in whom he dwells will not find it a grievous matter to be content with such things as they have.

Christ kept the Sabbath, even the seventh day of the week, and no other. His life was God's life, and the life of God is the law for men; therefore those who live solely by him will also keep the Sabbath day. They will not consider this a burdensome thing, but will delight in it, even as Christ delighted to do the will of God. Those who delight in the Sabbath, also delight themselves in the Lord (Isa. 38:13, 14), thus showing again that the law of God, including the fourth commandment, is the life of God. To delight in the law is to delight in the life of the Lord.

Let us therefore say to Christ as he stands at the door and knocks, "Come in, thou that comest in the name of the Lord." Let him come in with all the divine fullness, to live in us his own blessed will. It will be different from anything that we have ever before done, "for my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isa. 55:8, 9. The desire of man is to rise, and here is elevation indeed. The life of God will lift the one who accepts it from earth to heaven. E. J. W.

"Argument" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 4.

E. J. Waggoner

If the Gospel could be propagated by argument, it would be vastly more popular than it now is. If men could be saved by argument and controversy, there would be thousands saved today where there are only tens. But the fact is that it is not argument that is needed, but "holding forth the word of life." A man always weakens his cause when he consents to debate and strive and argue about it. Strife and debate are so firmly imbedded in human nature that it takes us a long time to learn this. But if we were to stop and think we should see that it is true.

Men do not argue about that of which they are perfectly sure. You would not argue with a man to prove to him that the sun is shining at noon. You point out

the fact to him, and if he wishes to see it for himself, he can, and if he does not, you can not help him by argument. You would not debate with a man to convince him that the twenty-six letters of the alphabet are what they are. If he does not know them, you may teach him, but not by a debate. If he does not wish to have you teach him, but wishes to argue the point, you would simply leave him to himself.

And you would not be at all moved by his boast that you dared not debate with him, and that your refusal showed that you did not dare put your belief to the test of argument. You do not simply *believe*, but you *know*, and it is much better to put knowledge to the test of actual use than to the test of argument. To argue the case would indicate a doubt about it in your own mind.

Now what the Gospel wants is not men who are ready to debate, but who know Christ, and who know his word. Such men will teach by their quiet lives, and if any want to learn further, they will be ready to point them to the Word, but they will not lower the standard by arguing with those who do not want to learn.

The man who wants to learn never wants to argue. The man who is anxious to argue a debate, does not want to learn anything from the one with whom he argues, but he wants, by arguing, to fortify himself in the opinions that he already holds. By repeating his arguments he helps to convince himself that they are true; and if he can outtalk his opponent, that proves to him that he is right. Therefore the time spent on him while he is in that condition is wasted. The Christian can afford to let him talk and even rail, knowing that the truth can not be injured. This very confidence begets in the other a desire to know what it is that is so sure that you are not in the least afraid that it will be overthrown by argument. Then is your time to instruct him.

So, then, argumentative ability is not necessarily a part of the outfit of the servant of Christ. For "the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to *teach* [not to argue], patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to acknowledging of the truth." 2 Tim. 2:24, 25. E. J. W.

February 4, 1897

"The New Creation" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 5.

E. J. Waggoner

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is." At the close of each day's work "God saw that it was good;" and at the close of the sixth day, when everything was finished, "God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." Gen. 1:31. Man himself was perfect, and all was as good as God himself could make it.

"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.

"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. 20:11.

The Sabbath was the sign of the power of God's word. He had spoken all things into existence; and now he rested in perfect confidence that his word would uphold that which he had created. The Sabbath of the Lord-God's rest-is therefore the mark of a perfect, new creation.

But man, to whom the dominion of the earth had been given, sinned. He sold himself to the enemy of God, and received death as his reward. By his sin the curse came upon the earth, so that God's perfect, new creation was everywhere marred. But God was not defeated; his purposes can not be thwarted, for he "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Therefore his love devised means to insure the carrying out of his original plan.

"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. Christ was given to death, that man might receive the eternal life which had been lost through sin.

But the cross of Christ is "the power of God." 1 Cor. 1:18. The Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Rom. 1:16. But ever since the creation of this world, the eternal power of God has been manifested in the things that he has made. Rom. 1:20. Therefore the cross of Christ-the Gospel-is the same power that is seen in creation. The same power of God by which man was created in the beginning, is now manifested through the Gospel to re-create him-to bring him back to the perfection which he had at first.

This is shown very clearly in the Scriptures. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," or, as the Revision has it, "there is a new creation." 2 Cor. 5:17. Of course there can not be a new creature without there having been a new creation. So again, "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before prepared that we should walk in them." Eph. 2:10, margin.

This new creation is signaled by rest. Christ says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. 11:28. Whoever comes to him is recreated and made new,-and then he finds rest-restoration of God.

As the new creation is the same as that wrought in the beginning, and by the same means, the word of God, so it has the same mark, namely, the Sabbath of the Lord, the seventh day. Notice these points:-

1. In Christ there is a new creation. In him all things are created in heaven and in earth. Col. 1:16.

2. With the new creation in Christ, there comes rest. Even so it was in the beginning.

3. Christ is of God made unto us "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." 1 Cor. 1:30. He is the truth, and he sanctifies himself, that we may be sanctified through the truth. John 17:19.

4. The Sabbath of the Lord, the seventh day, on which Christ rested when he had finished the new creation in the beginning, is the sign of sanctification, which comes only through Christ. We read, "Moreover also I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them." Eze. 20:12.

So now, as at the first, the Sabbath is the sign of the perfect, new creation. God has not changed, his power has not changed, neither has his sign changed.

But this is not the end. In the beginning God had a perfect earth as the abode of perfect men. So again he will have a perfect abode for the men who are made complete in Christ,-a new earth for his new men. He says, "Behold, I make all things new." And again, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things." Rev. 21:5, 7. "We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Peter 3:13.

There will be the same new creation that was in the beginning, at the close of the first six days; for it will be "the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." Acts 3:21. And since it is the same new creation, the same thing, namely, the Sabbath, will mark it; for we read God's sure Word to the new men whom he has created in Christ:-

"For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." Isa. 66:22, 23.

If we would be part of God's new creation, we must have it in God's own way, and not refuse to allow God to place his own seal of perfection upon it. E. J. W.

February 25, 1897

"The Will of God" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 8.

E. J. Waggoner

Some people never think of the will of God except when some disaster comes. Somebody dies, and they say that is the will of God, and we must bow to it. They attribute only that which is terrible or sorrowful to the will of the Lord. When anything comes that we can rejoice in, they seem to think that that is something that slipped in when the Lord was not watching. That is heathenism. Molech, the god of the heathen, was made to represent the idea of God always watching in anger over the people, and they offered their children as sacrifices to appease his anger. The Lord is good. His tender mercy is over all his works. He sends joy and peace; and even the sorrow which come as the result of the curse and sin, he turns to our good, and those who love him will get good in them. "All things work together for good to them that love God."

We like to do everything we can for our children. We like to have them enjoy themselves. Sometimes they ask something that we know is not best, and we have to deny them. Suppose they should go away grumbling, and say that we never tried to do anything for them. "It is his will; and I suppose we must yield to

it." They know better. They know that we plan enjoyments for them, and desire their happiness; and when something comes up that is contrary to their minds, they feel it is all right. They thought it was the best thing, but they have confidence in our judgment, and so give it up. In that way they get the good out of that very thing that is denied them.

Sometimes things may look very dubious. The way seems dark, and there are troubles and difficulties on every side. Now shall we groan over it and mourn and get all the hardness out of it? Some people seem to think that we must be duly solemn and mournful about a trial, because the Lord wants to make us miserable, and we must make it as hard as possible. No; there is good in it, and we get the good if we believe what the Lord says. We may not be able to see how there can be good in it; but he is the one who is to make it work for good. We do not have to make it work for good, and so we need not worry if we can not see how it will be done. We can not understand how the Lord will turn a temptation of the evil into strength for us. If he should tell us how he does it, we could not do it nor comprehend it. As it is his power alone that does it, we need not be troubled about how it is done.

What a blessed thing it would be if men could recognize the will of God in prosperity, as well as in the adversity that they suffer! It is the will of God that men should be saved. Why do not men submit to that? If they should, they would find more pleasure in God's will.

It is the will of God that we should be delivered from this present evil world. Gal. 1:4. It is the "good-pleasure of his will" that he has made us accepted in the Beloved. It is the will of God that Christ should save us, and raise us up at the last day. John 6:39. Paul expected "a prosperous journey by the will of God," to visit the church at Rome. And he had it too, although he was shipwrecked on the way; for he knew that "all things works together for good to them that love God." Rom.8:28.

If people who talk so solemnly about submitting to the will of God, whenever some affliction occurs, would talk also about submitting to his will in the sunshine, the showers, the air, the food, the flowers, and the fruits of the earth, they would soon learn that God is not always trying to make it unpleasant for his children; and they would soon be able to say, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." E. J. W.

March 4, 1897

"The True Israel" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 9.

E. J. Waggoner

"Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel; neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children; but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called." Rom. 9:6, 7.

These words of the apostle Paul should be sufficient to clear up all mystery in the minds of Bible believers concerning who are the "Israel" of to-day. It is plain that all theories and all claims based upon literal descent from Abraham are of no

value. It is of no consequence to us to know who are the natural seed of Abraham to-day, or what is to become of them in the future. No promise of God made to Israel was fulfilled through the simple process of natural descent.

The line of descent from Abraham which God recognizes is not a natural line, but a spiritual one. He has never recognized any line but the spiritual one, even from the days of Abraham himself. Of this fact there are many proofs. When Ishmael was born, and Abraham desired that he might live before God as the heir of the promise (Gen. 17:18), the Lord said to him, "Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac; and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him." And when, after the birth of Isaac, Sarah desired the son of Abraham by the bondwoman to be cast out because of his mocking, the Lord said to Abraham, "In all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called."

Ishmael was the father of a great nation; and we read the Abraham had other sons beside Ishmael and Isaac; but to these he gave gifts and sent them away, and Isaac alone was his heir. So there were several sons of Abraham, but only one heir; multitudes of natural descendants, but only a certain line of them whom God recognized as his children.

Isaac was chosen as the heir because he was the child of promise. The Scripture commentary upon this is, "They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." So then the line of descent was reckoned from God himself. Between God and the carnal nature there could be no possible union, and therefore no child of the flesh could be a son of God. Isaac was the child of promise; that is, he was born *through faith* in the promise of God made to Abraham, and thus he became a son. No person was ever a son of God who did not become so by faith. It has been possible for all the fallen sons of Adam to become sons of God by believing, as Abraham did, on "Him that justifieth the ungodly." By so doing they are "born again" into the line of the true descendants of Abraham,-into the family of God. And the same privilege is open to every man to-day.

The distinguishing mark of this line of descent from Abraham is righteousness; and his descendants compose together a "righteous nation,"-the only righteous nation this earth has ever known. Of them it will be said in the final day of reckoning, "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in." Isa. 26:2. This righteousness is by faith; for we read that "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness;" and also, "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Rom. 4:3, 5. And thus, as the apostle states in another place, "They which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." And the same are also the sons of God; for "as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1:12, 13.

Faith, and faith alone, stands out through all the history of Israel as the means by which the heirship of the promises of God was received. Abraham had faith in God, and God gave him the covenant of circumcision, "a seal of the

righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe." Rom. 4:11. But when the Israelites signally failed in faith, at Kadesh-barnea, and were turned back from the land of promise to wander in the wilderness, circumcision ceased among them, and was not renewed until, under the command of Joshua, they again stood on the borders of Canaan. Tho they were the *literal* descendants of Abraham, and of Isaac, the child of promise, the Lord refused to recognize them as the children of Abraham, because of their unbelief.

John the Baptist, also, and the Saviour, plainly told the Pharisees that they were not the children of Abraham. Said John, "Think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." Matt. 3:9. Thus he declared that natural descent from Abraham counted for nothing. And the Saviour said of them, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham," and also, "Ye are of your father the devil." They had not been born of God, and therefore were neither the children of God nor the children of Abraham.

As the natural seed of Abraham were not counted as children without faith, so, on the other hand, those who were not the *natural* seed could become united to Israel by faith. Any stranger could come and join himself to them and be counted as one of them. The promises of God were as specifically made to the stranger who came and united with Israel, as to the natural descendants themselves. God did not separate the Israelites from the other nations for the purpose of going off by himself with a certain people to favor them, and shutting the others out. He separated them from the wickedness of the nations around them, that they might not be contaminated thereby; but he excluded no one from joining them and sharing with them in all their blessings. He designed to magnify his name in them before all the world, that men might be drawn to them with a desire to obtain knowledge of him.

There is an Israel of God to-day, as there ever has been; and now, as then, it is open to all persons of whatever race or ancestry to unite themselves to it. There is nothing exclusive about it; it is as free as the offer of salvation. The condition of union with Israel now is the same that is ever was,-belief in God. "They which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." The same promises of God to ancient Israel hold good to-day; the advantages of union with Israel are the same. But there is no promise to the merely natural descendants, and no advantage in being connected with Abraham, Isaac or Jacob through the flesh. The Israel of God is to-day the remnant of the "righteous nation," that have gathered out in all ages from every race, and kindred and tongue, by the power of God's grace, through faith. "Israel" stands for those who by faith have power, as Jacob did, with God, and prevail. All these are children of God; and only these has God recognized in past time as Abraham's children, or does recognize as such to-day. They are those whom Christ has redeemed. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." E. J. W.

March 11, 1897

"Heresy and Heretics" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 10.

E. J. Waggoner

The word "heretic" occurs but once in the Bible; the word "heresy" occurs four times, once in the singular, and three times in the plural. The full meaning of the word "heresy" is very concisely put by Mr. Gladstone, in his article on "The Place of Heresy and Schism in the Modern Christian Church," in the current number of the *Nineteenth Century*. He says of heresy, "It means self-chosen and self-formed opinion. The Gospel is not chosen or formed by us: but fashioned by God, and tendered for our acceptance."

That is the whole case in a nut-shell. God is the only Source of truth. Only those are heretics who will not accept the word of God. He who accepts God's will as final is not an heretic, although he may be alone in his belief. Since God, and not the church, is the standard authority, and the source of truth, a man is not necessarily an heretic because he is not in harmony with what is called "the church." As a general thing it is the majority of "the church" who are "heretics," that is, choosers of their ways rather than of God's, while those who cling closely to the word of God are the few.

God is no respecter of persons; all are alike before Him. Therefore one man has as much right to choose for himself as any other, or as all other men. Therefore heresy is not a term that can properly be applied to a man because of any relation that he sustains to "the church." Heresy can exist only in relation to God.

This fact was recognized by the Apostle Paul when he was accused before Felix. He did not admit that he was an heretic, but said, "After the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers," and then

3

showed that he was not an heretic, by adding, "believing all things which are written in law and in the prophets." Acts 24:14.

As no one on earth has the power to define and set the limits of the truth of God, no one has the authority to declare any other one an heretic. Men have no right to go beyond the inspired instruction, "Preach the word." If the church of Christ does this, it may leave the responsibility of choosing for themselves or allowing God to choose for them, to those who hear; and to God may be left the responsibility of deciding who has chosen well.

March 18, 1897

"The Turkish-Armenian Question" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 11.

E. J. Waggoner

A Consideration of Some Neglected Truths

For a long time, especially for the last eighteen months, the attention of the whole civilized world has been directed to the events taking place in Turkey. The Armenian massacres have been discussed in doubtless every pulpit in

Christendom, and the papers, both secular and religious, have overflowed with accounts, comments, and suggestions. Indeed, one expects to see in his daily paper a column devoted to the situation in Turkey or to the relation of the Powers to it, just as regularly as to the state of the market.

It is therefore not necessary in this place to devote any space to the detailing of the outbreaks and massacres. No neglect has been shown in keeping them before the public in all their awful enormity; no details have been omitted, that would tend to excite the horror of the reader or hearer. While we do not repeat the reports of these massacres, we shall, for the purpose of our present study, assume that they are all true, both as to the numbers of Armenians slain, and as to the cruelties perpetrated. It might be well, however, to remember that in these reports we have the testimony from only one side,-that of the Armenians and those who are prejudiced against the Turks,-yet we will not now stop to question their truthfulness; let each one think that the outrages are as fearful as his imagination has pictured them.

A Still More Terrible Thing

The taking of human life under any circumstances is an awful thing. To read of men being shot and stabbed, of human bodies mangled and bleeding in the streets, or kicked to one side as though they were dogs, is horrible; yet no description can equal the reality. So we say that people do well to shudder as they read of wholesale slaughter. But fearful as the massacres in Turkey may have been, there is something to which we do not see anybody's attention specially called, which is still more shocking, so much more shocking that there can be no comparison. What is that thing?-it is *the almost universal cry for vengeance*, the demand for war,-for more killing,-that has issued and is still issuing from the lips and pens of professed followers and ministers of Christ. We do not wish to call attention to any individual, but only to the thing, and therefore we shall not give the names of those whose utterances we quote.

One man, who shows his strong religious sentiments by the statement, "We want a leader filled with the Holy Ghost, whose only fear is to displease God," writes thus to a leading religious journal:-

Sir, I am the father of a family, but my sons and I are only waiting the call to go out. In God's name let us raise an army of volunteers, and wipe out the awful stain upon our fair island home of accomplices in crime, and *sweep the old murderer and all his tribe into the sea.*

Another person, a woman, a regular correspondent of the same religious paper, quotes the story of two English captains who received some Armenian refugees on board their ships in the Bosphorus, and then when the Turks demanded the refugees, hoisted the British flag, upon which the Turks went away. Then she says:-

How fervently one wishes for a moment that they had fired upon our flag! It would have been the signal for instant war!

Gross Perversion of the Gospel

We have before us a report of a great representative meeting of Wesleyan Methodists, that was held in the historic City Road Chapel a few weeks ago. The writer says that, it was a meeting that showed, above all things, in how large a degree the best conscience of the people is permeated with the idea that the ethical principles of the Sermon on the Mount are applicable in all their simplicity even to the complex problems of international relations, and then follow these words:-

The immediate outcome was a resolution assuring Her Majesty's Government of united and vigorous support in any steps it may take to bring to a speedy end these disgraceful and unparalleled atrocities.

That by this resolution was meant support even in the event of war, is clearly shown by what preceded. One speaker said that "if necessary, England must stand alone in order to bring to an end this chapter of Eastern misrule." This, as another truly said, would doubtless "provoke a European war," yet even this the reverend gentlemen assembled were ready to accept, for still another said, "With Russia or without her, with the Concert of Europe or without it, we can, we must, we will, deliver the Armenians."

