**“The Sabbath-School. Acts 10:21-48; 11:1-18” The Signs of the Times, 9, 26.**

E. J. Waggoner

**Lesson for the Pacific Coast-July 21. Acts 10:21-48; 11:1-18.
NOTES ON THE LESSON.**

There is, in the minds of many, a strange misapprehension of the meaning of the vision which was given to Peter, Acts 10:9-16. They imagine that it meant that the distinction between clean and unclean beast was henceforth to be abolished. And that there is therefore nothing which it is not in lawful to eat. Even so renowned a commentator as Dr. Barnes fell into this error, although he taught that this was only the secondary meaning. He says:- {SITI July 12, 1883, p. 305.1}

“In the Old Testament God made a distinction between clean and unclean animals. See Leviticus 11:2-27; Deuteronomy 3-20. This law remained in the Scriptures and Peter plead that he had never violated it, implying that he could not now violate it.... Between that law and the command which he now received in the vision, there was an apparent variation, and Peter naturally referred to the well-known and admitted written law. One design of the vision was to show him that that law was not to pass away... It was also true that the ceremonial law is of the Jews in regard to clean and unclean beasts was to pass away, though this was not directly taught in the vision.” {SITI July 12, 1883, p. 305.2}

This matter may be settled very easily, by finding out what idea of the vision conveyed to Peter. He undoubtedly had the full understanding of it, because he received his instruction from the Lord. Two days after the vision, when, in obedience to the divine command, Peter had gone to the house of Cornelius, he said to the company there assembled, “Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call *any man* common or unclean.” {SITI July 12, 1883, p. 305.3}

The above statement is clear enough, but some claim, as Barnes does, that it means this and more. It may not be amiss to enter into a brief argument to show that the vision had not the slightest reference to the distinction between clean and unclean beast. In the first place, this distinction was not an arbitrary one, made at the time of the giving of the law, in order to separate between the Jews and Gentiles. The distinction existed from the beginning, in the nature of the animals. We find that beasts and fowls, both clean and unclean, went into the ark with Noah. This was several hundred years before the Jews existed as a nation. God had not yet called out anyone to be especially separate. There was nothing of a ceremonial nature in the distinction between clean and unclean animals. Afterward, when the children of Israel were brought out of Egypt, where every wrong practice prevailed, God told them what beasts and fowls were clean and what unclean, not as bringing about a new order of things, but as stating what already existed. {SITI July 12, 1883, p. 305.4}

There is not the slightest evidence to show that God intended that this distinction should pass away. Indeed, it could not pass away unless a change were made in the nature of animals. Few would dare claim that this change has been effected. The voice said to Peter, “What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.” It remains for those to believe that men are at full liberty to read everything, to show that this means that God had cleansed all unclean animals, so that they were free from all that would defiled. {SITI July 12, 1883, p. 305.5}

There is still one more thought which shows the absurdity of the idea that we are combating. In the vessel that appeared to Peter there were “all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and of the air.” It must have contained toads, lizards, owls, bats, vultures, and many offensive animals. Who believes that these are fit for food? But if the distinction between clean and unclean beast was done way, they must be. {SITI July 12, 1883, p. 305.6}

It is belittling the work of Christ to make such claims as that which we have been considering. The plan of salvation takes in only the human race. The blood of Christ cleanses everyone who will accept it. There is no distinction of race or condition; all are invited to come. The grace of God extends to every human being, but not to the brute creation. Christ’s sacrifice leaves them just where they were. But to mankind, the cry is, “Whosoever will, let him come.” This truth was taught to Peter by the vision on the housetop. The matter was presented in the manner that it was because it would make the most vivid impression upon him in his famished condition. {SITI July 12, 1883, p. 305.7}

“God is no respecter of persons.” That is what Peter had learned by the vision which had been given to him. In was a great step in advance for Peter. Brought up to look upon all but the Jewish nation as outcasts who God despised, and with whom it was a disgrace to associate, he learn what Paul says, that “the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.” God does not think any more highly of a man that has great mental endowments, or abundant wealth, than he does of his more humble neighbor. Both are dependent on him for what they possess. Neither does God esteem or despise any man because of his race or color. He “hath made of one blood all nations of men,” they are all his creatures, the objects of his care and grace. {SITI July 12, 1883, p. 305.8}

