**“‘The Open Grave’” The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald 75, 45.**

E. J. Waggoner

***Present Truth.***

In the city of Hanover, Germany, there is in one of the churchyards a grave which attracts the attention of hundreds of visitors every year. Pictures of it are to be found for sale in nearly every stationer’s shop, and it is known far and wide as “The open grave.” The history of it is in brief this:— {ARSH November 8, 1898, p. 711.1}

More than a hundred years ago a woman was buried there, and the following inscription (whether by her own direction or not, I do not know) was placed on the lowermost stone of the tomb: “This grave, purchased for eternity, must never be opened.” {ARSH November 8, 1898, p. 711.2}

The grave, as will be seen from the illustration, was covered with heavy stones, the top one being a solid block that doubtless weighs not less than a ton, and all the stones were firmly bound together with iron bands. But no human device can hinder the working of the power of life. Either a seed fell into the grave before it was closed up, or else a shoot from a tree penetrated the grave from beneath, and in obedience to the law of life, proceeded to make its way to the light. {ARSH November 8, 1898, p. 711.3}

Slowly and imperceptibly, but with irresistible power it forced its way between the huge stones, and burst every iron band. Now there is not a single stone left in its original position, although no hand of man has ever presumed to try to move them. {ARSH November 8, 1898, p. 711.4}

A vigorous birch-tree is now growing from the open grave which was to remain closed to all eternity. The tree is flattened where it comes in contact with the huge covering stone, so that it fills the entire aide of the grave, but immediately above the block it assumes the natural, round shape, and is about fifteen inches in diameter. {ARSH November 8, 1898, p. 711.5}

There is in the same churchyard another grave that has been opened in the same manner by a small locust tree, but it does not attract the attention that the first one does, since it has no inscription and no iron clamps. Both however teach the same thing, namely, the power of life. {ARSH November 8, 1898, p. 711.6}

How easily the voice of God sounding from heaven can rend all the tombs! That voice which at the last day will shake the earth, and open every grave, is but the same voice which in the beginning said, Let the earth bring forth grass and trees; and although no sound of it is heard, that Word is able, as we have seen to break every bond. That is the power of the resurrection. {ARSH November 8, 1898, p. 711.7}

But the power of the resurrection of the last day is only the power which Jesus Christ, who is risen from the dead, exerts in every believer. He is near to every soul, with all the power of His resurrection life. “The Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the Word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Romans 10:8, 9. {ARSH November 8, 1898, p. 711.8}

That word, which at the last will open every grave, and whose power is shown in the bursting of the iron bands that were designed to keep the Hanover grave closed, is able to burst every bond that would hold any soul down to this earth and its groveling life. Jesus still comes as of old, anointed with the Holy Spirit, “to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.” Who will listen to Him? “Hear, and your soul shall live.” {ARSH November 8, 1898, p. 711.9}

**“Imagination Is Idolatry” The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald 75, 48.**

E. J. Waggoner

***Present Truth.***

Imagination is not a gift of God. It is the perversion of God’s gift. It is the result of refusing to let God Himself direct the faculties which He has given us, and trying to direct them ourselves. One has no right to imagine anything. Imagination is but an *ignis fatuus* that leads men into a fog. The first chapter of Romans tells what it does for men. They had the knowledge of God,-that is, of the truth, for God had showed it unto them. But they did not like to retain God in their knowledge; they did not like to admit that they were not wise in themselves. So they proceeded to find out the truth by their own “reason.” But God is the only source of reason, and “reasoning” without Him is only vain imagination. They saw wisdom and power displayed in the things that are made, and which are growing. But they would not acknowledge that it was God’s power and wisdom that were manifested there, for in that case they would have been obliged to acknowledge that it was only by His power and wisdom that they themselves lived and acted and thought. This they would not do, for they professed themselves to be wise; they put themselves in the place of God. Then there was nothing left for them but to say that the things that were made were God, thus changing the truth of God into a lie. Instead of seeing God in everything, they imagined that everything was God, because they rejected the truth to begin with. The truth is that God’s power and divinity are to be seen working in everything that is made; the lie is to say that the power and wisdom originate in the things that are made whether it be men or the grass of the field. When men substituted their own imaginations for pure reason, it naturally followed that they gave those imaginations visible form, and so image worship was the result. Imagination is simply the forming of an image in one’s own mind. The image that is formed is only the imagination of the heart made visible. To make images is idolatry, whether they be formed by the hands, or only retained in the heart. {ARSH November 29, 1898, p. 762.1}

The work of the Gospel is to cast down imaginations. “Every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God,” must be overthrown, and every thought must be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Imagination has no place in God’s work. He deals in facts, not in fancies. The gospel is a fact. There is no speculation about it. We have only to believe what is real, that which has been done and finished. {ARSH November 29, 1898, p. 762.2}

Think what heights of knowledge we all might have attained to even in our short lives, and with our meager advantages, if we had never learned anything but the truth. We might not have been able to make much of a display, but we would have had something of solid value. One bag full of wheat is worth more than a thousand bags full of air. That which made Jesus of Nazareth superior to all the men of His day was the fact that He held Himself rigidly to the truth. Thank God that even though we have turned every one to his own way, and have filled ourselves with winds of teaching, it is never too late to learn the truth. If we come to Jesus in humility, He will transform us by the renewing of our minds, even giving us His own perfect mind. {ARSH November 29, 1898, p. 762.3}

Jesus Christ is the wisdom of God, and he is of God made unto us wisdom as well as righteousness. God’s Word is the only source of wisdom; “for the Lord giveth wisdom; out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.” Now since imagination is the deadly foe of the truth and of wisdom, it is evident that in dealing with the Scriptures, above all things, every trace of imagination should be rigidly excluded. Nothing of self must be allowed any place. We must hold ourselves as nothing, not bringing to the study of the Word any preconceived ideas, or rather, what men are pleased to call ideas. We must be silent before the Lord, believing that every word of God is absolute truth, and allowing Him to fill us. Then there will be no mistakes. Then there will be no danger that we shall fall into error. All who do this will see the truth, and will be “perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” Only in this course is there safety. In thus humbly submitting to be taught of God, not presuming to originate a single thought for ourselves, there are possibilities of almost infinite wisdom for the poorest and humblest souls. They who acknowledge God as the One who is all in all, have access to “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” {ARSH November 29, 1898, p. 762.4}

“Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.” 1 Corinthians 4:18. {ARSH November 29, 1898, p. 762.5}