Remember now that to "deliver the Armenians" means war. If one Power should undertake it alone, without the concurrence of the other Powers, it would result in a general war of all the Powers ranged against one another according to their several interests; if there were agreement, then the war would be against the Turks alone; but in any case there would be war. Remember also that this war is just what ministers of the Gospel were and are still pleading for; and remember also the statement that the meeting showed "in how large a degree the best conscience of the people is permeated with the idea that the ethical principles of the Sermon on the Mount are applicable in all their simplicity to the complex problems of international relations," and it will be seen how greatly men have allowed their passions to cloud their perception of the simplicity of the Gospel as set forth in the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus said, in the Sermon on the Mount, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." And further, "I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Matt. 5:38, 39, 44, 45.

That is all that is in the Sermon on the Mount that is especially applicable to this question, yet so far have professed Christians lost sight of its principles, that they can complacently cite their clamors for bloodshed and

revenge as being an illustration of those principles. Indeed, it is from religious teachers and the religious press that the demand for vengeance principally comes, because they regard the case as one of religious persecution and

therefore as especially concerning them. Now let the candid reader pause and think seriously, and say if such a perversion of the Gospel is not the most fearfully deplorable thing that could possibly happen.

The killing of a few thousands of people by men who do not profess to be Christians, is horrible enough; but more horribly wicked still is it when professors and ministers of the Gospel everywhere fill the minds of the people with the idea that war and vengeance are in harmony with and manifestations of the fundamental principles of Christianity. Such teaching only serves to nourish and glorify the natural fierceness which the Bible says will be characteristic of the last days; and with the people become fully imbued with it, there will be needed only a spark to set the whole world ablaze with the fire of hell. When the name of Christ, the Prince of Peace, is used as a war cry, where shall we look for peace on earth?

The Vengeful Spirit

It seems as though Christendom were becoming intoxicated with the spirit of vengeance, so that the most peaceably inclined men have lost their senses. One religious paper reprints some floating newspaper stories derogatory to the character of Turks in general, and then exclaims editorially:-

Ought such a nation to be tolerated for a moment on the face of the earth?
and that but expresses the general sentiment among preachers and people.

Just analyze this: "Ought such a nation to be tolerated for a moment on the face of the earth?" is the same as, "Ought such people to be tolerated for a moment on the face of the earth?" and that includes thousands of individuals, and of each of whom it is virtually said, "Ought such a person to be tolerated for a moment on the face of the earth?" That is to say, the spirit of intolerance is already so firmly rooted in the hearts of professed Christians, that they do not wish to tolerate for a moment the existence of those whom they, taking the throne of judgment, have decided to be unfit to live. What is that but charging God with laxness in the discharge of His duty, because He suffers wicked men to live?

How different from the Spirit of Christ. When He was rejected by the Samaritans, and two disciples wished to command fire to come down and consume the inhospitable people, He rebuked them, saying, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Luke 9:51-56. The Spirit of desiring to be the instruments of God's vengeance has always been more prominent than the desire to be instruments of His mercy, and when it is once cherished it inevitably results in getting ahead of the Lord, and being both judge and executioner.

The True Christian Spirit

But we have a still stronger rebuke of this bitter, warlike spirit. When Jesus had been betrayed into the hands of His enemies, and a mob of man came to seize Him and put Him to death, Peter drew a sword in His defense. The blow just missed the head of one of the gang of murderers, and cut off his ear. "Then

Jesus said to him, Put up again thy sword into his place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Matt. 26:51, 52. And then, as an evidence that He came not to take life but to save it, Jesus healed His wounded enemy. Luke 22:50, 51.

If there was ever a time when it was right to resist oppression and injustice, it was then. Jesus was innocent, as even His judges declared. Here was the worst kind of religious persecution. Every indignity, insult, and outrage was heaped upon Jesus, yet He opened not His mouth, and forbade His followers to fight in His defense. How then can any of His followers fight in defense of themselves, or even of their brethren who are persecuted? The disciple is not greater than his Lord.

Peter was well-meaning and sincere in his defense of the Lord, and so would we fain believe are those who now counsel drawing the sword in behalf of the Armenians. But Peter did not then know the spirit of the Gospel. He was not converted, and within a few hours after his impulsive defense he denied that he knew the Lord. His example is not one to be followed by disciples of Christ. When he became converted, he learned to know the Lord, and then he wrote:-

"If, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." 1 Peter ii. 20-23. Christians are *called* to follow Christ's example, and to suffer unjustly, without complaining, much less resisting; yet all over the world professed Christians are denying this calling. Why is it?-It is because a spirit, not from the Lord, is seeking to drive them to destruction, for Jesus said, "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." If Satan can only succeed in filling Christians with such zeal for any cause whatever, and no matter how worthy, that they will fight for it, He knows that their destruction is sure.

The Wicked, Devastating Sword

Mark the word "all." There is no exception. "*All* they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." One of our poets has pleaded that

The just, the holy, the benignant sword might be drawn in behalf of the Armenians, and professed Christians have applauded the sentiment; but the sword is always unjust, unholy, and devastating. It makes no difference who handles it. The sword vigorously wielded by the hands of professed Christians will work as much havoc and destruction as in the hands of infidels, as history abundantly proves, and therefore it is just as cruel and unholy. The fact that a man calls himself a Christian, does not make it any more a righteous deed for him to cleave another man's head with the sword, than it would be if a Turk did the same thing. How can anybody think that that which is wicked on the part of a Mohammedan is righteous on the part of a Christian? Is it so that Christians have a monopoly of crime in this world? and that no one but Christians can murder their fellow-beings with impunity? Does the reputation that a man has determine

the character of the deed he commits? If a man that is known to be a good man commits a murder, does that make the murder a righteous act? and is murder sinful only when perpetrated by men of previous bad reputation? That is the theory upon which is based the outcry against slaughter by the Turks, and the demand for the slaughter of the Turks. But it is a horrible doctrine. No; "he that doeth righteousness is righteous," and "every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin." When professed Christians do the deeds, and even overpass the deeds of the heathen, they nullify their profession, and place themselves in the ranks of the heathen. They are then worse than the heathen, because their high profession makes the insolence of their evil deeds the greater. Oh, the pity of the thing, that such a spirit should be consecrated by the name of Christianity!

Who Makes Them to Differ?

The prevailing idea seems to be that it is far worse to kill Christians than to kill non-Christians. Thus there is a great outcry when Armenians are killed, and on the contrary rejoicing when Turks are killed. Who has ever heard any sorrow expressed for the thousands of Turks who were butchered in the crusades? A religious paper that is loud in its outcry against Turks who kill, publishes without protest as a matter of simple history, the following:-

The founder of the reigning House of Montenegro was Daniel Petrovitch. He was elected Metropolitan in 1696, uniting in himself both the temporal and spiritual powers. On Christmas night, 1702, he cut to pieces all the Turks he could find in his dominions.

It is doubtful if there would be much if any indignation anywhere in Christendom if the Armenians should now slaughter the Turks in a similar manner. Indeed, the comments that followed the attack upon the Ottoman Bank furnish a case in point. At first it was thought to be a master stroke on the part of the Armenians; but afterwards, when the theory was circulated that the affair was planned by the Turks, then it was denounced as a dastardly outrage. It is on the same principle that when white men with machine guns kill several thousand blacks, it is a brilliant victory, and when the blacks retaliate upon a few dozen white that they succeed in overpowering, it is a cruel massacre.

A well-known prelate has expressed regret that the Spirit of the Crusades has been allowed to die out to the extent that it has, yet he can scarcely be ignorant of the fact that in those Crusades Mohammedans were butchered without mercy, simply because they were Mohammedans. The following brief extract describing the entry of the "Christians" into Jerusalem, amply shows the spirit and work of the Crusades:-

The Saracens gave way before them. They retreated through the streets, fighting at intervals until they were driven into the precincts of the mosque of Omar. Blood flowed in the gutters, and horrid heaps of the dead lay piled at every corner. None were spared by the frenzied Christians, who saw in the gore of the infidels the white way of redemption. Ten thousand dead, scattered through the city, gave token of the merciless spirit of the men of the West. Another ten

thousand were heaped in the reeking courts of the great mosque on Mount Moriah. "God wills it," said the pilgrims. . . . The Spirit of the massacre is well illustrated in a letter which the Christian princes sent to the Pope. The devout writers say: "If you wish to know what we did to the enemies we found in the city, learn that in the portico of Solomon and in the temple our horses walked up to the knees in the in pure blood of the Saracens."

The Crusaders are applauded, while the Turks, who have not equaled them in ferocity, are execrated. Why this difference?

In the Philippine Islands the Spaniards are at this very time slaughtering their Mohammedan subjects by the hundreds, showing no mercy to prisoners, but perpetrating the grossest cruelties. Yet there is no demand for the wiping out of the Spanish nation.

At the same time that the troubles were taking place in Turkey, English soldiers in Africa, under the direction of the Government, were slaughtering African natives. The white man's machine guns mowed down the comparatively unarmed blacks making "a mere jujube of black humanity." When the natives fled and took refuge in caves, these were blown up with dynamite; men, women, and children, torn and mangled, were thus buried, both dead and alive in one common grave. These reports come not from the victims, but from the victors; yet we hear of no meetings called to protest, nor any claims that English people are too wicked to be allowed to live, as indeed they are not. The same course has been pursued with the Indians in America, until now there are but few left.

We do not cite these things as accusations, but simply for the purpose of asking why it is so much worse for Turks to kill people than it is for English and Americans; why that which is denounced as an outrage when done by Mohammedans is a thing for applause when done by professed Christians. Truly, the times are sadly out of joint. Why is it so much worse for Mohammedans to kill Christians than for "Christians" to kill Mohammedans? Can anybody tell. Is it worse to kill a Christian, who has hope in his death, then to cut short the probation of one who does not know the Lord? Think of the awful responsibility men take upon themselves when they set themselves not merely to execute God's judgment on the ungodly, but to anticipate Him, and to send them into eternity while He is waiting for them to repent.

A Mistaken Idea

Thus far, in order that the case might stand in the strongest possible light, we have taken it for granted that the trouble in Turkey is simply religious persecution. The prevailing sentiment is thus expressed:-

The recent atrocities are an exhibition of Moslem fanaticism and hatred of Christians, which the Powers strangely permit.

Now anybody who will take the trouble to think calmly and seriously, can satisfy himself that this is not at all the case. One simple fact alone is sufficient evidence. The Greek Church is just as much Christian as is the Armenian, yet it is a well-known fact that in all the troubles in Turkey, the Greeks have not suffered. In the midst of the greatest excitement in Constantinople, if a man were

arrested, or were in danger of death, he would secure his instant release by showing that he was a Greek. If the Turks were persecuting Christians, why should they be so careful not to molest the Greeks?

Again, there are many Roman Catholics in Turkey, yet there has been no proceeding against them. We mention these three bodies-Armenians, Greeks, and Roman Catholics-together, because they are very similar. While the Armenian Church is nominally Christian, it is a well-known fact that it is most intolerant of Protestants, as much so as is the Roman Catholic. Protestant work in territory exclusively Armenian is attended with as much difficulty as in Spain. That is no reason why they should be killed, or why those who are suffering should not be assisted; but it may help some who assist the needy to do so on the simple ground that they are needy mortals, and not under the mistaken notion that they are suffering for conscience' sake.

In September last, just after the last outbreak, the writer witnessed a baptismal scene at Constantinople. It was at a time when the Turkish soldiers were patrolling the streets night and day; one could not turn a corner without seeing a squad of them. In the open day, without asking permission of anybody, a company of Christians went through the streets to the sea, to witness the immersion of some believers. The place of baptism was about midway between the Mohammedan mosques, and within bowshot of each. About half of the company were Armenians, the rest Greeks, and the administrator of the rite was an Armenian. Such a company walking together very naturally attracted a little attention, and a policeman asked what it meant. Upon being told, he said that was all right, and paid no more attention. At the sea there were Turks standing near, witnessing the baptism, and yet there was not so much as a disrespectful or irreverent word or gesture. There could not have been better decorum in any city in the world.

It might be well to add that the body represented on that occasion are not revolutionists, and are known to have no connection whatever with politics, but are content with being simply Christians. This is why they have had no difficulty.

Another instance will show that the Turkish opposition is against those who are plotting insurrection, and not against those who are teaching the Gospel. A young man, an Armenian residing in Scutari, was in Stamboul, and not being known to the police there, was arrested as a possible revolutionist. He told the police that he was a Sabbatarian, and they brought him to the house where the Sabbatarians were known to be assembled holding religious services, to see if it were so. When they were assured that he spoke the truth, he was released. But that was not all. The young men engaged the policeman in religious conversation, and the writer twice passed the door of the room where they were, and saw that Mohammedan Turkish policeman sitting on a divan with the Christian Armenian, each with a Bible in his hand, reading. The thought would not be repressed, that if all profess to be Christians had used the sword of the Spirit instead of the carnal weapon in their dealings with the Turks, there might be a different story to tell.

Is the Gospel for the Turks?

It is said, as proof that the Turks are animated solely by hatred of Christians, that people have been promised their lives on condition that they would turn Mohammedan, and give up the name Christian. That is very probably true. When revolution and anarchy are upheld and applauded throughout Christendom, what wonder is it if the Turks should, to a certain extent at least, associate Christianity and anarchy together? When to be a "Christian" is considered, and with good reason, synonymous with being an enemy of the Turks and the Turkish Government, the repression of revolution would very naturally be considered as simply the repression of too active Christianity. In such case it could easily be that real Christians, who hold the name as something more than a national sign, might suffer because they would not give up their faith, the Mohammedans not being able to distinguish between them and those who use the name as a cover for anarchy.

In prophetic vision the Apostle John saw "

165

a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues," standing before the throne of God, clothed with white robes, and bearing palms of victory over sin and Satan. Rev. 7:9. That is positive evidence that there will be Turks in heaven. Yet one would not gather from reading the religious press, that there was any possibility of salvation for a Turk. It may be said that the Turks are bitterly prejudiced against Christianity. That is true, and who could expect it to be otherwise? Christianity is to them embodied in the boasted "Christian nations" of Europe, and none of these have ever done anything to recommend the name. But that is not all. Those religious bodies, professing to be Christian, of which the Turks have most knowledge, are the Greek and Armenian churches, and in one important particular the Mohammedan has good reason to believe that his religion is superior to theirs; for he sees the members of those bodies bowing down to and adoring images and pictures, while the Mohammedan abominates the worship of titles. But even this is not the worst. From the time of the Crusades professed Christians as a rule have regarded the Turks with lofty contempt, as beings to be execrated and driven off; now, all Christendom is ringing with unchristian cries for vengeance upon the Turks, and even their utter extermination. Can it be wondered at that the Turks are not drawn towards Christianity, or that they are suspicious of foreigners? But when the just Judge of all the earth punishes the Turks for their misdeeds, who dare say that none of their blood will be upon the garments of those who bear the name of Christian? We appeal to individual Christians to clear themselves, by being Christlike in their words and acts, from all responsibility for Turkish indifference to Christianity.

The Great Deception

There is a cause for this present cry against the Turks. That it is not caused by the Spirit of Christ, needs no argument. What spirit it is that is even now

working, may be seen by remembering what it is desired to do with the Turks. The least thing that is demanded, is that they be driven from Europe. Such atrocities, it is said, ought not to be allowed on European soil. But will they be any better on Asiatic soil?-Certainly not. Then what would necessarily be the next step after driving them from Europe-manifestly, to drive them from Asia, that is, from the earth, so far at least as their existence as a nation is concerned. This is even now demanded. Their overthrow will be the last act in the scheme to place the world under the dominion of so-called Christian powers, thus to fulfill the dreams of a temporal millennium, in which so many have indulged. But each one of these "Christian Powers" will wish to have the supremacy, and so the armies of all will be assembled in Palestine, the centre of the Sultan's Asiatic dominion,-when the last struggle takes place. That gathering is thus described in prophecy:-

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come 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 spirits 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. . . And he they gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." Rev. 16:13-16.

Here we are plainly told what spirit brings the kings of the earth together at that place. That deception we see working even now; for that Christendom is being deceived is painfully evident. If men were not already grossly deceived, how could they *in the name of Christ* counsel war? How could they so misrepresent true Christianity before the world as to claim that the blood even of martyrs demands revenge by the sword? Is it not a terrible deception that is even now closing in upon the world? What an awful thought, that every man, be he minister of the Gospel or not, who is upbraiding the powers for naught concerning the Turks, is simply an unconscious agent of Satan to gather the kings of earth to that great battle which is to result in the ruin of all. God grant that many who have thoughtlessly been led away by a popular clamor, may recover themselves from the snare of the devil before it is too late, and show to the world, including the Turks, that Christianity means to be like Christ. We have full faith that this prayer will be answered. E. J. W.

March 25, 1897

"Boldness to Enter" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 12.

E. J. Waggoner

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. . . . let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." Heb. 10:19, 22. "That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." Luke 1:74, 75. As we have access by Christ unto the Father, of what need we be afraid?

One who has free access to the palace and the table of royalty will not tremble with fear in the presence of some lower officer of State. Such an one

enters the presence of the highest in the kingdom, and it is only a light matter to come before ordinary people.

How can it be that one who has boldness to enter into the presence of the King of kings, even into his secret chamber, not merely into the outer court, but into the "secret place of the Most High," and not only to enter there, but to abide, as a friend who has a right there,-how can such an one be afraid of anything else in the universe? We have that privilege, and the Lord desires us to use it.

How would any parent feel, who has a parent's heart, if his children should start with fear when he came into the room? If when they wanted something they should come cringing in a fearful manner, as tho they did not know whether or not they had a right to live? We like them to have that confidence in us that they will come with boldness and ask for that which they want, knowing that it will be given them if it is for the best.

So we can imagine how God must feel to have those for whom he has done everything, for whom he has given his life to bring all things to them, and has given them all things before they asked, fearing to come to him to claim anything, almost apologizing for their very existence. He does not want us to be afraid of him.

The Lord came down to earth to show us

3

how gentle he is. He lived and talked with people. He sat down by the wayside with them. He took children in his arms and blessed them, and they were not afraid of him. Whosoever will receive the kingdom of God must receive it as a child, with trusting confidence. He is goodness, and mercy, and tender-heartedness itself. He is pleased at our very boldness.

The boldness is not presumption; it is not arrogance. No one who is puffed up with pride, who is haughty, can ever come into the presence of the Lord with boldness. The pride and arrogance of men is simply the result of their separation from him. When they put him far off, and hide him from them, they can be very bold. But when they come into the presence of God, every mouth will be stopped. It is impossible for one to come into the presence of the Lord with arrogance, knowing that he is in his presence.

But the believer may come with boldness, lifting up the head. It shows that we believe that he is a God who keeps his word, that he is just what he is, a God of tenderness and infinite loving-kindness. And dwelling in the secret place, and abiding under his shadow, there is no fear. "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday." "Thine heart shall meditate terror," but there will be no fear in it.