A question that is quite a favorite with a certain class of theologians at the present day is, “What will be done with the heathen, who have not had a fair chance in this life?” They think this can be answered only in one way, viz., “They will be granted a probation after death.” But we do not believe that the question is a proper one to ask. It implies that God is so partial and unjust as to place some men on probation, and then not give them a probation. According to Paul, Romans 2:18-32, there are none who have not a fair chance in this life. He says that the heathen who know not God are without excuse, because “the invisible things of him,” *i.e.*, “his eternal power and Godhead,” are plainly manifest from the creation, that they may be learned from the things which he has made. And those who do not recognize their Creator, have become so because they “did not like to retain God in their knowledge,” but chose to follow their own lewd desires. It is evident, then, that it would be a lowering of the dignity of God’s Government, a compromising with sin, if such persons were allowed a second probation. Neither is there any probability that they would profit by such leniency. “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.” Ecclesiastes 8:11. If men harden their hearts in this probation, a second probation would make them still more obdurate. {SITI July 12, 1883, p. 305.9}

But there are those in heathen lands who do not give themselves up to sin. The law written on the heart may be in their cases very much abbreviated, yet they conscientiously live up to its teachings. Like Cornelius, they are conscious that their lives are imperfect, and they long for more light. Then, according to the promise of Christ, John 7:17, they will receive the light. Every soul who has a heart to do right, will be given the opportunity to learn what is right. We may not be able to trace the providence of God, as in the case of Cornelius, if God will not suffer any believing soul to perish for lack of knowledge. The Judge of all the earth will do right. {SITI July 12, 1883, p. 305.10}

“And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.” “They of the circumcision,” were Jewish converts to Christianity; these of course constituted the bulk of the Christian church at that time, since the gospel had not before been preached to the Gentiles. With this explanation we can appreciate the force of the following comment by Dr. Barnes:- {SITI July 12, 1883, p. 305.11}

“This is one of the circumstances which show conclusively that the apostles and early Christians did not regard Peter as having any particular *supremacy* over the church, or as being in any particular sense the *vicar* of Christ upon earth. If it he had been regarded as having the authority which the Roman Catholics claim for him, they would have submitted at once to what he had thought proper to do. But the primitive Christians had no such idea of his authority. This claim for Peter is not only opposed to this place, but to every part of the New Testament.” E. J. W. {SITI July 12, 1883, p. 305.12}

**“Shunning Responsibility” The Signs of the Times, 9, 26.**

E. J. Waggoner

What would be thought of the pastor of a church who would occasionally be absent from service on Sabbath morning without sending any excuse, or even letting the congregation know that he intended to be absent? Or, if a minister should make an appointment to preach on a certain evening, and then should stay away without informing anyone of his intended absence, how would he be regarded? The reply is at once that a man who would do such a thing, and repeat the offense, could not expect to retain the confidence of the people. They would justly feel that he had no appreciation for the responsibility resting upon him. His course would show that he was not a true minister-a servant of the church-but a server of self. {SITI July 12, 1883, p. 305.13}

But how much worse would that be than for a Sabbath school teacher to absent himself from his class, without any real excuse, or without notifying anybody of his intended absence? The cases are exactly parallel. When the teacher consents to take charge of the class, he virtually pledges himself to be present every Sabbath and do his duty by it. He has no more right to be absent from the Sabbath-school than the pastor has to be away from church. The teacher who does so shows his unfitness for the work in which he is engaged, and should he not reform, ought not to be retained in his position. {SITI July 12, 1883, p. 305.14}

Some teacher of this sort may say: “Well, I am willing to give up my class; let them fill my place with some one who can do better.” What an admission! Willing to give up all responsibility, because it interferes with your convenience. Willing to do nothing, when you ought to, and by the practice of a little self-denial could, do a great deal. How much better it would be to say, “I am willing to do all I can; if I fail, it shall not be on account of lack of effort.” You who are so humble that you don’t want to occupy any position of responsibility; who are willing to let others do all the work, do imagine that you will take things so calmly when you see another coming forward to take your crown? Think of this. It is well to consider consequences. E. J. W. {SITI July 12, 1883, p. 305.15}

