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

E. J. Waggoner

**Notes on Lesson for Feb. 10.**

**THE CHARGE OF JOSHUA**

The number of times that the Lord tells Joshua to be strong and of a good courage is worthy of note. After telling him that he will be with him even as he was with Moses, and that he will not fail him, the Lord says, “Be strong and of a good courage,” chapter 1:6; then follows the assurance that he shall divide the land among the Israelites. In the next verse he says again, “Only be thou strong and very courageous.” Then follows an admonition to do according to all that was written in the law, and to meditate upon it day and night; and then exhortation is again given: “Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed.” {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 53.1}

The Lord does not desire that his people should give way to discouragement. The same exhortation that was addressed to those who were about to enter into the earthly Canaan, is applicable to the Israel of God, who are striving for an inheritance in the heavenly Canaan. “Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed.” Why not to be discouraged? Are we not weak? and is not our enemy powerful? Would it not be presumptuous in us to feel strong and confident? Yes; it would if we depended only on our own strength; but fortunately we have also the same promise that was made to Joshua. It is this: “For the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.” And he has also said, “I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.” The Christian should ever realize this glorious truth: “The eternal God is my refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” Knowing this, how can he be discouraged? The apostles exhortation is, “Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.” Ephesians 6:10. {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 53.2}

**HOLY THINGS**

It is sometimes claimed that there is no such thing as holy time; that is absurd to think that one day is really any better than another; that man can make any day a holy Sabbath by resting upon it. It would be interesting to hear such ones explain Joshua 5:15. The case is similar to that of Moses at the burning bush. Joshua had seen the man standing by Jericho, and had learned that he was the “captain of the host of the Lord.” “And the captain of the Lord’s host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.” Now did the ground become holy because Joshua took off his shoes, or was it holy before? The answer is, It was holy before, for the Lord said so. Then it seems that there may be a difference between things of the same kind. There was no outward difference between the ground on which Joshua was standing and the ground in other places, yet there was a difference. One was holy, on account of the presence of the Lord, the other was not. The ground on which Joshua stood would have remained holy even if he had not removed his shoes. So it was with the Sabbath. The Lord has made it holy, and it will remain holy whether man regards it or not. The failure to discriminate between the holy and the profane is that which brings the judgments of God upon mankind. {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 53.3}

**THE DEFEAT AT AI**

In this case it was well shown how dependent the people were on God. When they trusted in themselves they failed. And what was the reason that God was not among them? Because there was sin among them. And by this we can learn the necessity of the church being pure as a whole. There was only one man in the camp of Israel that hac transgressed, yet God withheld his presence from them. So a single individual in the church may, by his wrong course, defeat all the labors of those who would make advance moves. This also shows the necessity of maintaining strict church discipline. The sin of Achan was imputed to the entire camp, until the offender was searched out and punished. The record says, “But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing; for Achan... took of the accursed thing.” Yet there is no evidence that anybody besides Achan was concerned in the theft, or knew of it. The Lord showed by this that he would have his people have a care for one another. We are each our brother’s keeper. The Lord has said, “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and shall not suffer sin upon him.” Leviticus 19:17. When the church, then, searches out the erring one, and rebukes him, it is doing that which is absolutely necessary to its own existence. Just as a man cannot be said to be sound if one of his limbs is diseased, so the church is not pure unless each individual member is walking orderly. And each person should also consider how much responsibility attaches to his course. By a wrong course he may involve many others in his own ruin; so true it is that “none of us liveth to himself.” {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 53.4}

**THE MIRACLE AT GIBEON**

“Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies.” “So the sun stood still in the midst of the heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.” Some, in their eagerness to overthrow the Sabbath of the Lord, have found in this occurrence a loss of time. But there was no time lost. It was simply a lengthening of the day. If such a miracle should occur on the Sabbath, it would simply lengthen the Sabbath. Two days were not combined in one, but it was one long day. “And there was no day like that before it or after it.” {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 53.5}

Skeptics find an abundance of food for caviling in this miracle, as, indeed, they may in any. But the Bible student need not be troubled about it. To say that it could not occur, is in reality to deny that God is the creator of the heavens and the earth; for if God made the planets it is certain that he can control them. It is said that God instituted fixed laws by which they should be governed. Very true; but did he put those laws out of his own power? The maker of a threshing machine designs that it shall work according to a certain plan; yet he can stop the machine without altering the plan. One thing is certain: the universe did not create itself. Although the mind of man cannot conceive of its extent, nor fathom the laws by which it is governed, there must be a creator who is infinitely greater than the universe. “He taketh up the isles as a very little thing.” It is evident that the Creator can do as he pleases with what he has created. If it is asked how it is possible that such a miracle could be performed without disarranging the whole planetary system, I would reply, “I do not know; I cannot imagine; If I could, it would cease to be a miracle.” The disbelief in miracles arises from the fact that men are too proud to acknowledge that there is anything which they cannot understand. He who believes only what he can comprehend and explain, will have a very short creed. It is no shame for man to confess that he cannot by searching find out God. E. J. W. {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 53.6}

**“Unwarranted Modesty” The Signs of the Times, 9, 5.**

E. J. Waggoner

The *Sunday-school Times* very justly says that it “requires character as well as courage to admit that one does not know what he is supposed to know—or what he supposes he is supposed to know.” It then gives some instances of this trait of character, and says:— {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 55.1}

“Yet, so rare is the courage and so rare is the character which prompts and justifies such answers as these, that it is too often a surprise when a man admits his ignorance on a point concerning which his opinion is sought. Just now there is widespread comment on President Woolsey’s frequent confessions of inability to understand all the mysteries, or to solve all the perplexities, in the Bible text on which he is commenting week by week, and in the *Sunday-school Times;* and it is admitted on all sides that these frank confessions are a proof of his superiority. Never be afraid to say that you do not know—when you do not know.” {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 55.2}

With the last sentence we heartily agree. But with all respect to President Woolsey’s superior ability-which is under question-we deny that proof of his superiority is found in his confession of inability to understand certain portions of Scripture. We refer especially to one that was made in the *Times* of Sept. 2, 1882, where, in commenting on Mark 13:30 he said, “This passage is surrounded with very grave difficulties, which the Sunday-school expositor had better look boldly in the face and then pass on.” The 28th and 29th verses of this chapter read thus: “Verily I say unto you, that this generation [the generation that should witness the fulfillment of the signs] shall not pass till all these things be done.” Now we hold that the preceding verse is a positive command for us to know in regard to these things; and to claim ignorance under the circumstances is not a mark of superiority. It is a sin. {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 55.3}

It is always well to be humble; but willing ignorance is not proof of humility. What would be thought of a Professor of mathematics who should say, “It is claimed by some that two and three are five, yet there are grave difficulties in regard to it, which the student should look boldly in the face, and then dodge; we must not be dogmatic.” Everybody would say that he was unfit for his position. When a thing is plain, it is only an act of simple manliness to speak decidedly in regard to it. So in the case under consideration. Christ’s language throughout the chapter is clear and plain. He briefly maps out the history of the world till the close of time, and gives certain signs which will immediately precede his coming. Then he says we may *know* that his coming is at hand. To say, then, that we do not know that it is near, is no assumption of superior wisdom, nor mark of egotism in those making the claim, but simple obedience to our Saviour’s command. {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 55.4}

The man in the parable, when asked why he had not on a wedding garment, was speechless. We would not care to meet our Lord with no other excuse for not being prepared than that we could not understand his directions. We very much fear that he would say, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge, I will also reject thee.” In a case of this kind, it is not safe to make experiments. {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 55.5}