If we can endure the time of greatest trouble, such as is here described, when destruction shall be over all the land, then we can have no fear now. No matter what persecution might be stirred up, we are free in the Lord, without fear, because we are walking and talking with the Lord; enduring as seeing him who is invisible. We can stand in the presence of authorities and kings, if need be, to answer for the faith, and not be afraid; because we are living in the presence of the King of kings. E. J. W.

April 1, 1897

"The Knowledge of Want" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 13.

E. J. Waggoner

The Word says, "There is no want to them that fear Him." That is because that when we know the Lord, we no sooner have a knowledge of want than the want is supplied. The revelation or sense of want comes from him. So when we feel the want in our soul, it is God's way of saying he has that thing to give us.

You want righteousness, do you? That is, you feel the lack of it. How did you find out that you wanted it? who told you your need?-The Lord let you know that want. How did he make you know it?-Simply by the revelation of the thing which will supply the want.

If we were to go into the wilds of Africa, out of the tract of civilization entirely, where the people know absolutely nothing of the conveniences of modern life, should we find the people begging for watches, for instance?-Of course not; they would know nothing about such things. But in our cities a boy doesn't get very old before he wants a watch. The knowledge of that thing, and the possibility of it, create the want.

Why is it that you want righteousness?-It is only because the Lord has revealed righteousness to you, the knowledge of right; for there can be no knowledge of wrong without the corresponding knowledge of right. We know a thing is wrong because it is contrary to the right.

In every heart there are desires, greater or less, for a better life. We do not know how many discouraged souls there are longing to be delivered from the degradation into which they have fallen. They do not know how to get deliverance; and the reason is that they do not know love. They have not learned that God is love, and they have not seen God's love manifested in those with whom they have associated, and so they do not know how to have their longings supplied. But every desire of the human heart for anything better, every longing for righteousness, has been created by the Lord, and created in order that the soul might hold to him for the supply of the want.

Whenever we want to be better than we are, the very moment that want comes, it is the plain language of God to us, saying, "Here is something that you lack; take it." This is why there is no want to them that fear God; for every want is supplied in the very knowledge of it, if we but know it. In Christ there is everything, even the fullness of God. He is the "Desire of all nations," and in him is all that men can desire.

Illegitimate Desire

Men may, it is true, desire many things that are not in Christ. But we can all testify from our own experience that the receiving of those things did not satisfy the desire. There was still a want there. Then that was not the real thing that we

wanted, after all. We thought it would satisfy us, but a trial of it showed that there was no satisfaction in it.

It is as if we should sit at a table, hungry, and should try first one thing and then another, without finding the hunger satisfied. At last we find just the thing which the taste seemed to be calling for and which satisfied. There are longings as of the intemperate man for drink. He drinks; but he is not satisfied. The more he drinks, the more the longing is cultivated. There is this and that pleasure that men desire and indulge in, which do not satisfy. The Lord says, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." Isa. 55:2.

There is not a longing in man that is not, unconsciously to himself it may be, really a drawing out after God, and for something which God can supply. So David says, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." Ps. 84:2. The nature of the flesh is sinful, and always sinful. But all this longing of the flesh is dissatisfaction. There is only one thing that can satisfy, and that is God. He is the Desire of all nations, and he satisfies "the desire of every living thing."

If you really do want to be better, if you want God's righteousness, just stop and thank him that he has given it to you. "His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness." E. J. W.

April 8, 1897

"Speculation and Faith" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 14.

E. J. Waggoner

Speculation is uncertainty. It is always a risk. A man ventures something, not knowing what the result will be. He thinks that a certain investment will be a safe one, and will yield large returns, but he is not sure. He has no means of being sure. If he could be sure of the result, it would not be speculation. Very often the man who feels the most confident of the good results of his investment is most sorely disappointed.

This element of uncertainty is that which wears out the speculator, and makes him prematurely old. His nerves are always in tension. He may have all his fortune at stake, and it is impossible for him to rest in perfect ease when he knows that a very little thing may dash it from him in a moment. No wonder that a man in such a condition often finds it impossible to sleep.

Faith is altogether different from this. Faith knows. It runs no risks. There is no element of uncertainty in it. Christ is the only object of faith, and he is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." He never fails. His power is almighty, and he loses nothing that is intrusted to him; no one can snatch anything from his hands. See John 10:28, 29; 17:12.

Christ is the "tried stone," the "precious corner-stone," the "sure foundation;" and "he that believeth in him shall not be confounded." His ability to keep is shown in the fact that he upholds all things by the word of his power. Heb. 4:13.

When the Lord would encourage us to put our trust in him, he says, "Lift up your eyes on high, and see who hath created these, that bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by name; by the greatness of his might, and for that he is strong in power, not one is lacking." Isa. 40:26, R.V.

So it is as unto "a faithful Creator" that we are to commit the keeping of our souls to him. That which may be known of him, even "his eternal power and Godhead," is clearly revealed in the things that he has made, so that all have ample opportunity to become acquainted with him. Therefore the language of faith is, "I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have trusted, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." 2 Tim. 1:12, margin.

Faith knows nothing of worry. There is no straining of the nerves to the utmost pitch of anxiety, for fear of what may happen in the future. He who knows the Lord would as soon think of worrying lest a comet should strike the earth, or lest the earth should come into collision with some other planet, and thus be wrecked, as to worry lest at some future time the Lord might allow him to fall. His strength is in quietness and confidence. Under the shadow of the Almighty he abides secure, and is not afraid, knowing that nothing present or to come can separate the soul from that "everlasting love." E. J. W.

April 29, 1897

"What Can He Say?" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 17.

E. J. Waggoner

In a meeting of the Foreign Missionary Society of the American M. E. Church, a returned missionary to Persia, who was described as "full of enthusiasm for his work," spoke as follows:

I am often asked by the Persians how it is, if the Christian religion be the pure Gospel I claim, that my nation, Christian America, has a far longer list of crimes than Persia? What can I reply? What can I do but bow my head in shame, and raise my heart in prayer to God to lift the cloud from rum cursed America? O, this Christian nation will have to rouse from her slumber, and sweep this evil from her borders, ere she can hold out pure hands to other nations, asking them to accept her Bible and her God!

A man who would have any trouble in answering such a question as that asked by the Persians, ought to get better acquainted with the Gospel before going out as a missionary. He should learn that the Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to *every one* that believeth," no matter in what land he dwells. He should be able to assure the questioners that the Gospel is an individual matter, and that therefore America is not, never was, and never will be Christian, and that it is not possible that any nation on earth, as a nation, can be Christian.

The fact that America "has a far longer list of crimes than Persia," is all the evidence that

is needed to show that it is not Christian; for Christianity means freedom from sin. America is no more a Christian nation than Persia is.

But it would doubtless be most galling to the missionary's "patriotism" to make such an answer as that. And that is the trouble with too many missionaries, both home and foreign. A mistaken loyalty to their native country interferes with their loyalty to the Gospel. If they could but learn that true Christianity is only a sojourner on this earth,-a pilgrim and a stranger even in the land of his birth,-and that his citizenship is in heaven, they would not be embarrassed by such questions as were asked the missionary to Persia. The only country in which they would have a special interest, as a country, would be the heavenly country.

But would not the same charge against the Gospel remain unanswered, namely, that it can not be as pure as is claimed, or else it would have more influence in diminishing crime in America?-Not by any means. The Gospel cleanses from sin and crime all who accept it, and no others. If it were less pure than it is, it would be more generally accepted; but then it would be of no use. The Lord himself gave no warrant for supposing that the majority of men in any nation would accept the Gospel, but, on the contrary, warned his followers that they must always be comparatively few in number, and must suffer persecution.

The Gospel knows nothing about natural or artificial boundaries on this earth. It is to be "to all people." It knows nothing about states and governments. Its mission is to "every creature." Kingdoms may rise and fall, nations may extend their boundaries, and others may be absorbed, but none of these things concern the ambassadors for Christ. They are the representatives of no country but heaven, and are accredited to no earthly government, but to the world as a whole, and to the whole world considered as individuals, who are to be transformed by it, and made to live a different life as individuals. When all of Christ's ambassadors fully realize this truth, then will their mission be clothed with a dignity and power befitting its exalted origin. E. J. W.

May 6, 1897

"Sacrifices" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 18.

E. J. Waggoner

Sacrifices .-There is only one sacrifice in the Christian religion, and that was made by Christ. We have never made a sacrifice. God does not call us to make sacrifices, but to accept the sacrifice that has been made. True, we have to give up all things that pertain to self, but giving up self is simply taking Christ.

Suppose a poor beggar comes to us, with ragged clothing, and a few coppers in his pocket, and we say to him, "Take off these rags, and we will give you a new suit; and give up the coppers, and we will fill your pockets with sovereigns." Would he begin to mourn, or talk about the great sacrifice he was called upon to make in giving up his rags and the coppers he had in them?

Of course we give up something, but what sacrifice is it, when we get ten thousand times as much, and infinitely more? God wants us to give up our miserable ways, and take his ways; our narrow, circumscribed thoughts, and take

his thoughts; our poverty, and get his robes; our gross ignorance, and get his wisdom; our wickedness, and get his righteousness. E. J. W.

May 13, 1897

"Our High Calling" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 19.

E. J. Waggoner

When Peter, in his boat on the Sea of Galilee, saw the power of Jesus of Nazareth over the sea and its inhabitants, he fell down before the Lord, saying, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Luke 5:8. It was the same feeling that prompted Isaiah, when he saw the same Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, to exclaim, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." Isa. 6:5.

It is worthy of note, also, that both those men who thus confess their sinfulness, were at once accepted as workers. To Peter, the Lord said, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men," literally, "thou shalt be catching men alive." But Peter had to be converted before he could strengthen the brethren; and likewise the coal from off the altar had to touch the lips of Isaiah, and purge his sin, before he could say, "Here am I; send me," to the call "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" and could be told, "Go."

Herein is hope and a wondrous calling for every sinner. Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He receives and saves sinners, and then, having received them into his confidence, he sends them forth as his representatives, to carry his message of mercy to other sinners. He takes us as associates with him. He was made flesh, and took the nature of fallen humanity, in order to save men; and so he commits the work not to angels, but to those who have felt the power of the sins that oppress those to whom they are sent. To thus work with Christ is the highest honor that the universe can bestow. E. J. W.

May 27, 1897

"Only a Shadow" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 21.

E. J. Waggoner

Only a Shadow. -Every shadow of darkness, every cloud of gloom, every fear of whatever kind, is simply the shadow of death and of the devil. He has cast his hellish shadow over the world. Now, as Zacharias prophesied by the Holy Ghost, at the birth of his son, the Lord has visited us and delivered us out of the hand of our enemies, that we "might serve him without fear."

He has delivered us from every tremor of fear, and hath sent the Dayspring from on high "to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death." If you have his life, you have his light. What is there to be afraid of? To the one in Christ, death itself is only a shadow. The sting is gone. Satan can cast the shadow over him, but there is nothing in a shadow to be afraid of. He is delivered from the power of darkness. He is going through an enemy's land,

whose weapons are all broken. He is going into a nest of scorpions, whose stings have been removed. He is going into a prison-house, the key of which is held by One who loves him. E. J. W.

July 1, 1897

"Editorial. Thine Is the Kingdom" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 25.

E. J. Waggoner

"Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen." Matt. 6:13.

This is an everlasting truth, for the Lord himself has spoken it; yet to how many who daily utter the words are they little more than a form of speech! As a matter of fact, this confession; which if made with the spirit and with the understanding, brings the soul into the closest and most perfect relation to God!

The kingdom belongs to God. How extensive is it?—"The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all." Ps. 103:19. "The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him." Hab. 2:20.

"The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof, the world, and they that dwell therein." Ps. 24:1.

"The Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." Dan. 4:17. "For God is the King of all the earth; sing ye praises with understanding. God reigneth over the heathen; God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness." Ps. 47:7, 8. Wherever in the universe created beings can look up and see a canopy of space above them, there is God's kingdom. Read Ps. 139:1-12.

People in general do not recognize God as universal King, but that makes no difference with the father. A portion of God's dominion is for rebellion against him; but that does not destroy the fact that the kingdom is his by right. Many people worship gods of their own making, but that does not destroy the fact that there is but one God. In the beginning God gave the dominion of this earth to man. Gen. 1:28, but he did not thereby renounce his right to it. God is the King of kinds, and it pleased him to rule the portion of his dominion through man whom he had made in his image. Man was but simply the agent through whom God made manifest his power on earth. The fact that man has refused to be the instrument of God's will, does not in the least impair God's original and eternal right to the kingdom.

But our confession to God comes closer home. When the unbelieving Pharisees demanded that Jesus should tell when the kingdom of God should come, he replied: "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo, here, or, lo there, for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17:20, 21.

There is a story of a king who visited a school and questioned the pupils. Taking up a paper weight, he asked them to what kingdom it belonged. They replied, "To the mineral kingdom." Then pointing to a plant, he asked the same question, and they said, "To the vegetable kingdom." Then he asked, "To what kingdom do I belong?" The children were afraid to say that he belonged to the

animal kingdom, and as they hesitated, one said, "To God's kingdom." That was a truth, for every created thing in the universe belongs to God's kingdom, and there is but one law for all, namely, God's life.

Some one will say, "But God does not rule in wicked men's hearts." Quite true, because his rule is love, which they reject; but the fact remains that every human heart is God's rightful kingdom. His right is demonstrated by the fact that "he giveth to all life and breath, and all things;" "for in him we live, and move, and have our being." Acts 17:26, 28. It is with his life alone that we live, for we have none of our own and since the life belongs to him, he alone has the right to direct it.

That which may be known of God, that is, "his eternal power and Godhead, it manifest in men, even in the heathen, as well as in all the things that God has made. Rom. 1:19, 20. But men, unlike the trees of the field, "hold down the truth in unrighteousness," choosing rather to be their own masters than to allow God to rule. But "the way of man is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Jer. 10:23. Man has no more power in himself than the grass of the field has, and therefore when he attempts to rule the kingdom himself, he makes a sad failure.

Who alone has the right to rule?-He to whom the kingdom belongs. So when we say the Lord, "Thine is the kingdom," we acknowledge that he alone has the right to rule, not only in our hearts, but in all the earth. But if we truly acknowledge the fact, we yield the kingdom fully to his control.

Just here is where many make a fatal mistake. They say, "The kingdom is the Lord's, but people in general will not acknowledge it, therefore we must compel them to submit to him." Such a course as that is virtually a denial of the fact that the kingdom is the Lord's. To say the least, God is as able to use force as

386

we are, and if he wished people to be forced to submit to him, he could do it. The fact that he does not compel people to serve him, is sufficient evidence that he does not wish men to seek to do so. His law is love, and therefore force is in direct opposition to his kingdom.

All that we are called upon to do, no matter who we may be, is to acknowledge God's right to the kingdom. Whoever acknowledges that the kingdom-that is, all mankind, including himself-belongs to God, will very naturally refrain from attempting to rule any part of it. He to whom the kingdom belongs has the sole right to rule, and if we are sincere in our acknowledgment of God's right, we will not meddle with his affairs. We will leave him to deal with other people as he sees best. By acknowledging his right to rule *all* the kingdom, we ourselves disclaim the right to rule *any portion* of it, even to our own lives. The only part of the kingdom, however, that we can yield up to God is ourselves. When we have done this, then we may tell others how good his rule is, and persuade them also to yield to his dominion.

There is strength in the heartfelt confession. "Thine is the kingdom," for God is able to protect his own. The battle is not ours, but his to whom we belong-"the King of glory." "Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." In his hand are power and might, so that none is able to

withstand him. His thoughts toward us are thoughts of peace, and he desires nothing so much as our welfare both here and in eternity. What a blessed thing to know that "the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King; he will save us." E. J. W.

July 8, 1897

"Editorial. The Power and the Glory" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 26.

E. J. Waggoner

The Power and the Glory. -"Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen."

The Kingdom is the Lord's, and it includes the whole universe. Nothing is outside his jurisdiction. Every creature in the heavens and the earth rightfully belongs to his dominion.

A King Must Have Power; for a king without power is a king only; in name. God is really King, and therefore to Him belongs power. "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God." Ps. 62:11.

No Division of Power. -We must not fall into the error of limiting God, by thinking that power is divided, and that he has merely a share of it, even tho it be the largest share. "Thine is *the kingdom and the power*." "His kingdom ruleth over all;" and wherever his kingdom is, his power is supreme. God alone has power.

God the Almighty One. -That is to say, he has *all might*. Therefore no one being possesses any might in himself. Because God possess all the power in the universe. Christ, the only-begotten Son, could say, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

All of God. -"In him we live, and move, and have our being." Acts 17:28. Every motion that is made, every thought, every word, requires the exercise of power; but the power is not inherent in the man who moves, but in God. "There is no power but of God." Rom. 13:1. The power which men have to fight and blaspheme God, and to commit all sorts of wickedness, is but God's power perverted, just as the performance of righteous acts, and the utterance of praise, is God's power given free course.

Evidence of His Love. -Light-minded persons may see in this occasion for charging God foolishly; but others will see in it his supreme abounding grace and his everlasting love. While some think that God's seeming abundant grace is an evidence of weakness, or of complicity with crime, the well-instructed will "account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation." 2 Peter 3:14.

The Patience of Power. -If God were not sure of his "everlasting strength," he could not thus sit still and see men defy him to his face, and even use his own power in opposition to him. But he has the patience of conscious omnipotence. Knowing that he really has power, he can not, like many men, be tempted to make an exhibition of it simply to demonstrate to scoffers that he possesses it.

His Power to Save. -God desires that men should be saved, and in the Gospel he manifests his power to save them. All God's power, and every revelation of it, is for the purpose of leading men to trust him for their soul's

salvation. The fact that men misunderstand God, even willfully, and pervert the power which he reveals in them for their salvation, does not discourage him or throw him into a passion. Still he graciously manifests his power in them, in hope that at last they will allow him to use it to his own glory in their salvation. God's power is the power of love, and love does not use force, therefore he patiently waits, until he is positively and definitely rejected.

Joy in His Power. -What wonderful joy comes with the recognition that all power is God's. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." Eph. 2:8. Our salvation depends on him, and he has the power. His kingdom is in our hearts, but his enemy has been allowed to come

402

in and raise the standard of rebellion. Nevertheless, as soon as we definitely choose the Lord for our King and our Lawgiver, he will save us by his mighty power. Isa. 33:22. He has power to drive out every enemy. What a comfort to rest confidently in the almighty power of our God!