**“A Strange Thing” The Signs of the Times, 9, 26.**

E. J. Waggoner

In the *S. S. Times*, in an article on the raising of Dorcas by Peter, Rev. Charles S. Robinson, D.D., says: {SITI July 12, 1883, p. 307.1}

“Imagine Dorcas’ surprise when she first opened her eyes. Here she was back in the world again. How stranger it is to discover that no one of those persons who were raised from the dead ever attempted to tell the story of what they saw or heard.” {SITI July 12, 1883, p. 307.2}

We wonder that more people do not look at it in this light. The grave is spoken of as that “undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveler returns,” but as a matter of fact many have returned, yet none have ever opened their lips to relate what they heard or saw while dead. But if the dead are conscious, this is passing strange. If it be true that death is simply the separation of the soul from the body which has acted as a clog to it, restricting its free exercise, why is it that in those instances where the soul has been returned to its lodgment, no note is made of the wonderful things learned while it was permitted to expand unrestrained? {SITI July 12, 1883, p. 307.3}

We say that it is indeed a wonderful that no revelations have been made of what is beyond, if, as the poet says, death is only transition, and the soul is more acutely conscious in death than it ever was during life; but we do not bring forward the fact that no such revelation has been made, as proof that the dead are not conscious. We have proof of a more satisfactory nature, which clears the subject of all doubt, and explains why those who have been raised from the dead were silent as to what transpired during that absence from among the living. The testimony is abundant, but we have space here for only the following:- {SITI July 12, 1883, p. 307.4}

Those who are dead are asleep: “Consider and hear me, O Lord my God; lighten my eyes, lest I *sleep the sleep of death*.” Psalm 13:3. “It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so he giveth his beloved *sleep*.” Psalm 127:2. “And many of them that *sleep* in the dust of the earth shall awake, some everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” Daniel 12:2. “In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and *sleep a perpetual sleep*, and not wake, saith the Lord.” Jeremiah 51:39. “For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.” 1 Corinthians 15:16-18. “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are *asleep*.” “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which *sleep* in Jesus will God bring with him.” 1 Thessalonians 4:13, 14. {SITI July 12, 1883, p. 307.5}

People who are in a sound sleep are entirely unconscious of what is going on, and the Bible says that the dead are unconscious: “For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything.” “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor the device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.” Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10. “But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up; so man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.” “His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.” Job 14:10-12, 21. “The dead praise not the Lord, neither indeed that go down into silence.” Psalm 115:17. “Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.” Psalm 146:3, 4. {SITI July 12, 1883, p. 307.6}

Many more texts might be added but these are sufficient for our purpose. They are direct statements of fact and need no explanation. There only two things that can be done with them: Either accept them as literally true, or reject them all together. But if we accept the Bible as the infallible word of God, we are not left to wonder why those who have been raised from the dead never told the story of what they saw or heard. They had none to tell. They were unconsciously sleeping, and were unable to take note of passing events. Then it is not a strange thing after all. {SITI July 12, 1883, p. 307.7}

But there is one strange thing about this matter, and that is how, in the face of all these Bible texts, a Doctor of Divinity could write such a paragraph is that quoted at the beginning of this article. E. J. W. {SITI July 12, 1883, p. 307.8}

**“The Policy of Romanism” The Signs of the Times, 9, 27.**

E. J. Waggoner

It is doubtless well known that the American Bible Society and the Baptists are not in harmony; that the Baptists circulate the Scriptures by means of their own organizations, instead co-operating with the society. The cause of the disagreement is this: The only Bible in the Burmese language is that translated by Judson, and the American Bible Society, which professes to be undenominational, refuses to circulate this Bible, because the word “baptize” is rendered by a Burmese word signifying “immerse.” Of course the Baptists were left with no alternative but to do their own distributing. {SITI July 19, 1883, p. 319.1}