But there is another side. The same individuals who are so fearful of appearing dogmatic on the subject of Christ’s coming, seem never to be troubled with that fear in regard to another subject-the immortality of the soul. There is no doubt in their minds on that point. That the soul of man is immortal is held to be so certain that it is useless to argue it. Disbelief in that is considered synonymous with disbelief in the Bible and Christianity. And what is the ground of this positivrness? Simple inference. Nowhere in the Bible is the statement made that man is immortal, *i.e.,* undying, excepting in Genesis 3:4; and as that statement was made by Satan, the father of lies, it must be discounted about one hundred per cent. The Bible plainly states that “God only hath immortality,” that if man obtains it he must “seek” for its; that it is the “gift of God” “through Jesus Christ our Lord,” and that it will be bestowed only on the righteous, and at the coming of Christ. Yet in the face of all this, those who are not ashamed to confess their ignorance of a thing which Christ has commanded us to know, have no hesitancy in affirming that man is naturally immortal. {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 55.6}

There is another point on which we would like to have our friends follow their own advice,-“Never be afraid to say that you do not know, when you do not know.” It is in respect to the Sunday. Our “orthodox” friends feel very confident that the first day of the week is the Sabbath-so confident that they want to force everybody to observe it, at least outwardly. Yet nowhere in the Bible is it stated that Sunday is the Sabbath. Nowhere is Sunday called by any other name than simply “the first day of the week.” Nowhere is it stated that Christ or his apostles or anybody else ever observed that day. On the contrary it is expressly stated that the “seventh day is the Sabbath;” that that day must be kept holy, but that the other six, including the Sunday, are “working days;” that God did the greatest part of his creative work on the first day; the disciples of Jesus did work on that day, which they would not do on the Sabbath; and that Paul used it as an ordinary traveling day. Now as it is an impossibility for one to know that which is not true, would it not be the part of modesty, to say the least, for our friends to admit that they do not know that Sunday is the Sabbath? {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 55.7}

We will not press the matter further. We admit that we do teach the doctrine of the second coming of the Lord with great confidence, but since the Bible alone is the ground of our confidence, we think we do well to be confident. To those who dare not speak with confidence on this point, but are very certain of the other points which we have mentioned, we quote the words of Paul. “Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.” E. J. W. {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 55.8}

**“The Coming of the Lord—Why We Write About It” The Signs of the Times, 9, 2.**

E. J. Waggoner

The following is from the *Christian Herald* (Disciple), of Monmouth, Oregon:- {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 55.9}

“The SIGNS OF THE TIMES spent a good deal of its time in writing about the second advent of Christ, and talks as though nobody except the Seventh-day Adventists believes that Christ is ever coming again to this earth. The SIGNS ought to know that when it is trying to prove the second advent of our Saviour it is wasting its paper and ink. The truth is we are caring but little about the matter, for we simply accept the fact of his coming, and as to the *time*, we are not in the least concerned.” {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 55.10}

What has the *Herald* been doing, that it does not want to hear about the coming of the Lord? When a child manifests indifference in regard to the return of his father, who has been absent, it is generally attributable to one of two causes: Either the child has no love for his father, and does not desire to see him; or else he has been doing that which he knows to be wrong, and fears that he will receive the punishment which he richly deserves. Which one of these reasons applies in the present instance? {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 55.11}

“The truth is we are caring but little about the matter,” says the *Herald*. Well, that is just what we spend so much of our time writing and talking about it; and inasmuch as there are thousands of persons who are in the same condition that the *Herald* is, we think we cannot justly be accused of wasting our time. At any rate, we do not propose to stop. In fact, we dare not stop, for we have the following urgent command laid upon us: “Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land tremble.” Joel 2:1. Why all this alarm? What need is there of any unusual demonstration? Answer: “For the day of the Lord, for it is nigh at hand; a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and a thick darkness.” Surely there is reason enough to talk about it. {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 55.12}

But, says the *Herald*, “we simply accept the fact of his coming, and as to the *time* we are not in the least concerned.” Therefore it thinks that nothing more need be said. Now we are very well aware that almost all bodies of professed Christians accept the fact that Christ is coming; but that is not enough. The trouble is that they are content with the mere expression of their belief that he will come sometime, but are not particular as to *when* he comes, or, seemingly, as to whether he comes *at all*. Now the command is “blow ye the trumpet *in Zion, and* sound an alarm *in my holy mountain*.” It is among God’s professed followers that the alarm is to be made; those who nominally care anything about it. Is there not need enough for an alarm to be sounded, when even the “watchmen on the walls of Zion,” hold their peace, and publicly profess that they care nothing about what is coming? The command is given to these watchman. “Go through, go through the gates: prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones, *lift up a standard* for the people. Behold the Lord hath proclaimed *unto the end of the world*. Say ye to the daughter of Zion. Behold, thy salvation; behold his reward is with him, and his work before him.” But the watchmen refuse to lift up the standard, or to clear the way so that the people may walk in the law of the Lord, and thus be prepared for his coming. And this explains why they are not caring for his coming. To the command to “ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls” (Jeremiah 6:16), they have replied, “We will not walk therein.” No wonder they do not want to hear of his coming. {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 55.13}

Perhaps some one will say that we are straining a point, and that these “old paths,” this “good way,” in which they have said they would not walk is not the Law of the Lord. Then read what follows: “Hear, O earth; behold I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, *because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law*, but rejected it.” Verse 19. But we will speak further on this point at another time. {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 56.1}

The *Herald* says it is not caring about the coming of the Lord. Well, we *do* care about it, and for these very good reasons:- {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 56.2}

1. *We shall then be with Christ*. He himself says, “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there he may be also.” John 14:2, 3. Paul also says, “For this we say unto you *by the word of the Lord*, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven* with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17. There is no other way than this that we can ever go to dwell with the Lord; therefore the coming of the Lord is to us a matter of considerable importance. {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 56.3}

2. *We shall then be made like him*. “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that *when he shall appear, we shall be like him*, for we shall see him as he is.” 1 John 3:1, 2. “For our conversation [commonwealth] is in Heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” Philippians 3:20, 21. Many persons pay a great deal of attention to the adorning of their bodies; but no amount of the earthly adorning can make them compare with Christ’s glorious body. With the hope that this promise will soon be fulfilled, we can be content even if we are ill-favored now. {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 56.4}

3. *We shall then receive a crown*. Peter exhorts those who are placed over the flock, to feed them, and says, “And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, he shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not the way.” 1 Peter 5:4. And Paul also defines still more closely those who will receive this crown. “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course. I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but *unto all them also that love his appearing*.” 2 Timothy 4:7, 8. Then it appears that we must do something more than merely to admit that Christ is coming, if we obtain the crown; we must *love his appearing*. But what we love we think about; and “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” Paul intimates that he loved the appearing of Christ; and that fact is evident from his writings, because he speaks of that more than of any other thing. Every letter that he wrote contains more or less reference to Christ’s coming. Will the *Herald* say that he wasted his paper and ink? We have not said so much about it as Paul did, but we mean to do better in the future, and thus obey the command to “exhort one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.” If we love his appearing more we should talk about it more, and try to induce others to love it also; and if everybody loved it, then surely we would talk about it more than ever; it would be an ever joyous topic of conversation. {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 56.5}

4. *At Christ’s coming we shall be made immortal*. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:51-54, that at the sound of the last trump the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and the living shall be changed; that it is then that this corruptible will put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality. We long for that time to come. {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 56.6}