His Is the Glory. -Not only ought it to be, but *it is*. The last message before the coming of the Lord, calls loudly upon men to "fear God, and give glory to him," as the One who "made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Rev. 14:6, 7. We are to give glory to him, because it belongs to him. His is the glory, because his is the power. Whoever takes glory to himself for anything that he possesses or has done, thereby robs God.

Glory in His Word. -"Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth." Jer. 9:23, 24. Wisdom, power, and riches, all come from the Lord; therefore "he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." 1 Cor. 1:31.

An Instance. -Take a single example, in the line of wisdom. On the day of Pentecost, and many times thereafter, God gave his servants power on the instant to talk foreign languages. Unlettered Galilean fishermen suddenly began to speak intelligently in languages that before were but meaningless jargon to them. It was manifestly a gift of God, and one instinctively shudders at the thought of one with such a gift boasting of his possession, as tho the glory of it were due to him. Very well; but "the Lord giveth wisdom; out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding." Prov. 2:6. If a man by study has acquired several languages, he has done it only by the power which God gave him, and therefore his knowledge is the gift of God just as truly as was the knowledge of the apostles.

His Keeping Power. -Whoever not simply openly, but in his inmost thoughts, continually gives God the glory, will be kept "to the praise of the glory of his grace." "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Prov. 3:6. Men foolishly think that it is beneath their dignity, and a limitation of their freedom, to acknowledge that God alone has power, and that all glory belongs to him; but how much better it is to acknowledge the truth and thus be "strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power" (Col. 1:11), than to

deny him, and thus be left to our own disgraceful impotence. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory, and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." Jude 24, 25. E. J. W.

July 15, 1897

"Editorial. Christ as Teacher" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 27.

E. J. Waggoner

Christ as Teacher. -"And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done? The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him." John 7:31, 32.

The trouble with the Pharisees and the chief priests was that their character and teaching suffered by comparison with that of Jesus. "Never man spake like this man," was the testimony of the officers who were sent to seize him. "He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." The people listened to him more readily than to them, and this aroused their jealousy. And the people knew that the priests sought his life.

Yet the priests and rulers might have retained the confidence of the people, even in the presence of Jesus, if they had only been willing to learn of him, and accept his Spirit and the wisdom that filled him. For that, however, they were too proud, and so they took away the key of knowledge; they entered not in themselves, and those that would enter in, they hindered by every means in their power. Luke 11:52.

There was another reason why the wrath of the leaders of the Jews was aroused against Jesus. It was that the people who heard his living words of truth, not only lost relish for the old traditions that the elders retailed, but they actually came to know more than the leaders themselves. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." The rulers were not willing to do, and therefore they did not know; while the poor people who desired to do God's will knew the truth. David said, "I understand more than the aged, because I have kept thy precepts." Ps. 119:100.

It is the earnest desire of every true teacher that the people shall learn, and the more they learn, the better he is pleased. If in time they surpass him in knowledge, then he will be but the more pleased. Even that is a testimony to the value of his teaching. This will often be the case when one leads his hearers to the Word. If he does not limit it by his own construction, but opens it, and allows the people to see for themselves, it will often be that souls will see more than he does. He who is not willing that this should happen, seeks his own glory, and not that of God; he preaches himself, and not the Word. E. J. W.

"Prove All Things" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 27.

E. J. Waggoner

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." 1 Thess. 5:21. A very reasonable exhortation this, and one that should commend itself to everybody's good sense; yet few heed it, and many of those who profess to regard it misapply it.

How are we to prove all things? By what standard shall we test them? Here is where so many fail. Most people will use their own feelings and impulses as the standard. Their natural likes and dislikes determine what they shall hold fast and what they will reject. What they think to be good, they will follow; but since human judgment is naturally controlled or at least biased by inclination and desire, it is an unsafe guide. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Prov. 16:25.

For this reason alone, if for no other, it should be apparent to all that we are not to prove all things by sampling them. A thing may taste good, and yet contain a deadly poison. He who makes it his practice to eat everything he sees, in order to find out if it is good to eat, may have his probation cut short. It is far better to apply well-known tests for poisons, and then to eat only that which is proved to be good.

So in the mental and spiritual world. A man is not obliged to dabble in every theory in order to prove it. He who thinks that he must prove every form of teaching by trying its effects on himself will fare worse than the one who tries physical poisons on himself. The system can not stand it. His nature would soon become so corrupted that he would be unable to distinguish the good, even if he got hold of it. But he would never find the good; for the forms of error are infinite, and he who sets himself to the task of investigating all error, so as to know how to avoid it, will never finish. The only thing that he will prove will be his own folly.

Just as there are tests for physical poisons, which can be applied without subjecting ourselves to the influence of those poisons, so we have an infallible test of truth and error. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isa. 8:20. The Word of God is truth, and whatever is not in harmony with that is of course error. If we become thoroughly familiar with the Word, error will be revealed on its first approach, and we need have nothing whatever to do with it. The Word of the Lord is his voice, and all that is necessary is for us to know that; for we do not need to talk with a stranger hours or days in order to find out if the voice is that of our most intimate friend.

Least of all must it be supposed that we are to prove the Word of God itself, to see whether or not we should hold to it, or to how much we should hold fast. No; that is the standard that is already proved. "The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." Ps. 12:6. "Every word of God is pure." Prov. 30:5. The Word itself is good; hold it fast, and prove all things by it, holding only that which the Word declares to be good. E. J. W.

July 22, 1897

"Editorial" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 28.

E. J. Waggoner

"Himself He Can Not Save." -When Jesus hung upon the cross, the priests and scribes and elders said in mocking contempt, "He saved others; himself he can not save." Matt. 27:42. In those words there was a truth far beyond what the Jews had any thought of,-a truth that even the followers of Jesus do not appreciate. Whoever grasps the full meaning of the statement, "He saved others; himself he can not save," and whoever allows it to apply to himself, has salvation, for it contains the whole of the Gospel.

"He Saved Others." -The Jews acknowledged this, yet they crucified him. He whose only offense was that "he went about doing good," was hanged as a malefactor, and he lifted no hand in self-defense, nor uttered a word of reproach against his persecutors.

"He was oppressed, and afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." Isa. 53:7. He saved others, and, even while hanging on the cross, "a reproach of men, and despised of the people," he showed his power to save, in the case of the penitent thief; but himself he could not save.

The Secret of His Power. -This was the secret of his power to save others. It was not simply that he *would not* save himself,-not alone that he unselfishly forgot himself,-but he *could not* save himself. To have saved himself would have been the destruction of all others; for if he had planned to save himself, he would have stayed in heaven, and never exposed himself to reproach, and cruelty. But such a thing as impossible. He *could not* thus save himself, for such a saving of self would have been selfishness, and there was no selfishness in him. He absolutely could not remain in heaven and leave man to perish. But he could not save men while keeping himself in safety apart from them and their troubles. So he "gave himself for us." Titus 2:14.

The Gospel and Giving. -Thus we see that the Gospel has its origin and perfection in giving. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son." John 3:16. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister,"-not to be served, but to serve-"and to give His life a ransom for many." Matt. 20:28. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that tho he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

434

2 Cor. 8:9. He had everything, and we had nothing, so he gave up everything, and kept nothing; in order that we might have everything.

Emptied Himself. -Most clearly is this set forth in Phil. 2:7, in the rendering of the Revised Version, where we are told that when Jesus had everything, he did not count it a thing to be desired to hold it, "but emptied himself." The Greek word from which this is translated has the sense of "to drain out." In a sense he annihilated himself, threw himself away, in order that he might save those who were lost and in danger of annihilation. He took no thought for himself; he did not defend himself against attacks that were made upon him; utterly regardless, reckless of self, he was lost in solicitude for others.

The Purpose of Love. -This neglect of self was not a momentary enthusiasm, as when one under a strong impulse saves another from impending death at the expense of his own life. On the contrary, it was a deliberate, settled purpose. Calmly and deliberately, looking over the whole situation, and counting the cost, he laid down his life, that is, he placed it from him, gave it up to the service of others; and when that was done, the moment of death was but an incident in a long career of the same giving. His life was just as truly laid down for the sheep before he came to earth, and while he walked and talked and suffered in Judea and Galilee, as when with his expiring breath he cried, "Father, into thy hands I commit my Spirit."

A Lesson to Us. -In all this history of self-sacrifice there is a lesson for us. We are not simply to admire the example of devotion, but to follow it. In it alone, is there salvation. Jesus seemingly threw himself away, yea, that is what he actually did, for he "poured out his soul unto death" (Isa. 53:12), "emptied himself," drained the last drop; "wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." Phil. 2:9. His humiliation was his exaltation; his casting away of self was his salvation. And that was the only possible way of salvation; for, as before stated, to have sought to save himself would have been to deny himself, that is, to prove false to his nature. Since God is love, unselfishness, the only way that he can preserve his own existence is to give himself away.

The Mind of Christ. -"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." 1 John 3:16. "The brethren" for whom we are to give ourselves are the sons of Adam, for all who are children of Adam must be brethren. Of course those who give themselves for their brethren in Adam, will without question give themselves for their brethren in Christ, who himself counts even those who do not know the name of God as his brethren, saying, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren." Heb. 2:12. "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Let no one say or think, "My life is so commonplace and uneventful that I have no occasion to lay down my life for anybody; no great opportunities come to me." It is not in dying on some great occasion that laying down one's life consists, the laying down of life consists in not counting it our own, reckoning yourselves as dead, deliberately putting our life from us, and forgetting all about it in thoughts of others. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

Not by Our Effort. -The lesson, in short, is that nobody can be saved by trying to be saved. Salvation is too great a thing to be accomplished by human efforts. Strange as it may seem, we can be saved only as we cease all efforts to save ourselves, and lose all thought of self in efforts to save others. Only so do we enter into full sympathy with Christ, and become laborers together with God. But that casting away of self is our salvation, for while we are concerning ourselves for others, Christ, who is also concerning himself for others, is as a matter of course caring for us. God "turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends." Job 42:10.

Rest and Peace. -Freedom from anxiety is thus assured to us. How easy to cast all our care upon him, when we know he cares for us! And when we know

that he cares for us, what need have we to care for ourselves? Thus we experience the truth that the Lord's yoke is easy, and his burden light.

Debtors to All. -One thing more. Paul said, "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise." Rom. 1:14. That which was true of Paul, is equally true of us. Why was he debtor?-The answer is plain, when we once stop to think; it is simply this, that Paul had received the whole of that which was given for the world. Christ gave his life for the world. He "tasted death for every man." But Christ is not divided; every soul gets the whole of him. "Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Eph. 4:7. His life is light, and the light that shines for me, shines equally bright for all. He is the "Sun of Righteousness," but the sun shines for all; each one gets all the benefit of the sun, and no one could get any more, even if he were the only person on earth. So each person gets the whole of the life of Christ, which is given to the world. Now it is very evident that if I get the whole of something that is given to all the world, then I am debtor to the world; and the same is true of every soul. The only difference between the most of us and the apostle Paul is that he realized that to him was the fullness of Christ given, and he accepted and appropriated the gift, while we are too often content with but a little of the divine life. We selfishly think to take just enough for our own use, and put a part away from us, not realizing that we must have the whole; and so we fail to realize that we are debtors. May God grant that we all may have the eyes of our understanding enlightened by the Holy Spirit, so that we may know the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and may not reject that portion of the life of Christ which to the natural man seems disagreeable, but may allow his perfectly unselfish life to abide in us, so that we, not alone with our lips, but by the glad offering of ourselves for others, may truly render thanks unto God for his unspeakable gift. E. J. W.

July 29, 1897

"Not a Creed" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 29.

E. J. Waggoner

Justification by faith, and that means salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ, is not a theory. It can never be put into a creed, a form of words. Every professor of religion who has certain points of doctrine which he holds, and who is satisfied with them just as he was put them into a form of statement, has as iron-bound a creed as any ever imposed by a council.

But the truth of God is ever growing, ever enlarging. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18), and we can not put that light into writing, and say, "This is the sum of the doctrine." We may speak what we know, and write what we know, but this simply calls attention to the truth; there is more and more. There are oceans of light and truth, wonderful revelations that the Lord will make to every soul, beyond what he has ever seen, in the treasures of the grace of Christ, if he will but give up to the Lord continually, for him to live his own marvelous life in him. Continually should

the prayer be made, "open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." Every wonderful thing that we see is but the forerunner of a still more wonderful thing to be revealed, if we will but be open to receive it.

But the man not content with God's words, who will not rest until he has defined doctrine by his own words and put God into a formula, shuts himself away from learning of God. E. J. W.

August 12, 1897

"Editorial. The Wisdom of Jesus" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 31.

E. J. Waggoner

The Wisdom of Jesus. -"And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him. Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. . . . And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers." Luke 2:40-47.

Of one thing each reader of this narrative should rest assured from the very beginning, and that is that Jesus was not as we sometimes see it stated, "disputing with the doctors." He was not doing anything that would be unbecoming in a child of twelve years. He was not putting himself forward, nor "showing off." He was not presuming to teach those learned doctors of the law, nor showing the least disrespect to them. He was listening to their instruction, and asking them questions on what they were teaching, just as every listener was expected to do. He was seeking knowledge; more wisdom may sometimes be revealed in the questions of a learner than in the instruction of a teacher. The questions of the child Jesus, asked for the purpose of gaining information, showed that he already had a marvelous perception and grasp of truth, greater perhaps than had the doctors.

Later in life, when he was engaged in public labor, "the multitudes were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes." Matt. 7:28, 29, R.V. "And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagog, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?" Matt. 13:34.

The true answer to this question is scarcely understood even by the followers of Jesus. If it were, there would be more of the same wisdom among them; for just as truly as Christ "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7, R.V.), so then "it behooved him be made like unto his brethren" (Heb. 2:17), so truly did he possess no advantages over his brethren, and had access to no sources of wisdom that are not open to all.

Made in all things like unto his brethren. -The common idea concerning Jesus is that he was born with special wisdom, and as an infant he possessed knowledge superior to that of most men, and that he did not need to learn as other folks do, but that his wisdom was inherited, so that he knew everything without any effort. Such an idea not only makes him a monstrosity, but it places a great gulf between him and us, so that we have nothing in common with him, and derive no help from him. All our hope and consolation in Jesus rest in the fact that, as partaker of flesh and blood, he was subject to the same infirmities that we are, as weak and helpless in himself as we are, yet without sin, and by the divine life dwelling in him made "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." He came to earth to let men know what God can do in human flesh; and just to the extent that we imagine him to have "natural" abilities superior to ours, do we deprive ourselves of the grace that is brought to us in him.

The fact that Jesus was not born with greater knowledge than possessed by other infants, is indicated by the statement that he "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." Luke 2:52. It would have been as incongruous for him to be born with perfect wisdom as to be born with full stature. He increased in wisdom as he grew in age and stature, just as other children are expected to.

In the fiftieth chapter of Isaiah we have the Lord's own statement of how he obtained the wisdom that made him the greatest Teacher the world has ever seen. That this chapter contains the words of the Lord Jesus is shown by verse 6, "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting." Now read verse 4 (R. V.): "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of them that are taught, that I should know how to sustain with words him that is weary; he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as they that are taught," or "as disciples," Christ was himself a disciple, a learner from the Father, thus showing that only they who are learners can be apt teachers.

Jesus made no claims to be the possessor of special gifts. He said: "I can of mine own self do nothing." John 3:30. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do." Verse 19. These are not the expressions of false modesty, for Jesus spoke only truth, as he is the Truth; therefore as no man can be any weaker than not to be able to do anything of himself, or more ignorant than to know anything without being taught, even so there is no person in the world who does not possess the same advantages that Jesus did.

Hear him again: "Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as *my Father hath taught me*, I speak these things." John 8:28. To Moses God had said concerning Jesus, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."

The Promises to All Believers. -All this is promised to all believers as well as to Jesus. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men

liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." James 1:5. To "the captive exile" the Lord says, "I have put my words in thy mouth." Isa. 51:14-16, R.V. As "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself," even so he has "placed in us the word of reconciliation," so that he beseeches by us. 2 Cor. 5:19, 20. If it is given to us to pray "in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God," then of course the same grace, and the same gifts by grace, are bestowed upon us that were bestowed upon him. "Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Eph. 4:7.

All this knowledge of Jesus came solely from the Word of God, through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. He asked wisdom and received it, just as we may. But we must not suppose that we are to ask for wisdom, and then go to sleep and wake up wise. We are to ask in faith, and that means according to God's promise, which is this: "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding." "Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path." Prov. 2:1-6, 9.

To the simple, even to fools and scorners, God says, "Turn you at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you." Prov. 1:23. Jesus needed no reproof, for he did not turn aside from the way. He said, "An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him; and now that he lieth he shall rise up no more." Ps. 41:8. We have sinned, as he did not; but if we will turn at the reproof of the Lord, he will make known to us the same words of wisdom that he did to Christ; for Christ *is made* unto us wisdom, as well as righteousness." 1 Cor. 12:36.

How little we have realized the wonderful depths and heights and breadth of wisdom that is contained in the Word of God, to be freely bestowed on all who will humbly, patiently, and prayerfully study them. Both Solomon and he who is "greater than Solomon" derived all their wisdom from this source alone, as we have learned by the inspired testimony of Solomon. God, who through Solomon said, "My son, if thou wilt receive my words," "then shalt thou understand," was speaking to his Son Jesus, and also to us, whom he accepts as sons equally with Jesus. Jesus listened and learned. He says, "The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back." Isa. 30:3. He has said to us that if any man willeth to do his will, he shall also know. John 7:17.

This wonderful knowledge is not hidden from children. Nay, the things that are hidden from the worldly wise and prudent are revealed unto babes. "I have more understanding than all my teachers; for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients,"-the old men,-"because I keep thy precepts." Ps. 119:99, 100. This is not to the praise of the child, but of the Word, which any child, as well as Timothy and Jesus, may know.

One thing must not be forgotten , and that is that such wisdom accompanies only true humility. The simplicity of real childhood must be maintained. We must always, even with the knowledge which the Word gives, confess that we know nothing except as we are taught. Natural pride, stubbornness, unwillingness to acknowledge that we have nothing and are nothing, are the hindrances to the acquirement of true knowledge; but we have the assurance that the same God whose power bestows upon us the wisdom of Christ is able also to give us his meekness. Let us then be not rebellious, but submissive to the Word of wisdom.
E. J. W.

August 26, 1897

"Editorial. Independence" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 33.

E. J. Waggoner

Independence. -The feeling of independence is inherent in human nature. The first declaration of independence against God was made by Lucifer, in the courts of heaven, and next, at his instigation, by man in the Garden of Eden, when he set about to make himself equal to God, and thus independent of his authority. The first marked feature to manifest itself in the infant is the disposition to have its own way; and unless this disposition is checked, it grows stronger with years until even in early youth he declares his determination to have his own way, regardless of what anybody else may say or think.

