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E. J. Waggoner

CHRIST AS LAWGIVER

Since all must honour the Son even as they honour the Father, they must honour Him not only as Creator, but as Lawgiver. Says Isaiah: "The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king, He will save us." Isa. 33:22. The statement of Christ, that "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honour the Son, even as they

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honour the Father" (John 5:22, 23), is in itself evidence that Christ is lawgiver. Only the power that makes the laws can provide for their execution. We shall now proceed to give proof that the law was given by Christ, even as it is His righteousness.

Christ was the leader of the children of Israel from Egypt to Canaan. Perhaps there is no one who does not believe this in a general way; but it is susceptible of very clear proof. We quote first 1 Cor. 10:4, which says that the fathers "did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that went with them [margin]; and that Rock was Christ." This of itself is sufficient to settle the matter. Christ is the Rock upon which the church of God is built, and the Rock that shall grind the enemies of God to powder. Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:20; 1 Peter 2:4-8; Luke 20:17, 18.

He is the Rock upon which those who are lifted from the horrible pit of sin have their goings established. Ps. 40:1, 2; 1 Cor. 3:11. It was He whom Israel rejected when He "lightly esteemed the Rock of His salvation." Deut. 32:15.

This is still more clearly shown by a comparison of Num. 21:5, 6 and 1 Cor. 10:10. The first text tells that "the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died." Here we see that the people spoke not only against Moses, their visible leader, but also against God, their invisible leader. Now in 1 Cor. 10:9 Paul tells plainly against whom they were murmuring. He says: "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents." So it was Christ who, with the name of God, was leading Israel, and it was against Him that they murmured.

Heb. 3:5-11 also teaches the same thing very plainly. One has only to read it with care to see that Christ is the one whose voice the Holy Ghost warns us not

to reject as did the fathers who tempted Him forty years in the wilderness. We quote:-

"And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear His voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness; when your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known My ways. So I swear in My wrath, They shall not enter into My rest."

Since Christ was the leader of ancient Israel from Egypt to Canaan, it follows that Christ was the Angel of the Lord who appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and said:-

"I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey." Ex. 3:6-8.

If any should object to this most natural conclusion, on the ground that the one here speaking calls Himself "I AM THAT I AM," the self-existent One-Jehovah-we have only to remind him that the Father hath given to the Son to have life in Himself (John 5:26), that Christ asserted the same thing of Himself when He said, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:5, 6); for which supposed blasphemy the Jews attempted to stone Him; and that by the prophet He is most plainly called Jehovah, in the following passage:-

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS;" literally, "Jehovah our righteousness." Jer. 23:5, 6.

But to return to the main point, which is that Jesus was the leader of Israel from Egypt, the Redeemer of His people from bondage, as shown by the texts cited. Now connect the introductory words of the decalogue: "And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." Ex. 20:1-3. This scripture positively identifies the leader of the children of Israel from Egypt, as the giver of the law from Sinai. If it is said that in the transaction we cannot separate the Father and the Son, we reply that that is just the point we are making. The Father and the Son cannot be separated in any transaction, for they are one. But just as the Son was the one by whom all things were created, so was He the one who declared to the people the law of Jehovah. Thus He is the divine Word. The Son declares the will of the Father, which is also His own will.

The fact that it was the voice of Christ that declared the law from Sinai, may be demonstrated in another way, as follows: "After speaking of the giving of the law, in Heb. 12:18-21, the apostle says: "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven; whose voice then shook the earth; but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." Heb. 12:25, 26.

This tells us that the same voice which shook the earth at the giving of the law from Sinai will once again shake the earth, and the heavens also. Now note the following texts, which show what takes place in connection with the second advent:-

1 Thess. 4:16: "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

That it is Christ's voice that is then heard is shown by John 5:26-29:-

"For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man. Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

So it is the voice of the Son of God that opens the graves. Now we will compare a few more scriptures. In Ps. 2:6-8 we learn that Christ is to rule the heathen with a rod of iron, and to dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Isaiah says that "he shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked." Isa. 11:4. In Rev. 19:11-21 we have a description of the going forth of Christ with the armies of Heaven to contend with and destroy the wicked nations of earth; and in Jer. 25:30, 31 this battle is thus described:-

"The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter His voice from His holy habitation; He shall mightily roar upon His habitation; He shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations, He will plead with all flesh; He will give them that are wicked to the sword."

Compare with this Rev. 19:15 and Isa. 63:1-6, and read Joel 3:16: "The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake; but the Lord will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel." These texts are sufficient to show that the

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shaking of the heavens and the earth is done by the voice of the One who has the controversy with the nations, and who is to destroy them and deliver His people. We have already seen that the voice that is to shake the heavens and the earth is the same voice that shook the earth at the giving of the law. But it is Christ who is to dash the nations in pieces, and so it is His voice that will shake the earth and also heaven. Therefore it was the voice of Jesus that spoke the ten commandments from the top of Sinai. The law is the truth (Ps. 119:142), and

Christ says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." John 14:6. The ten commandments are God's righteousness (Isa. 51:4-7), and His will (Rom. 2:17, 18); but they represent the righteous will of Christ as much as they do that of the Father; for He and the Father are one. E. J. W.

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"Explaining Miracles" *The Present Truth* 7, 4.

E. J. Waggoner

Many very good persons have in the past been zealous to explain the miracles of the Bible. Of late years the number of these zealous souls have been increasing. Their motive is a laudable one, for they think that if they can take out of the way of infidels some of the difficulties of the Bible, and thus remove their objections to that book, many will accept its teachings. But however honest the motive may be, it is certain that they are engaged in a thankless task. If they knew the cause of infidelity, they would not think to cure it by such methods; and if they would stop to consider, they would see that if it were possible to explain the miracles of the Bible, there would be no inducement for an infidel or anybody else to accept its teachings.

Miracles lie at the very foundation of the gospel, and are the principal part of its superstructure. The very existence of God is a miracle; the creation of the world was a miracle; the fact that it is upheld by the same word that brought it into existence, is a miracle; our own existence is a miracle; and the plan of redemption is a stupendous miracle. A belief in miracles underlies all knowledge, and all true science. The first element of knowledge is to perceive that things exist. Before any advancement whatever can be made in science, the fact that things exist must be accepted. And this requires no reasoning, for we cannot help believing it. But the apostle says: "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Heb. 11:3. We look at the heavens and the earth, and ask, How were they framed? And the answer is, God formed them out of nothing; He created the matter which composes them: "He spake and it was; He commanded and it stood fast." By His own word He caused matter to exist where the instant before there was nothing. Who can understand this? Nobody. It is a miracle; but the acceptance of it by faith underlies all true science.

But the devotee of "science falsely so called," attempts to account for the existence of the worlds in some other way. He says that all these things which we see were evolved from a single particle of matter. But when he has gone back to that atom, which, as he claims, has by repeated self-multiplication, produced the worlds, he is still confronted by the question, How did this atom come into existence? And he can never get back of that "How?" So after all his contempt for miracles, he bases his theories on a greater miracle than does the believer in the word of God. For he assumes that inanimate matter created itself out of nothing; while the Bible brings to view an intelligent Creator.

Suppose that our zealous friends should, by some miracle, succeed in explaining the miracles of the Bible; would the infidel then accept that book? Certainly not; for all reason for accepting it would be taken away. The Bible would then have been brought down to the level of man; it would be nothing more than any man could produce. We might go further, and say that if it were possible to explain the miracles of the Bible, there would be no God in whom to believe. The very existence of God implies the existence of miracles. God could not be God, and not work miracles. An infinite God *must* do things which are above the comprehension of a finite mind. They are not miracles to God; there can be no miracles to Him, for He simply does His own will. But the simplest acts of God must necessarily be above the comprehension of man. If it were not so, man would be equal to God. That the simplest acts of God are beyond human comprehension is demonstrated every day, in the growth of plants, the sunshine, the rain, and a thousand other things which we think we understand, because they are so common, but which no man can explain. We know that under certain conditions, certain results will follow; but why? God alone can answer.

And so it is a mistaken zeal which prompts one to try to explain the miracles of the Bible. No man can do it, but the very attempt to do so tends to lower God and the Bible in the estimation of unbelievers. It tends to make them think that God does not work in so very mysterious a way after all. Moreover, when believers attempt to explain miracles, the world accepts that attempt as an evidence that everything that God has done may be understood; and consequently when they read of something that absolutely defies comprehension, they reject it as false.

The reason why men are infidels is not because of the difficulties in the Bible, but because of the difficulties in their own hearts. When men lost the knowledge of God, it was not because they had nothing to reveal God to them, but "because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man." Rom. 1:21-23. The fault was all in themselves. It is an evil heart of unbelief that causes men to depart from God, and it is the same thing that keeps them from coming to Him.

Says the apostle: "But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for He that cometh to God must believe that He *is*." Heb. 11:6. This proposition is self-evident. No one can come to God unless he first believes in the existence of God. And no one believes in the existence of God if he has conjured up in his mind some image to take the place of God, which is totally unlike God. And he who believes that God is, must believe in His power to work miracles. More than this, he must believe in the absolute necessity for the performance of miracles, because from the very nature of the case the infinite God must do things that are too wonderful for man to comprehend.

The fact that God is a wonder-working God is the great source of consolation to the Christian. To be sure the Christian rests in the promises of God, but what would those promises avail if infinite power were not behind them. When Christ commissioned His disciples to preach the gospel, He fortified them with the

assurance, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." And thousands have read the promises of God, and have confidently rested in them, because of the words: "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in His excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." Deut. 33:26, 27.

The miracles of the Bible are not to be explained, but believed. Our belief in them is the measure of our belief in God. We believe that God exists, that He is the Creator of all things, and accepting this fact, we do not find it at all difficult to believe that He caused the shadow on the dial of Ahaz to turn backward; that He caused the sun to stand still in the heavens, so that one day was as long as two; that He divided the Red Sea, and the River Jordan; that He caused iron to swim, and made the dumb ass speak with human voice; that He preserved Jonah alive three days in the whale's belly; or that He raised the dead. Why should He not do such things? "Our God is in the heavens; He hath done whatsoever He would." He made all things; why should we suppose that He has less power to control than He had in creating? No; it is the most natural thing in the world for our God to do wonderful things, because He is a wonderful God.

So we do not seek to explain any miracles; we cannot afford to waste time in so fruitless a task. And we know of no better way to convince infidels of the truth of the Bible than to put before them its plain declarations. The promises of God are not to those who understand them, but to those who believe them. Men may say that they can't believe; it is not so; they can believe; they *must* believe or else be lost; for "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." E. J. W.

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"The Sabbath and the Resurrection" *The Present Truth* 7, 6.

E. J. Waggoner

"In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week," etc., Matt. 28:1. Here we have New Testament testimony upon the subject of what day should be called the Sabbath. It is the day that immediately precedes the first day of the week, therefore the Sabbath is the seventh day of the week. This is just what the commandment says: "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." And Luke, in speaking of the Sabbath day which immediately preceded that first day of the week in which Christ arose from the tomb, says that the women "rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment." Luke 23:56. This item alone should be sufficient to firmly establish anyone who may be wavering concerning the Sabbath in the New Testament.

But some may say that this Sabbath was past before the resurrection, and that the change in the day could not take place until Christ had risen and appeared

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to his disciples. We reply that the resurrection of Christ has nothing to do with the matter. The gospels were all written years after the occurrence of the events

which they record, and the names which they give to things must be the names by which the Holy Spirit wishes those things to be known throughout the entire Christian age. With one accord they speak of the seventh day of the week-the day immediately preceding the first day of the week-as "the Sabbath." The first day of the week they call simply "the first day of the week," and nowhere in the Bible is it given any other title. Now when the Bible says that the seventh day is the Sabbath, and throughout both the Old and the New Testament it is called the Sabbath, by what authority do men give that title to the first day? How dare men take such liberties with the word of God? The Lord looks with favour only on those who tremble at his word. See Isa. 66:1, 2.

Facts must outweigh conjectures; yet even in the face of the uniform testimony of Scripture, some will argue that "redemption is greater than creation." Well, suppose for a moment that it is; what has that to do with the Sabbath? How is it possible to find any connection between the alleged fact that redemption is greater than creation, and the Sabbath day. The seventh-day Sabbath rests upon the great fact that God created the heavens and the earth in six days and rested on the seventh, and that he afterwards blessed and sanctified that day. Now to make the redemption argument apply to the alleged change of the Sabbath, people must argue like this: "Redemption is greater than creation, therefore the Lord did not bless and sanctify the seventh day." But says one, "That is nonsense." Of course it is, and so it is nonsense to argue that anything in God's plan of redemption can possibly affect the day which He Himself has made holy, and commanded all men to observe.

But who knows that redemption is greater than creation? Has it been revealed in the Bible? No. Then what man has known the mind of the Lord so well that he could declare it? Who can fathom infinity, so as to compare two infinite works? No power less than that of an infinite God could create a world, and it requires power to redeem it. And no mind but the mind of God can ever comprehend either work. Then it well becomes poor, ignorant mortals to accept the judgments of God, as "righteous altogether," and not try to do for Him that which he has not done.

The idea that men can commemorate finished redemption by resting on Sunday is a wild one. In the first place it has never been commanded, and that alone is sufficient to condemn it. If it had been commanded, then we should have to observe two days, for no power can ever annul the fact that the seventh day is the sacred rest-day of the Lord. But God has not required another day of rest. The resurrection of Christ is a pledge of the final redemption of all who believe in Him; but it did not mark the close of redemption. Paul says 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." Rom. 8:22, 23. And he also says that the possession of the Spirit is simply the pledge of our inheritance, until the purchased possession is redeemed and given to us. See Eph. 1:13, 14. Only when the saints shall stand around the throne of God, in the kingdom of glory, can they celebrate redemption completed; and those who share that triumph will have lived not according to their own views or

preferences, but "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." E. J. W.

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"The Spirit as Guide" *The Present Truth* 7, 7.

E. J. Waggoner

When Christ told his disciples that he was about to go away, and that they could not follow him, their hearts were filled with sorrow and anxiety. They dreaded to face an unfriendly world alone. He had been their guide and instructor, and they had learned much from his teachings. They knew of no one who could fill his place. Peter had echoed the sentiments of all the disciples when, in answer to Christ's inquiry if they also would go away, he said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." They knew that no one else could do for them what Jesus had done; and the thought of being separated from him was a sad one.