Have we not good reason to care for our Lord’s coming? Here we suffer pain; we are often obliged to confess that we are sick; on account of the weakness and feebleness of our mortal bodies, we are unable to do much that we would like to do. We lose our friends, and are often obliged to mourn. But when Jesus comes all this will cease. “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.” “He that testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly, Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus.” E. J. W {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 56.7}

**“A Word to Missionary Workers” The Signs of the Times, 9, 5.**

E. J. Waggoner

What would be thought of a minister of the gospel who did not pray before conducting a meeting or preaching a sermon; one who never prayed for the success of the work in which he was engaged, or who never made those under his care the subject of a special prayer? People would say of such an one that he was not very deeply interested in his work, and they would not be disappointed if it should be a failure. The successful minister not only prays for the success of his work in general, but the individual members of his congregation are the subjects of his daily secret prayer. He feels personally responsible for their salvation. Night and day they are upon his mind, and he is planning for their good; thinking how he can encourage those who believe, and how those yet unconverted may be reached in the best manner. Ii is expected that the minister of the gospel will do this; it is well known that if he does not do so, all the success that may attend his labor will be, in a measure, accidental. {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 56.8}

Now the same thing will apply to the missionary worker who occupies a more limited field. When a member of the Missionary Society has received the names of persons to whom to send the SIGNS and other reading matter, he should feel that those individuals are his especial charge. He should feel in a measure responsible for their salvation. So far as his influence extends, his responsibility is just as great as that of the preacher. He should engage in the work with seriousness and earnestness. He should make it a subject of prayer. It is not enough to pray for the success of the missionary work in general; each individual must be the subject of earnest prayer; not once or twice but constantly. Try to feel the same interest in each that you would if he were present in person. When the missionary worker sends off his paper, laden with messages of truth, he should feel that he is in the position of one who is delivering a sermon to a congregation. True, he is not responsible, as is the preacher, for the words of the sermon, but he can pray, as the preacher does, that God’s Spirit will accompany the word and impress it upon the hearts of those who receive. “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.” “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build; except the Lord keep the city, the watchmen waketh but in vain.” The truth may be clear and plain, and may be presented in a most forcible manner, yet it will fall lifeless to the ground unless God directs it to the heart. No one should think of attempting to write a letter on the subject of religion without first asking God to direct. We should realize that it is God’s work, not our own, and we must endeavor to do it in his way. Work done in this way accomplishes double good; it will be blessed to the good of the one for whom it is done, and will strengthen the worker. But missionary work done in a listless manner, as quickly as possible, will certainly not strengthen the one who does it, and cannot be expected to accomplish much for anybody. {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 56.9}

We are told to pray the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth more laborers into the field. We would not have been told to pray, if praying would do no good. If the work lags, may we not conclude that this injunction has not been heeded? And even when we do pray for laborers, is it not often the case that we want somebody else to be raised up, while we do nothing? If all would pray earnestly for laborers, and then would go to work to do their part toward supplying the demand, how quickly the work might be done. Let us place ourselves in such a position that when we pray, we may say, “Here am I, send me.” Depend upon it, the Lord will find employment for us all, and that which is just suited to our capacity. E. J. W. {SITI February 1, 1883, p. 56.10}

**“Miracles” The Signs of the Times, 9, 6.**

E. J. Waggoner

Last week we considered the subject of miracles very briefly, in connection with the one at Gibeon. It may not be amiss to say a few words more on the same subject. There is a growing disbelief in miracles, even among those who profess to believe the Bible. So common is this disbelief that one needs to have a well-defined position, and be firmly fixed in it, in order not to be affected. Not to deny the existence of miracles is to deny the truth of the Bible, for that is founded on miracles. The creation of the earth, the creation of man, the incarnation of Christ, his sacrifice for sins,-are all miracles. {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 65.1}

But there is a tendency, and it is not confined to infidels, to explain the miracles recorded in the Bible, by the laws of nature, as commonly understood. It is claimed that God will not work contrary to the laws which he has ordained. That may be true; but who knows it? Who shall say that God is obliged to work always in a fixed course? Extraordinary occasions call for extraordinary action, and why may not God work in any way that he pleases? {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 65.2}

Again, even if we admit that God must, or does, always work according to fixed laws, how does that help the matter? Who is there so presumptuous as to suppose that he understands all laws of nature? The term “laws of nature” is a convenient one to express what little we know of nature. Men formulate their observations of the properties of matter, and call the result the laws of nature. But it is not necessarily the laws of nature any more than a single section of the Constitution is the laws of the United States. There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in any man’s philosophy. {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 65.3}

It may be true that all miracles are performed in harmony with certain fixed laws, but not according to any laws within the scope of man’s knowledge. Take for instance the miracle noted last week-the standing still of the sun and moon. Take a miracle in the lesson covered by this week’s review-the one in which the prophet caused iron to swim. These were both contrary to any laws known to man. But both of these are surpassed by the creation of the earth, or the raising of a dead man to life. We cannot understand them; if we could they would not be miracles. {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 65.4}

The existence of miracles is proved by the existence of God. If God exists, miracles must exist, for a being who did nothing but what could be fully comprehended by men, would be only a man, and not God. If there is a God, he must be infinitely superior to man, and consequently must perform acts infinitely beyond man’s comprehension. And on the other hand, the occurrence of miracles (things that are wonderful because they are unexplainable) proves the existence of a Being infinitely superior to man. And that such things do occur every day, no one in his senses will deny. The humble child of God is not troubled with speculations as to how miracles are performed. He accepts them as revealing the power of the God whom he worships. He can say, The One who created the universe; and still controls it, “upholding all things by the word of his power,” who “hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand,” who “taketh up the isles as a very little thing,” and to whom the nations “are as a drop of a bucket,”-He is the God whom I worship. It is in accordance with his nature to do wonderful things. And this God has said, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” E. J. W. {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 65.5}

**“The Nature of Jehu’s Zeal” The Signs of the Times, 9, 6.**

E. J. Waggoner

There is much in the character of Jehu to admire. He was active and energetic, one who never let the work in hand like. He was a driving, go-ahead man; one who in these days would doubtless be called, if engaged in trade, a successful businessman. When he was commissioned by the Lord to execute his judgment on the house of Ahab, he lost no time. Jehoram and Jezebel were quickly dispatched, together with all the sons and relatives of Ahab. As he was engaged in the work of the extermination, he met Jehonadab, to whom he said, “Come with me and see my zeal for the Lord.” He knew that he was following the commandment of the Lord, and he seemed to take pride in it. He wanted others to see that he was not afraid to stand up for the truth, even though it was unpopular. So after slaying the remnant of Ahab’s followers, he gathered the priests of Baal and destroyed them, and, so the record says, “destroyed Baal out of Israel.” {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 65.6}

All this was very praiseworthy. The Lord commended him for it, in these words: “Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in mine heart, by children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel.” But unfortunately Jehu’s zeal stopped too soon, or, rather, it was not of the right kind. We read: “But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart; for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin.” His zeal for the Lord did not lead him to shun sin himself. He could rebuke and punish sin in others, but could not avoid it himself. When there was vigorous work to be done, when people could see, he was zealous; but when it came to the matter of walking in the law of the Lord with all his heart, with none but God to see, his zeal was gone. {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 65.7}