Who Shall Rule? -This is easily answered in the case of the infant. That the child is of right subject to the parent, is so self-evident as to need no special argument. The child is *not* independent of its parents. Why not?-Simply because *it is not*. It can not be. It depends upon them for existence in this world, and after it sees the light of day it is as dependent as before. It is absolutely impossible for it to maintain an independent existence. If forsaken by its mother, and left with no one else to take her place, it would perish in a very short time. For years the child is the most helpless of animals; it is absolutely dependent on the exertions of others for its existence. Then of course it must be subject to those who provide for it, because-

Dependence Means Subjection. -He who provides a thing has a right to say how that thing shall be used. To partake of one's bounty,-to be absolutely dependent,-and at the same time to rail against him, and to use all one's power against him, is the basest ingratitude. Whoever does that is by common consent regarded as lost to all sense of justice. So long as one is absolutely dependent on another, that other must of right have the controlling voice in the dependent one's affairs.

Who Is Independent? -Who is there that is indebted to no one for his existence?-Not one; as already seen, every child is of right subject to its parents. But the parents themselves,-whence to they derive their support, their life itself?-"God that made the world and all things therein, . . . giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; . . . for in him we live, and move, and have our being." Acts 25:24-28. The parents of every child, yea, every person in the world, are as

absolutely dependent on God for existence and its continuation, as the infant is upon its parents. The strongest and wisest man in the world is far more helpless compared with God, than the newborn infant is compared with him. When Peter stepped out upon the water at the word of Jesus, he was conscious of the fact that he was dependent upon Jesus for support. But he was just as much dependent on that support when walking on the land.

God the One Ruler. -Those who are nearest to God, beholding his power and glory, and who themselves occupy the highest position of all created beings, do humble reverence to God, saying, "Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power; for thou didst create all things, and

514

because of thy will they were, and were created." Rev. 4:11, R.V. "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. 100:3. Therefore, just as the child is of right subject to his parents, because dependent on them for existence, so all men are of right subject to God, absolutely dependent on him for life, and breath, and all things; and this is the very lesson that God would have both parents and children (and that includes everybody) learn from the relation of parent and child. The child is dependent on its parents, in order that both it and they may see their common dependence upon God; and the child is by the nature of things compelled to be dependent on its parents until it comes to years of discretion, in order that, in the proper order of things, it may learn the lesson of dependence, and pass from the recognition of dependence upon its parents to the recognition of its dependence upon God; nay, more, long before it ceases to be dependent upon its parents, it should learn the lesson that it is subject to them, for the reason that all are subject to God.

The Responsibility of the Independent One. -We speak now of the one who chafes under proper restraint, and who imagines himself to be independent, for God alone is independent. Well, since God alone is independent, from him alone may we learn the responsibility that one really assumes when he asserts his independence. God is self-existent; his name is I AM; no other being in the universe contributes the slightest particle to his support. Therefore he has a right to do as he will, and none can question him and say, "What doest thou?" "Our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased" (Ps. 15:3); and none have ever been able to withstand him; "For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" He who would stay the Lord in any of his purposes, must be one who has first given to him; but there are none such.

What It Means. -The one therefore who assumes that he is independent, and who asserts his independence, takes upon himself the responsibility of maintaining his own existence. When the headstrong youth declares his independence of his father's control, the father sometimes allows him to carry his declaration to its legitimate conclusion, and attempt to provide for his own support. Now it may be that the youth from that time is able to live without his father, although but for his previous dependence he could not now be seemingly

independent, but it is impossible for him to be independent of God. He goes out into the world in his boastful pride, declaring himself to be independent even of God. He blasphemes the name of God. He will not be dependent on any being, not he. But wait! He is breathing, yes, even breathing out defiance to God. Where did you get your breath, my friend? Did you make it?-No, you didn't have anything to do with it. "You found it ready made and used it, and the supply is kept up while you are asleep. Now, no matter who made it, it is certain that you did not, and therefore if you are determined to be independent, you must at once cease using it. Of course no other man made it, any more than you did; God alone made it. Now the only way for you to be independent of God is for you to provide your own air, and use no other. Everybody who declares independence against God, puts himself under obligation to make his own air. You can not do it?-No, of course you can not. If you cease using God's air you will immediately die. Whose life are you using, then?-Why, God's and his only. Certainly then it is nothing more than common fairness that he be allowed to direct his own life. Every man who breathes is by that very act under obligation to devote his life to the Lord, for him to control.

"His Mercy Endureth Forever." -We have said that sometimes an earthly father tells his rebellious sons that he may look out for himself if he will not acknowledge parental authority; but this God does not do. "His mercy endureth forever." "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Matt. 5:43. "He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil." Luke 6:35. This is the goodness of God that leads men to repentance. If men would only acknowledge the truth that is evident in every breath they breathe, the very drawing of their breath would draw them to God. How easy is it to believe God?-Just as easy as it is to breathe. Then "let everything that hath breath praise the Lord," and thus prepare the way for God to show them his salvation. E. J. W.

"Discovering Truth" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 33.

E. J. Waggoner

Discovering Truth. -The astronomer does not make the celestial bodies which his telescope reveals; they were in existence before he saw them, and all that he has done is to look steadily and patiently at some particular portion of the heavens, until the new light suddenly dawned upon his vision. Even so with a man searching for hid treasure or for something that is lost. He digs faithfully, or patiently searches for it, until he finds it; but when he has found it, he can not take any credit to himself for its existence. He did not manufacture it; he simply had the patience to keep looking until he found the right place, or till his eyes became accustomed to the light, and could distinguish objects. Then he had only to look and see that which was plainly visible. It is exactly the same way in the study of divine truth. Truth and wisdom come from God alone. He is the author of truth, because he is the truth. No man can manufacture or invent truth, for it exists from eternity. All that anybody can do is to open his eyes and see it. One reason why more people do not know and have the truth is that they think that to

acquire it requires special qualifications and a sort of genius, whereas all that is necessary is open eyes. The natural man wishes to "work out" theories, so that he may have the credit of being wonderfully clever; but truth comes only to him who acknowledges his ignorance, and does not desire to gain applause for wisdom which does not and can not originate with him. If our sight is defective, we have only to pray to the Lord to anoint our eyes with eyesalve, and open them, that we may behold wonderful things in his law. Rev. 3:15; Ps. 119:18. E. J. W.

"Inciting to War" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 33.

E. J. Waggoner

Inciting to War. -It does not augur well for the prospects of peace, when leading church teachers declare that the three conditions of justifiable warfare are,-the command of the prince, a just cause, and a good intention-and that the first cause "relieves the individual soldier from all moral responsibility for his military action," that "it is lawful for Christian men at the command of the magistrate to wear weapons and to serve in the wars;" and, even worse still, that "in war men have the opportunity of rising to higher levels of virtue than they would have thought possible of attainment." Such teaching is not calculated to make men acquainted with God as the One who "maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth." He who "hath the power of death, that is, the devil," has, by means of his skill in passing himself off as an angel of light, attained to a very prominent position as a religious teacher, so that counsels of war and death are largely supposed to be a part of the Gospel of life and peace. E. J. W.

September 2, 1897

"Editorial. A Lesson in Ruling" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 34.

E. J. Waggoner

"Thou Bethlehem Ephratah, tho thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel." Micah 5:2.

Compare this with Matt. 2:6, where it is quoted, and note the margin, which is closer to the original: "Thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall feed my people Israel."

This is the Holy Spirit's own definition of the work of a true ruler or governor. We find it not in the nations of earth, nor in the apostate church, where the princes of the people "exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority over them," but we do find it amongst the real followers of Christ; where greatness is according to the amount of service.

The Danish Version, following the original Matt. 2:6 more closely than the English, has it: "Out of thee shall go a Prince who shall be My people Israel's Shepherd." This agrees with the marginal reading of our common version, for the

duty of a shepherd is to feed the flock. But mark this, that the Ruler of Israel is the Shepherd of Israel: His work as Ruler of the people is to feed them.

See how beautifully this thought of a Shepherd-King is expressed in Isa. 40:10, 11: "Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."

This is the only kind of ruling that the Lord sanctions in his church. In Heb. 13:17 we read the exhortation, "Obey them that have the rule over you," but here again we may learn from the margin that these "rulers" are guides—those who direct the people in the right way, as a shepherd. Christ is "the Prince of princes," the Ruler over all; he leads his people, however, and does not drive them. He leads them where they will find food and safety.

This thought is emphasized by the fact that Christ as Ruler comes out of Bethlehem. Bethlehem, literally, is the "House of Bethel." Out of the house of bread comes the Ruler, whose work is to feed the people. How significant! More than this, he himself is the bread of life. In the house of God there is always an abundance of "the hidden manna," enough and to spare. Here is a lesson for all who are in positions of authority in the church. Their work is to take the bread of life from the house of bread, to feed upon it themselves, and then feed the people with it. When they do this, their authority will be recognized by the people, even if questioned by the scribes and Pharisees. E. J. W.

September 9, 1897

"Editorial. The Light of the World" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 35.

E. J. Waggoner

"And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth." And Jesus said, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing." John 9:1-7.

In this simple story we learn how literally true are the words of Jesus, "I am the light of the world." Here was a poor man who in the midst of light was walking in darkness. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world," and immediately gave the man sight. It is very evident that the poor man was wholly dependent on Jesus and his word for his sight. Jesus was literally to him the light of day.

But that case is only illustrative. What Jesus was to that man, he is to all. He is literally the light of the world. "All things were made by him" (John 1:3), and "by him all things consist" (Col. 1:17). God has set his glory upon the heavens. Ps. 8:1, R.V. The light of which the sun was made bearer, is nothing less than "the light of the glory of God." All the light of this world came from the word of God, who said, "Let there be light," and "there was light."

It was this same word that gave light to the poor, blind man. There was no healing virtue in the clay, nor in the water; but the man obeyed the command, "Go and wash," and in those words of Jesus he found the light. Thus he found that the words, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path," are most strictly and literally true. He who follows Christ can not walk in darkness, because he has the light of life. John 8:12.

The man upon whom this miracle was wrought was only a poor beggar, who until that day had never seen the light, yet as soon as the miracle was performed, he had more true knowledge of the light than all the learned Pharisees and doctors of the law had. Note his clear and decisive answers under cross-questioning. When there was a doubt expressed as to his being the same blind man who begged by the wayside, he settled that question by saying, "I am he." He was not ashamed to acknowledge his low degree.

Neither was he ashamed to acknowledge his dependence upon Jesus for his sight. On being asked how his eyes were opened, he said, "A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash; and I went and washed, and I received sight." It was a simple testimony to the truth, and therein lay its convincing power. The most learned man in the city could not have told it any better.

Then there was a dispute as to the character of Jesus. First he bluntly declared, "He is a prophet." Note that he did not give it as his opinion or belief, but as a fact that admitted of no dispute. In his simplicity he did not presume to advance theories, but stuck to what he knew, and that was far better than theories. If professed Christians, and Christian teachers, were better acquainted with the practical facts of the Gospel, there would be far less groping among systems of theories.

Further than these simple facts, the young man would not allow himself to be enticed. To the Pharisees' declaration that Christ was a sinner, he replied, "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." That was a fact which the Pharisees would gladly forget, but the young man held them to it; and it really settled the whole question. For to give sight to a man born blind, was a creative act, and showed divine power. That being admitted, there could be no further question as to the character of Jesus.

The result was characteristic. The Pharisees could not gainsay the facts so simply yet graphically told by the young man, but they were bound not to accept the light that had so brightly dawned upon him, and so they said, "Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?" and they cast him out of the synagog. When men meet facts which they can not overthrow and will not accept, they betray their confusion by appealing to their age, or their position, or their learning.

But the great lesson for us to learn is the reality of the light which God gives by his Word, and the positive assurance with which those must speak who have received that light. If all the philosophers in the world should unite to demonstrate that the sun is an opaque body, and that we actually receive no light from it, the most ignorant man in the street could say, "I don't know anything about your science, but I know I see;" and with that fact he could overturn all their theories.

So the simple man whose eyes are opened to see "the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ," can silence every learned objection with the simple declaration, "I was blind; now I see." Doubtless few will accept the truth through his simple testimony; but he may be sure that those who will not accept it on such evidence, would not accept it under any circumstances. One thing that an unlearned man knows is worth more than ten million things that wise men do not know. E. J. W.

"Shutting in the Light" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 35.

E. J. Waggoner

Shutting in the Light. -The sun has risen, and is beginning to flood our room with light. Brighter and brighter the light shines, as the sun ascends in the heavens. "Ah, now we have light enough; that is quite sufficient; we shall not need any more! We will therefore now close the shutters tightly, so that we may prevent any more light from coming in, and keep only that which we now have." This we forthwith do, but, behold, it is perfectly dark! The light that we had went out as soon as we shut out the light that was streaming in. So we find that it is impossible to retain the light that we now have, unless we allow the light to continue to come in freely. How many are forgetting the obvious fact, content to have no more light, and even strenuously resisting its entrance! Let such remember that they are in the way of making the light that is in them become darkness. E. J. W.

September 16, 1897

"Disgrace and Accusation" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 36.

E. J. Waggoner

Disgrace and Accusation.- The only disgrace that can come to any man in this world is the commission of sin. It is not the exposure and punishment of crime, but the crime itself, whether known or not, that constitutes the disgrace. Therefore the fact that a man has committed gross sin, is not necessarily a disgrace to him. That depends wholly upon whether or not he has repented of the sin. If he holds to the sin, the disgrace still clings to him; if he has repented, the disgrace is removed; because the grace of God removes the sin of him who repents, and where the grace of God abounds, there can be no disgrace. This is self-evident. This shows that there is no disgrace to the repentant sinner in the fact that people who do not know the grace of God still remember his previous misdeeds, and despise him. It is not what others think of us, but what we are, that determines whether or not we suffer disgrace. And so it is no disgrace for a man to be unjustly suspected or accused. The disgrace rests upon the false accusers alone. Many people will say, even after a falsely-accused person is proved to be innocent, "There must be something wrong that gave rise to the suspicion." Such persons should remember that Christ, "who knew no sin," was accused of the grossest misdeeds. He himself has said, "Blessed are ye, when

men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." E. J. W.

"Fulness of Joy" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 36.

E. J. Waggoner

"These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." John 15:11. There is something wonderful in these words, especially when we consider the circumstances under which they were spoken. "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you." That shows us that by receiving and retaining what Jesus says to us, we receive and retain his joy. Joy comes by believing the words of the Lord, as we read, "The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing." Rom. 15:13. Notice, it is "all joy" in believing, just as Jesus says: "that your joy may be *full*." By receiving his words we get fullness of joy-perfect joy.

But that shows us also that he had perfect joy-fullness of joy; for it is *his* joy that we are to receive. "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." We get fullness of joy through Jesus, simply because his joy is perfect. As men sometimes express it, his cup of joy was full. When was it that he expressed the wish that his perfect joy might remain in his disciples?-The very night when he was betrayed; while he was on the way to the place where he knew that he would be delivered into the hands of cruel men, to be mocked, and beaten, and scourged, and crucified. Ah, that is joy worth having,-a joy that is perfect in distress and affliction, a joy that is perfect in itself, and does not depend on circumstances! It is the possession of such joy, and that alone, that enables one to endure affliction. Jesus, because of the joy that he had continually before him, and present with him, "endured the cross, despising the shame." Heb. 12:2.

This joy is found, not in doubting, not in experimenting, but in trusting. There are millionaires that would give all their possessions for such joy, that delivers from painful anxiety, when the poorest man can have it by simply taking the words of the Lord and letting them work out their fulfilment in him. How can Christians be otherwise than glad, when they serve a Master who is gladness itself? E. J. W.

September 23, 1897

"Asking and Receiving" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 37.

E. J. Waggoner

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth." Matt. 8:7, 8. If we seek, with this assurance, it is worth while to know what to seek, what it is that is worth the finding. The same One who gives the assurance that we shall find, tells us what to seek: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found." Isa. 55:6. "Seek the Lord, and his strength; seek his face evermore." Ps. 105:4.

Here is something that is certainly worth finding. If we find the Lord, we find his strength. He is the Almighty, therefore whoever finds him becomes "strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." Col. 1:11. In his presence is fullness of joy. Not only so, but "in him all things consist" (Col. 1:17, R.V.), and therefore he who finds the Lord has with him all things (Rom. 8:23).

But is the Lord, with all this treasure, hard to find? Nay, quite the contrary; "he that seeketh, findeth," because he is not far from every one of us. Acts 17:27. More than this, he is seeking us: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19:10. Since he is seeking us, what can possibly hinder us from finding him, if we

580

also seek him? Each seeking the other, we are sure to come together.

The statement that the Lord came to seek the lost, points to the fact that man was once with him, but wandered away. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." Isa. 53:6. When people sin, they imagine that God is angry with them, and that he has turned away from them. Not so; it is they who turn away and hide from him, while he seeks them. Adam and Eve, after their sin, "hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden." Gen. 3:8. But the Lord did not hide from them; on the contrary, he sought them, and when they responded to his call, they found each other.

Therefore, since it is we who "hid as it were our faces from him" (Isa. 53:3), and he is all the time seeking us, it is evident that all we have to do to seek and find him is to turn round and look up. How easy the way, and how blessed the result! Let each one, then make these words his own: "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek," assured that the finding will be sure, speedy, and glorious. E. J. W.

September 30, 1897

"Editorial. The Great Sacrifice" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 38.

E. J. Waggoner

The Great Sacrifice. -The great Sacrifice of divine love was not an after thought, coming in after man sinned. It was not a new device to meet an exigency. There are no surprises to Him who is infinite in knowledge and wisdom. Jesus Christ was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Rev. 13:8.

Character a Matter of Choice. -In the very plan of God the possibility (not the necessity) of sin was involved. That creature enjoying the greatest bliss must obtain it by choice; he must be free because he chooses freedom. That which man is *compelled* to do brings him little joy. The chafing chain of compulsion destroys all the pleasures of what if of choice would be a delightful occupation. The only pleasure sin ever brings, evanescent as it is, comes because men choose it; and the pleasure which comes from choosing good and doing good is as much greater and higher as eternity is more than time. God therefore gave to

man free choice, with the possibility of sin. But God set before man the end of the evil way, and the eternal fruition of good, desiring him to choose the good way and making it possible for every one so to do.

Man's Choice. -Man's choice was evil. He walked by sight not by faith. God's way was in his Word. He warned man, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. 2:17. Faith is based on God's Word. Rom. 10:17. But man "saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes," he chose the way of sight, and sinned, and died. Gen. 3:6. Choosing by sight was the way of temporary pleasure and selfishness, the very way in which millions barter eternal life and bliss. Choosing by faith in God's Word, it would have forever led man out toward God, like whom he would have continued to grow. Infinite Love gave to man the way of faith, that it might be the way of infinite blessing.