To comfort them, Christ gave them the assurance that He would come again and receive them unto Himself, and that by this means they could again be with Him. But even this promise was not sufficient, for there would still intervene a long period during which they would be left alone. How could they do without the presence and counsel of their Lord?

Again Jesus meets the difficulty by promising that whatsoever they should ask in His name should be done for them; and He added, "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth." John 14:16, 17. This Spirit was to be sent in His name, and was to take His place until His return. Said Christ, "I will not leave you comfortless [orphans]; I will come to you." This coming does not refer to his personal, visible coming, when He will receive His people to Himself, but to the Spirit who should come in His name. The Spirit was to be their guide, to prepare them for His coming at the last day.

The offices of the Spirit are many; but there is a special one pointed out in this discourse of our Lord. Said He: "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 14:25, 26. It is as a teacher that the Spirit is here brought to view.

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Many persons entertain very erroneous views as to the manner in which the Spirit operates. They imagine that it will teach them something which the Bible does not contain. When certain Bible truths are presented to them for their observance, they excuse themselves from all responsibility in the matter by saying that they are led by the Spirit of God, and do not feel it their duty to do that particular thing. They say the Spirit was given to guide into all truth; and, consequently, if it was necessary to obey that portion of the Scripture, it would have been brought to their notice. The fact that they do not feel impressed to

obey is proof to their minds that there is no necessity for obedience. To such persons the Bible is of no account; they make its truth depend entirely upon their own feelings. And they actually charge God with the inconsistency of authorizing His Spirit to speak in contradiction of His revealed word. The fact that God cannot lie should convince anyone that His Spirit and His word must always be in harmony.

Christ prayed for His disciples, "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth." The psalmist David said, "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Thy law is the truth." From these passages we learn that when Christ said, "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth," He meant that the Spirit would lead them into a proper understanding of that which had already been revealed. He plainly stated this when He said, "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Many things that Christ said were not understood at the time; but they were made plain by the Spirit, after Christ had ascended to heaven. And it is thus that the Spirit teaches us now; it leads those who are humble and teachable into a proper understanding of the written Word of God.

Paul gives testimony on this point which is not uncertain. In Eph. 6:13-17, he describes the Christian's armour. The following is the concluding portion: "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, *which is the Word of God.*" Christ said that when the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, should come, He would "reprove [convince] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." Paul says that "by the law is the knowledge of sin." Both these passages are harmonized by the one quoted from Paul to the Ephesians. The Spirit does indeed convince of sin, but it is by impressing on the minds and hearts of men the claims of God's Word. The Bible is the sword, the instrument by which the Spirit pierces the heart and lays bare its wickedness. The Spirit is the active agent, but the Word of God is that through which it works. The two always act in unison.

We should look with suspicion upon any spirit that counsels opposition to the Word of God. John tells us that there are many spirits, and that we are to try them. In Isaiah we are told by what we are to try them: "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. It is the spirit of darkness that leads men to act contrary to the word of God. E. J. W.

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"Can We Keep the Sabbath?" *The Present Truth* 7, 8.

E. J. Waggoner

There are thousands throughout the United States and in Europe who are ready at once to answer this question in the affirmative, for they know by experience that it is possible. Indeed, the question really admits of only one answer, and that is, "Yes; we can if we want to." But there are many persons who

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

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

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

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

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

were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is Mine, and the fulness thereof." Ps. 50:10-12. Surely you need have no fear of starving, if you serve such a Master as that.

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

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

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

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

still His promises are sure, and cannot fail. Food and clothing are promised, and though these may be scant, yet "a little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked." Ps. 36:16.

One thought more: If we keep the commandments of God, we are God's servants. If we refuse to obey Him, whose servants are we?-We certainly must be the servants of Satan. There is no neutral ground. "To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey." Now suppose you continue in sin, and sin is nothing else but the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4), what is your prospect for living? Here is it: "For the wages of sin is death." Rom. 6:23. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." Eze. 18:20. You say you cannot live if you keep all God's commandments; God says you

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cannot live if you do not keep them. If your statement were true, you would only lose this present life, and many men in times past have lost their lives for the truth of God, and we honour them for it; but if you disobey God, you will lose eternal life. Jesus says: "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it." Matt. 16:25. Satan may promise well, but he has nothing but the treasures of this world to offer, and they are all forfeited, so that he has really nothing to offer you. How different is the service of God. The apostle says: "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." 1 Tim. 4:8.

But the promises of God and happiness to those who fear God are almost innumerable. Not a tithe of them has been given. Surely those mentioned are sufficient to enable anyone to trust God. E. J. W.

April 23, 1891

"Can We Keep the Sabbath?" *The Present Truth* 7, 9.

E. J. Waggoner

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We shall find, if we study carefully, that the bible says much in favor of peculiar people. The Jews were brought out from Egyptian bondage that they might serve the Lord, and be a peculiar people. Paul says in Titus 2:14 that Christ "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." The apostle here speaks

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

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

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

May 7, 1891

"The Reasonableness of Faith" *The Present Truth* 7, 10.

E. J. Waggoner

The Christian's faith is something that cannot be seen as a source of wonder to the unbeliever, and is often the object of ridicule and contempt. The worldling regards the simple faith of the Christian as an evidence of weakness of mind, and with a complacent smile at the thought of the superiority of his own intellect, he declares that *he* never believes a thing without evidence; *he* never jumps at conclusions, and doesn't believe anything that he cannot see and understand.

The saying that the man who believes nothing that he cannot understand will have a very short creed, is as true as it is trite. There is not a philosopher living who can understand the one-hundredth part of the simple phenomena that he sees every day. Scientists have found out by observation that certain kinds of soil are specially adapted to certain kinds of produce; but nobody can tell why.

As a matter of fact, faith is one of the commonest things. There is no skeptic who does not have faith to a greater or less degree; and in very many cases they go even farther, and manifest simple credulity. But the element of faith underlies all business transactions, and all the affairs of life. Two men make an appointment to meet at a certain time and place, to transact certain business; each has to trust the other's word. The merchant has to exercise faith in his employÉs and his customers. Yea, more, he has to, unconsciously it may be, exercise faith in God; for he will send his ships across the ocean, with confidence that they will return again loaded with merchandise, and yet he must know that their safe return depends on the winds and the waves, which are beyond human control. And even though he never once thinks of the power that controls the elements, he puts confidence in the officers and crew. He will even trust himself on board of one of the ships, whose captain and crew he never saw, and confidently expect that they will bring him to the desired heaven.

One of these men who thinks that it is foolish to trust in a God "whom no man hath seen, neither can see," will go to a little window and lay down a twenty-dollar gold-piece, and in return will receive from a man whom he never saw before, and whose name he does not know, only a little strip of paper which says that he is entitled to a ride to a distant city. He perhaps has never seen that city, and knows of its existence only by the reports of others, yet he steps aboard the cars, gives his bit of paper to another total stranger, and settles down in comfort. He has never seen the engineer, and does not know but that he may be incapable or malicious; yet he is perfectly unconcerned, and confidently expects to be carried safely to the place, the existence of which he knows only by hearsay. More than this, he holds in his hand a piece of paper prepared by some men whom he never saw, which states that these strangers, to whose care he has entrusted himself, will land him at his destination at a certain hour; and so implicitly does this skeptic believe this statement, that he sends word ahead to some other person whom he has never seen, making arrangements to meet him at that specified time.

Still further, his faith is drawn upon in the sending of the message announcing his coming. He steps into a little room, writes a few words on a slip of paper, which he hands to a stranger sitting by a little machine, pays the man half a dollar, and then goes his way believing that in less than half an hour his unknown friend a thousand miles away will be reading the message which he left in the station behind him.

But to all this the skeptic will reply that he does not blindly trust in others, but that he has *reason* to believe that he will be carried safely, that his message will be sent correctly, and that his letter will reach his wife in good season. His faith in these things is based on the following grounds:-

1. Others have been carried in safety, and thousands of letters and telegrams have been correctly sent and promptly delivered. Whenever a letter has been miscarried, it has almost invariably been the fault of the sender.

2. The men to whom he instructs himself and his messages, make a business of carrying people and messages; if they should fail to fulfill their agreements,

nobody would place any confidence in them, and their business would soon be ruined.

3. He has had the assurance of the Government by whom the railways and telegraphs are controlled, and which thereby becomes responsible. His confidence in the letter-box was due to the fact that he saw upon it the letters "V. R.," and he knows that they mean that the Government has promised safely to deliver any letter placed in the box, if it is properly addressed and stamped. He believes that the Government will fulfil its promises, because if it does not, its existence must soon come to an end. Its existence depends on its power to fulfil its promises, and its integrity in performing them. And all these things form a solid ground for his faith.

Well, the Christian has a thousand-fold more ground for his faith in the promises of God. Faith is not blind credulity. Says the apostle: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence [ground, or confidence] of things not seen." Heb. 11:1. This is an inspired definition, and therefore we may conclude that the Lord does not expect us to exercise faith except on evidence. Now it can readily be shown that the Christian has the same ground for exercising faith in God, that the skeptic has for his confidence in the railroad and telegraph companies, or in the Government; and a great deal more.

1. Others have trusted the promises of God, and have found them to be sure. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews contains a long list of those who have verified the promises of God; who "through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to fight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again."

2. The God whom we trust makes a business of answering prayers, and of protecting and caring for his subjects. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not." Lam. 3:22. And "He delighteth in mercy." Micah 7:18. "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." Jer. 29:11.

3. The existence of God's government depends on the fulfillment of his promises. The Christian has the assurance of the Government of the universe, that every lawful request that he makes will be granted. Government is especially for the protection of the weak. Suppose now that God should fail to fulfill one of his promises to the very weakest and most insignificant persons in the world; that single failure would destroy the entire government of God.

Moreover, those who put their trust in human government, or in any institution of men, are liable to be disappointed. With the best of intentions, mistakes will be made, because men are but fallible. But to the Christian the firm assurance is given: "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." Deut. 33:26, 27. His power is shown in creation. The things that He has made attest His eternal power and Godhead. The more powerful the Government, the greater the confidence in it. Then what more reasonable than that we should have implicit confidence in the God whom

nature and revelation combined declare to be omnipotent, eternal, and unchangeable?

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If I should express to an infidel my doubts as to the integrity of one of his friends, he would say: "That's because you don't know him; just try him, and you will find him as true as steel." This would be a fair reply; and so we say to the infidel who doubts the promises of God. "O taste and see that the Lord is good; . . . there is no want to them that fear him." Ps. 34:8, 9. What right has anybody to doubt the promises or the power of God before he has given them a fair trial? And in that case, what right has anybody to doubt God, since everybody is testing his power and goodness every moment of his life? E. J. W.

May 21, 1891

"Patience, Its Development and Its Fruit" *The Present Truth* 7, 11.

E. J. Waggoner

"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." Rom. 5:1-5.

Here we have set forth the practical side of justification by faith. Not that justification by faith is not practical in every aspect, for nothing can be more practical than the forgiveness of sins. But this sets forth the practical every-day results of justification by faith. First there is peace that cannot be ruffled by any outside disturbance. It was such peace that, in Stephen and Paul, was superior to the howling mob that demanded their lives. Next there is joy, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. Faith gives access to the grace of God. The grace of God is according to the riches of His glory. The glory of God will be according to the riches of His grace. The possession of grace makes sure the glory to be revealed; therefore whoever through faith tastes the riches of God's grace, may rejoice in full assurance of glory to be revealed in Him. The faith that appropriates the grace of God reaches forward and grasps the eternal glory. As the apostle Peter says:-

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ; 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; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." 1 Pet. 1:7-9.

But our rejoicing in hope of the glory of God is not because we have so easy a time, with no trials. Notice in the text just quoted that the "joy unspeakable and full of glory" is coupled with such trials as can be likened only to the fierce flame

that heats the crucible in which the gold is placed. So in the passage before us. "We glory in tribulations also." Why?-Because "tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope." Let us note these points. We know something of what tribulation means; shall we study how it works patience, what the experience is which results, and what the hope?

Most people think that tribulation works impatience. That is a great mistake. It is true that even petty trials that are not worthy to be listed in the same catalogue with tribulations are often followed by impatience; but they never beget impatience. They simply reveal the impatience that already exists. Many people think to excuse their irritability by pleading strong provocation. If other people were not so exasperating, they would not become impatient. Wrong. If other people did not cross them, they doubtless would not manifest impatience. A dog or a bear may say the same; they will not show their teeth, and growl, unless provoked. But their nature is none the less fierce. Circumstances and associations do not make us impatient and wicked. They may tend to draw it out; but they cannot make us manifest that which we do not have.

Tribulation works patience only in those who, being justified by faith, have peace with God. Nothing but tribulation can work patience; there is no other way that patience can be developed, except by trials; the fiercer the trials, the more the patience, the greater the experience, and the brighter the hope.

What is patience? It is simply endurance. The ox is a symbol of patience, because it quietly bears the yoke, and endures heavy loads and even blows. Now how can a man bear and suffer, and show a disposition of quiet perseverance, unless he has trials. There is no call for patience when there is no burden to bear. As the muscle that is never exerted in carrying burdens can never develop strength, so the soul that never has trials can never develop patience. Patience is necessary, for only he in whom patience has its perfect work, is perfect and entire, lacking nothing. James 1:4. Therefore tribulations are necessary. Surely we may rejoice in that which works perfection, and brings to us every possible good.

How does tribulation work patience? The fact that it does so only in those who are justified by faith in Christ, suggests the answer. It is only when the relation between us and Christ is very close. Let us put it in the form of a paradox, that it may be the more strongly impressed on the mind. Tribulation works endurance only when we learn how not to endure it. We endure the burden which tribulation imposes upon us only by throwing it off. Let the following texts serve as proof:-

"Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body what ye shall put on. . . . For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." Matt. 6:25-32, Revised Version.

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you." 1 Pet. 5:6, 7.

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee; He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." Ps. 55:22.

The apostle Paul was called upon to bear heavy burdens, and to endure great suffering, and he says this of the amount of his burdens, and how he bore them:-

"But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." 1 Cor. 15:10.