How many there are like him. They can talk the truth glibly, and are ever ready to defend it. No matter how unpopular the truth is, they are not ashamed to uphold, and are ready to denounce those who differ. But as to living out the truth in their daily lives, at home and abroad, in private as well as in public, they are lacking. They seem to think that they can make up for personal sins by a vigorous denunciation of the sins of others. But God has not two sets of workmen: one to watch and another to pray; or one to preach and another to work. One good quality will not make up for the absence of another. All must be combined in the same individual. He only is a man of God, who is “perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” E. J. W. {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 65.8}

**“Facts vs. Misrepresentations” The Signs of the Times, 9, 6.**

E. J. Waggoner

EDITOR SIGNS OF THE TIMES-*Dear Brother*: I have before me the December number of the *Richmond Star*, a paper published monthly at Richmond, Ind., by Milton Wright, a preacher and, I believe, bishop of the church of the United Brethren in Christ. The motto of the paper is: “First pure; then peaceable.” {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 66.1}

On the first page is an article which I give below, and I wish to know if it is true. F. G. HARRIS. {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 66.2}

**“SABBATARIAN MISREPRESENTATIONS**

“Perhaps scarcely any class of Christian professors practice false quotation from authorities so much as Seventh-day Adventists. They have widely asserted that Dr. Mosheim states, in his celebrated “Church History,” that it was by a decree of the Emperor Constantine in *the fourth century*, that the Christian day of worship was change from *the seventh day of the week to the first day of the week*. A few quotations from Dr. Mosheim’s “Church History” will show that he testifies the very opposite from what he is represented by these Sabbatarians as doing. {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 66.3}

“In the history of the *first century* of the church, chap 4, sec. iv. Mr. Mosheim says:- {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 66.4}

“‘All Christians were unanimous in setting apart the first day of the week, on which the triumphant Saviour arose from the dead, for the solemn celebration of public worship. This pious custom, which was derived from the example of the church at Jerusalem, was founded on the express appointment of the apostles, who consecrated that day to the same sacred purpose, and was observed universally throughout the Christian churches, as appears from the united testimony of the most credible writers. The seventh day of the week was also observed as a festival, not by Christians in general, but by such churches only as were composed of Jewish converts; nor did the other Christians censure this custom as criminal or unlawful.’ {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 66.5}

“Dr. Mosheim, in his history of the *second century* chap 4. sec. says:- {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 66.6}

“‘The first Christians assembled for the purpose of divine worship, in private houses, in caves, and in vaults where the dead were buried. Their meetings were on the first day of the week; and in some places they assembled on the seventh, which was celebrated by the Jews. Many also observed the fourth day of the week, on which Christ was betrayed, and the sixth, which was the day of his crucifixion.’ {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 66.7}

“Now after the foregoing most explicit testimonies concerning the *universal* observance of the *first day* of *the* week for Christian woship during the *first* and *second centuries*, Dr. Mosheim, in his history of the fourth century, uses the language which has been so misrepresented by Seventh-day Adventists. He says in his history of the fourth century, chap 4. sec. v:- {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 66.8}

“‘The first day of the week, which was the ordinary and stated time for the public assemblies of Christians, was in consequence of a peculiar law enacted by Constantine, observed with greater solemnity than it had formerly been.’ {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 66.9}

“How differed are these testimonies of the learned and judicious Dr. Mosheim from those stated by Seventh-day Adventists to deceive the unlearned and ignorant. It is a great injustice to avert a wise historian’s testimony to just the opposite of what he has testified. It seems to be the work of ‘those who love and make a lie.’ [ED.” {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 66.10}

To the brother’s inquiry we reply that the article is both true and false-principally false. Seventh-day Adventists do not claim that Mosheim states in his “Church History” or anywhere else, that the Sabbath was changed by the decree of Constantine. No such claim can be found in any of our writings. It will be noticed that the writer of the article does not attempt to substantiate his charge, by showing just where the false quotations may be found. It is very easy to make charges in a general matter, but an accusation, in order to be valid, must be backed up by proof. But of this he had none, and he is therefore guilty of what he charges upon us-misrepresentation. {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 66.11}

Now as to the truth of his quotations. If the brother will take the pains, he will find them all in “The History of the Sabbath and First Day of the Week,” by Eld. J. N. Andrews, for sale at this office. (See advertisement in this issue.) This work, which is complete on this subject, contains these and many other quotations from first-day historians. In fact, all that is quoted from early writers in support of the Sunday, will be found in this book. Instead of claiming that the Sabbath was changed in consequence of Constantine’s law, evidence is given to show that Sunday was kept long before his time. {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 66.12}

It may not be amiss, in passing, to call attention to the first quotation from Mosheim, in which it is stated that “all Christians were unanimous in setting apart the first day of the week,” etc.This passage is taken from Maclaine’s translation of Mosheim’s History, and is always quoted by first-day writers, because it accords so nearly with what they wish to prove true. Now Dr. Mclaine did not profess to give a strictly accurate translation of Mosheim. He himself says in his preface: “I have sometimes taken considerable liberties with my author, and followed the spirit of his narrative without adhering strictly to the letter; and have often *added a few sentences* to render an observation more striking, a fact more clear, a portrait more finished.” That is, he has not hesitated to exaggerate what Mosheim really said, whenever he wished to do so. Other writers, not Sabbatarians, say that Dr. Mclaine “has interwoven his own sentiments in such a manner with those of the original author, both in the notes and in the text, that it is impossible for a mere English reader to distinguish them; and in diverse instances he has entirely contradicted him.” In the translation of Dr. Murdock, who has given “a close, literal version,” the passage is materially modified. Although Dr. Mosheim states that Sunday was observed in the first century, he does not state that “all Christians were unanimous” in so doing. As far as we are concerned, however, we are willing to let the passage stand as quoted. We mention it merely to show that first-day writers are not over-scrupulous as to the means they use to advance the interest of the Sunday. As for selves, we are anxious that the exact truth on this Sunday question should be given in every instance; for the more the truth shines upon it, the more clearly it is seen that there is no divine authority for Sunday-keeping. {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 67.1}

And now what do Seventh-day Adventists claim in regard to Constantine’s law? They claim, not that Sunday was not kept previous to its enactment, but that it was *the first law* ever given in favor of Sunday observance. And that we do not make this claim rashly, the following testimonies will prove:- {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 67.2}

“It was Constantine the Great who first made a law for the proper observance of Sunday; and who, according to Eusebius, appointed it should be regularly celebrated throughout the Roman Empire.”-*Encyclopedia Britannica, art. “Sunday.”* {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 67.3}

“Chambers’ Encyclopedia,” published by J. B. Lippincott & Co., under the heading “Sabbath,” says:- {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 67.4}

“But whatever may have been the opinion and practice of these early Christians in regard to cessation from labor on the Sunday, unquestionably the first law, either ecclesiastical or civil, by which the sabbatical observance of that day is known to have been ordained, is the edict of Constantine, 321 A.D.” {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 67.5}

There is no one who will presume to dispute these authorities. There is no one who can find any law for Sunday-keeping prior to this edict of Constantine. From these authors we learn that while many Christians did keep Sunday before Constantine’s time, they did it voluntarily, and not on account of any law which had been given. From “Chambers’ Encyclopedia,” article “Sabbath,” we quote as follows:- {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 67.6}

“At what date the Sunday, or first day of the week, began to be generally used by Christians as a stated time for religious meetings, we have no definite information either in the New Testament or in the writings of the Fathers of the church. By none of the Fathers before the fourth century is it identified with the Sabbath, nor is the duty of observing it grounded by them either on the fourth commandment or on the precept for example of Jesus or his apostles, or on an anti-Mosaic Sabbath law promulgated to mankind at creation, and continuing in force after the coming of Christ.” {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 67.7}