Love's Infinite Gift. -Yet, knowing that man would sin, God provided (not for the sin) but salvation from the sin. He gave his only-begotten Son. Not eighteen centuries ago did he give him, but he "verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." 1 Peter 1:20. The gift was made-God gave his Son (John 3:16), that Son "gave himself" (Titus 2:14)-in the beginning, the gift of God's infinite love. As that gift involved the very Godhead, the person of him who with the Father

594

made the worlds, all the purposes of God are found in him. With respect to that great center of love and power has all the plan of God through all the ages been wrought out. Every sacrifice ordained of God was efficacious only as it expressed faith in God's great sacrifice of his Son. Every kid, every lamb, every offering of first-fruits, every one of the first-born, pointed to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. John 1:29.

"Manifest in These Last Times." -The Sacrifice was eternal; its greatest manifestation was when Jesus Christ was given into the hands of the powers of darkness, condemned without a trial, mocked and scourged, and crowned with thorns, made to bear the instrument of his own suffering till bodily strength failed from sheer exhaustion, and then nailed to the cruel tree. During all this time mindful only of others, admonishing the women of Jerusalem that were weeping for him, gently reproving Peter with a look, placing his mother in the care of a loved disciple, praying for those who tortured him, and comforting the repentant criminal at his side-was there ever sacrifice and love like this? The cross was the climax of the manifestation of his suffering; but he suffers still. He was a present Saviour to Abel, to John who stood beside the cross, to us who live in the nineteenth century. For as truly as to the Gauls of old, so to us, before our eyes, "Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified *among you*." Gal. 3:1. His death is for us to-day. Our sins are to-day laid upon him that we may sin no more.

An Eternal Sacrifice. -His is not a sacrifice of a day, or for three and one-half years, or for thirty-four years; it is an eternal sacrifice. When he left heaven's glory, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, he became one of us, a "brother in adversity;" and when he ascended, we triumphed with him; but he is one with us still; and forever is he one with us-

God, yet man-a brother to all men, for all eternity. And the pain is not over yet. He is touched with the feeling of all our infirmities, suffers with his body, the church, a crucified yet risen Saviour. What love is this? As he has made the eternal sacrifice for you, O soul, will you not yield yourself, your all, to him, "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Rom. 12:1. There is cleansing, there is blessing, there is power and life and salvation in Jesus Christ, even "to the uttermost."

Taste and See. -One of my friends offers me some food which he says is very good and nourishing, and asks me to adopt it as an article of diet. But I am skeptical, and do not believe that it is good, and so I say, "Prove to me that it is good, and I will take it." "That I can not do," he replies: "I know it is good, and can assure you of the fact; but you must prove it for yourself; taste it, and you will know it too." Well, that is certainly reasonable; for I can't expect to know that a thing is good, unless I taste for myself. Even so, when my friend does not believe me when I tell him that the Lord is good, and asks me to prove it to him. I can not; I know that he is good, for I have tried him; I can assure others of his goodness, but I can not prove it to them. I can only say, "O taste and see that the Lord is good." Why will not people be as reasonable in regard to spiritual food as with the mere physical? Taste, and you have the proof. E. J. W.

"Imagining Difficulties" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 38.

E. J. Waggoner

"O, I can't sleep at night, I can't sleep!"

"Poor fellow, you must cease your overwork, and at once make use of soothing remedies!"

"O, that will do no good; the trouble is not with me; I could sleep well if I had an opportunity, but there is no time in which to sleep; I can never sleep any more!"

"Why not? How can that be?"

"I have just learned that the earth is round, and that it isn't night at all places on the earth at the same time, and that therefore it is impossible for people to sleep."

595

"Foolish fellow! Who has been telling you that?"

"Nobody; but my pastor, who is a learned man, has told me that it is impossible to keep the seventh-day Sabbath, because it is not the seventh day all over the world at one time; and I have sense enough to see that if we can't rest on the seventh day, then we can't sleep on the seventh night; and if we can't sleep on the seventh night, we can't sleep on any other night. What shall I do?"

"Do! why, go to bed to-night, when the night comes to you, and sleep where you are, instead of thinking you must sleep where you are not. Didn't you sleep well last night?"

"First-rate: never slept better in my life; but then you see I had not heard the parson's theory."

"Well, don't let a theory run away with the fact. The fact is, you can and do sleep every night when it comes to you; when the night is on the other side of the

earth, you do not need to sleep. So with the Sabbath-the seventh day-which God made for man-for all men-to keep. Keep it when it comes to you; when it is not present with you, then you are not required to rest on it. Let your soul rest in the assurance that God has never given a commandment that it is not possible for all men everywhere to obey." E. J. W.

October 7, 1897

"One Sure Thing" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 39.

E. J. Waggoner

In the book of Proverbs much is said about surety, and people are more than once warned against going surety, not only for a stranger, but even for a friend. In the eleventh chapter, verse 15, we read, "He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it; and he that hateth suretyship is sure." In the margin we have in the place of "suretyship," "those that strike hands." That is, a man can not be safe unless he refrains from giving his hand as surety for another.

But read further, and see what is said in the twenty-first verse: "Tho hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished; but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered." Notice that the words "tho" and "join" are in Italic type, indicating that they are not in the Hebrew. The literal Hebrew, as indicated in the margin of the Revised Version, is "hand in hand." Here, then, we find an instance of giving the hand, or, as rendered, "My hand upon it," in two translations before me, I read, "One can give his hand for it, that the wicked shall not be unpunished, but the seed of the righteous

3

shall escape." So sure is it that God will see that justice has its due! Men are often tempted to think, as did David, that the wicked have the best of it, and that in unrighteousness is the most prosperity to be found; but let no one be deceived in this matter. So sure is it that wickedness will be punished, and that the reward of the righteous will not be forgotten, that one may safely give his hand upon it, and be a surety for it. It is the only sure thing in this world. E. J. W.

October 14, 1897

"His Saving Knowledge" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 40.

E. J. Waggoner

"For the Word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Heb. 4:12, 13, R.V.

To the soul that does not know the Lord, this is one of the most terrible texts in the Bible. Since the day when Adam and Eve hid themselves among the trees of the garden, the consciousness of guilt has ever tended to make men afraid of God. The natural inclination of the sinner is to try to hide from God; he can not

bear to have his misdeeds laid bare before the eyes of spotless purity. So the words, "all things are naked and opened to the eyes of him with whom we have to do," and, "Thou understandest my thought afar off," are words that strike terror to the heart of the ungodly. So the natural man tries to forget the fact,-tries to forget his own sins,-foolishly imagining that his ignorance, or forgetfulness, or unbelief, hides the matter from the eyes of God.

But it is impossible to hide from God, for he is everywhere, filling all space. "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." Ps. 139:7-10. This being the case, the best thing for men to do is to face the fact, and find the comfort that there is in it, instead of following the devil's promptings, and endeavoring to hide from him who is love, "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort." 2 Cor. 1:3.

How is it that God knows all things? Is it by searching into the secret things, so that by study he arrives at knowledge that he did not possess before?-Impossible! for that would argue imperfection on his part. We may not seek to understand God's capacities by a comparison with man. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." God himself is everywhere, the direct source of all life. Wherever there is life, wherever there is a created thing to be maintained in existence, there God is, and wherever God is there is all wisdom.

Notice that the Word of God pierces the joints and marrow, and soul and spirit, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. This is a natural consequence of the fact that "the Word was made flesh." John 1:14. God in Christ has forever identified himself with humanity. When Adam stood in innocence and uprightness, it was only by the indwelling Word, upon which he wholly depended. When he forgot his dependence, and struck out for himself, and thus fell, God did not forsake him, but descended to the depths with him, that he might lift him out again. So God is "not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being." Acts 17:27, 28. When men would seek to justify themselves for not obeying the commandments of God, by professing ignorance of them, the Spirit says to them: "Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above); or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead);" for "the Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart." Rom. 10:6-8. Christ, "the wisdom of God," knows the sins of mankind, because "he *is come* in the flesh." He bears the sins of the world, because the Lord has laid upon him the iniquities of us all. Isa. 53:6. He knows them, because nothing can be done that does not touch him; no motion can be made without the power that comes alone from the Word. This is the true "Real Presence."

How utterly useless, then, to think of hiding our sins from the Lord! We might as well try to hide from the Lord the knowledge of his own existence. Every one of those sins is stamped upon his being. They pierce his brow, his hands, his feet, even his heart, and press upon him so that "his visage was so marred more

than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." Isa. 52:14. He must know, for every sin touches is own life.

And herein is the comfort to us in the thought of God's knowledge of mankind. "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." Isa. 53:11. He knows our sins, because he experiences their power, and by that knowledge he justifies many. How many?-As many as believe on him, as many as confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Rom. 10:9, 13.

Christ bears the burden of the world's guilt, and bears it easily. Our sin crushes us, and presses us down to destruction; but he swallows up death in victory. Tho sin crush out his life, yet he rises from the dead with the freshness of eternal life. Whoever knows this, and believes the truth, that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, will of course let the burden fall entirely on him who is able to bear it, and will thus be free.

So when we confess sin to God, we are not telling him any news. We are simply agreeing with his Word. He knew it all before, but he wishes us to be confidential with him. He is a faithful Friend, and will not betray our secrets. On the contrary, he will himself forget our

3

misdeeds, blotting them out of existence, so that even our adversary, the devil, can not find them, to taunt us with them. The only way to hide them from the world, is to tell them to God.

What a blessing and comfort, then, to know that God knows! "He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." And he cares too. "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." And, what is more, he is able to carry the burden for us, and give us peace and rest. "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain thee." Therefore unto him that is able to keep us from falling, who is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us," to him who knows our sins, who pities our weakness, and who is mighty to save by his love and wisdom-to him be glory and praise forever and ever. E. J. W.

October 28, 1897

"How to Love God" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 42.

E. J. Waggoner

"I do not love God, and it does not seem as tho I ever could; how can I learn to love him?" Thus writes an inquiring soul. The only answer is, Get acquainted with God. The trouble with our friend is a lack of acquaintance with God; for "he that loveth not knoweth not God." 1 John 4:18. "And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee; for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee." Ps. 9:10.

Don't trouble yourself about "trying to love God." Love doesn't come in that way. Love is a spontaneous growth springing from acquaintance with one who is loving and lovable. Get acquainted with God, and you can't help loving him. The god whom you are *trying* to love, is not the true God.

"The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom. 5:5), and we are taught (Luke 11:13) that God is more ready to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him, than a parent is to give good things to his children. The Spirit has, indeed, been poured out upon all flesh (Acts 2:16, 17), so the gift of love has been bestowed upon us even before we ask it. Air and water, the first essentials to life, and the freest of the gifts of God, are the best representations of the measureless gift of the Spirit, and so of the infinity of God's gift of everlasting love.

"But how can I get acquainted with God?" O, that is not difficult! He is "not far from every one of us" (Acts 17:27), and is very accessible, for he invites everybody to come to him. Through Christ all men, of every class and nation, "have access by one Spirit unto the Father." Eph. 2:18. Begin to hold conversations with him. Do not be afraid of intruding, or of putting yourself forward; for when you speak to the Lord, you are only replying to the words that he has already spoken to you. If you consider what he has said to you, you will be at no loss to know what to say to him. You

3

can not expect to love one with whom you are not acquainted; but what is more natural than the growth of love between persons who frequently converse together?

We get acquainted with God also through his works. "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." Ps. 33:5. All his works praise him. The evidences of his love and loveliness are stamped upon every leaf and flower; they descend with the rain, and flow with the streams; they shine in the sunbeams, and are diffused in the air. "O, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him;" for unto you who believe "he is precious." E. J. W.

November 4, 1897

"Editorial. Acceptance with God" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 43.

E. J. Waggoner

Acceptance with God. -Many people hesitate to make a start to serve the Lord, because they fear that God will not accept them; and thousands who have been professed followers of Christ for years are still doubting their acceptance with God. For the benefit of such I write, and I would not bewilder their minds with speculations, but will endeavor to give them the simple assurance of God's Word.

A Purchased Possession.- "Will the Lord receive me?" I reply by another question, Will a man receive that which he has bought? If you go to the store and make a purchase, will you receive the goods when they are delivered? Of course you will; there is no room for any question about it. The fact that you bought the goods, and paid your money for them, is sufficient proof, not only that you are

willing, but that you are *anxious*, to receive them. If you did not want them, you would not have bought them. Moreover, the more you paid for them the more anxious you are to receive them. If the price that you paid was great, and you have almost given your life to earn it, then there can be no question but that you will accept the purchase when it is delivered. Your great anxiety is lest there should be some failure to deliver it.

Now let us apply this simple, natural illustration to the case of the sinner coming to Christ. In the first place, he has bought us. "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price." 1 Cor. 6:19, 20.

The price that was paid for us was his own blood-his life. Paul said to the elders of Ephesus: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood." Acts 20:28. "For as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation [manner of life] received by tradition from your fathers' but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." 1 Peter 1:18, 19. He "gave himself for us." Titus 2:14. He "gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." Gal. 1:4.

He bought not a certain class, but the whole world of sinners. "For God so loved *the world*, that he gave his only-begotten Son." John 3:16. Jesus said, "The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." John 6:51. "For when we were yet without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly." "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Rom. 5:6, 8.

The price paid was infinite, therefore we know that he very much desired that which he bought. He had his heart set on obtaining it. He could not be satisfied without it. See Phil. 2:6-8; Heb. 12:2; Isa. 53:11.

It Was His Bargain.- "But I am not worthy." That means that you are not worth the price paid, and therefore you fear to come lest Christ will repudiate the purchase. Now you might have some fear on that score if the bargain were not sealed, and the price were not already paid. If he should refuse to accept you, on the ground that you are not worth the price, he would not only lose you, but also the amount paid. Even tho the goods for which you have paid are not worth what you gave for them, you yourself would not be so foolish as to throw them away. You would rather get some return for your money than get nothing.

2

But further, you have nothing to do with the question of worth. When Christ was on earth in the interest of the purchase, he "needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man." John 2:25. He made the purchase with his eyes open, and he knew the exact value of that which he bought. He is not at all disappointed when you come to him and he finds that you are worthless. You have not to worry over the question of worth; if he, with his perfect knowledge of the case, was satisfied to make the bargain, you should be the last one to complain.

For, most wonderful truth of all, he bought you for the very reason that you were not worthy. His practiced eye saw in you great possibilities, and he bought you, not for what you were then or are now worth, but for what he could make of you. He says, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake." Isa. 43:25. We have no righteousness, therefore he bought us, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Says Paul: "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the Head of all principality and power." Col. 2:9, 10.

How Christ Gets Glory.- Here is the whole process:-

"We all. . . were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph. 2:3-10.

We are to be "to the praise of the glory of his grace." This we could not be if we were originally worth all he paid for us. There would in that case be no glory to him in the transaction. He could not, in the ages to come, show in us the riches of his grace. But when he takes us, worth nothing, and at the last presents us faultless before the throne, it will be to his everlasting glory. And then there will not be any to ascribe worthiness to themselves. Throughout eternity, the sanctified hosts will unite in saying to Christ: "Thou art worthy; . . . for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests." "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." Rev. 5:9, 10, 12.

The Doubting "But."- Surely all doubt as to acceptance with God ought to be set at rest. But it is not. The evil heart of unbelief still suggests doubts. "I believe all this, but-" There, stop right there; if you believed you wouldn't say "but." When people add "but" to the statement that they believe, they really mean, "I believe, but I don't believe." But you continued: "Perhaps you are right, but hear me out. What I was going to say is, I believe the Scripture statements that you have quoted, but the Bible says that if we are children of God we shall have the witness of the Spirit, and will have the witness in ourselves; and I don't feel any such witness, therefore I *can't* believe that I am Christ's. I believe his Word, but I haven't the witness." I understand your difficulty; let me see if it can not be removed.

As to your being Christ's, you yourself can settle that. You have seen what he gave for you. Now the question is, Have you delivered yourself to him? If you have, you may be sure that he has accepted you. If you are not his, it is solely because you have refused to deliver to him that which he has bought. You are defrauding him. He says, "All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a

disobedient and gainsaying people." Rom. 10:21. He begs you to give him that which he has bought and paid for, yet you refuse, and charge him with not being willing to receive you. But if from the heart you have yielded yourself to him to be his child, you may be assured that he has received you.

In His Word.- Now as to your believing his words, yet doubting if he accepts you, because you don't feel the witness in your heart, I still insist that you don't believe. If you did, you would have the witness. Listen to his Word: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made him a liar, I because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son." 1 John 5:10. To believe in the Son is simply to believe his Word and the record concerning him. And "*he that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.*" You can't have the witness until you believe; and as soon as you do believe, you have the witness. How is that?-Because *your belief in God's Word is the witness.* God says so: "Now *faith is the substance* of things hoped for, *the evidence* of things not seen." Heb. 11:1. If you should hear God say with an audible voice that you are his child, you would consider that sufficient witness. Well, when God speaks in his Word, it is the same as tho he spoke with an audible voice; and your faith is the evidence that you hear and believe. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Rom. 8:16. How is the witness given?-By the Word. There the witness is written, and the Holy Spirit brings to our remembrance the words recorded.

Go On unto Perfection. -This assurance does not warrant us in relaxing our diligence and settling down contentedly, as tho we had gained perfection. We must remember that Christ accepts us not for our sake, but for his own sake; not because we are perfect, but that in him we may go on unto perfection. He blesses us, not because we have been so good that we have deserved a blessing, but in order that in the strength of the blessing we may turn away from our iniquities. Acts 3:26. To every one that believes in Christ, the power-right or privilege-is given to become the sons of God. John 1:12, margin. It is by the "exceeding great and precious promises" of God through Christ that we are "made partakers of the divine nature." 2 Peter 1:4. E. J. W.

November 18, 1897

"Unlettered Learning" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 45.

E. J. Waggoner

"And the Jews marveled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" John 7:15.

The Greek word here rendered "letters" is the word meaning *writings* or *Scriptures*. A learned man, one well acquainted with books, is commonly called "a man of letters," or a literary man. Now there are many books, but only one that is so prominent as to be sufficiently designated by the term "the Book," and that is the Bible; for the word "*Bible*" means simply *book*. So "the writings," when used in the Bible without qualification, mean the sacred writings, or the Scriptures. The

text above quoted should therefore be rendered, as it is in some versions, "How does this man know the Scriptures, never having learned?"