He who has been justified by faith has laid upon Christ the greatest burden that can be borne—the burden of sin. Christ died for the purpose of assuming this burden, which men could not bear. "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." 1 Peter 2:24. Now the justified person finds trials pressing upon him; but he has already learned of Christ's power, and has proved the truth of His gracious promise, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. 11:28. He knows that he himself has not the strength to endure these trials without being irritated; the load will prove too galling for him. So he bears it by casting it upon Christ, which he has the fullest warrant to do. "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.

Thus not the mere doctrine, but the actual fact of justification by faith, becomes the soother of all pains, the supporter in every trial, the strength in every duty. We do not know how we are going to be fed and clothed, if we follow some clearly indicated line of duty. What of that? "Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" The greater includes the less, and if God has given His Son, that carries every needful thing with it. What shall we say of the faith of one who professes to know Christ, and yet is continually worrying and fretting for fear of some calamity, or murmuring at little ills that befall him? Surely if his faith does not enable him to trust under these smaller trials, how can he know anything about God? If faith in Christ is good for anything, it is good for everything. And that is just what it is good for. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." 1 Tim. 4:8.

And patience works experience. Of course. Experience in what?—Why, experience, or proving of the power of God to keep us even in the little vexations and trials of life, as well as in the tribulation that comes in time of great persecution. Only trials can give us this experience,

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for only trials and afflictions drive us to test the power of God. And remember that this "experience" is simply experience in the willingness of God to bear all our burdens, so that the peace of God, and not impatience, may rule in our hearts. And yet men and women who never in their lives cast a single burden on the Lord, who never took the every-day trials of life to the Lord for him to bear for them, and who consequently were developing impatience and fretfulness, often talk about their "Christian experience." Such should learn that experience is something more than a mere profession.

The limits of this article forbid a consideration of the hope that maketh not ashamed, which this practical experience begets. Another article must be devoted to that. But if the reader will only make the experiment of laying hold by faith upon the power and love of God, he will know by experience what the hope is. E. J. W.

June 4, 1891

"A Servant of Jesus Christ" *The Present Truth* 7, 12.

E. J. Waggoner

There are some words and expressions which, by their very frequency of occurrence, make but little impression upon us. We are so familiar with them that we read them and speak them as a matter of course, scarcely thinking that they have any meaning. One such expression is that which begins the epistle to the Romans, "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ." Two other of Paul's epistles, the one to the Philippians, and the one to Titus, as also Peter's second letter and the epistles of James and Jude, begin in the same way, and in other places the apostles style themselves, or are styled, the servants of God and of Christ. The prophets, also, and Old Testament worthies, as Moses, Joshua, etc., are called servants of God. That this is more than a catch phrase, and that it is of the deepest significance, will be apparent as we study it.

The Greek word which is translated "servant" in these instances is *doulos*, *doulos*, and is defined by Liddell and Scott as "properly a *born bondman, or slave*." It was the regular Greek word for a slave, and was often used of the Persians and other nations subject to a despot. The Revised Version has "bond servant" in the margin of Rom. 1:1, as the equivalent of the word rendered "servant."

We may accept the word, "slave," therefore, as the one which the apostle uses to show the completeness of his subjection to Christ. We have, therefore, only to study the condition of a slave, to know not only how Paul regarded himself, but how all who really serve God must hold themselves.

A slave is one who is the entire property of another. He cannot dispose of his time nor his actions as he will, but only as his master directs. Neither can he hold property in his own right. His strength is his master's; and if he earns anything, that which he receives belongs to his master. In the days of American slavery, negroes were often hired out to men who were not their masters, and often they earned large wages, but not a cent of it could they call their own. When their master bought them, they brought no property of their own, and all that they could expect for their service was enough to sustain life. Their time and strength were as absolutely their masters as were those of the horses with which they worked.

Now compare this with what we find set forth in the Scriptures as the proper condition of Christians, who are servants of Christ. Says the apostle Paul: "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; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Cor. 6:19, 20. Notice the completeness of the subjection. We are not our own, and therefore we cannot have a word to say as to what we shall do. The will of God, and his glory, is to direct us in everything. So the apostle says: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Cor. 10:31.

But there is another thought suggested by the word "slave," as applied to Christians, and that is that they have been reduced to servitude from a previous condition of rebellion. Although, as the Lexicon says, the Greek word for "slave" signifies "*a born bondman*," it is a fact that by natural birth no person is a servant of God. By nature we are all the children of wrath. Paul classes himself with us when he says: "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." Titus 3:3. And in another place he thus contrasts the different kinds of servitude in which men may live:-

"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." Rom. 6:16-18.

Before any man becomes the born bondman of Christ, he has to be born again. But this new birth implies a previous death, and that death is by crucifixion. See Gal. 2:20. Now crucifixion was a form of punishment inflicted on only the worst class of men, and its use as applied to those who thereby become Christ's, shows a previous condition of rebellion. "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Rom. 8:7. The words of the Lord to Isaiah, concerning the people of Israel, describe the condition of all men by nature:-

"Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever; that this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord." Isa. 30:8, 9.

From this rebellious state we are brought into the condition of servants. As it has aptly been expressed, we capitulate, and accept the terms of peace. We become subject to God. The word "subject" or "subjection" carries with it also the relation which we should sustain to God. It comes from two Latin words meaning "under the yoke," and is derived from the Roman custom of erecting a yoke and causing those whom they had conquered in battle to pass under it, as a token of their complete surrender. This ancient custom also explains the act of David, in putting the men of Rabbah "under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron," and making them pass through the brick kiln. 2 Sam. 12:31. It was the same as making them pass under the yoke, as a token of their being his servants. So Christ calls us to, "Take my yoke upon you." Taking the yoke of Christ upon us is to yield ourselves completely to him, for him henceforth to rule every act and every thought. As Paul expresses it, it is "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Cor. 10:5.

Right here it should be noticed that true service to Christ is willing service. We are his bond-servants, brought into captivity to Him, but it was love that bought us, so that we gladly submit. As Olshausen says of Paul: "He had been overcome by the Redeemer, conquered and subdued by His higher power. But as one not merely outwardly conquered, and still disposed to resist, but inwardly

subdued, Paul had at the same time become a willing instrument for executing the purposes of the Lord as an apostle."

Moreover, although the word rendered "servant" signifies one subject to a despot, that only indicates the completeness of the control which God has over those who are truly His servants, but does not carry with it any idea of degradation. It makes a vast amount of difference to whom one is a servant. The servant of a poor, ignorant, coarse man would be a most abject creature. The slave of such a monarch as Nebuchadnezzar might be a high officer of State. So to be a servant of the Most High God is the highest honor that any creature can have in the universe. Angels in heaven, that excel in strength, do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word, and are glad to declare themselves only fellow-servants with those who on earth are wholly devoted to Christ. Rev. 22:9.

Again, the slave of Christ is the only free man in the world. Paul says: "For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman; likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men." 1 Cor. 7:22, 23. David says: "O Lord, truly I am Thy servant; I am Thy servant, and the son of Thine handmaid; thou hast loosed my bonds." Ps. 116:16. Here we have bondage and freedom. The man out of Christ is an

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abject slave; he is "holden with the cords of his sins." But the moment he yields himself unconditionally to Christ to be His servant, the body of sin is destroyed, and henceforth, if he continues to be the Lord's servant, sin has no more dominion over him. He is free to do right. His bondage is the bondage of love, and he finds the yoke easy.

The Lord will not accept divided service. He will not go into partnership with the devil, each having an equal share in a servant. A man must be wholly the Lord's, or he is not the Lord's at all. Says Christ: "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Matt. 6:24. If, then, we have given ourselves to the Lord as His servants, and then seek in anything to please ourselves only, we rob Him of service which is his due. Our strength, both of mind and body, belongs to the Lord, for He says:-

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." Luke 10:27, with verse 28.

Now suppose a man indulges a habit which destroys his strength of body and vigor of mind; he is not then the Lord's slave; he is the slave of sinful indulgence. One man eats more than is good for him, more than he needs. He does so, simply because the food tastes good. That extra quantity of food, instead of increasing his strength, is a tax upon it. Strength that he should have to devote to the Lord is perverted to the service of appetite. Now it matters not what that man's profession may be, he is not the bond-servant of Christ. If he were, he would glorify God in eating and drinking, as well as in every other act of life.

Here is a test by which we may settle every question as to the lawfulness or unlawfulness of an act: Will it glorify God? If it will it is not only lawful but

necessary. The man who is honest with himself before God in this question can settle which things are unlawful for him, and how far he may go in things that are necessary, as in eating and drinking.

"But what a hardship," says one, "to be obliged to rein ourselves up to such a test." Well, that depends on whether or not we are really the *slaves* of Christ; whether or not we have willingly, gladly capitulated, accepting His terms, and yielding to His service. If we have, then it is not a task to inquire what will be to His glory, and to do it. We have yielded to Him because in His infinite love and mercy He has enabled us to see that there is more to be desired in His service than in our own; and we have made His will our own. He has made us new creatures, giving us a new heart, and new purposes, so that when we do His will we are simply doing our own, for His will is ours, and our will is His.

"But suppose our will is His, and we have only one longing, supreme desire, namely, to do His will and glorify Him, how can we always do it?" That is answered in the very fact that we are His, wholly His. We are not our own, but have resigned ourselves into His hands as simple instruments of His will. We have no power in ourselves, but He has all power, and can make us what He wishes. And here comes in the encouragement of the thought that we serve a mighty Master, one against whom all the powers of earth and hell combined can do nothing. So when the fierce temptation arises, when the infirmity of the flesh would cause us to fall, we, having the mind of our Master, to hate sin, flee to Him for strength, and His strength does what our weakness cannot.

What comfort in the thought that the whole thing is comprised in simple submission to God. "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Rom. 6:13. God wants us to live holy lives; He has shown the strength of His desire for us to be delivered from evil, by giving His Son to die for us. And since God has such an infinite longing for us to be free from sin, and has such infinite power to accomplish His desires, what can hinder the accomplishment of those desires, if we but yield ourselves to Him? No matter how fully we may have been the servants of sin, we now, having become servants to God, are made free from sin, having our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. Rom. 6:22.

No wonder that Paul was able to accomplish such wonderful things. He was the Lord's slave, wholly and without reserve, and the Lord simply worked through him. Even while the most conscious of his own weakness, he could say: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

God is not partial; He is no respecter of persons. He is as ready to strengthen us with all might, according to His glorious power, as he was the apostle Paul. And so no matter what our inherited or acquired weakness, we may be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation; and when that salvation is revealed, we may be sealed as his servants, to see His face, and stand before His throne, serving him day and night in His temple. Glorious service! Who would not prefer that to the poor, miserable service of self? E. J. W.

June 18, 1891

"The Gospel of God" *The Present Truth* 7, 13.

E. J. Waggoner

In his introduction to the epistle to the Romans, Paul declares himself to be "a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord," and he throws in, by way of parenthesis, the statement that this gospel of God "He had promised afore by His prophets in the holy Scriptures." These two verses bring out two points that are too often overlooked or denied, to which we wish to call attention.

First, the gospel is "the gospel of God, concerning His Son Jesus Christ." It is not only a mistake, but a grievous error, and a grave charge against the goodness of God, to separate Him from the gospel. To make God the Father the hard, vindictive, unyielding Judge, who is moved to compassion only by the entreaties of the Son, is as grievous a sin as is that of the Catholics in making Christ the angry Judge, and the virgin Mary the one who interposes to shield sinners from his wrath. That God the Father has the deepest interest in the salvation of sinners, and is filled with tender love and pity for them, is proved by the following most familiar words of Jesus:-

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16.

Here is shown the depth of God's love for us. It was so great that He allowed his Son to die that we might live. So fully was God concerned in the gospel plan, that the beloved disciple, without designating whether He referred to the Father or the Son, said: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us." 1 John 3:16. "God did not selfishly send his Son to die. The Father was bound up in the Son, for they were one. The Father permitted the Son to come to earth to die, yea, He "delivered Him up for us all," but in so doing He gave all that heaven had to bestow. Every sorrow and suffering that our Saviour bore for us pierced to an equal extent the great heart of God.

It is true that the apostle Paul, in writing to the Thessalonians, speaks of the final destruction of them "that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Thess. 1:8. But this simply shows the unity of the Father and the Son in the work. The Father and the Son are one. In every act and thought they are united. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," yet of Christ it is said that "He gave Himself for us." Titus 2:14. And this agrees with the words of the prophet:-

"Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the Lord; even He shall build the temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." Zech. 6:12, 13.

"The man whose name is The BRANCH," is Jesus Christ. He sits upon His Father's throne (Rev. 3:21) and both together are counseling for the peace of those who are enemies and alienated in their minds by wicked works. Still further,

read those most expressive words of Paul, "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Cor. 5:19. The humble birth, the life of poverty, and want, and temptation, and suffering, the agony in the garden, the reproaches and insults in the judgment-hall, and the cruel death upon the cross, were all manifestations of God's good-will to men, and desire for peace among them.

And this gospel was preached from the very beginning. Abel believed it, and by his faith he "offered unto God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous." Heb. 11:4. Noah believed it, and so "became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Verse 7. Likewise "the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." Gal. 3:8. This was when Abraham had no child, and when there was no human possibility that he ever could have one, yet "he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness." Gen. 15:6.

So it was with the Israelites, the lineal descendants of Abraham. The apostle says, "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them." Heb. 4:2. "Unto us as well as unto them!" That seems a strange way of putting the things, doesn't it? If he were asserting that the Jews had the gospel, he would have said that the gospel was preached unto them as well as unto us. But that is not his point. He has already shown that the gospel was preached to them. They had it first, and rejected it, and now we are warned lest we, having the same privileges that they had, should "fall after the same example of unbelief."

This gospel of the death and resurrection of Christ for the deliverance of man from sin and death was promised through the prophets in the holy Scriptures. Time would fail to enumerate the prophecies concerning the Messiah, and we can only sum them up in a few New Testament statements. Peter, speaking of the salvation of our souls, says: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." 1 Peter 1:10, 11.

Paul, when permitted to speak for himself before Agrippa, said: "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come; that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles." Acts 26:22, 23. This does not mean that Christ should be the first person, in point of time, that should rise from the dead, for the prophets themselves raised the dead, and Christ raised many before his death; but it meant that he should be the first in eminence. He is the first-fruits of them that slept. Among all that shall rise from the dead He is first, because it was His resurrection that made it possible for any others to be raised from the dead.