If anyone wishes to verify this statement, he will find in a little work entitled, “Testimony of the Fathers Concerning the Sabbath and First Day of the Week,” for sale at this office, every passage in the writings of the Fathers of the first three centuries, in which an allusion, or even a supposed allusion, is made to the Sabbath or first day. {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 67.8}

Kitto, in his “Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature,” in the article “Lord’s Day,” after noticing the text commonly produced in favor of Sunday observance, says:- {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 67.9}

“Though in later times we find considerable reference to a sort of consecration of the day, it does not seem at any period of the ancient church, to have assumed the form of such an observance as some modern religious communities have contended for. Nor do these writers in any instance pretend to allege any divine command, or even apostolic practice, in support of it.” {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 67.10}

Now for another quotation from Mosheim. We are always pleased when it is brought forward in favor of Sunday observance. We give the passage as quoted by our reverend critic:- {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 67.11}

“The first day of the week, which was the ordinary and stated time for the public assemblies of Christians, was in consequence of a peculiar law enacted by Constantine, observed with greater solemnity than it had formerly been.” {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 67.12}

That law of Constantine’s reads as follows:- {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 67.13}

“Let all the judges and town people, and the occupation of all trades, rest on the venerable day of the sun; but let those who are situated in the country, freely and at full liberty to attend to the business of agriculture; because it often happens that no other day is so fit for sowing corn or planting vines; lest the critical moment being let slip, men should lose the commodities granted them by Heaven.” {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 67.14}

If, as Mosheim states, the Sunday was, in consequence of this law, “observed with greater solemnity than it had formerly been,” the reader may well wonder how much sacredness was attached to Sunday before this time. Not much, certainly. This statement of Mosheim is not of much use to the Sunday cause. {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 67.15}

But our opponents will still say with a triumphant air: “Nevertheless the Sunday was kept by the expressed appointment of the apostles, or at least on account of their example.” Why, how do you know that? “Because Mosheim says so.” Very well, and how did Mosheim find it out? Did he live in the apostles’ time? Did he confer with them? They will be compelled to answer that he did not; that he was a modern writer, born more than two hundred years after the discovery of America. How then did he learn what the apostles wrote? He had the New Testament, wherein their writings are contained. But we have the same, and so have our first-day friends; why then, instead of quoting from Mosheim that the apostles commanded the observance of Sunday, do they not go direct to the writings of the apostles, and point out the passage wherein such command is made? For the very reason that no such passage can be found, as they very well know. {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 67.16}

But why does Mosheim say that Sunday observance was founded on the express appointment of the apostles, if it is not really so? For the same reason that many first-day theologians of the present time make reckless assertions which they cannot prove. He believed in Sunday sacredness, having been taught it from his youth. In his reading of early history he found that some Christians kept that day; and since he could find no commandment any where else for Sunday-keeping, he straightway concluded that the apostles themselves must have commanded it. If they did not, who did? Sure enough, who did? {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 67.17}

We are not at all alarmed for the Sabbath, when told that Sunday was kept very soon after the apostles’ time. We learn that the fourth day of the week and likewise the sixth was observed also. We learn also, according to Tertullian, that the custom of praying for the dead was common in the second century, and that the invocation of saints, the superstitious use of images, the sign of the cross, etc., were common in the fourth century. Apostolic authority was claimed for all of these. Will our first-day friends accept them on this authority? Certainly not. And why not? “Because,” they will tell you, “these things are forbidden in the Bible, and we find nothing in the writings of the apostles sanctioning them.” Exactly; and so we say about the Sunday. {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 67.18}

It matters not how early a custom was established, so long as it does not have the sanction of divine authority. We find that an abominable practice (1 Corinthians 5:1) was prevalent among certain Christians, even while the apostles were yet alive; shall we therefore conclude that all Christians are in duty bound to do likewise? Assuredly not. Even among Christ’s chosen twelve there was a thief, and yet we do not conclude from this fact that Christ sanctioned robbery. Paul knew that abuses would creep into the church, and warned the disciples against being led astray. Acts 20:29, 30. He stated that even in his day the “mystery of iniquity” was working, and the great apostasy had commenced. 2 Thessalonians 2:7. Let no one think it strange, then, that we find men in the early centuries adopting the Sunday festival, along with other heathen customs. Sin has always existed even within the professed church of God, and will continue to exist until He shall come “whose fan is in his hand,” to “thoroughly purged his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner,” and to “burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” E. J. W. {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 67.19}

**“Time of Christ’s Resurrection” The Signs of the Times, 9, 6.**

E. J. Waggoner

A friend in Oregon questions the correctness of a statement incidentally made in the Sabbath-school department of the SIGNS a few weeks ago, to the fact that Christ rested in the tomb on the Sabbath day, and rose on the morning of the first day of the week; and he asks, “Is there any Scripture evidence to prove that our Lord rose from the grave on the first day of the week?” To this we reply that we think there is. It is true that we are not told in so many words when the resurrection took place, but the evidence seems to be clear nevertheless. Jesus told his disciples several times that he would be crucified and rise again the third day. Matthew 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; Mark 9:31; Luke 9:22, etc. Christ was crucified on Friday. This fact is plainly stated by Luke, who closes the account of the crucifixion and burial of Christ with these words: “And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath true on.” Luke 23:54. Then he still further identifies the time by saying that the women who saw the burial, “returned, and prepared spices and ointments, and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment.” Verse 56. Now it does not require any mathematical skill to determine that “the third day” could not by any possibility be earlier than the first day of the week following, and that it was not later, we know from the record. Therefore the first day of the week must have been the resurrection day. {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 67.20}

Matthew 28:1 is quoted as proof that Christ rose on the Sabbath; but the statement here is simply (according to our version) that the women came to the sepulcher “in the end of the Sabbath.” But the original of this passage allows perfect harmony with Mark 16:1, which says that it was “when the Sabbath was past.” These Scriptures have to do simply with the coming of the women to the tomb. They came very early on the first day of the week and found the grave empty; but the argument given above is, we think, conclusive as proving that the resurrection did not take place before the beginning of that first day. {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 67.21}

“But,” some will say, “this gives a stronger argument to the believers in Sunday observance.” Not at all. The fact that Christ rose on the first day of the week has no more to do with the Sabbath question then with the doctrine of the temporal millennium. There is no commandment for the observance of the resurrection day; not even an intimation that that day was henceforth to be the Sabbath. From the time of the crucifixion onward, the disciples observed the Sabbath the same as before. {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 67.22}

Whoever tries to prove that Christ did not rise on the first day a week, wastes his time, and strengthens those who are keeping Sunday in their determination to do so. Better far to admit at once that Christ rose on the first day of the week, and then show that Sabbath sacredness is not affected in the least by that fact. E. J. W. {SITI February 8, 1883, p. 67.23}

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

E. J. Waggoner

In the action of Ezra as he was about to go up to Jerusalem to rebuild the city, there is a lesson for those who at the present time are asking the aid of civil authority in favor of Sunday observance. He had received permission from the king to go up to Jerusalem, and had gathered together a company of his people for that purpose. But the country to which they were to pass was hostile, and they were not men of war, and could not defend themselves. The king was well-disposed toward them, and would no doubt have given them a guard of soldiers if they had desired it. But Ezra would not ask help from the king; “for,” said he, “I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and the horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way; because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.” Ezra knew that if he should ask for assistance, the king would think that the Lord was not with them, or else that they were afraid to trust him. So he proclaimed a fast, that they might afflict themselves before God, to seek of him the right way. Ezra 8:21. And the result is summed up in these words: “So we fasted and besought our God for this; and he was intreated of us.” {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 75.1}