The *Christian Union*, commenting editorially on this affair, regrets the action taken by the American Bible Society, and says that it is plainly in the wrong. It thinks that the society should do all in its power to bring about a union, and should circulate the version which it now rejects. The following paragraph in this article states the case clearly, and makes an important admission:- {SITI July 19, 1883, p. 319.2}

“There is a scholarly, an acceptable, an actually accepted version of Scripture in the language of the Burmese. This version is without competition, present for prospective. It is *the* Burmese Bible. At least for an indefinite time to come. The Burmese depend on it, on it alone, for their knowledge of the word of God. Such, on one side, is the state of the facts. But this Burmese version of Scripture renders the Greek word ‘baptize,’ with its cognates, by a vernacular equivalent meaning ‘immerse.’ No competent scholar will assert that this is an unscholarly rendering of the Greek original. This rendering, however, compels the Christian missionaries who do not practice immersion, and who, of course, do not teach immersion, to explain the terms involved. There is for such missionaries and obvious disadvantage in this. Still, in spite of the disadvantaged, missionaries not Baptists do, as a matter of fact, use this version, making the necessary explanation.” {SITI July 19, 1883, p. 319.3}

It is generally admitted that no man was better qualified to make a scholarly translation of the Bible than Dr. Judson: In translating the Scriptures into the Burmese language, he rendered “baptize” by a word meaning “immerse,” not on account of theological bias, but because as a scholar he could not do otherwise. Educated as a Presbyterian, all his prejudices were against the Baptists. On his voyage to India he employed his leisure time in studying the subject of baptism, both that he might satisfy himself as to the course which he should pursue in regard to the infants of those who might be converted under his labors, and that he might defend his views against the Baptist missionaries at Singapore, with whom he expected to spend a few months. The result of his careful study was that he rejected infant baptism and sprinkling of adults, and was himself baptized soon after his arrival in India. Of course his translation accorded with his viewa, and all his converts were immersed. In pursuing this course he occupied a position which no scholar will attempt to criticize. {SITI July 19, 1883, p. 319.4}

And now what is the position of those who do not practice immersion, but who from necessity use Judson’s Bible? The *Christian Union* says that they are compelled “to explain the terms involved.” What kind of an explanation they could make that would be satisfactory to all parties, we cannot imagine. Here is the situation: (1) A Bible which says, “He that believeth and is immersed shall be saved.” “Repent, and be immerse everyone of you in the name of Christ Jesus;” (2) Educated and acute heathen who well know the meaning of the terms used; and (3) Missionaries who do not believe in nor practice immersion, but who believe in sprinkling instead, yet who, as scholars, know that the translation is a correct one, and, in fact, the only correct translation that could be made. We fully agree with the *Christian Union*, that “there is for such missionaries an obvious disadvantage,” in making “the necessary explanation.” We would not care to be under such a necessity. {SITI July 19, 1883, p. 319.5}

But the article contains still stronger testimony in favor of immersion. The editor says:- {SITI July 19, 1883, p. 319.6}

“If the case were other than it is; if it were a question of antecedent instruction to translators what kind of versions to produce, the case might be different. We might, then, say, Let ‘baptize’ be transferred-that is, transliterated-into the heathen tongues, not translated at all. Missionaries of differing views on the subject of baptism could then use one and the same Bible, applying their several explanations of the terms transferred. This is the course pursued in both the New and the Old Versions of the Bible, and it is a wise one. But here is a version already in existence, already in possession, exclusive possession. It translates, indeed, instead of transliterating. But it translates truly enough, so far as lexicography goes. Nobody can deny that; nobody at least whose denial would weigh. Nay, if non-Baptist Burmese scholars were to make a new version of their own, and in that version translate the terms in question, such scholars would not render those terms in a manner to *contradict* the version already existing. The utmost that they could do would be to render those terms by words or phrases of a general and indeterminate meaning. What would thus be gained? Why, against a version that gave what is certainly the general meaning of ‘baptize,’ there would be a version that did not give the meaning of that word at all. That is all.” {SITI July 19, 1883, p. 319.7}