Like John the Baptist, Jesus never studied in the Jewish schools. John "was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel." Luke 1:80. So Jesus dwelt at Nazareth, subject to his parents, a humble carpenter, until he came prominently before the people at his baptism. Yet no two teachers ever aroused greater interest among the people, or attracted more attention. People flocked to hear them, and hung on their words. The officers of the law said of Jesus, "Never make spake like this man," and the people were astonished at his teaching; "for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

That Jesus had not studied in the schools of the doctors of the law,-the theological seminaries of that time,-is shown by the questions which the priests and elders put to him as he was teaching in the temple, "By what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority?" Matt. 21:23. Yet he had wisdom, both in asking and in answering questions, that put to silence all the learned doctors, while his teaching was so simple that "the common people heard him gladly," because they could understand him; and the ability to put deep things into simple, easily understood language is the mark of the greatest wisdom.

How did Jesus get this wonderful knowledge?-From the Word of God. All Jewish children were taught the Book of the Law, according to the command of the Lord by Moses: "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." Deut. 6:6, 7. Many parents of course did this carelessly, and, especially in later times, mingled with their instruction many idle traditions learned from the doctors; but those children who had faithful parents knew the Holy Scriptures from childhood. With the child Jesus this was no routine task, for he says, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." Ps. 40:8. The Holy Scriptures, studied in the humble house in Nazareth, and opened to his understanding by the Spirit of God, were the beginning and the sum of all the wisdom that Jesus had.

As with Jesus himself, so with those whom he chose to accompany him, and to send forth to preach,-they were men in humble station, not having studied in the theological schools. Their learning was derived from the Scriptures.

The rulers were astonished at the power and knowledge of these humble fishermen preachers, as they had been with Jesus. We are told that when the rulers "saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." Acts 4:13. The word "ignorant" is unfortunate, as applied to the apostles. "Unlearned" they certainly were, according to the fine standards of the schools; but they were not ignorant. Why then do we have such a statement in the sacred record?-In reality we do not, and the occurrence of the word in our English version is an interesting illustration of the very point we are studying. Thus:-

The two words "ignorant men," in Acts 4:13, are from one Greek word, *idiotai*, the plural of *idiots*. The reader will at once recognize in this our common word "idiot," and will at once conclude that the English rendering is much more mild than the Greek text. But wait a moment. The primary and ordinary meaning of this Greek word is, "a *private person*," one of the common people. But as certain public teachers began to style themselves philosophers, and to claim for themselves a monopoly of wisdom, so that a man must have a recommendation from them-a certificate that he had "been through" the prescribed course-before he could have any standing as a scholar, it came about that all who had not such public recognition were considered ignorant. The fact that our translators adopted this secondary use of the Greek word instead of its real meaning, shows how much they were under the influence of the same spirit. The Danish and Norwegian versions have "laymen" in the place of "ignorant men," and the German has "men of inferior condition."

Here is encouragement, and a lesson. The encouragement is that people in the most humble and despised walks of life may, by devoted study of the Word from a sincere desire that will astonish even the worldly-wise. Deut. 4:5, 6. See also Prov. 2:1-9.

The lesson is that in the church of Christ, there are no ranks and degrees-no class distinctions. The church, following in the steps of the schoolmen of heathen times, have made two classes,-clergy and laity,-that is the special, elect class, who have the keys of

3

knowledge, and *the people*, who are to take what the clergy are pleased to dole out to them. But the Scriptures teach us that all in the primitive, true church were *laymen*, that is, they were simple, ordinary people, whose only distinction from others was that which the Holy Spirit gave them. Jesus, himself an ordinary laborer, chose fishermen and sent them forth to preach, and because they were thus sent forth they are called *apostles*. But they were *laymen*, and such they would be called to-day, if they were alive and in England or America. That those who teach the Word should form a special class, distinguished from other people by title, dress, etc., was not only not contemplated by the Lord, but was directly opposed.

It is true that "there are diversities of gifts," and all men have not the same work, yet all in the church are brethren, and the greatest among them is he who does the most service. Let, therefore, no one be puffed up in his own mind with the thought that as a preacher he is above others in the church, and let no one be discouraged because his state is lowly. It was Tyndale's declaration that he would "make the boy that drives the plow in England to know more of the Scriptures than the pope does." That possibility is now before every plowboy, and he who truly improves it, although his name be unknown outside of his neighborhood, has a place in the church infinitely higher than that of pope. E. J. W.

November 25, 1897

"Editorial. The Voice of the Deep" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 46.

E. J. Waggoner

The Voice of the Deep.- It is impossible that any one who is acquainted to any degree with the Lord should stand by the sea without being reminded of the mighty power of the Creator. Yet many gaze upon the sea day after day with never a thought of its Maker, and even openly defy him.

God's Power. -To such the Lord says: "Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not: Fear ye not me? saith the Lord; will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?" Jer. 5:21, 22.

His Faithfulness. -But it is not in order to produce fright that the Lord reminds us of his mighty power, that can set bounds for the sea, so that it can not pass over in its fiercest tumult. No; it is that we may trust him. Perfect faith and love drive fear away. So the power of God over the sea is referred to as evidence of his faithfulness. "O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them." Ps. 89:8, 9.

An example of this faithfulness is given in the description of the storm at sea, when the terrified disciples awakened Jesus and he "rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. . . . And there was a great calm." This was but the manifestation of the original creative power. He who created the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that in them is, retains full control over all. In those words, "Peace, be still," we hear the same voice that said, "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together into one place." And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached to us; so we are to learn from God's power over the sea, which is his because he made it, his power over the waves of strife that surge through human hearts.

Peace in the Heart. -For the angry sea represents the wicked. "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it can not rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." Christ is our peace. The word which he spoke to the Sea of Galilee that night is the word which he speaks to us. "I will hear what God the Lord will speak; for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints; but let them not turn again to folly." Surely here is comfort for those who have long struggled in vain with fierce passions.

Saving Forever. -Not only is God's power over the sea a symbol of his power to save men from the tide of sin, but it is also a pledge and surety of their final complete deliverance. It also shows the power with which God is going to clothe the preaching of the Gospel message in the last struggle preceding his second coming. Read the soul-thrilling words of Isaiah 51:9-16. E. J. W.

"The Great Three-fold Message. God's Remedy for the Ills of Christendom" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 46.

E. J. Waggoner

It is a sad yet well-known fact that the professed Christian churches are terribly backslidden from God. This no earnest, observant Christian will deny. One testimony on this point will suffice. It is from Dr. Moore, editor of the *Western Christian Advocate* (Methodist Episcopal), of Cincinnati, Ohio, and appeared in that paper in its issue of May 19, 1893. It is headed, "To the Church of Methodists Write." We can not quote it entire. That which we do not quote is as striking and pointed as that which we do quote. We also apprehend that the Methodist Church will average fairly with the other great Protestant denominations. Dr. Moore says:-

The class-books are filled with names of unconverted men and women. Official members may be found in box, dress circle, and parquet of opera and theater. Communicants take in the races, and give and attend card parties and dances. The distinction between inside and outside is so obscure that men smile when asked to unite with the church, and sometimes tell us that they find the best men outside.

When we go to the masses, it is too often with such ostentatious condescension that self-respect drives them from us.

And yet we have so spread out, under the inflation of the rich and ungodly, that they are a necessity to us. The enforcement of the unmistakable letter of the discipline for a single year would cut our membership in half, bankrupt our missionary society, close our fashionable churches, paralyze our connectional interests, and leave our pastors and bishops unpaid and in distress. But the fact remains that one of two things must happen,-the discipline must purge the church, or God's Holy Spirit will seek other organized agencies. The ax is laid at the root of the tree. The call is to repentance. God's work must be done. If we are in the way, he will remove us.

DivisionóConfusionóUnbelief

It is a sad and undeniable fact that the great numerous Christian church is hopelessly divided. Human federations may in a way bring them together, but human federation is not divine union. Human compacts or agreements are not bonds of divine life. All that the human can do is to confederate around a human standard called a creed. But God's method is to unite all in one by the divine indwelling life. Jesus thus expresses it: "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." John 17:23. Consideration about a human creed is but the worship of an image on paper. Union in and by and through Jesus Christ is the worship and power of the living God.

It is a sad and undeniable fact that the many divisions in the great professed church and in the several churches are a stumbling-block to worldlings and unbelievers. It is seeking unholy justification for an abnormal condition to say that all this division is unity in diversity, and all are well-organized parts of one great army under the One Leader, when the greater part of the vital strength of the church is absorbed in the very churches themselves, which, instead of growing better, are growing worse, and, instead of being the pastor's force to second him in aggressive work, are his field of labor. Jesus Christ said that union, not

division, was an evidence of his divine mission. Hear him pray: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." John 17:21. Neither is this union to exist in mere sentiment, but in teaching, in doctrine, in purpose. Thus the Spirit speaks through Paul: "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 divisions* among you; but that ye be *perfectly joined together* in the *same mind* and in the *same judgment*." 1 Cor. 1:10.

It need scarcely be said that the only mind which will thus unite mortal man, with all their limitations of early environment, education, habits, prejudices, and sins, is the mind of Christ. Therefore "let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Phil. 2:5.

A Whole Christ

To thus be united to Christ and by the means of Christ's life to each other, means to accept Christ in the fullest sense. To accept Christ as a Saviour, a redeemer, a way of life, an example, or a teacher, will not suffice. He declares, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." John 14:6.

To accept Jesus Christ as *the* Way is to give up all our ways and yield all, willingly (for he will never compel), to his way. "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh [renounceth] not all that he hath, he can not be my disciple." Luke 14:33.

To accept Jesus Christ as *the* Truth, means to accept the Word of God, as God's message through Christ to this world. For Christ is the Word, the one through whom all the Word was given. John 1:1-3; 1 Cor. 8:6. It was his power that created all things; it was his Spirit which spake through the prophets. Col. 1:16; 1 Peter 1:10, 11. He it is who has in all times and ages declared the Father to the children of men, whether as the Angel of the Covenant, the Pillar of Cloud and Fire, the exhaustless Rock-fountain in the desert, the Man Christ Jesus in Judea, the Inspirer of the Holy Writings, or the Sender of the Comforter, his representative. The Holy Word, with its one law and one Gospel, its one Spirit and one object, is the message of God through Jesus Christ to the sons of men. So Christ prays of those whom he would make one, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy Word is truth;" for by that Word was he sanctified, "that they also might be sanctified through the truth." John 17:17-19.

He therefore who receives Christ, the Truth, will receive his Word in law and Gospel, in precept and promise, with all the heart. No tradition will make void in his heart the commandments of God to render vain his worship. Matt. 15:6, 9. No sophistry of man will be allowed to nail upon the cold, dead, irresponsive arms of a cruel creed the life-giving truths of that Word. He who truly accepts Christ will take the Word of Christ into his heart, and there let its vital principles live and grow, fashioning him day by day like the Master. That Word will be the Christ revealed in writing. And Christ will be that Word revealed in character.

He who receives Jesus Christ as the Life will not cut off the life which is in Him by the old serpent fable of Eden, "Thou shalt not surely die." In the light of God's presence in his Word the humble soul will acknowledge his sinfulness, and thereby his mortality, and look to Jesus Christ alone as the Source of righteousness and eternal life to the believer now, the Bestower of immortality at his coming.

This acceptance of Christ does not mean that all Christ's fullness must be seen and realized if we are to become one in him; for that can never be, because he is infinite. But it does mean that the believer is to accept Jesus Christ as he is, as he is revealed in his Word. He must allow no civil magistrate, no mitred priest, no human creed or council, no worldly ambition, no arts of the evil one, to come between his soul and Jesus Christ, and he will leave to prayer, study, experience, and the goodness and wisdom of Christ, to supply the fuller knowledge.

Thus accepting Jesus Christ made the early apostolic church what it was, united in heart and purpose, in word and doctrine, in worship, in life. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship;" "and the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; . . . and with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all." Thus it was in that early church. How precious to them were the truths and hopes of the resurrection, the second coming of Christ, the atonement in its fullest and strongest sense, the power of the simple Word and Holy Spirit of God in those days! Now these very doctrines are scoffed at and ridiculed and "spirited" away by those high in church councils, with but little or no protest from pulpit or press.

God's Plan Ever the Same

And God's plan for saving men has ever been the same. With him "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Human nature has always been the same, and the Gospel of God's grace has ever been effectual to save. Types and symbols and shadows have changed, but the holy law and the divine Saviour have remained the same. "I am the Lord, I change not." "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever."

ConfusionóBabylon

Departing from God's way, erecting human standards, following man's way instead of God's way, adding to his Word, subtracting from it, have always brought division and hence confusion. The would-be wise men of the land of Shinar,

723

promised themselves a better way when *they* built *themselves* a city and a tower, and sought to make *themselves* a name. They prized their work so highly that they called it, according to the story of their brick books, "Bab-il," "the gate of God," or "the gate of heaven;" but God could not serve with their sins. He will not

give his glory to another, and he named it what it literally was, Babel, confusion. See Gen. 11:1-9. And so every attempt to improve upon God's work has resulted in confusion in the work of God, of which confusion "God is not the author." 1 Cor. 14:33.

Modern Babylon

It was confusion, Babylon, which came into the Christian church even before the death of the apostles, till finally, a few centuries after, the great apocalyptic harlot was developed.

The Reformers took some mighty strides toward the one standard of God, albeit in different companies, but they still stopped in Babylon, and confusion reigns even to the present. As truly as the great apostate system of the Papacy became Babylon by departing from the truth of God, so truly did Protestantism in the formulation of a multitude of creeds. Not only was confusion brought into the church, but the people of the world seeking for light are confused and driven to unbelief. Just as surely as papal Babylon committed fornication by forsaking her lawful Spouse, Jesus Christ, and uniting with the civil power, just so surely have those Protestant churches committed fornication with the kings of the earth which have done the same thing. And those who have not yet done this, but who are clamoring for civil power to enforce unscriptural dogmas or institutions (Scriptural would be no different), are trimming their ways for unlawful lovers of spiritual fornication. And is not this the condition of the Protestant churches to-day? Said the Rev. Charles Beecher, in a sermon at the dedication of the Second Presbyterian Church in Fort Wayne, Ind., Feb. 22, 1846:-

Thus are the ministry of the evangelical Protestant denominations not only formed all the way up under a tremendous pressure of merely human fear, but they live, and move, and breathe in a state of things radically corrupt, and appealing every hour to every baser element of their nature to hush up the truth and bow the knee to the power of apostasy. Was not this the way things went with Rome? Are we not living her life over again? And what do we see just ahead?-Another general council? A world's convention! Evangelical Alliance and Universal Creed!

Since 1846 matters have not grown better, but rather worse.

God's Remedy

Here is God's remedy for this confusion among his people; for he certainly so counted them, and sent his message to heal them:-

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; *for the hour of his judgment is come*; and worship him *that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.*" Rev. 14:6, 7.

The time when this message is due to the church and the world is when the judgment of God is impending. In past centuries we are told of a "judgment to

come," of a day when God *will* judge the world (Acts 17:31; 24:25), but in this message the judgment of God is come; it is already here. It is the adjudication of cases in the heavenly courts, *the accounting worthy* of those who have been faithful, and who will be raised to immortality at Christ's coming to give reward. (See Luke 20:35; 1 Cor. 15:52; Rev. 22:11, 12.)

"*Fear God*," says the divine message, "and give glory to *him*." It implies that the church has given glory to men. Tradition has made void the commandments of God. Cold, dead creeds have displaced the living Word. Elaborate ritual has dispossessed simple worship. The pagan solar holiday is accepted as the Lord's holy day in the place of the Sabbath of the Lord, one memorial of Him who created the heavens and the earth. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do his commandments."

Reverence of God leads to obedience. "Worship *him*." Turn from the worship of the false to the true. The highest worship is obedience, or service. "Thou shalt *worship* the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou *serve*," are the words which Christ made his own, and which God would have the church make her own, and so return from Babylon, confusion, to Jerusalem, unity and peace.

As the everlasting Gospel brought union in the early church, which came from Pharisee, and Sadducee, and Essene, and publican, so if it had been received when first proclaimed in 1840, and onwards, it would have brought into one all the churches of modern Babylon. God did not condemn them for being in Babylon. He desired to call them out. "We would have healed Babylon," is what God said, but the sad result is "she is not healed." Jer. 51:9. And so has it been.

Babylon Is Fallen

The churches are worse to-day than when Charles Beecher, and many others, uttered their faithful warnings. Since that time the church has turned wonderfully to the world. She is organizing herself into societies, law and order leagues, unions, and civic federations, for the purpose of enforcing civil law, while the Gospel is scarcely heard by the poorer strata of society. More and more is the church leaving Christ and uniting with the world and the State. She is leaving the living spring and cold snow of Lebanon for human, broken cisterns. She has forsaken her Husband, Christ Jesus, and is committing fornication with the kings of earth. And so the angel sorrowfully declares:-

"And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." Rev. 14:8.

And it could not be otherwise. When the Jewish Church turned from the close, yet healing message of John and Jesus, a message which, if received, would have restored, they were ready to reject Christ, their King, and to say, "We have no king but CÊsar." And so when the modern church rejects God's healing message of reproof and warning, she will turn to the world and the State, and, under the guise of "Christian Citizenship," "Patriotism," or "Americanism," will denounce as traitors those who reveal by the Word of God the true nature of the Church-and-State dogmas, the children of fornication.

The Last Solemn Protest

What is the church now doing in the direction of the last apostasy?-She is centering her efforts and gathering her forces around the Sunday standard. And what is Sunday?-An

724

institution which as a religious holiday is wholly pagan in origin, which as a weekly worship day is wholly papal, and for which there is no authority save the papal church and tradition. It is a usurper. Its very genius and character arouse a spirit opposed to the Gospel. It has been connected with apostasy and persecution in all ages. It was the mark of apostasy in heathendom; Rome claims it as the mark of her authority, and many of the Protestant churches, as organizations, are conceding Rome's claim by upholding in the face of law that foster child of the Papacy, and by endeavoring to secure the aid of the Papacy to claim the help of the civil power to enforce the counterfeit as the very test of God and mark of patriotism. Nevertheless it is, in howsoever shining garments dressed, the mark of the beast, opposed to the Sabbath of the Lord, the sign of God's power to create and sanctify and deliver. Eze. 20:12, 20; Ex. 20:8-11; Deut. 5:15.

But, thank God, there are may yet in all these organizations who cleave to the Gospel, who believe in Gospel methods and Gospel means for reforming the world. While mistakingly holding Sunday, they believe in no power save the Spirit to impress hearts, no means save the Word to enforce its claims upon men. These stay the tide, as it were, but do not change the current.

Against this course of Church uniting with the State the Lord offers to each soul the following fearful warning:-

"And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same 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; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." Rev. 14:9-11.