Peter also declared to the people who were astonished at a notable miracle: "But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all His prophets that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled." Acts 3:16. And then he added,

"Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days." Verse 24.

Not only did the prophets foretell of these days, but they enjoyed them, not simply in anticipation, but in reality. Jesus said to the Jews, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad." John 8:56. And the prophet David said of the same day,-the day of salvation: "I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." Ps. 118:21-24.

How could they rejoice in the day of salvation, and be saved by Christ's blood, hundreds of years before it was shed? Because God's promise made it real before it took place. He "quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were." Rom. 4:17. A thing which God has promised is just

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as sure as though it had actually taken place. There was not the slightest possibility that Christ should not suffer, after he had once been promised; and that Christ should redeem men by his blood "was foreordained before the foundation of the world." 1 Pet. 1:20. Then, since He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, it follows, as a matter of course, that those who lived in the first year of the world could derive the same benefit from His sacrifice that we can. "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." "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." E. J. W.

July 2, 1891

"God Manifest in the Flesh" *The Present Truth* 7, 14.

E. J. Waggoner

Romans 1:3.

When the apostle, in his introduction to the epistle to the Romans, speaks of the gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, he says of Christ that He "was made of the seed of David according to the flesh." In this expression, besides the statement of the genealogy of Christ, there lies not only a great theological truth, but also a most comforting thought for poor, frail, erring mortals.

When Christ was here on earth, "God was manifest in the flesh." 1 Tim. 3:16. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Cor. 5:19. Christ was God; it was by Him that the worlds were made, and it was the word of his power that preserved all things. Heb. 1:3. He had equal glory with the Father before the world was (John 17:5); "for it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell." Col. 1:19. In Him dwelt "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Col. 2:9. Yet He was man at the same time. John puts the matter very forcibly and plainly when he says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and

the Word was God." "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." John 1:1, 14.

No words could more plainly show that Christ was both God and man. Originally only divine, He took upon Himself human nature, and passed among men as only a common mortal, except at those times when His divinity flashed through, as on the occasion of the cleansing of the temple, or when His burning words of simple truth forced even His enemies to confess that "never man spake like this man."

The humiliation which Christ voluntarily took upon Himself is best expressed by Paul to the Philippians: "Have the mind in you which also was in Christ Jesus; who being originally in the form of God, counted it not a thing to be grasped [that is, to be clung to] to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, becoming in the likeness of man; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross." Phil. 2:5-8, Revised Version, marginal reading.

The above rendering makes this text much more plain than it is in the common version. The idea is that although Christ was in the form of God, being "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person" (Heb. 1:3), having all the attributes of God, being the ruler of the universe, and the one whom all Heaven delighted to honour, He did not think that any of these things were to be desired so long as men were lost and without strength. He could not enjoy His glory while man was an outcast, without hope. So He emptied Himself, divested Himself of all His riches and His glory, and took upon Himself the nature of man in order that He might redeem him. It was necessary that He should assume the nature of man, in order that He might suffer death, as the apostle says to the Hebrews that He "was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death." Heb. 2:9.

It is impossible for us to understand how this could be, and it is worse than useless for us to speculate about it. All we can do is to accept the facts as they are presented in the Bible. Other scriptures that we will quote bring closer to us the fact of the humanity of Christ, and what it means for us. We have already read that "the Word was made flesh," and now we will read what Paul says as to the nature of that flesh. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. 8:3, 4.

A little thought will be sufficient to show anybody that if Christ took upon Himself the likeness of man, in order that He might suffer death, it must have been sinful man that He was made like, for it is only sin that causes death. Death could have no power over a sinless man, as Adam was in Eden; and it could not have had any power over Christ if the Lord had not laid on him the iniquity of us all. Moreover, the fact that Christ took upon Himself the flesh, not of a sinless being, but of sinful man, that is, that the flesh which He assumed had all the weaknesses and sinful tendencies to which fallen human nature is subject, is shown by the very words upon which this article is based. He was "made of the seed of David according to the flesh." David had all the passions of human

nature. He says of himself, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Ps. 51:5.

A brief glance at the ancestry and posterity of David will show that the line from which Christ sprung, as to his human nature, was such as would tend to concentrate in Him all the weaknesses of humanity. To go back to Jacob, we find that before he was converted he had a most unlovely disposition, selfish, crafty, deceitful. His sons partook of the same nature, and Pharez, one of the ancestors of Christ (Matt. 1:3; Gen. 38), was born of a harlot. Rahab, an unenlightened heathen, became an ancestor of Christ. The weakness and idolatry of Solomon are proverbial. Of Rehoboam, Ahijah, Jehoram, Ahaz, Manasseh, Amon, and other kings of Judah, the record is about the same. They sinned and made the people sin. Some of them had not one redeeming trait in their characters, being worse than the heathen around them. It was from such an ancestry that Christ came. Although his mother was a pure and godly woman, as could but be expected, no one can doubt that the human nature of Christ must have been more subject to the infirmities of the flesh than it would have been if He had been born before the race had so greatly deteriorated physically and morally. This was not accidental, but was a necessary part of the great plan of human redemption, as the following will show:-

"For verily he took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. [The Syriac version has it, "For He did not assume a nature from angels, but He assumed a nature from the seed of Abraham."] Wherefore 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 to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." Heb. 2:16-18.

If He was made in all things like unto His brethren, then He must have suffered all the infirmities and passions of His brethren. Only so could He be able to help them. So He had to become man, not only that He might die, but that He might be able to sympathize with and succour those who suffer the fierce temptations which Satan brings through the weakness of the flesh. Two more texts that put this matter very forcibly will be sufficient evidence on this point. We quote first 2 Cor. 5:21:-

"For He [God] hath made Him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

This is much stronger than the statement that He was made "in the likeness of sinful flesh." He was *made to be sin*. Here is a greater mystery than that the Son of God should die. The spotless Lamb of God, who knew no sin, was made to be sin. Sinless, yet not only counted as a sinner, but actually taking upon Himself sinful nature. He was made to be sin in order that we might be made righteousness. So Paul to the Galatians says that "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that

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we might receive the adoption of sons." Gal. 4:4, 5.

That Christ should be born under the law was a necessary consequence of His being born of a woman, taking on Him the nature of Abraham, being made of

the seed of David, in the likeness of sinful flesh. Human nature is sinful, and the law of God condemns all sin. Not that men are born into the world directly condemned by the law, for in infancy they have no knowledge of right and wrong, and are incapable of doing either, but they are born with sinful tendencies, owing to the sins of their ancestors. And when Christ came into the world, He came subject to all the conditions to which other children are subject.

From these texts we are enabled to read with a better understanding Heb. 5:7, 8, where the apostle says of Christ:-

"Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which he suffered." Jesus spent whole nights in prayer to the Father. Why should this be, if He had not been oppressed by the enemy, through the inherited weakness of the flesh? He "learned obedience by the things which He suffered." Not that He was ever disobedient, for He "knew no sin;" but by the things which He suffered in the flesh, He learned what men have to contend against in their efforts to be obedient. And so, "in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." "For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need." Heb. 4: 15, 16.

One more point, and then we can learn the entire lesson that we should learn from the fact the "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." How was it that Christ could be thus "compassed with infirmity" (Heb. 5:2), and still know no sin? Some may think, while reading this article thus far, that we were depreciating the character of Jesus, by bringing Him down to the level of sinful man. On the contrary, we are simply exalting the "divine power" of our blessed Saviour, who Himself voluntarily descended to the level of sinful man, in order that He might exalt man to His own spotless purity, which He retained under the most adverse circumstances. "God was in Christ," and hence He could not sin. His humanity only veiled His divine nature, which was more than able to successfully resist the sinful passions of the flesh. There was in His whole life a struggle. The flesh, moved upon by the enemy of all unrighteousness, would tend to sin, yet His divine nature never for a moment harboured an evil desire, nor did His divine power for a moment waver. Having suffered in the flesh all that men can possibly suffer, He returned to the throne of the Father, as spotless as when He left the courts of glory. When He laid in the tomb, under the power of death, "it was impossible that he should be holden of it," because it had been impossible for the divine nature which dwelt in Him to sin.

"Well," some will say, "I don't see any comfort in this for me; it wasn't possible that the Son of God should sin, but I haven't any such power." Why not? You can have it if you want it. The same power which enabled Him to resist every temptation presented through the flesh, while He was "compassed with infirmity," can enable us to do the same. Christ could not sin, because He was the

manifestation of God. Well, then, listen to the apostle Paul, and learn what it is our privilege to have:-

"For this cause I bow my 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 fulness of God.*" Eph. 3:14-19.

Who could ask for more? Christ, in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, may dwell in our hearts, so that we may be filled with all the fullness of God. What a wonderful promises. He is "touched with the feelings of our infirmity." That is, having suffered all that sinful flesh is heir to, He knows all about it, and so closely does He identify Himself with his children, that whatever presses upon them makes like impression upon Him, and He knows how much divine power is necessary to resist it; and if we but sincerely desire to deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts," He is able and anxious to give to us strength "exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think." All the power which Christ had dwelling in Him by nature, we may have dwelling in us by grace, for He freely bestows it upon us.

Then let the weary, feeble, sin-oppressed souls take courage. Let them "come boldly to the throne of grace," where they are sure to find grace to help in the time of need, because that need is felt by our

Saviour, in the very time of need. He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmity." If it were simply that he suffered eighteen hundred years ago, we might fear that He has forgotten some of the infirmity; but no, that temptation that presses you touches Him. His wounds are ever fresh, and He ever lives to make intercession for you.

What wonderful possibilities there are for the Christian! To what heights of holiness he may attain! No matter how much Satan may war against him, assaulting him where the flesh is weakest, he may abide under the shadow of the Almighty, and be filled with the fullness of God's strength. The One stronger than Satan may dwell in his heart continually; and so, looking at Satan's assaults as from a strong fortress, he may say, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." E. J. W.

July 16, 1891

"The Power of Christ" *The Present Truth* 7, 15.

E. J. Waggoner

Romans 1:4.

"And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

The statement in this verse is a continuation of that in verse three, or, rather, is the complement of that; so this article must be but little more than a continuation of the preceding one. We have learned what is embraced in the statement that Christ was made of the seed of David, "according to the flesh," and now we have to note what he is to us "according to the Spirit of holiness."

"And declared to be the Son of God, . . . by the resurrection from the dead." This must not be understood as meaning that Jesus was not the Son of God before His resurrection, nor that He was not declared to be the Son of God before that time. We well know that He was the Son of God before the world was, and He was then glorified with the glory of the Father. It was as the dearly-loved, only-begotten Son of God that Christ came to this earth. When He was baptized, at the beginning of his earthly ministry, the voice of God came from heaven saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matt. 3:17. Upon the mount of transfiguration that voice again was heard, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." Matt. 17:5. And all through his earthly life, Jesus did not hesitate to declare Himself the Son of God. So we know that the resurrection did not affect His relationship with God.

It seems evident that the phrase, "according to the Spirit of holiness," must be the key to unlock the mystery. If we take the closing words of Jesus, as recorded by Matthew, we shall be upon the track of the correct explanation. He said:-

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matt. 28:18-20.

The kind of power that was given unto Christ may be known from what the disciples were to do: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach." Their going and teaching was based upon the fact that Christ had all power, and promised to be with them always. And this agrees with what Paul says in the verse immediately following the one quoted at the head of this article: "By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name." Rom. 1:5.

Now we may know how it is that Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead. He was the Son of God, whatever took place. But by the resurrection from the dead He acquired power to impart holiness to as many as should believe on Him. It is true that thousands lived holy lives before the first advent of Christ, but they did so only by the power which Christ obtained for them by virtue of His promised death and resurrection. It will be seen that the Scriptures sustain this exposition. We first read Heb. 2:14, 15:-

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy Him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

Christ took part of flesh and blood, in order that He might have power to redeem man. This does not in any way limit His power before He came to earth; but it is a simple fact that man could not have been redeemed except by the

blood of Christ. The law could not relax its claim, and so the Lawgiver consented to receive in Himself the penalty of His own law, and thus God can be just and the justifier of Him that believeth in Jesus. More than this, by His life of suffering and temptation, He learned how to sympathize with poor, weak mortals. And so the resurrection, which was the triumphant close of His earthly work for man, the thing toward which all His previous life tended, is said to be that by which He obtained power to fill His followers with holiness.

The apostle Peter bears testimony to the same effect. He says:-

"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.

As this text will come in again in our comment on Rom. 1:16, we pass it without remark for the present. In his second epistle Peter says:-

"Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue." 2 Pet. 1:2, 3.

Here is comfort, indeed. All things that pertain unto life and godliness are given to us by this divine power of Christ. Surely there is no manner of excuse for anybody's failing of righteousness and eternal life. Read now what the apostle Paul says:-

"For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 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 longsuffering with joyfulness." Col. 1:9-11.

The "glorious power" of God is shown in the heavens, which "declare the glory of God," and in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. This glorious power may be ours, so that we may be "strengthened with all might," to be able to "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." This power Christ can bestow on us, because He has experienced the very lowest ebb of human weakness, so that He knows just what help is needed. Therefore He is able to save to the uttermost those that come to God by Him.

It is a soul-cheering thought that human weakness, instead of being a bar to our overcoming, may be the very stepping-stone to victory. The apostle Paul had a weakness, which it seemed to Him was an insuperable obstacle to his fulfilling his divine commission, and so he besought the Lord to take it from him; but the Lord said:-

"My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

With this assurance the apostle said:-

"Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches,

in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong." 2 Cor. 12:9, 10.

But we are persuaded that it is not in physical weakness alone that Christ's strength is made perfect. The infirmities of the flesh, those tendencies which make us an easy prey to the temptations of Satan, call for the manifestation of divine power in an especial manner. In his list of the wonderful things accomplished by faith, the apostle tells of some who "out of weakness were made strong." Heb. 11:34. That is, the very weakness of their moral nature called for more of the divine power, and the greater the weakness, the more divine power was called for; and so it appears that the

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weakest point in our nature may, through the divine power of Christ, become our strongest point.