If Ezra had not been convinced that he was doing the work of the Lord, he would not have trusted in the Lord, but would have asked the assistance of the king. In every instance where people ask for human protection in matters pertaining to religion, it is because there is a belief in their hearts that the Lord is not with them. If there was Bible evidence of the sacredness of Sunday, would its friends ask for a human law in its favor? Never. God has intrusted his truth to men, for them to disseminate, but he has never authorized them to use carnal weapons in its behalf. The commission is to teach all nations; but it is not said that the disciples must force all nations to believe. If anything is really of God, all man has to do is to observe it, and teach it, calling on the Lord for help, and the Spirit of God will convict men of sin. {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 75.2}

If the advocates of Sunday observance really believe that it is of God, let them teach it with all diligence, asking God to guide them. If it is of God, he will not let it suffer, but will vindicate his truth. But when they ask the aid of politicians, worldly men, these men will help them from worldly considerations, and not as a matter of religion. They will not believe that God is in the movement; but they will identify themselves with it, because they will expect to derive personal advantage from it. And this is the only consideration that will move politicians and men of the world; so that if the movement really were of God, it would be dishonored by such advocacy. God is able to take care of his own truth and people, without the aid of weak and sinful man. E. J. W. {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 75.3}

**“The Sure Word” The Signs of the Times, 9, 7.**

E. J. Waggoner

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.” 2 Peter 1:19. {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 77.1}

The apostle is not comparing one prophecy with another, but he is comparing prophecy with something else. He does not say that we have one word of prophecy that is “more sure” than some other word, but that the word of prophecy is more sure than some other thing. What that other thing is we may learn from the context. In verses 16-18 he speaks of the certainty of Christ’s coming, and the reason why he is so certain in regard to it. He says: “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.” The idea is this: At the transfiguration the apostles saw Christ just as he will appear when he comes in his glory. They also heard the voice of God from Heaven. So when they declared the coming of Christ, they did it on the evidence of both their eyes and their ears. This is accounted the best possible evidence; but Peter says that there is something that is more sure than this. What is it? It is the “sure word of prophecy.” It is possible that a person’s eyes or ears might deceive him, but there is no possibility of doubt in regard to the prophecy. And why not? Because it did not come “by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” The prophecy, therefore, is as reliable as God himself. There are very few things in this life upon which we can depend implicitly; how gladly, then, we ought to receive this sure word, and how eagerly we ought to search it. {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 77.2}

**THE OBJECT OF PROPHECY**

As noted by Peter, the object of the sure word of prophecy is that we may be more certain in regard to Christ’s coming, for that is the grand event to which all prophecy points. Christ’s first advent was the basis of many prophecies, and it was the most momentous event since the creation of the world. Upon that coming the redemption of the whole human race depended; but even that with its attendant sacrifice would be lost to us if Christ were not to come the second time. Christ came and died that man might be redeemed, to reign with him forever; but those whom he has purchased cannot be with him unless, according to his promise, he comes again to redeem them to himself. There is no other way by which we can go to Heaven. So the redemption of the race depends fully as much upon Christ’s second coming as upon the first. It is no wonder, then, that so much prophecy has been given in regard to so important an event. We will examine a little of it, and we shall see that the coming of our Lord is not so vague and indefinite a matter as some would have us believe. {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 77.3}

**NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S DREAM**

This dream, related in the second chapter of Daniel, is familiar to every reader of the Bible. The circumstances attending it are such as would attract the attention of one who was reading merely for pleasure, for they are highly interesting. But our interest in the narrative is increased a thousand-fold when we learn the object and interpretation of the dream. The object of the dream is told in few words. Daniel said to the king, “There is a God in Heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar *what shall be in the latter days*.” Then it is for us far more than for Nebuchadnezzar. {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 77.4}

The dream was as follows: A great image, bright in appearance and terrible in form, appeared to the king. Its head was of fine gold, its breast and arms and its feet of mingled clay and iron. While the king looked upon this image, a stone was cut out of the mountain without the aid of human hands. This stone smote the image upon the feet, and instantly the whole image was reduced to fine powder, and was blown away; but the stone immediately became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 77.5}

The interpretation of the dream occupies but little more space. Daniel, after reminding the king that God has given him universal dominion, tells him that his kingdom is symbolized by the head of gold. The other three divisions of the image, the silver, the brass, and the iron, symbolize three other universal empires. The last one of these is to be divided into ten parts, as is indicated by the ten toes of the image, which shall be distinct from each other. And now comes the closing scene: “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall *stand for ever*. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king *what shall come to pass hereafter*: and the dream is certain, and *the interpretation thereof sure*.” Daniel 2:44, 45. {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 77.6}

This dream with its interpretation was not given that men might be informed in regard to earthly kingdoms, but for the sole purpose of pointing out the fifth universal kingdom. Then we may know something in regard to the time of its setting up. Let us follow the connection. Babylon was conquered by the Medes and Persians, B.C. 538. Medo-Persia, then, was the empire symbolized by the breast and arms of silver. The Persian Empire in its turn gave away to the Greeks. This took place B.C. 321. Here we have three of the four kingdoms; and since there were to be but four universal, earthly monarchies, the fourth cannot be difficult to locate. There is no doubt but that Rome was symbolized by the iron part of the image. It was at the height of its power at the first advent of Christ, having fully completed the conquest of Greece half a century before. There is no disputing the fact that it was universal in its dominion, and Scripture proof of the fact is found in Luke 2:1. Now we have the four universal empires before us. Where shall we look for the setting up of the fifth. In the days of Christ? No; because Rome was then undivided. It could not be set up until the division of that empire into its ten parts, which was completed A.D. 457. The coming of Christ, and the setting up of his everlasting kingdom, is the next thing brought to our view. And this is in reality the next thing to be accomplished. Certain things must be done by powers that now exist, but when earthly governments again fall, their place will be taken by Christ’s kingdom. Other prophecies corroborative of this, and more minute in detail, will be considered next week. {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 77.7}

Now is not this a sure word of prophecy? Kingdoms have risen and fallen just as predicted by the prophet. He said that the ten divisions of the Roman Empire would seek to consolidate their power, but would be unsuccessful, and so it has been. Every attempt to unite the nations of Europe has ended in failure. And if the past has been fulfilled to the letter, we have the assurance that that which yet remains will as surely be fulfilled. Inspiration did not point out the length of time that these earthly kingdoms should exist, and it has not told when the heavenly kingdom will be set up, but we know it cannot be far distant. The divided state of the image has continued for 1,400 years, much longer than any other division. Other prophecies show more definitely that the end is very near. We learn from this that God’s kingdom is as much a reality as any earthly kingdom, and that those whose interest is in earthly things can have no part in it. Are we fitting ourselves for citizenship in that glorious, everlasting kingdom? E. J. W. {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 77.8}