A United Church Once More

Who will heed the Word of God? Some will. The first message, the healing message, sums up all positive truth of that Word. The second message simply announces the law suit upon the various organizations composing Babylon of rejecting the first. The third brings to each individual soul the message of warning to turn from "the beast" (the great system of Papal Church and State union), from "the image" (the reproduction of that system by Protestant Church and State union), from "the mark" ("the wild solar holiday of all pagan times," the rival of the Sabbath of the Lord). But out of all these organizations, out of the world, from

among the lowest slaves of Satan, from every land and clime, is gathering a company washed by the blood of the Lamb through faith, loyal to God and his law. Thus continues and declares the prophet: "Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Rev. 14:12.

They keep therefore *all* the commandments. It could not be said that he who was breaking the first or eighth commandment was a commandment-keeper. Neither could it be so said of him who violates the fourth precept. Of those who endured the persecution of the Dark Ages, not having all the light, it was said, "Here is the *patience* and the *faith* of the saints." Rev. 13:10. They had patience; they possessed faith. But the class developed by this last threefold message of warning, have an additional characteristic—they "keep the commandments of God."

And why not? How could they have an intelligent faith, the faith of Jesus, and do otherwise? His faith led him to keep all God's commandments. It led his disciples, the early Christians, to follow in his steps. "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." 1 John 2:6. Having the same Spirit, having the indwelling Christ, they will do the same works. He kept the seventh-day Sabbath; why should not his people? He knew it for what God designed it, the very rest of God from sin and self. The remnant church will thus know it.

Christ's Coming

The next event in the great drama of the prophets is thus described:-

"And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle." Rev. 14:14.

It is Christ our Lord coming to reap earth's harvest, which is rapidly ripening. The same sun which ripens the wheat for the garner, ripens the tares for the fire. The same truth which, received, develops character for the kingdom of God, rejected, develops character for destruction. O soul, accept of Jesus Christ as he is, as he desires to be to you, the Way, the Truth, and the Life! Accept of the everlasting Gospel, and be saved eternally in God's own way.

One Sure Thing. -In the book of Proverbs much is said about surety, and people are more than once warned against going surety, not only for a stranger, but even for a friend. In the eleventh chapter, verse 15, we read, "He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it; and he that hateth suretyship is sure." In the margin we have in the place of "suretyship," "those that strike hands." That is a man can not be safe unless he refrains from giving his hand as surety for another.

But read further, and see what is said in the twenty-first verse: "Tho hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished, but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered." Notice that the words "tho" and "join" are in Italic type, indicating that they are not in the Hebrew. The literal Hebrew, as indicated in the margin of the Revised Version, is "hand in hand." Here then, we find an instance of giving

the hand, or, as rendered, "My hand upon it!" In two translations before me, I read, "One can give his hand for it, that the wicked shall not be unpunished; but the seed of the righteous shall escape." So sure is it that God will see that justice has its due. Men are often tempted to think, as did David, that the wicked have the best of it, and that in unrighteousness is the most prosperity to be found; but let no one be deceived in this matter. So sure is it that wickedness will be punished, and that the reward of the righteous will not be forgotten, that one may safely give his hand upon it, and be a surety for it. It is the only sure thing in this world." E. J. W.

December 9, 1897

"Greater Works than These" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 48.

E. J. Waggoner

Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." John 14:12. The first question that almost invariably arises whenever this is read, is, "What greater works can anybody possibly do than the Lord did?" or, "How can anybody do greater works than he did?" To this the hearer is obliged to answer, "I don't know." But the fact that we do not know, and can not form any conception of the thing, has no effect upon it. Jesus has said it in the most positive manner, and that is sufficient.

Let it be remembered that it is only those who *believe* that can do these great works; and certainly no one who is not able to do the works, can be expected to know anything about the matter. But the very asking of the questions, "What?" and "How?" implies more or less unbelief. The person may not realize it, but there is at least a shade of doubt underlying those questions; there is a trace of the notion that we will not believe what we can not understand. Now if there is unbelief even in the slightest degree, then it is certain that no works at all will be done; for "this is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom he hath sent." John 6:29. But if there is unbelief, there can not possibly be belief. Therefore the one who questions this matter need not expect ever to know anything about it.

"But is it not unbelief that prompts my questioning," some will say; "it is only a real desire to know what the works are, and how they are to be done." In other words, it is curiosity. Well, of one thing we may be sure, and that is that whatever good works one has, come from God; for that which was true of Christ must most certainly be true of us, "I can of mine own self do nothing." John 5:30. "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." John 14:10. Since "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13), it is not necessary for us to know *how*. Our part is simply to yield ourselves as instruments of righteousness. The instrument does not need to know what the one who handles it is doing, nor how he is able to do it. Nay, the instrument *can not* know how, else he would no longer be the instrument. "Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord?" Ps. 106:2.

Finally, is it useless to ask how we can do greater works than those which Christ did, for those who do them will be unconscious of them. When at the last day the Lord says to the faithful ones, "Come, ye blessed of my Father," and enumerates the good works that they have done, they will wonderingly ask, "Lord, when did we ever do these things?" They will have been so yielded to the Lord that his mighty power will have wrought them in the most natural and unobtrusive way, just as it does through the growing plant. It is well that we are thus ignorant. If it were possible that the mighty works of God could be wrought through self-conscious folks, it would be most uncomfortable for those who were obliged to live with them. If we thought that we were doing greater works than Christ did, we would become so conceited and overbearing that nobody could live with us. Let us be content, yea, we may even rejoice, that we are weak and ignorant, since our Father is almighty and all-wise, and he is ours. E. J. W.

December 16, 1897

"Editorial. The Lesson of History" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 49.

E. J. Waggoner

We do not say "a lesson from history," but "the lesson of history;" for there is but one great lesson

769

that history teaches, yet it is one that is rarely learned. For want of learning this one lesson, thousands study history in vain; while he who learns the simple, fundamental lesson in the beginning of his study will read to profit.

The reason why the lesson referred to is so almost universally overlooked, is that the records that are usually studied are so crowded with details that the mind becomes confused; history becomes to the student only a mass of occurrences, in which the underlying truth taught by history is lost. This melancholy result would be avoided if people began at the right place to study, taking the simplest history first and afterwards that which is more complex.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and the Bible is the book that teaches the fear of the Lord; therefore it is in the Bible that the beginning of wisdom is found. It is the simplest book in the world, as would naturally be expected of a book of beginnings. That it is really a book very easy to be understood is proved by the fact that it teaches the way to the kingdom of heaven, which can be entered only by children and those who become like children. See Matt. 18:3. It is manifest, therefore, that the Bible can be understood by children, and consequently must be an easy book. It is the first book that children should study. But the whole of a thing is found in the beginning, just as the entire tree exists in the germ; and so the Bible, which teaches the fear of the Lord, contains the sum of knowledge, and may be studied by the gray-haired sage as profitably as by the little child. Its treasure of wisdom is inexhaustible.

Now for the first lesson in history. Very fittingly it begins with the beginning of time. We will quote a page from it, that we may clearly see what is the simple, underlying truth taught by all history since the creation of the world. Here it is:-

"This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth; and the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years; and he begat sons and daughters; and all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died. And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos; and Seth lived after he begat Enos eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters; and all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years; and he died. And Enos lived ninety years, and begat Cainan; and Enos lived after he begat Cainan eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat sons and daughters; and all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years: and he died." Gen. 5:1-11.

Thus the record continues to the end of the chapter, of which we have quoted just one fourth; yet the chapter covers a period of more than fifteen hundred years.

What is the sum of history, as indicated by this record?-Simply this, that men lived a certain number of years, and then died. With this first historical record agree all that have been written since. The whole of history can be summed up in the words, They lived so long, and then they died. The one thing, therefore, that history teaches, is that a man's life is but "a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Yet this is the thing that is seldom thought of in reading history. Histories written by man are so filled up with accounts of the incidentals,-the things that people did, the battles fought, the kingdoms established, the cities built, and the "glory" gained,-that unless one has begun the historical study with the primary book, that is, the Bible, he will lose the main point.

Secular history alone is sufficient, if one reads it thoughtfully, to show that it is utterly impossible for man to inherit or possess this earth. "For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others." Notwithstanding this, "their inward thought is this their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. Nevertheless man being in honor abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish. This their way is their folly; yet their posterity approve their sayings."Ps. 49:10-13. Each generation imagines that it is an exception, and that its works will stand forever.

Dull Students

People refuse to learn the lesson of history, even when it is spread out before their eyes. They contemplate the ruins of former greatness, and even while looking, think: "How superior we are to those who lived in ancient times! Their

empires have all vanished, and their cities are in ruins, or utterly extinct." But that is most short-sighted reasoning. A man might as well claim to have more vitality than Methuselah, because he himself is living, in the possession of full strength, while Methuselah, forsooth, is long since dead! Ah, but wait, my friend, and time will tell a different story! You will not have to wait one-tenth the length of Methuselah's life, to learn your mistake.

So with the works of which men boast to-day. There are now no structures so massive and so strongly built as many of those of ancient days, that have been utterly demolished by time. Should time continue as much longer as it has already continued, nothing would remain of the glory of the nations that now inhabit the earth, and their names would be forgotten unless some new fragments of stone preserved them.

No; this earth is under a curse, and unsuited for man's dwelling-place. He can not live here. Do what he will to establish himself here, he is swept away before he can fairly get a foothold. The princes of the earth are brought to nothing, and the judges of the earth are as vanity. "Yea, scarce are they planted, scarce are they sown, scarce hath their stock taken root in the earth, when He bloweth upon them, and they wither, and the whirlwind taketh them away as stubble. Isa. 40:24, R.V., margin.

In spite of this truth which is the one thing that is most evident in all history, men go on planning for this earthly life as tho they were to abide here forever. We see them throwing all their energies into a political struggle, fiercely excited over the outcome, scrambling and crowding for a place, perfectly oblivious to the fact that even if they succeed in attaining the coveted object, it will disappear, and they themselves with it, almost as soon as they seize it. So it always has been, and so it will be to the end. They are as foolish as children on the beach, fighting over the sand houses they have built, which the next wave of the incoming tide will wash away, and at the same time overwhelm them.

What hope is there then for man?-Much, every way. Go back again to our elementary history book. Surely we can believe a record that is so conclusively substantiated by facts. That tells us that God created the earth not in vain, but to be inhabited (Isa. 43:18), and that when he had completed it, with man upon it, he "saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." Gen. 1:31. The critical eye of the Master could detect no flaw, nothing that could be improved, either in man or his condition and circumstances. Everything was as good as God himself could make it.

Now we know that "whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever." Eccl. 3:14. Therefore the condition of the earth in the beginning, and of man as well, is that which is to be through all eternity. God did not place men on the earth in order that they should be swept away like gnats, but that they should possess it forever, even forever and ever. Therefore, "we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Peter 3:13. Even tho there were not many repetitions of that promise, the fact that in the beginning God placed a perfect man in a perfect earth, is sufficient promise that so it will be. In view of this promise we can confidently say, even when about to

be carried away by the flood of time, "God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave; for he shall receive me." Ps. 49:15.

Who will begin to read history from the beginning, and learn the great lesson that it teaches? Who will cease to chase the bubble that collapses as it is grasped, and begin to plan and live as citizens of a better country, that is, an heavenly, whose capital is a city that has everlasting foundations, whose builder and maker is God? E. J. W.

"What War Is" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 49.

E. J. Waggoner

It is a most singular thing, yet it is a fact, that the loudest calls for war that have been heard within the last two or three years, have come from the ministers of the Gospel. From thousands of pulpits appeals have been made for any or all of the Powers to proceed to annihilate the Turks, in the interest of the Armenians; later, the Cretans have been encouraged in their efforts to throw off Turkish rule, and Greece has been applauded for taking the part of Crete in order that she might get the whole; while many of the same preachers unsparingly berated the English Government for not joining the Greeks in their war with Turkey.

What a strange spectacle,-professed ministers of the Gospel of peace, to say nothing of thousands of church members, clamoring for war! Do they know what war is? Let us just take the barest glance at it, as it really is. One of the war correspondents with the Turkish army, in the course of his description of the battle of Mati, says:-

The guns were already clouded in smoke and dust. Now and again a dot came traveling up toward us with painful slowness-a wounded artilleryman; now moaning convulsively; now silent, and swallowing an invisible lump, with twitching eyes.

Who cannot see the picture of the strong man striving to repress any expression of the pain that was nevertheless overmastering him? Later on, the correspondent says:-

The ambulance drove forward to pick up our wounded, and Edhem Pasha pushed on behind his victorious troops. I passed a Turkish soldier who lay with both legs broken, sobbing piteously with pain. And then I hated war.

And who would not? For war means those same scenes magnified, and multiplied a thousand times. It means men helpless and suffering with wounds, lying in some spot for hours and even days in the heat and cold, famishing for water. In short, it means wholesale murder, aggravated by the fact that many of the victims are not killed outright.

We are charitable enough to believe that most of this call for war, from the lips of professed Christians, would cease if those who do the calling could be placed for a season in the front ranks. Not that they are cowards, but that they do not stop to think what they are talking about. The fact is, that every man who shouts for war is simply an aider and abettor of murder. One famous general declared that "war is hell," and it is fact that the spirit of war is the spirit of Satan. An officer in the Franco-Prussian war said that if he had led a regiment of angels into the

battle they would have come back devils. How can Christians be in any way whatever accessories to such fiendish work?

It is for the purpose of warning, not of condemning, that we write. We know that there are thousands of sincere Christians who "know not what manner of spirit they are of" when they call for war, to avenge wounded honor or even outrage, and some with whom we have talked have been shocked, on having their attention called to the matter, to find that they were unconsciously being inspired by the spirit of the devil, for it is the spirits of devils, that go about to stir up war. See Rev. 16:14. The man who shouts for and applauds murder is at heart a murderer. In this time when the nations are preparing war, "great plainness of speech" is necessary, in only that some at least may be awakened to their danger, and may for ever break loose from the fierce, murderous, Satanic spirit that is benumbing the senses of the world's millions, and carrying them to everlasting destruction. E. J. W.

December 23, 1897

"Only as Shadow" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 50.

E. J. Waggoner

Every shadow of darkness, every cloud of gloom, every fear of whatever kind, is simply the shadow of death, and of the devil. He has cast his hellish shadow over the world. Now, as Zacharias prophesied by the Holy Ghost at the birth of his son, the Lord has visited us and delivered us out of the hand of our enemies that we "might serve him without fear."

He has delivered us from every tremor of fear, and hath sent the Dayspring from on high "to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death." If you have his life you have his light. What is there to be afraid of? To the one in Christ death itself is only a shadow. The sting is gone. Satan can cast the shadow over him, but there is nothing in a shadow to be afraid of. He is delivered from the power of darkness. He is going through an enemy's land, whose weapons are all broken. He is going into a nest of scorpions, whose stings have been removed. He is going into a prison-house, the key of which is held by One who loves him. E. J. W.

"He Hath Blinded Their Eyes" *The Signs of the Times* 23, 50.

E. J. Waggoner

"Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." John 11:39, 40.

Many people are more inclined to find doubt and despair in the Bible, than to find hope and comfort, although the Bible contains none of the former, and is full of the latter; so when they read the words of the prophet Isaiah, they at once begin to complain against God, and to say that he is unjust and partial, and they will feel sure that they can not believe, because God has made it impossible.

Now the Bible claims to be the Word of God. It exists for the sole purpose of revealing God to men, that they may see in him the One altogether worthy of worship and affection. Everybody knows that this is the object of the Bible, whether they believe what it says or not. That being the case, how can it be supposed that anything can be found in the Bible that would tend to depreciate God in the estimation of men? Considered from a human standpoint, and as a merely human production, no one would be so foolish as to write things derogatory to his hero, in a book published for the sole purpose of honoring him. We may therefore be sure that none of the men who had to do with the production of the Bible saw in such statements as the one first quoted anything except such goodness and mercy as is consistent with the character of an all-merciful God, a God who not only loves, but who *is love*.

That there is comfort in even such texts as that quoted from Isaiah, and that they were written for the sole purpose of producing hope and comfort, is proved by Rom. 15:4: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." And that the words of the prophet Isaiah do not teach that there are some who can not be saved even tho they wish to, is shown by the inspired words of Peter, concerning Christ: "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Acts 10:43.

When we read that God has hardened the heart of any person, then we should read the story of Pharaoh. God hardened his heart; but every one who reads the account carefully, will see that it was only by the manifestation of kindness and mercy that he did it. When God sent judgments upon Pharaoh and his land, he humbled himself, and confessed his sin, promising repentance; but as soon as God showed him favor and prosperity came again, then his heart was hardened. It was because Pharaoh hated truth and righteousness that as soon as special mercy was manifested toward

787

him he took advantage of it to sin yet more, "Let favor be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord." Isa. 26:10.

Read the verses in connection with John 12:39, 40, together with the eleventh chapter, and you will see that the way the Lord blinded the eyes of the people was by sending great light to them, which was not according to their previous experience. Jesus declared himself to be the Light, and his mighty works had showed how great was the light. But the greater the work that he did, the more the people hated him and his teaching. Everybody knows the effect that great light has upon the eyes of those who are not accustomed to it; it blinds them, or causes them to close their eyes. The more they have accustomed themselves to live in the darkness, the more does the light blind them.

The Jews, like all the rest of the world, sat in darkness; but their blindness was even greater than that of the rest of mankind, because they had had great light; and everybody knows that the darkness is much more intense to one who goes out of the light into it, than to one who as always been in the dark. But while others came to the light that shone in the darkness when Jesus came, the

Pharisees and the principal part of the Jews rejected him. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." John 1:11. "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." John 3:20, 21. The Jews had loved darkness, and persisted in walking in darkness so long that the light was much more blinding to them than the darkness itself.

The very same statement by the prophet Isaiah we find thus quoted in Matt. 13:13-15: "Therefore speak I to them in parables; because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive; for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and *their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see* with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." The same spirit of truth prompted Matthew to make this quotation from Isaiah, that moved Isaiah to write the words in the first place; therefore we know that what we read in Matthew is the exact meaning of what we read in Isaiah. God blinded the eyes of men, only by sending them wonderful light.

Is it therefore God's fault that they can not see?-Not by any means. How can it be? If men complain because God shows mercy, what would they say if he manifested wrath? If they reject the love and mercy of God, what can he do for them? Shall we complain of God for sending light that caused men to close their eyes? Shall we say that if he had not sent light, they would not have closed their eyes? Well, what then? Is it better to have one's eyes open in the pitchy darkness, where there is not a ray of light, than to have them shut in the sunshine? The last condition of the man is just the same as the first, and his possibilities are infinitely greater; for nobody can possibly see in the darkness, but all can see in the light if they will accustom their eyes to it. Let us open our eyes, and praise the Lord for bringing us "out of darkness into his marvelous light." E. J. W.