From this standpoint, then, we may even glory because of the weakness of our moral natures. Not that we should glory because we are or have been weak, but having been "strengthened with all might according to His glorious power," being "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might," we can glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world, with its lusts, is crucified unto us, and we unto the world.

"All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth," says Jesus. Let us not, then, tremble at the power of the enemy. Let us not talk about the power of the devil, for that will give him an advantage over us. By our very fear of him we give him power over us. He is a strong man armed, but Christ is the stronger than he, who has entered into his house, and bound him, and taken away his armour wherein he trusted. See Luke 11:21, 22; Rev. 1:18. His power is nothing in comparison with that of Christ. Let us, then, exalt the power of Christ, and joyfully trust it. No matter what the inherited or acquired weakness of character, nor how sorely the enemy may press, we may rest confident in the promise:-

"Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be. There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." Deut. 33:25-27. And in all these things we may be "more than conquerors through Him that loved us." E. J. W.

July 30, 1891

"The Obedience of Faith" *The Present Truth* 7, 16.

E. J. Waggoner

Romans 1:5.

"By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name."

This verse is of course dependent on that which has preceded, and the antecedent of the pronouns "whom," and "His," is the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord." The apostle's statement is, that by Jesus Christ he has received the grace to be an apostle, for obedience to the faith among all nations. The grace

which he says he has received, is more than the ordinary grace which is invoked upon all the saints, in the apostolic benediction. It is special grace for special work. In Eph. 1:7, 8, he expresses it thus:-

"Whereof [that is, the gospel] I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

Grace was given to Paul in large measure, simply because he was called to a great work. God gives to every man strength according to his day. So far as grace to overcome sin is concerned, Paul had no more of it than any man may have. Heaven has no special favorites; "God is no respecter of persons." The patriarchs, prophets, and apostles were men of like passions with us, and had no more aid in overcoming any habit than we may have in overcoming the same. Enoch "walked with God;" but that is nothing more than God requires of every man. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Micah 6:8.

But the special point of the verse under consideration is the expression, "obedience to the faith." Notice that the margin has it, "the obedience of faith;" and this is the exact rendering of the original. The same expression occurs in Rom. 16:26, where Paul says that the mystery of God, namely, the gospel, "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."

A somewhat similar expression comes in Acts 6:7, where it is said that "a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." By some, these expressions are supposed to refer to a system of faith; but we cannot so generalize. Faith is a personal matter. Obedience to a system, would be simply a performance of the rites of that system; but that would amount to nothing without the exercise of personal faith. When Paul said, "I have kept the faith," he meant that he had kept in his heart that faith which enabled him to fight the good fight, even the good fight of faith. With this view in mind, we shall see that it matters little whether we say "obedience to the faith," or "the obedience of faith."

The great characteristic of faith is, that it works. We do not mean that works are attached to it, but works come from it. "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." James 2:26. Faith "worketh by love," says Paul. There may be that which is called faith, but if no works proceed from it, it is not faith.

Obedience implies action; it is well-doing when it is rendered to God. But what we wish to emphasise is, that there is no well-doing except that which springs, *not* from the individual himself, but from his faith. A few texts of Scripture will serve to show this. Read first, Hab. 2:4. "Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith."

A just man is one who acts in harmony with the law of God. Therefore a just man is an obedient man. So we may understand the text as saying that an obedient man shall live (a life of obedience) by his faith. The obedience springs

from his faith, and therefore there is no chance for him to be lifted up, since the act of obedience is not his personal action, but is the action of his faith, and credited to him as his own. The man whose soul is lifted up in him, is the man who thinks that he can of himself do all that is required, and who as a consequence does nothing. Thus, "pride goeth before destruction."

In his letter to the Philippians, the apostle Paul said that his great desire was to win Christ, "And be found in him, 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. Faith itself brings righteousness, even the imputed righteousness of God through Christ, in the remission of sins. It is that righteousness which is "without the law, unto all and upon all them that believe." Rom. 3:21, 22. It is that righteousness which Abraham received, when he "believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Rom. 4:3. This righteousness is "imputed without works" (Rom. 4:6); it is bestowed as an act of God's free grace.

This imputed righteousness is simply "the remission of sins that are past," and may be called passive righteousness. The man is counted as though he had always been obedient, although he has never been obedient. The justice of this will be considered at another time. But following this there must be active righteousness through the remainder of life; for it is only to those who patiently continue in well-doing (righteousness) that God will render eternal life. Now this active righteousness is just as much the work of faith as is the other. This is shown by Phil. 3:9, already quoted, in which Paul says that he wants to be found not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is by faith of Jesus Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

The same is shown also by Paul's prayer, that the Philippians might be "filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ." Phil. 1:11. This is the righteousness, or the obedience, of faith. From these texts we are justified in saying that a man does good works, not in order that he may be righteous, but because he is righteous. His works will never bring righteousness, for the righteousness of God is only by the faith of Jesus Christ; and when he has once experienced that blessedness, he works because he cannot help it, unless he renounces his faith and his past experience. He works because the love of Christ constrains him. From this stand-point we can harmonize the obedience to the faith, with the obedience of faith.

This is not a mere theory; it is a practical truth. Because of a failure to comprehend it, thousands of professed Christians live most unsatisfactory lives. Like the ancient Jews, they follow after righteousness, yet they do not attain to it, because they work it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. Not realizing that no righteousness whatever can come except through faith, they seek to get themselves "into a place where the Lord can bless" them. But God's blessing is manifested, through Christ, in turning men away from their iniquities. Acts 3:36. "By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil." Prov. 16:6.

Paul was not commissioned to preach a gospel of self-righteousness, but the obedience of faith. Such righteousness does not commend itself to the mass of mankind, because it involves pain, and shame, and humiliation. It involves a

rating of self at the true value, which is nothing; an acknowledgment that we are so altogether sinful that we cannot even think that which is right; that if any good shall appear in us, it will be just as much the work of the Lord as were the steps taken by the impotent man, who was healed through the instrumentality of Peter. If men could buy righteousness and eternal life, or could earn it by hard labour, or even by undergoing torture, few would be without it; but because they can get it only by complete dependence

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on another, to whom all the honour must be given, their pride will not let them accept it.

Yet this obedience of faith, which is by Jesus Christ, is the only obedience which will gain for us an entrance through the gates into the eternal city of God. For in that day when a King, even the King of righteousness, shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth, in whose days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely, the name whereby He shall be called is, "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." Jer. 23:5, 6. E. J. W.

August 13, 1891

"Saints of God" *The Present Truth* 7, 17.

E. J. Waggoner

Romans 1:7.

"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, . . . to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints; grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

The first seven verses of the book of Romans constitute the introduction to the epistle-the salutation; but those who have read the preceding articles of this series will conclude, if they never thought of it before, that there is a world of thought conveyed even in one of the greetings of the apostle Paul. Not one word did he write in vain. The expression to which we wish to call especial attention in this article is, "called to be saints," or, more properly, "called saints."

The word "saints," is used throughout the Bible to denote the people of God, both while they are in this world, and after they have been redeemed. Paul, when on his missionary journeys, gathered money for the poor saints at Jerusalem. Rom. 15:25, 26; 1 Cor. 16:1. Three other epistles he addressed respectively as follows: "To The saints which are at Ephesus" (Eph. 1:1); "to all the saints in Christ which are at Philippi" (Phil. 1:1); and "to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse." Col. 1:2. In short, it is generally used as synonymous with "Christian." This should serve to give us an exalted idea of what it is to be a Christian, rather than an inferior idea of what it is to be a saint.

The Roman Catholic Church, with the arrogance characteristic of it, has assumed the prerogative of making saints. It holds that a saint is far different from the ordinary Christian, and confers the title of "saint" upon men long dead, much as a college will grant a post-graduate degree to one who since graduation has been particularly successful in certain lines of work or study. But this is

wholly a perversion of the Bible use of the term, for it properly belongs to all who are in Christ.

A saint is one who is sanctified. The two words have a common derivation. Paul addressed his first epistle to the Corinthians, "unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints." 1 Cor. 1:2. Sanctification is not, as some imagine, a special grace bestowed upon certain Christians, but is the condition of all who are truly Christians. All who are in Christ Jesus are sanctified, and for this reason they are called saints. The modern idea that a man may live for years in a justified state before God, and still know nothing of sanctification, is but another phase of the Roman Catholic idea that a saint is an extraordinary Christian-something more than a Christian. To be sanctified is looked upon, not as a necessity, but as a privilege granted to a few; and the result is a lowering of the standard of simple Christianity.

The word rendered "sanctified," means to consecrate, to devote to religious uses. The word rendered "saint," signifies the person or thing so devoted or set apart. I will quote the first definitions both of the Greek and the Latin words that are so rendered: "*Agios (hagios)* "devoted to the gods, (Latin, *Sacer*); and so I, in good sense, *Sacred, holy.*" Liddell and Scott. The Latin word *sanctus*, which is rendered "saint," is from the verb *sancio*, which is defined, "to render sacred or inviolable by a religious act; to appoint as sacred or inviolable." As used of legal ordinances, or other public proceedings, it meant, "to establish, appoint, decree, ordain; also to make irrevocable or unalterable." Harper's Latin Dictionary. These definitions will materially aid the reader in his understanding of sanctification, a subject which we can at this time scarcely more than hint at. In harmony with these definitions is the following comment by Dr. Barnes on the word "saints":-

"The radical idea of the word is, that which is separated from a common to a sacred use, and answers to the Hebrew word *Kadosh*. It is applied to anything that is set apart to the service of God, to the temple, to the garments, etc., of the priests, and to the priests themselves. It was applied to the Jews as a people *separated* from other nations, and devoted or consecrated to God, while other nations were devoted to the service of idols. It is also applied to Christians, as being a people devoted or set apart to the service of God. The *radical* idea, then, as applied to Christians, is that *they are separated from other men, and other objects and pursuits, and consecrated to the service of God*. This is the peculiar characteristic of the saints."

To be a saint of God is to be sanctified or consecrated to his service. The process is this: God calls all men. "The Spirit and the bride say, . . . Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Rev. 22:17. This call is extended to all men indiscriminately. The Spirit strives with every soul. At the door of every heart Christ stands and knocks. Some hear His voice, and open to Him. This is an invitation for Him to take complete possession. It is a surrender of self to God; a yielding to Him to be His bond-servant. This surrender of self to God, that His will may be the rule in every act, word, and thought, is the act of consecration to God. It must be a voluntary act on the part of the individual, yet it is the love of Christ which constrains to the act. The individual, having counted the cost, has deliberately given up the world with its sinful pleasures, has renounced all

purpose and desire to have His own way, and has accepted Christ as his sole Master. He is then devoted to the service of God, and is therefore sanctified, a saint of God.

From this it appears that sanctification does not necessarily imply perfection of character, in the sense that the expression is commonly used. The individual at first has no Christian character. The character is not changed in a moment from imperfection to perfection; but the yielding of one's self to Christ, for Him to work in the soul that which is good, may be the work of a moment. Old things are now passed away, and a new life begins. Although he does not attain at a single bound to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, he is not condemned, because all his acts are wrought in God. He is not sanctified because he is holy, but he is sanctified because he has put himself into the hands of God to be made holy.

Perhaps the following criticism by Olshausen, upon the word rendered "saints," may make the matter more clear:-

"The word in its *immediate* signification denotes no degree of moral perfection (the Corinthians, who were in so many respects deserving of blame, are called *hagioi*, saints), but refers to the separation of believers from the great mass of the *kosmos*, the Gentile world. Yet it doubtless also implies that Christians have been made partakers of the principle of a higher moral life, which, as in a course of development, is gradually to pervade the whole man, and produce perfect holiness. Now this principle is the Spirit of Christ, so that Paul's idea 'made us accepted in the beloved,' is also applied to the conception of *hagios*. Christians are holy on account of Christ who lives in them, and who is their true life."

Says the apostle Paul: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Col. 3:1-3. The phrase, "the higher Christian life," as applied to a condition higher than that of simple acceptance with God, is false and misleading. The Christian life is the highest life there is. It is a life in Christ, who sits at the right hand of God in heaven. Less than this is not a Christian life.

The object of this article is not to lower anybody's conception of sanctification, or saintship, but to elevate their conception of what it is to be a Christian; to impress upon the mind the fact that one who is not sanctified in Christ Jesus, and thus a saint of God, is not a Christian. Neither is it designed to discourage anybody. It would be false and cruel sympathy that would seek to encourage one by representing the Christian life as a low plane of living. The true way is to set forth the Christian life in its true light, and then point out the source of help.

The Christian life is continual progression. The Christian is a disciple, a learner; he is one who is engaged in a warfare, continually gaining victories; he is one running a race, ever drawing nearer the goal, which is "the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." His Master in the school is Christ, whose yoke he has taken, and from whom he learns; his leader in the battle is Jesus Christ, who, as Captain of the Lord's host, has all power in Heaven and earth to impart to his faithful followers, so that they may be more than conquerors through Him who loves them; and in the race that is set before them, they are to

run with perseverance, "looking unto Jesus." And so, "we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Cor. 3:18. E. J. W.

August 27, 1891

"The Church in Rome" *The Present Truth* 7, 18.

E. J. Waggoner

ROMANS 1:8.

"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world."

What a vast difference there was between the church in Rome in Paul's day, and the church of Rome to-day. Then their *faith* was spoken of throughout the whole world; not their *superstition* is the object of comment everywhere. Then their faith was *spoken of* by others throughout the whole world; now that which has been substituted for faith is published by themselves throughout the whole world.

It is a good thing when the faith of a church is so marked as to attract attention. But how was it that the faith of the church in Rome came to be known so widely and so well? It could not have been because the Romans told everybody of it, for that very thing would have proved that they didn't have it. It could not have been because people could see their faith, because faith is not a thing that can be seen. But the results of faith can be seen, and it was by these that the faith of the Romans became so generally known. In the nineteenth verse of the last chapter, Paul says to them: "For your *obedience* is come abroad unto all." True faith always works obedience, and that could be seen.