Note first the latter portion of the above paragraph: “Nobody whose denial would weigh” can deny that “baptize” is correctly rendered “immerse.” “If non-Baptist Burmese scholars were to make a new version of their own, and in that version translate the terms in question, such scholars would not render those terms in a manner to *contradict* the version already existing. The utmost that they could do would be to render those terms by words or phrases of a general or indeterminate meaning.” But this, as the editor says, would be no translation at all. That is, we must either translate the Greek word “baptize” by “immerse,” or else not translate it. Well, why not translate it? Because the great mass of professed Christians do not choose to practice immersion, as they admit that the Bible teaches, and they want to be left free to put their own construction on the term. We are obliged to say that we could not write a recommendation for honesty for those who take such a position. {SITI July 19, 1883, p. 319.8}

The case is more serious than is commonly supposed. It involves the question whether or not the Bible shall be placed in the hands of the people, or whether they shall depend upon the priests and clergy for their knowledge of the Scriptures. If one word be not translated, why translate any of the Bible? If it is a wise thing to translate the Greek word “baptize,” then why not transliterate the entire Bible? Then the New Testament in English, French, Italian, Spanish, etc., would consist merely of the Greek words of the text, but with the Roman letters instead of the Greek characters. For the inhabitants of Burmah, the Burmese characters which correspond to the Greek letters, would be used, and so in other languages. This would enable the people to renounce the words, but as they would not know their meaning the clergy could apply any meaning which suited their notions, and not be under the necessity of making embarrassing explanations. Then every body could make use of the Bible. The Spiritualist could teach that Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10; Job 14:21, and kindred passages mean that departed souls are conscious and able to communicate with their friends. The Mormon could teach that the seventh commandment requires every man to keep at least two women whom he shall call his wives. Even the atheist or the pantheist could quote the first commandment as meaning either that there is no God, or that there are millions. In short, there are no errors which might not be successfully promulgated on the authority of the Bible, because people who know no language but their own could not judge for themselves whether or not the facts were as represented. As far as the mass of people are concerned, the Bible would be just as valuable if it were written in hieroglyphics or senseless jargon; and for real use it would be as well to have no Bible at all, for that is what it really amounts to. {SITI July 19, 1883, p. 319.9}

We have called this the policy of Romanism, and such it is. The policy of that church has ever been to keep the Bible out of the hands of the people. She says that they may read it in the original; but as comparatively few are able to do this, that amounts to a complete prohibition. By leaving it untranslated, the priests can teach whatever they please without fear of contradiction. The Protestant world never tires of giving honor to Wickliffe, Luther, and Tyndale, for giving the Bible to the people in their own language, thus breaking the banns of Rome, yet it sanctions a course similar to that which the Catholic Church pursued; for it must be evident to all, that the difference between keeping the whole Bible from the people, and keeping a part of it from them, is only one of degree. {SITI July 19, 1883, p. 319.10}

And this is the course that the *Christian Union* and with it all the so-called orthodox denominations, thinks is a wise one to pursue, at least in regard to the subject of baptism. We most heartily dissent. It is a very convenient subterfuge, and for that very reason it is not wise. Honesty is better than policy If we are to take the Bible as our guide, let us have it just as it is. If it crosses our preconceived ideas, then let us change our own opinions and practices and make them accord with the standard. If any are determined to hold onto their own theories, or to tradition, in direct opposition to the Bible, let them do so on their own responsibility, and not use the authority of the Bible to back up that which it does not teach. If men do not believe what the Bible says, then let them cease quoting it as authority. “Every word of the Lord is pure;” and a practice which cannot stand when compared with the pure word as it came from the pen of inspiration, ought not to be adopted by men claiming to be Bible Christians. We fear that there are more persons than is commonly supposed, who are letting themselves liable to the penalties threatened in Revelation 22:18, 19. E. J. W. {SITI July 19, 1883, p. 319.11}