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

E. J. Waggoner

It is often the case that we hear persons give as a reason for not coming to Sabbath-school, “I didn’t have my lesson.” But this answer should not be dignified with the title of reason, for it is really a very poor excuse. It shows that the individual offering it does not realize the object of the school. We do not go to Sabbath-school to “show-off” our proficiency, as some people go to church to exhibit their fine clothes. We go to Sabbath-school in order to learn. We are all of us ignorant, to a greater or less degree, of the truths contained in the Bible; we go to the Sabbath-school that we may become enlightened. To stay away from the school because we are ignorant, is as foolish as it would be to stay away from dinner because we are hungry. If we do not know the lesson, that is a great reason why we should attend the school. If it were possible for us to be perfectly familiar with the lesson, so that we could learn nothing more, there would be no special reason for us to attend, except for the sake of our example; we would not lose so much personally by staying away, but our absence might influence others to stay away also. But when we do not understand the lesson, and stay away, we have not only our example on the wrong side, but we suffer great loss ourselves. {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 77.9}

It may be asked, “If the Sabbath-school is simply the place to learn, what is the use of studying the lesson at all?” Just this: The more we know of anything, the more we are able to learn, and the better able are we to appreciate what others have learned. If we have learned the lesson as well as we can by ourselves, we shall be in the best condition to learn from others; we will have an interest in what they say. If we know nothing of the lesson, we may learn but very little in regard to it during the Sabbath-school hour; but that little is vastly more than we should learn if we did not hear the recitation at all. {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 77.10}

Let every Sabbath-school scholar, then, whether young or old, resolve that he will attend every Sabbath, both for the good which he may do, and for that which he may receive. E. J. W. {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 77.11}

**“Thoughts on the Twelfth Chapter of Hebrews” The Signs of the Times, 9, 7.**

E. J. Waggoner

“Wherefore seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.” {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 79.1}

The word “witnesses,” in this text, conveys to many a wrong idea, or rather, many persons give it a meaning which does not belong to it in this place. A witness is one who testifies in a cause, from personal knowledge, and in this sense it is used here. This chapter is a continuation of the argument on faith, and the cloud or multitude of witnesses who are here spoken of, are the worthies whose deeds are recorded in chapter eleven. They are not “witnesses” in the sense that they are *looking on* to see us run the race, for all of them except Enoch died. Now of the dead it is said that “they know not anything,” Ecclesiastes 9:5; that in the day of their death “their thoughts perished.” Psalm 146:4; and that they are not conscious of the elevation or disgrace of even their dearest relatives. Job 14:21. It is certain, then, that those of whom the apostle says that they “all died in faith,” are not cognizant of any thing that is now taking place on this earth. How then are they “witnesses”? They have all run the race, and obtained great victories through faith; and by means of the sacred record their lives bear witness to the power of a firm, abiding faith. Of Abel it is said that “he being dead yet speaketh.” So likewise all these worthies are standing by to cheer us on by their testimony as to the possibility of making the race a success. {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 79.2}

One stanza of an excellent hymn that is based on this passage, is ruined because the writer of the hymn mistook the meaning of the word “witnesses.” The stanza is this:- {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 79.3}

*“A cloud of witnesses around,
Hold thee in full*survey; *Forget the steps already tried,
And onward urge thy way.” {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 79.4}*

But this is not true. These witnesses do not hold us in survey. They know nothing of our existence. In short, they know nothing at all, because they are dead. {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 79.5}

“Seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses.” The position of a small word in a sentence may make a great deal of difference. The word “also” is here out of its proper place. The text should read thus: “Wherefore seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, *let us also* lay aside every weight,” etc. It is not true, as implied in the common version, that those in ancient times were compassed about with witnesses. The Bible was not written in their day, and they had no precedent for their faith. Noah had no example of those who had trusted in God before his time, and had been preserved. He had simply the word of God. There had been no rain on the earth, and if the philosophers of his day were like those of the present time, they doubtless said that such a thing was contrary to nature. Nevertheless he believed and obeyed the word of the Lord, and by so doing he “condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 79.6}

Abraham was called out from heathen surroundings, and “went out, not knowing whither he went.” He had not before him a long list of persons who had tested the promises of God, and found them sure. So far as we know he had never been associated with any one who worshiped the true God. Still he had evidence enough. He had “two immutable things,” the promise and the oath of God. But we have in addition to these a great array of men “subject to like passions as we are,” who gained glorious victory through faith in God. Since they accomplished such great victories through faith, let us be encouraged to do likewise. If they, who had so much less light and encouragement than we have, preserved thus manfully, what patience and faith and zeal ought we not to exhibit! {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 79.7}

The apostle declares that “whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have a whole.” Romans 15:4. Now there is to us abundant ground of hope in the lives of the patriarchs. We seldom take all the encouragement from the record of their lives that we ought. We are apt to imagine that those men were composed of different stuff from what men are now, that there was something peculiar to their natures which gave them favor with God. But this is not so. Some sin or weakness appears in the life of nearly every one. Human nature was the same in their day that it is now. Wherein, then, was their strength? Simply in this: They were able to take God at his word. It is written, “Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness.” All the difference between them and us is that they believed implicitly, while we doubt. But it is just as easy for us to believe as it was for them; otherwise there would be no propriety in giving them as our example. Indeed it ought to be easier for us, since we have their lives as assurance that God is “a rewarder of them that diligently see him.” If human nature is the same now that it was then, we have the assurance that God is the same also, and is just as ready to give us his aid in transforming ourselves that we may be made partakers of the divine nature. The lives of these worthies, and the exhortation of the apostle, were not written for nothing. Will we give them the attention that they deserve? E. J. W. {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 79.8}

(*To be Continued*.)

**“The Obedience of Saul” The Signs of the Times, 9, 7.**

E. J. Waggoner

When Saul was sent to execute God’s judgment against the Amalekites, the command given him was “Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.” 1 Samuel 15:3. This order was explicit enough certainly, and could not be misunderstood. All will agree that disobedience to such a plain command could proceed from nothing else but willfulness. Saul set out upon his mission, and smote the Amalekites, gaining a great victory. He did not, however, follow strictly the directions given him, for we read. “But Saul and the people spared and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them; but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.” Did Saul obey orders? There can be but one answer: He went directly contrary to them. Should a modern officer obey the orders of his superior no better than Saul, he would immediately be court-marshaled and shot. {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 80.1}

But how did Saul excuse himself for such conduct? Did he shrink from meeting the man of God, and say that the order could not be executed? No, he came boldly forward and said, “Blessed be thou of the Lord; I have performed the word of the Lord.” What impudent assurance! No wonder the prophet asked in astonishment, “What meaneth this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?” Saul had his reply ready, and said, “They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.” {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 80.2}

From these answers of Saul’s it appears that he really thought that he had obeyed the Lord. He doubtless reasoned thus: “The Lord wants all the sheep and oxen destroyed; but the end will be accomplished just as well if we offer them a sacrifice, as it would if we should slaughter them where they are. By saving them for sacrifice we can fulfill the command of the Lord, and at the same time offer him acceptable worship.” Now it is very evident that such reasoning is not reasoning, but sophistry. If the Lord had desired that those and all should be offered in sacrifice, he would have said so; and although the Lord delights in sacrifice, he cannot accept that which is made at the expense of obedience to his commandments. Saul’s course shows that he was blinded by self-will. {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 80.3}