How many Christians there were in Rome, we have no means of knowing. There might have been a very large church, yet when we consider that character of that city, we know that the number of Christians must have been very small in comparison with the entire population. It was a heathen city. Nero, whose very name is a synonym for everything that is wicked, cruel, and licentious, was the emperor when Paul wrote his epistle. The character of a king and court largely determine the general character of the people. The lower orders ape the customs and morals of the higher. The love of place and power, and the desire for the recognition of loyalty, are always powerful factors in leading men to conform to the whims, the sentiments, and the morals of an emperor. History tells us that society in Rome at that time was rotten. This is the only word that can describe the condition of things.

With all his vices, Nero was luxurious. He had elegant tastes, and spent money lavishly in adorning the city. But effeminate vice always accompanies the lavish expenditure of wealth. Rome was the metropolis of the world, not simply as to population, but in matters of business and fashion. It was both the London and the Paris of that time. Of course, then, the thought and practice of the great mass of the people of Rome was anything but Christian.

Yet in the midst of this sink of iniquity there lived a handful of people whose faith was spoken of throughout the whole world. They were emphatically a *peculiar* people. They were in the world, and yet not of it. The fact that they lived in the most populous, the most fashionable, and the most wicked city in the world, did not hinder them from living "soberly, righteously, and godly."

It is right that the faith of Christians should be spoken of, but it is not necessary that they should do the speaking of it. All they have to do is to have the faith, and it will be known. Says Christ:-

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt. 5:14-16.

Just let, or allow, your light to shine. Have the light, and the world must necessarily see it. The darker the night, the more plainly can we see a lighted candle in the room; so the more of moral darkness there is in the world, the more distinctly should the light of truth be seen in the lives of Christians. They are to be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom they shine as lights. Phil. 2:15.

Christians are Christ's representatives in the world; that is, the world will learn of Christ through His followers. He is the light of the world, and they, receiving light from Him, are to transmit it undimmed to those around them. And this heavenly light shining in them shall increase more and more until it blends with the everlasting glory that shall cover the whole earth. E. J. W.

September 10, 1891

"Established by Spiritual Gifts" *The Present Truth* 7, 19.

E. J. Waggoner

ROMANS 1:9-11.

"For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established."

Was there ever another man in the world who carried so great a burden for others as the apostle Paul did? To the Ephesians he wrote that he ceased not to give thanks for them, making mention of them in his prayers, that God would give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. Eph. 1:15-17. To the saints at Philippi he wrote: "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy." Phil. 1:3, 4. Likewise to the Colossians he said: "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you." Col. 1:3. And so he did for the Thessalonians. 1 Thess. 1:2; 2 Thess. 1:3, 11. All these churches were the fruit of his own labour, and it is but natural that he should remember

them in his prayers; but he had never seen the brethren of Rome, yet he declares that he prays for them no less than for those among whom he had laboured and suffered. He could say of a truth that there was upon him daily, anxious care and solicitude for all the churches. 2 Cor. 11:28.

How much time Paul must have spent in prayer, to mention so many churches and individuals by name in his requests and thanksgivings! Must not this have been one secret of his great success? He had but one thought, one desire, and that was to bring men to Christ, and to strengthen those who had accepted him. He had received abundantly of the grace of God, and he felt himself a debtor to all mankind. That grace was not bestowed upon him in vain, for he says that he laboured more abundantly than all of the other apostles. 1 Cor. 15:10. It is probably safe to say that no minister ever lived who was more like Christ in carrying a burden for sinners, than the apostle Paul. The reason was, that he had an ever-present, overwhelming sense of what Christ had done for him. The grace of Christ will always manifest itself in this way, just to the extent that it is received and appreciated. It is not something that a man receives merely for his own enjoyment or profit, and that can be corked up in a bottle for private use, but it can be preserved only by dispensing to others.

So the apostle wrote to the Romans, whom he had never seen: "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me." His earnest desire for these brethren whose faith was spoken of in all the world, was that he might settle them in it so surely that nothing could shake them. This great burden of soul he expressed to the Thessalonians, when he said, "Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith." 1 Thess. 3:10. What a lesson there is here for all Christian ministers!

But how did he expect to establish these people? By imparting unto them some spiritual gift. The gifts of the Spirit are named by Paul in Eph. 4:11 and 1 Cor. 12:4-11. The first text says of Christ that "he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." In the other he says:-

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. . . . But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 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 kinds 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."

All these gifts come by the Spirit; so it is evident that when Paul said, "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift," he did not mean that he would bestow upon them the power to work miracles or to speak with tongues. He could not have done this if he had desired to. Moreover, it is not by the possession of these gifts that a person is established. They are given "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of

Christ" (Eph. 4:12); but a man may possess these gifts to the edifying of others, and he himself be lost. The apostle Paul had these gifts in greater measure than any other man, yet he had to keep his body under, lest after he had preached to others he himself should be a castaway (1 Cor. 9:27); and he says that a thorn in the flesh was given him to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations given unto him. 2 Cor. 12:7. It is evident, therefore, that Paul did not expect to establish the Romans by enabling them to exhibit the gifts of the Spirit, but rather, by the exercise of the gifts which were bestowed upon him, to build them up in the faith so that they might exhibit the fruits of the Spirit. It is the same thing that he wrote to the Corinthians, concerning the grace of giving: "We desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same gift also." 2 Cor. 8:6, margin.

Perhaps there are few who realise how well fitted the apostle was for this task. There is not one of the spiritual gifts that he did not possess. In the book of Acts we learn of his power to work miracles, to heal, and to discern spirits. His own writings give evidence of the spirit of prophecy that he possessed; and he says that he spoke with tongues more than all the rest, and that he would not speak without interpreting. 1 Cor. 14:18. He was an apostle, a prophet, an evangelist, a pastor, and a teacher. If any wish to know why he should be so highly favored above other men, we can only say that "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal," and Paul had such singleness of purpose, such whole-souled devotion, that he used to the utmost every gift bestowed upon him. God gives to every man all that he can and will use to his glory.

"To the end ye may be established." The gifts of the Spirit are for the building up of the body of Christ, and none of them has been used for this purpose more than the gift of prophecy. When Jehoshaphat had received from the prophet of the Lord a message for the people, he said: "Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper." 2 Chron. 20:20. And to the same effect Isaiah, when he had delivered a prophecy from God to the king of Judah, said to him, "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established." Isa. 7:9.

What, indeed, can establish the people of God like prophecy? Tongues are for a sign to them that believe not; miracles serve the same purpose, showing the power of God; but prophesyings instruct and warn. So the apostle says:-

"Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God; for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort." 1 Cor. 14:1-3.

The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. Rev. 19:10. It was the Spirit of Christ that was in the ancient prophets (2 Peter 1:10, 11), and that same Spirit is to be with his people even unto the end. Consequently we find that "the testimony of Jesus Christ," which is the spirit of prophecy, is to be found in the last state of the church-the remnant. Rev. 12:17. Paul, also, writing to those who

should live at the time of the coming of the Lord, says, "Despise not prophesyings." 1 Thess. 5:20.

The establishing power of the prophetic word is shown by the apostle Peter when, after relating the view which he had of "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," on the mount of transfiguration, he said: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." 2 Peter 1:19.

By the gift of prophecy we are shown when we are nearing the end of time; we are warned of the dangers incident to the last days. It foretells the widespread apostasy, so that none need be moved. While the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain all the truth that is necessary to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, there must be that same spirit of prophecy in the church, to shed light upon those prophecies, for "no prophecy of the Scriptures is of any private interpretation."

It is because of despising prophecies and prophesyings that so many have apostatized. The word of prophecy is a light, and when men turn away their eyes from it, they go into darkness, and soon stumble and fall. Their minds become blinded to the simplest truths. And since the prophetic word is a light shining in a dark place until the day shall dawn, and the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day, it is evident that as we approach the end we shall have more and more of the gift of prophecy to keep us from the darkness that covers the earth, and the gross darkness that covers the people. "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established." May God help us to believe. E. J. W.

September 24, 1891

"The Christian a Debtor" *The Present Truth* 7, 20.

E. J. Waggoner

Romans 1:14, 15.

"I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also."

The apostle Paul had no sympathy with those who would say, "The world owes me a living." For such a person he had only the sharpest rebuke. His command was "that if any would not work, neither should he eat." 2 Thess. 3:10. In the language quoted above, we have the sentiment of the true missionary—one who has given his life to the service of others.

But Paul did not take any credit to himself for his labour for others. He considered that he was simply working out a debt. To the Corinthians he wrote: "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is me if I preach not the gospel!" 1 Cor. 9:16. The question is, How did Paul become a debtor to all men? and, Did any obligation rest upon him

that does not rest upon every follower of Christ? The answer to both questions may be found in the Scriptures.

In the very beginning of his epistle to the Romans, Paul declared himself a servant of Jesus Christ. As we have already learned, this means that he was the life-long bond slave of Christ, yet his service was a willing service of love. He had given himself wholly to Christ, and was so closely identified with Him that he was counted as a son and a brother. This is the position of every Christian. "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price." 1 Cor. 6:19, 20. First of all, then, the Christian owes himself and all that he has to Christ, because Christ has bought him with His own blood.

But the fact that we owe ourselves to Christ, and that if we acknowledge that obligation we are to identify ourselves so completely with Him that the service will not be ours but His (1 Cor. 15:10), makes us debtors to all men. For Christ "died for all;" and in carrying out His work for men, he assumed an obligation to all men, although no man had of right any claim upon Him. Paul says that although He was in the form of God, He "made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant." Phil. 2:6, 7. And we are expressly exhorted to have this mind in us. Jesus himself said: "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." Matt. 20:26-28.

Christ gave His life "for the life of the world" (John 6:51); therefore everyone who yields himself to Christ, to become identified with Him and His work, becomes, like Him, a servant, not alone of the Lord Jesus, but of all for whom He became a servant. In other words, the Christian is Christ's servant; but as Christ's work is for the world, he who becomes a sharer of that work must become the servant of the world. Paul felt this to the utmost. He felt that he owed service to everybody that was in need; and so he did. The servant owes his service to the one who pays for it. Christ had bought the service of Paul by the sacrifice of himself; and when Paul recognised that debt to Christ and gave himself to the discharge of it, the Lord turned his service in the direction in which he himself laboured. The only way to be a servant of Christ is to serve those for whom he died. Wesley had some of the same spirit that Paul had, when he said, "The world is my parish."

The second great commandment in the law is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Our neighbor is everyone with whom we come in contact who is in need. Says Paul: "As we therefore have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Gal. 6:10. "As we have opportunity." That indicates that we are to seek occasion of serving men, and so Paul did.

To the Romans Paul said in another place: "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." Rom. 15:1-3. Thus again we learn that the work of Christ is to be the example for us; and He "went about doing good." Acts 10:38. Again Paul says: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." Gal. 6:2.

The trouble with too many who profess to be followers of Christ is that they do not feel any great sense of obligation. Sometimes they talk about "getting a burden" for the work, but what is that burden? It is nothing else but a sense of the debt which we owe to Christ, and consequently to the world. If a man owes a great deal of money, and has no means with which to pay it, he will necessarily feel as though he had quite a load upon his shoulders—a burden. So all that is necessary to enable a man to have a burden for souls is for him to realise how much Christ has done for him.

The one to whom much is forgiven will love much. Paul felt himself to be the chief of sinners, and so when he felt the pardoning love of God, he felt that he owed much service. And he never forgot how much had been forgiven him, nor how great was his dependence upon God, and so he always felt the burden of debt resting upon him. Those who have felt the burden of their sins, and who know that they are removed, will not have to strive to get a burden for souls. They will feel, like Paul, that necessity is laid upon them, and it will be the joy of their lives to discharge that obligation. E. J. W.

October 8, 1891

"The Gospel the Power of God" *The Present Truth* 7, 21.

E. J. Waggoner

ROMANS 1:16.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

There are few more comprehensive texts in the Bible than this. John 3:16 is another like it; either one of them could well be taken as the text for a sermon on almost any doctrinal subject, and they are of the greatest practical importance. They are vast treasure-houses, which can never be exhausted, but whose rich stores seem to increase in proportion as they are drawn upon.

The text tells us that the gospel is the manifestation of God's power, and before we consider the greatness of this power, and how it is applied, it may be well to note briefly what the gospel is. Primarily, the word means good news. It is the good news of a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord,—the good news of salvation. But a Saviour and salvation imply that somebody needs to be saved from something; and so the angel in foretelling to Joseph the birth of Christ, said: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus [Saviour]; for he shall save His people from their sins." Matt. 1:21. But sin brings death, for James says that "sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:15), and Paul tells us that "the wages of sin is death." Therefore since Christ came to save from sin, it is evident that he saves from death; and this is what the apostle says in Rom. 5:8, 9: "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."

When Christ saves from sin, he saves from the transgression of the law, "for sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:4. The law, of which sin is the

transgression, is the law of ten commandments, for, says Paul, "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. 7:7); and the only law which says, "Thou shalt not covet," is the ten commandments.

The tenth commandment is doubtless taken by the apostle to show how he was convicted of sin, because it is the only one of the ten the transgression of which is wholly in the mind, and it therefore affords the most direct proof of his later statement that "the law is spiritual." David said: "I have seen an end of all perfection; but thy commandment is exceeding broad." Ps. 119:96. We are told also that "the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Heb. 4:12. To the same intent the wise man wrote:-

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"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Eccl. 12:13, 14.

The injunction to fear God and keep his commandments, is based on the fact that God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, and derives its force from it. Therefore the text quoted is proof that the law of God has to do with every work and every secret thing. It is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. But we are not left to draw conclusions in this matter, for Jesus has told us plainly that murder may be committed in the heart, and that a single impure look and desire is a violation of the seventh commandment. See Matt. 5:21, 22, 27, 28. Solomon tells us, also, that "the thought of foolishness is sin." Prov. 24:9.

These few texts are quoted for the purpose of showing the nature of sin, that we may the better understand the power that is required to save men from it. In addition to these we might note the Saviour's statement that evil thoughts flow naturally from the human heart (Mark 7:21), and the words of God through the prophet, that the "heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Jer. 17:9. As showing the loathsome nature of sin, and how completely it has fastened itself upon men, we quote the words of the Lord through Isaiah:-

"Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters; they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more; the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores; they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." Isa. 1:4-6.

To save people from their sins is to change all this. It is not merely to forgive the sins of the past, but it is to save from sins in the future, by changing the heart and the whole being,-to make a man entirely new. It is no less a work than to cleanse a man "full of leprosy," or to raise the dead. The man who is saved from sin is saved from doing that to which his whole being naturally inclines. There is

no earthly power that can do this. No man can change his own nature so that good thoughts will come naturally from the heart in the place of evil thoughts; no man has power to resist the fierce temptations that come through the lusts of his own heart, and that have been strengthened by long practice. Nothing but the power of God can do that; and that power is manifested in the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation. Many doubt the efficiency of even this power, for they say it is impossible for them to overcome. "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." 1 Cor. 1:18.

It is the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses from sin. He "was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." Rom. 4:25. In this the power of God to save believers is manifested. The death and resurrection of Christ show not only the great love of God, but, also, his power to redeem. Note the words of the apostle Paul to the Ephesians, to whom he wrote that he ceased not to pray for them,-

"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. 1:17-20.

From this we learn that if we believe God, we shall know the exceeding richness of His power, even of that power which raised Jesus from the dead. The death and resurrection of Christ is God's pledge to us that He will save us from sin, if we believe in Him; and it shows the power that will be put forth in order to effect this. This was the thought in the mind of Paul when he wrote that he counted all things loss if he might win Christ, and be found not having his own righteousness, "but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith; that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Phil. 3:9-11.

To know the power of Christ's resurrection, is to experience the working of that same power, in the removal of sin, which God wrought in Christ when he raised Him from the dead. Who could fail with this strength?

It is of this power and its results that the apostle Peter speaks, when he says to us: "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." 2 Peter 1:2-4. This is an assurance that the divine power of God, exhibited in the resurrection of Christ, is amply sufficient to enable one to overcome all the lusts of the flesh This is what we are taught also in the following:-

"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.

What is it that will bring to us this mighty power? Faith in Jesus Christ. Let the sinner but have an intense desire to be freed from the bondage of sin, and let him have the faith that the man "full of leprosy" had when he said, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," and the Lord will say to him, as He did to the leper, "I will, be thou clean." If Christ dwells in the heart by faith, the soul will be strengthened with might by the Holy Spirit, according to the riches of the glory of God, and may "be filled with all the fulness of God." See Eph. 3:16-19. What greater power could one ask for than this? And the possession of this power is a sure antidote for sin, and a preserver against it, for sin is the working of Satan, and the resurrection of Christ from the dead marked His victory over Satan. He had entered into Satan's house and bound him, and had taken all his armour wherein he trusted, so that when He ascended into heaven He could say, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." Matt. 28:18.

And this power is continued so long as the person has faith. The gospel is the power of God *unto salvation*, to everyone that believeth. The same power that forgives the sin, and that changes the nature, will still remain to keep the soul from sin. Says Peter: "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 Peter 1:3-5. The power of God is the gospel of Christ, and the resurrection of Christ has begotten us unto a lively hope, because we know that the power of the gospel is the same power that brought Jesus from the dead, and is able to keep us, through faith, until the Lord returns.

Let none say then that he cannot overcome any evil habit. "But it is a part of my nature, and I have no power

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to resist it." Exactly, but the power of God can change the nature, and make a new man. It could change a leper, so that his flesh became like that of a child. It could give power to the man who was impotent from birth. More than this, it could raise the dead, even after the body had undergone decomposition, as in the case of Lazarus. All these things are done by the same power that raised Jesus, which is a pledge of all things that we need. Rom. 8:32. The same Spirit that raised up Jesus from the dead, will, if it dwells in us, strengthen us with the same power against sin, and, having kept us through faith unto salvation to be revealed when Christ comes, will quicken our mortal bodies, so that as we are now in spirit made to sit in heavenly places in Christ, we shall then be made to sit at his right hand, clothed in glory according to the riches of His grace. "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift." E. J. W.

October 22, 1891

"The Law in the Gospel" *The Present Truth* 7, 22.

E. J. Waggoner

ROMANS 1:16, 17.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

The apostle had just before stated that he regarded himself a debtor to all mankind, and that he was willing to preach the gospel even in the proud city of Rome, because, says he "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." The reason why he was not ashamed of the gospel, was that it is "the power of God unto salvation." Men glory in power; if they have none of their own, then they attach themselves to someone who has, and exalt in the power with which they are connected. The man who has the greatest power, or who thinks he has, has none of that apologetic air which characterizes the weakling. The ambassador in a foreign country feels boldness, and has a sense of pride in proportion to the greatness of the Government which he represents. Of course Paul's feeling was entirely different from the pride of self-exaltation of the ambassador of an earthly court; but as the ambassador of Christ, he felt that he had nothing to be ashamed of. The power which he represented was the power of God. Why should he be ashamed? Yet it is a fact that many who profess the name of Christ are ashamed and afraid to declare it. Must it not be because they have never experienced the power of the gospel in their own hearts? When one has actually felt "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," he cannot be ashamed of it.

But the seventeenth verse contains another reason why he is not ashamed, or, rather, an evidence that the gospel is the power of God, namely, "for therein is the righteousness of God revealed." What is the righteousness of God? and how is it revealed in the gospel? These questions should be settled here, for the expression, "the righteousness of God," is one upon which a great deal depends in the book of Romans. Pages upon pages have been devoted to this question by commentators, who have learnedly discussed the original; but the reader who depends solely upon the Bible for an answer will find it very easily.

In Deut. 6:25, after rehearsing the ten commandments, Moses says, "And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He hath commanded us." This follows from the fact stated in Ps. 119:172, where the psalmist says: "My tongue shall speak of Thy Word; for all Thy commandments are righteousness." Since all the commandments of God are righteousness, it is evident that those who do them will be righteous; for "he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He [Christ] is righteous." 1 John 3:7.

But the ten commandments are not simply righteousness in the abstract. They are the expression of the righteous character of God. Says the Lord, through the prophet Isaiah:-

"Hearken unto Me, My people; and give ear unto Me, O My nation; for a law shall proceed from Me, and I will make My judgment to rest for a light of the people. My righteousness is near; My salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon Me, and on Mine arm shall they trust. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but My salvation shall be for ever, and My righteousness shall not be abolished. Hearken unto Me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is My law." Isa. 51:4-7.

Those who know righteousness are the ones in whose heart is the law of God;

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and this righteousness God calls "My righteousness." That the commandments of God are an expression of His righteousness, may be shown in another way. The apostle Peter says: "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation [conduct]; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." 1 Peter 1: 15, 16. This is what God requires of us-to be holy, as He is. But the wise man says: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." Eccl. 12:13. Now since He requires holiness of all, and the keeping of the commandments is the whole duty of man, it follows that the keeping of the commandments constitutes holiness.

The proposition that in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, which is only stated here, is fully elaborated in the epistle later on, so that a few words on it may suffice at the present time. First, the righteousness of God-the law of God-is revealed in the gospel, because the gospel carries the law on its very forefront. Without the preaching of the law there can be no preaching of the gospel. The gospel is God's remedy for sin, which is the transgression of the law. All men are sinners, but all men do not realise that fact; for many who are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, think that they are rich and increased with goods. Rev. 3:17. Now it is evident that before such will listen to the counsel to buy the eye-salve, the gold tried in the fire, and the white raiment, they must be shown their condition. They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick; but they who are sick will not send for a physician until they are convinced of their illness, and shown that they need help. So it is useless to preach the gospel as the way of salvation, without showing the need of salvation; and the law of God is the only thing that points out sin.

But it is with a deeper meaning than this, that the apostle says that in the gospel of the righteousness of God is revealed. The opposite of sin is righteousness; and so when God remits-sends away-sin, He does it by putting righteousness in its place. Where once was sin, now appears perfect righteousness, "even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ

unto all and upon all them that believe." Rom. 3:22. The righteousness of God is declared for the remission of the sins of all who believe in Jesus. He cures the disease by putting health in its place. The righteousness which is brought to the believing sinner through the gospel, is the same thing exactly as the righteousness of the law, for it is witnessed by the law (Rom. 3:21); but it cannot be contained except in Christ, who, as the Word of God, is the embodiment of the law.

This gospel righteousness is the righteousness of which Paul speaks in Phil. 3:9, where his desire is that when Christ comes he "may be found in Him, 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." The fact that God cannot deny himself, proves that he can have but one righteousness; and therefore the righteousness of his law, and the righteousness which the gospel imparts,-the righteousness which is of God by faith,-must be the same righteousness. So we have the law before the gospel, the law in the gospel, and the law in the life as the result of believing the gospel. E. J. W.

November 5, 1891

"Living by Faith" *The Present Truth* 7, 23.

E. J. Waggoner

ROMANS 1:17.

"The just shall live by faith." Rom. 1:17.

This statement is the summing up of what the apostle has to say about the gospel. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, but only "to every one that believeth;" in it the righteousness of God is revealed. The righteousness of God is the perfect law of God, which is but the transcript of His own righteous will. All unrighteousness is sin, or the transgression of the law. The gospel is God's remedy for sin; its work, therefore, must be to bring men into harmony with the law,-to cause the workings of the righteous law to be manifested in their lives. But this is wholly a work of faith,-the righteousness of God is revealed from "faith to faith,"-faith in the beginning, and faith to the end,-as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

This is true in all ages since the fall of man, and will be true until the saints of God have His name in their foreheads, and see Him as He is. It was from the prophet Habbakuk (2:4) that the apostle quoted the statement. If the prophets had not revealed it, the first Christians could not have known of it; for they had only the Old Testament. To say that in the most ancient times men had but an imperfect idea of faith in Christ, is to say that there were no just men in those times. But Paul goes right back to the very beginning and cites an instance of saving faith. He says: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous." Heb. 11:4. He says of Noah, also, that it was by faith that he built the ark to the saving of his house; "by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Heb. 11:7. We say that their faith was in Christ,

because it was faith unto salvation, and besides the name of Jesus "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12.

There are too many who try to live the Christian life on the strength of the faith which they exercised when they realised their need of pardon for the sins of their past life. They know that God alone can pardon sins, and that he does this through Christ; but they imagine that having once been started they must run the race in their own strength. We know that many have this idea, first, because we have heard some say so, and second, because there are such multitudes of professed Christians who show the working of no greater power than their own. If they ever have anything to say in social meeting, besides the ever-recurring formula, "I want to be a Christian, so that I may be saved," they tell only of a past experience, of the joy they had when they first believed. Of the joy of living for God, and of walking with Him by faith, they know nothing, and he who tells of it speaks a strange language to them. But the apostle carries this matter of faith clear through to the glorious kingdom, in the following most forcible illustration:-

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Heb. 11:5, 6.

Note the argument to prove that Enoch was translated by faith: Enoch was translated because he walked with God, and had the testimony that he pleased God; but without faith it is impossible to please God. That is enough to prove the point. Without faith not an act can be performed that will meet the approval of God. Without faith the best deeds that a man can do will come infinitely short of the perfect righteousness of God, which is the only standard. Wherever real faith is found it is a good thing; but the best of faith in God to take away the load of the sins of the past will profit a person nothing unless it is carried right through in ever-increasing measure until the close of his probation.

We have heard many people tell how hard they found it to do right; their Christian life was most unsatisfactory to them, being marked only by failure, and they were tempted to give up in discouragement. No wonder they get discouraged; continual failure is enough to discourage anybody. The bravest soldier in the world would become faint-hearted if he had been defeated in every battle. Sometimes these persons will mournfully tell that they have about lost confidence in themselves. Poor souls, if they would only lose confidence in themselves entirely, and would put their whole trust in the one who is mighty to save, they would have a different story to tell. They would then "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Says the apostle, "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice." Phil. 4:4. The man who doesn't rejoice in God, even though tempted and afflicted, is not fighting the good fight of faith. He is fighting the poor fight of self-confidence and defeat.

All the promises of final happiness are to the overcomer. "To him that overcometh," says Jesus, "will I give to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne." Rev. 3:21. "He that

overcometh shall inherit all things," says the Lord. Rev. 21:7. An overcomer is one who gains victories. The inheriting is not the overcoming; that is only the reward for overcoming. The overcoming is now; the victories to be gained are victories over the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life,- victories over self and selfish indulgences. The man who fights and sees the foe give way, may rejoice; nobody can keep him from rejoicing, for joy comes spontaneously as the result of seeing the enemy give way. Some folks look with dread upon the thought of having to wage a continual warfare with self and worldly lusts. That is because they do not as yet know anything about the joy of victory; they have experienced only defeat. But it isn't so doleful a thing to battle constantly, when there is continual victory. The old veteran of a hundred battles, who has been victorious in every fight, longs to be at the scene of conflict. Alexander's soldiers, who under his command never knew defeat, were always impatient to be led into the fray. Each victory increased their strength, which was born only of courage, and correspondingly diminished that of the vanquished foe. Now how may we gain continual victories in our spiritual warfare? Listen to the beloved disciples:-

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." 1 John 5:4.

Read again the words of the apostle Paul:-

"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.

Here is the secret of strength. It is Christ, the Son of God, the one to whom all power in Heaven and earth is given, who does the work. If He lives in the heart to do the work, is it boasting to say that continual victories may be gained? Yes it is boasting; but it is boasting in the Lord, and that is allowable. Says the psalmist, "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord;" and Paul says: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Gal. 6:14.

The soldiers of Alexander were reckoned invincible. Why? Was it because they were naturally stronger and more courageous than all their enemies? No; but because they were led by Alexander. Their strength was in his leadership. Under another leader they would often have been defeated. When the Union army was fleeing, panic-stricken, before the enemy at Winchester, the presence of Sheridan turned their defeat into victory. Without him the men were a quaking mob; with him at their head they were an invincible army. If you had listened to the remarks after the battle, of the soldiers who served under those and similar leaders, you would have heard the praises of their general mingled with all their rejoicing. They were strong because he was; they were inspired by the same spirit that he had.

Well, our captain is the Lord of hosts. He has met the chiefest foe of all and has vanquished him single-handed. Those who follow Him invariably go forth conquering and to conquer. Oh, that those who profess to be His followers would put their trust in Him, and then, by the repeated victories that they would gain,

they would show forth the praises of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvellous light.