There is a great deal obedience at the present time of the same nature as this that we have just considered. In a conversation which we once had with a lady in regard to the Sabbath, she admitted that the seventh day is the Sabbath, just as the commandment says, and that it has never changed by divine authority; “but,” said she, “we keep the first day of the week in honor of Christ; and the Father has such great love for the Son that anything done in his honor will be accepted as obedience.” Just think of it. The Father and the Son are one; yet God will overlook this obedience to his plainest commandment, if the person declares it to be his intention to honor the Son. Has Christ commanded the observance of the first day? No. Never. Has either one ever said that such observance would honor Christ? Such a thing was never even intimated. Has not God commanded men to keep the seventh day? Yes; and in the same commandment he has told them to work on six days. And Christ was one with the Father before the worlds were made, and was associated with him in that work; hence the commandments of the Father are also those of the Son. Then how can anybody possessing reasoned imagine that breaking the Sabbath and observing Sunday, is an act of honor either to the Father or to the Son? This question is beyond our power to answer. {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 80.4}

Under this same head comes Joseph Cook’s reason (?) for keeping Sunday. He once wrote an article for the *Christian Union* on “The Sunday Question,” which begun thus:- {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 80.5}

“If it be asked what is the biblical authority for the observance of Sunday, my reply must be that the sermon on the mount, in my opinion, recognizes the moral spirit of the whole decalogue. The sermon on the Mount affirms that not one jot or tittle of the law shall pass away till all be fulfilled. That does not mean the ceremonial law, but the two great tables of the older dispensation. No one pretends that the law in the decalogue against theft is repealed by the New Testament, nor that against adultery.” {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 80.6}

Truly that is a reason worthy of Saul himself. “We keep Sunday, because the law enjoining the observance of the seventh day is still in force!” This reasoning goes beyond Saul, for he intended to obey the Lord, at some future time, and in his own way; but Mr. Cook intends to obey the Lord in his own way, which is by direct disobedience. {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 80.7}

Let us use this reasoning in the case of the other commandment. The first commandment says, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” Now why may not the heathen who has professed to be converted to Christianity say, “If it be asked why I worship idols, my reply must be that the commandments are recognized by the New Testament as of full force. The spirit of that law enjoins worship, but since the object of worship is not specified, we are at liberty to worship what we please.” Is there a sin common to mankind that may not be justified by such reasoning? {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 80.8}

Or he might say, The Lord takes great pleasure in the things that he has made. When he had to finish the work of creation, he pronounced it very good; and the psalmist says: “The works of the Lord are great;” “His work is honorable and glorious;” “He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered.” Now, reasoning as in the first instance, the heathen might say, “It is true that the Lord has commanded us to worship him; but I worship the sun and moon in honor of God’s creation; and God thinks so much of his works that he will accept the sun-worship as obedience to himself.” Why should the heathen be condemned for breaking one commandment and the Christians be justified for breaking another, for the same reason? {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 80.9}

Do men think that they can deceive the Lord by such sophistry, and cause him to think that disobedience is obedience? Do they imagine that they will convert the Lord to their way of thinking? or that he will withhold punishment out of respect to their persons? If they do, let them consider the case of Saul, and its consequences, and take warning. E. J. W. {SITI February 15, 1883, p. 80.10}

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

E. J. Waggoner

“Let us lay aside every weight.” The apostle here takes the figure from the running course, where the contestant before starting in the race would lay aside every superfluous thing. Nothing was retained that would in the least hinder his progress. So we must lay aside everything that would hinder our progress in the divine life. These weights are of various kinds; some we have by nature, and others we voluntarily assume. Their number is legion, comprising every sin and evil tendency common to mankind. Barnes well says that “some very light objects, in themselves considered, become material and weighty encumbrances. Even a feather or a ring-such may be the fondness for these toys-may become such a weight that those who wear them will never make much progress toward the prize.” The original signifies something that may be hooked or fastened on. Constant watchfulness, therefore, it is required on the part of the runner, lest, after he has laid aside a certain weight, Satan, who is ever on the alert, may fasten it on again. {SITI February 22, 1883, p. 91.1}

“And the sin which doth so easily beset us.” In addition to the “weights,” of which different people have different kinds, there is a constantly recurring sin, to which all are liable, and which not only hinders our progress, but effectually stops it. If we trace the connection between this chapter and the two preceding chapters, we cannot fail to see that the sin to which the apostle here refers is the sin of unbelief. Chapter 10 closes with these words: “Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.” The eleventh begins with a definition of faith, and continues with notable examples of it, showing that without faith it is impossible to please God. Then comes the exhortation which we are now considering. Many suppose that by “the sin which doth so easily beset us,” the apostle means some especial sin to which different persons are liable, differing in different cases. So we hear of impatience as the besetting sin of one person, and covetousness as the besetting sin of another. But the apostle speaks of “*the* sin,” and not of the *sin* which so easily besets us. It is a fact that may be demonstrated, that lack of faith is the greatest source of trouble with every person, manifesting itself, of course, in many different ways. Lack of faith keeps back thousands from being Christians, and causes many professed Christians to stumble and fall by the way. {SITI February 22, 1883, p. 92.1}

The word which is rendered “easily beset,” does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It properly means “surrounding,” and has been defined, “easy to encircle.” Tindal renders it, “the sin that hangeth on us.” Bloomfield supposes that it means “the sin which especially winds around us and hinders our course,” with reference to the long garments worn by the ancients, which, if not removed or fastened up, would wind around the legs of the runner, and cause him to fall. In harmony with this view is the exhortation given to “gird up the loins of your mind,” meaning to have faith. {SITI February 22, 1883, p. 92.2}

How few there are who believe with all their heart. But a belief that admits of a doubt is not faith. True faith is that condition into which not the slightest element of disbelief enters. Who has the faith of Abraham, or Noah, or Moses? We think we have faith because we assent to the most prominent doctrines of the Bible, or to what is known as the “Third Angel’s Message.” A simple belief that Jesus is the Son of God, and that all the ten commandments are still as binding as when they were given, will not save anybody. “The devil’s believe and tremble,” but their belief is not imputed to them for righteousness; they are devils still. Genuine faith in the Third Angel’s Message is evinced by a practical reception of all the truths brought out by it. Among them may be mentioned the spirit of prophecy. One what does not believe in this is not a believer in the message, for it is one of the main points. Compare Revelation 12:17 with Revelation 19:10, etc. But this also involves a practical believe in true temperance, for that is a vital part of the Third Angel’s Message. True temperance, or health reform, as it is termed, has been declared to bear the same relation to the last message that the right arm does to the body. Then if we do not believe and practice it, our faith is a crippled faith. {SITI February 22, 1883, p. 92.3}

We may also show our lack of faith by neglecting to render to God his dues. Among nearly all denominations the tithing system is now recognized as the Bible plan of supporting those who labor in the cause of God. It is founded on the same principle as the Sabbath-the right of property. “The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord;” and whoever uses that time for himself takes that to which he has no right. So also “the tithe is the Lord’s,” and whoever does not return it to him is guilty of robbery. Men who would scorn to defraud their neighbors of a dime, will systematically rob God, and think there is no wrong done. The Bible bears no uncertain testimony on this point. In astonishment the prophet says, by direct inspiration from God, “Will a man rob God?” Some one will say, No; a man cannot rob God. But listen: “Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and in offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.” Malachi 3:8, 9. Abraham did not do so, for he paid his tithes to the Lord’s servant. Noah, in gratitude for his preservation, sacrificed not merely one-tenth, but one-seventh of his property. The neglect to honor the Lord with our substance, and with the first-truths of all our increase, Proverbs 3:9, is a most flagrant manifestation of unbelief. God makes his care for us, both temporal and spiritual, dependent on our remembering him; but if we do not thus honor him, we intimate that we have no faith in his ability or willingness to care for us, or else that we lightly esteemed his protection. E. J. W. {SITI February 22, 1883, p. 92.4}