John says that he that is born of God overcomes the world, through faith. Faith lays hold of the arm of God, and His mighty power does the work. How the power of God can work in a man, accomplishing that which he could not possibly do for himself, no one can tell. It would be as easy to tell how God can give life to the dead. Says Jesus: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." John 3:8. How the Spirit works in a man to subdue his passions, and to make him victorious over pride, envy, and selfishness, is known only to the Spirit; it is sufficient for us to know that it is done, and will be done in everyone who wants that work wrought in him, above all things else, and who trusts God for the performance of it.

We cannot tell how Peter was enabled to walk on the water, when the waves were rolling about him; but we know that at the command of the Lord he did it. So long as he kept his eye fixed on the Master, divine power enabled him to walk as easily as though it were solid rock

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underneath; but when he looked at the waves, possibly with a feeling of pride in what he was doing, as though he himself was doing it, fear very naturally took possession of him, and he began to sink. Faith enabled him to walk on the waves; fear made him sink beneath them.

Says the apostle: "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed about seven days." Heb. 11:30. Why was that written? For our learning, "that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Rom. 15:4. Why, is there any prospect that we shall ever be called upon to fight armed hosts, and to take fortified cities? No; "for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12); but the victories which have been gained by faith in God over visible foes in the flesh, are placed on record to show us what faith will accomplish in our conflict with the rulers of the darkness of this world. The grace of God, in answer to faith, is as powerful in these battles as in those; for says the apostle:-

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh; 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. 10:3-5.

It was not physical foes alone that faith enabled the ancient worthies to conquer. We read of them that they not only "subdued kingdoms," but "wrought righteousness, obtained promises," and, most wonderful and most encouraging of all, "*out of weakness were made strong.*" Heb. 11:33, 34. Their very weakness became strength to them through faith, because the strength of Christ is made perfect in weakness. Who, then, shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? since it is God that justifieth, and we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall

tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Rom. 8:35, 37.

E. J. W.

November 19, 1891

"From Faith to Faith" *The Present Truth* 7, 24.

E. J. Waggoner

ROMANS 1:17.

"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

This expression has been the subject of much learned discussion by theologians, and very few of them are agreed as to its meaning. The fact that learned men are disagreed in regard to it, need not frighten us from it with the thought that it cannot be understood, for we read that things hidden from the wise and prudent are revealed unto babes. If we are but simple enough to accept the obvious Scripture meaning, as explained by the Scriptures, we need not be in darkness.

One of the greatest causes of the failure of many people to understand the book of Romans, and indeed any other portion of Scripture, is a failure to hold to first principles and Bible definitions. Men attempt to define some terms according to their theological training, and find it hard work to make them fit. Then if they at one time accept the Bible definition of a term, they do not adhere to it, but give it some other meaning the next time they meet with it. This can lead to nothing else but confusion.

The cause of the difficulty in understanding this text, is a failure to cling to the Bible definition of the term, "the righteousness of God." We have already seen that it is an expression indicating God's character, and that his character is set forth in the ten commandments. They sum up the whole duty of man, which is to be like God. The law, having been transgressed, cannot, as a matter of course, be perfectly represented in any person's life, and so the gospel was devised, that man might in Christ find the perfect righteousness of the law. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, because it makes manifest the righteousness of God. Not only is the law-the righteousness of God-preached, and its majesty upheld, by the gospel, but by the gospel the fruits of righteousness are made to appear in the life of the believer.

Some would make "righteousness of God" in this text synonymous with "justification." That is all right, if they do not limit the application of the text to the moment of justification from past transgression. It is the application of the law in Christ to the life of the transgressor that justifies him. Through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, God by His grace counts the past life of the sinner who believes as though it had been in every respect, in accord with his law. This is justification. It is the revelation, or manifestation, through the gospel, of the righteousness of God. But the text says that this is revealed "from faith to faith;"

and this can mean nothing else but a progressive work of righteousness. The verse teaches that the righteousness of God is revealed from one degree of faith to a higher degree of faith, and consequently that righteousness must ever be on the increase. This is shown by the quotation which the apostle makes to prove his statement. It must be that the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, he argues, because it is written, "The just shall live by faith." The force of this is found in the fact that the Christian life, which is the result of faith, is progressive. The Christian life is a continual growth. Peter says: "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 3:17, 18. The only way to keep from falling from that which we have, is to grow. David says of the righteous man that "he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water." Ps. 1:3. This means continual growth.

We read of the path of the just, that it "shall be as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Prov. 4:18. But "the just shall live by faith;" therefore it must be that their faith increases.

Again, Paul says to the Corinthians: "Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness." 2 Cor. 9:10.

To the Thessalonians he wrote: "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men." 1 Thess. 3:12. And again he said: "But we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more." 1 Thess. 4:16. But faith works by love; that is, love is the outgrowth of true faith; therefore increasing love must be the result of increasing faith.

To the Hebrews, the apostle wrote: "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection." Heb. 6:1. And in the epistle to the Philippians Paul said: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. 3:12-14. Here is set forth a continual reaching out for some higher attainment. The calling of God in Christ Jesus, is a calling to holy or righteous living, for we read: "But like as he which called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy." 1 Pet. 1:15, 16, Revised Version.

This righteousness to which we are called, and for higher attainments in which we must constantly press, is obtained only by faith, as Paul expresses his desire to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. Phil. 3:9. Therefore, since righteousness comes only by faith, and it must increase, it follows that faith must also increase. So it was not a vain prayer which the disciples uttered, when they said, "Lord, increase our faith." Luke 17:5.

That faith is susceptible of growth, is plainly declared by the Scriptures. Paul had hope that when the faith of the Corinthian brethren was increased, he should

be helped by them to preach the gospel in the regions beyond them. 2 Cor. 10:15, 16. To the Thessalonians he wrote that he prayed exceedingly night and day, that he might see them, and might perfect that which was lacking in their faith. 1 Thess. 3:10. And still later he wrote: "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth." 2 Thess. 1:3.

This last text contains the whole of the argument that we have made. Their faith grew, and as a consequence their charity abounded. Charity, or love, is the fulfilling of the law. It is the manifestation of the righteousness of God, and is a result of true faith, for faith works by love, and the only righteousness which will be accepted when the Lord comes is that which is by the faith of Christ, "the righteousness which is of God by faith." Such being the teaching of Scripture, there is no reason why we should not understand Rom. 1:17 just as it reads: The righteousness of God is revealed, or manifested, from faith to faith.

One or two notable instances recorded in Scripture will illustrate this. The apostle records that "by faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace." Heb. 11:31. This case has been a cause of stumbling to some who have not given careful thought to it. It is well known that Rahab lied to the men sent by the king of Jericho to seize the spies (see Joshua 2:2-6), and they imagine that in saving her God placed a premium on lying, and that it is right sometimes to lie. Neither is true. Rahab was saved, not because of her lie, but because of her faith. She, in common with all the people of Jericho, had heard how the Lord dried up the waters of the Red Sea, and how he had led the Israelites; but she alone, of all the inhabitants of Jericho, believed that the hand of the Lord was in the matter, and that he had given the land of Canaan to the Israelites. She had simple faith, but was totally ignorant of God's law. In the code of heathen morality, lying was accounted a virtue, and she knew nothing better. But her faith made it possible for her to be saved, and brought her into a place where she could learn righteousness. As a natural consequence her faith in God would increase when she learned more of Him. In her case we have a clear instance of the revelation of the righteousness of God from faith to faith.

The same thing is true of Cornelius. He feared God with all his house, and gave much alms, and "prayed to God always." As a consequence, an angel was sent to him, directing him to send for Peter, who should tell him what he ought to do.

The sum of the whole thing is that it is faith that brings God near to us. If we first believe that He is, He will reveal Himself to us more fully. If we rejoice in that light and walk in it, our faith will be increased, and that will bring more light. As with Rahab, so with all. God does not grant us a blessing because we are righteous, but in order that we may become righteous. When our faith brings us to Christ, it is that we may learn of Him. To our faith we add virtue and knowledge. But as faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, it follows that the more we really know-accept-of the word of God, the greater will be our faith. And so, increasing daily in faith, the just go on from strength to

strength, until the dawning of the perfect day ushers them into the immediate presence of God. E. J. W.

December 3, 1891

"Holding the Truth in Unrighteousness" *The Present Truth* 7, 25.

E. J. Waggoner

ROMANS 1:18.

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness."

God is love; yet "He reserveth wrath for His enemies." The gospel of Jesus Christ is a gospel of peace and love; but all who reject it will be "punished with everlasting destruction." 2 Thess. 1:8. Not only so, but the gospel itself reveals not only the righteousness of God, but also the wrath of God against those who spurn that righteousness. Said Christ: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Mark 16:15, 16. The wrath of God, which is revealed against unrighteousness, is not a light thing. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3:36.

God is "of purer eyes than to behold iniquity." Sin is foreign to his nature, and cannot be tolerated. But the punishment meted out to the wicked will not be solely because of their personal sins, that is, not simply because they themselves are wicked, but because by their wickedness they have hindered others from being good. Sin is contagious. It is not only a blood disease, making corrupt every part of the individual in whom it has a place, but it affects all who come in contact with the one so diseased. Says the wise man: "One sinner destroyeth much good." Eccl. 9:18.

An erroneous opinion generally prevails in regard to the expression, "who hold the truth in unrighteousness." It is usually regarded as applying to wicked men who have the true doctrines of the Bible, but do not practice them; but this is not the idea. The word here rendered "hold" means, primarily, to hold back, withhold, check, restrain, hold down. It implies more than simple possession; it conveys the idea of shutting up in prison, restraining the liberty, or crushing out. The Vulgate has *detineo*, to hold off, keep back, detain. The idea is that the unrighteousness of men prevents the spread of the truth. Wickedness hedges up the way of truth.

A good illustration of this is seen in the case of Jesus at Nazareth. When he first spoke to the people, their hearts responded, and they were forced to acknowledge the truth. But soon envy, jealousy, and evil passions assumed control, and drove out the good impressions that had been made. Then they began to say, "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not His mother called Mary? and His sisters, are they not all with us?" Their thought was, "What can this man tell us? we knew Him when He was a boy." And then the record says: "And He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." Matt. 13:58. They might

have received wonderful blessings, but they would not. They most effectually held, or shut up, the truth by their unrighteousness.

It is utterly impossible that a man should long possess the truth while pursuing an unrighteous course. Indeed, we may say that it is impossible that he should have the truth at all, while living in the commission of deliberate sin. For Christ is the truth, and the whole truth; whosoever has not Christ, has not the truth; and the man who lives an ungodly life has not Christ. It may be said that an ungodly man may possess a correct theory of truth. That is so, but a theory will not save him, neither will a mere theory advance the cause of truth. The truth which makes free is the truth as it is in Jesus.

The Word of God unhampered will grow and multiply. It will enlarge the one who has it. It must manifest itself. Said the prophet Jeremiah: "Then I said, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name. But His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." Jer. 20:9. But if the prophet had persisted in his first intention, and had refused to speak, that word which was as a burning fire shut up in him, would soon have gone out. The word of God is like a fire; but if a fire is confined, and not given vent, it will soon go out.

"Therefore we ought to pay the more earnest heed to the words which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." Heb. 2:1. The margin has it, "run out as leaking vessels." This shows that it is a wrong view of Rom. 1:18 which makes it teach that a man may possess the truth of God, and still be an ungodly man. He may have the truth, and may have been set free by it; but if he fails to give earnest heed to it, he will soon lose it all. The man who doesn't give heed to the truth which he knows, will soon lose it. He may retain a mental conception of the theory of the truth, but he can no more be said to be holding the truth than a man who has an articulated skeleton can be said to be holding a man.

That the idea that we have presented is the one that was in the mind of the apostle, is still further evident from what follows, namely, that the heathen once knew God, but lost that knowledge because they did not act in harmony with it. And when the truth has once leaked out of the heart, that person is an agent, it may be unconsciously, in the hands of Satan, to prevent some other one from receiving it. For "no man liveth to himself." E. J. W.

December 17, 1891

"Unprofitable Servants" *The Present Truth* 7, 26.

E. J. Waggoner

A very important lesson is conveyed by our Lord's illustration in Luke 17:7-10. It is not among Catholics alone that it is considered possible to perform works of supererogation. There are very many who, by their actions at least, hold that they can place God under obligations to them. Love of approbation, and the overvaluing of one's own deeds, are so universal that there are very few who do not at times have some traces of that disposition. With some the idea obtains that

God keeps a debit and credit account, charging each individual with his evil deeds, and giving him credit for all his good deeds, and that if the good overbalance the evil, then God owes him a reward. With this idea, more or less clearly defined, most worldlings flatter themselves that their case will be all right at the last.

Many professors often imagine that God is under some obligation to them, and they manifest it in various ways. If they have given somewhat liberally to the cause of God, and have not been prospered as they think they should be, they withhold their gifts. They do not propose to work for the Lord unless they can receive at once large returns on the investment. Others find it difficult when times are hard to make as good a living for their families as they desire, and so they say, "We cannot afford to keep the Sabbath." As much as to say, "If God does not furnish me with everything I want, He need not expect my services." Still others look for their reward in appreciation of their work by their brethren. If their efforts are not estimated at their true value, they become discouraged, and refuse to work because they are not appreciated.

Now against all feeling of this kind, our Lord utters a rebuke. Summing up the case, he says: "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do." The truth is that the obligation is upon the side of man. The fact that God created us and preserves us alive, places man under obligation to give his whole service to God. Jeremiah says, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed." Every moment of man's life places him under greater obligation to God than he can ever hope to fulfil. And as this mercy is extended to all, it is not alone the professed Christian who owes service to God. Sinners are under as much obligation to God as though they had made a profession to serve him. But if we repent, and obey the commandments of God in every particular, how does the case stand then? We are still unprofitable servants. God is none the richer for our service. There is a vast amount of sin that we have committed in the past, and as we can do no more than our duty from day to day, we are still largely in debt. Were it not that Christ has been set forth "for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God," the best of men would fail to obtain heaven.

And so after all that has been done, eternal life must be "the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." A proper appreciation of this would serve to keep us humble, and prevent many mistakes made on account of our self-sufficiency. Let us be careful lest we become lifted up because of the faith that we have, and so lose the grace of God which is promised to the humble. The more real faith we have in Christ the more will we acknowledge our entire dependence upon Him, and our own utter weakness. Let us heed these words of the apostle: "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." Rom. 12:3. E. J. W.