**“The Sabbath-School. Acts 11:19-30; 12:1-20” The Signs of the Times, 9, 28.**

E. J. Waggoner

**Lesson for the Pacific Coast-Aug. 4. Acts 11:19-30; 12:1-20.
NOTES ON THE LESSON.**

“Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.” These, as we learn from Acts 8:1, 4, were lay members, for the apostles remained in Jerusalem. They could not refrain from telling the wondrous truths that they had learned. This is in accordance with our Saviour’s injunction, “And let him that heareth say, Come.” The proof of their fitness to preach is found in verse 21, “And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.” The enemies of the gospel thought they were crushing it out, when they drove the disciples away from Jerusalem, but instead of that they were causing it to spread. The enemies of the truth may rage, but God can cause even their wrath to praise him. Paul says, “We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.” 2 Corinthians 13:8. {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 329.1}

We may learn a lesson from the course of these disciples under persecution. When Christians are in trouble they are too liable to think that God has forgotten them; but these disciples did not stop to pity themselves, and mourn over their hardships. And the results proved that God had an object in allowing this persecution to come upon them; he wanted to use them in his service. If they had murmured at their hard lot, how much they would have lost; they would not have been honored by God with the position in his service, and their selfishness might have resulted in the loss of many souls who, under the circumstances, received the truth at their hands. Who knows but that all who complain on account of trials lose just as much? {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 329.2}

“And some... spake unto the Grecians.” The Revised Version, following some of the best authorities, has “Greeks” instead of “Grecians.” And this seems the most harmonious. The most of them confined their labors to the Jews, but others, having less national prejudice, or a clearer view of the scope of the gospel, preached to the Gentiles also. The following remarks of H. Clay Trumbull in the *Sunday-School Times*, are pertinent:- {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 329.3}

“Christianity is sure to carry some men ahead of their age in the right direction. However the mass of those who are in the church may be bound by the common customs of the present, or by the blind traditions of the past, there will ever be more or less of radical and progressive reformers, who will do as others ought to do, instead of being content to do as others do do. From the days of the apostles this has been the way of moral and religious reforms; their beginning has been with the few extremists, rather than with the many, conservatists. So it was with modern missions, with the Sunday-school work, with the cause of temperance, and of anti-slavery, and of anti-church lotteries, and of anti-duelling; so it is with the progress of both religious and civil liberty; so it is with the now world-wide plan of uniform Bible study. So it is with prohibitory liquor legislation, with the battling of the anti-Chinese spirit, with the pressing of the anti-tobacco reform, and of the anti-church debt movement, and with a host of other good enterprises. Whatever may be the views or the practices of Christians generally, there are ‘some’ who have taken an advance position on these points, a position which they don’t propose to yield for anything short of death, for the second coming of our Lord.” {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 329.4}

When tidings of these things reached the church at Jerusalem, “they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.” The object in sending our best was to assist and direct these disciples in their work. “As far as Antioch,” indicates that he should follow up the work in the various places for the scattered ones had preached. The preaching to the Gentiles may have struck the church in Jerusalem as an irregularity that must be checked. But when Barnabas arrived at the field of labor, he found that he had only to exhort the new converts to continue in the way as they had begun. When he saw the grace of God he was glad. He had no feelings of envy because the Gentiles had received the word, or because some humble persons had been the instruments of their conversion, “For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith.” The Bible never deals in flattery, and when it says of a man that he was good, means a great deal. The highest titles of honor that this world can bestow sink into insignificance in comparison with the words, “Thou good and faithful servant,’ when spoken by the King of glory. {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 329.5}

“And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.” On the reason why Antioch should have been the place where this term was first used, “Conneybeare and Howson’s Life of Paul” says:- {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 329.6}

“As new converts in vast numbers came in from the ranks of the Gentiles, the church began to lose its ancient appearance of a Jewish sect, and to stand out in relief as a great self-existent community in the face both of Jews and Gentiles. Hitherto it had been possible, and even natural, that the Christians should be considered-by the Jews themselves, and by the Gentiles whose notice they attracted-as only one among the many theological parties which prevailed in Jerusalem and in the Dispersion. But when the Gentiles began to listen to what was preached concerning Christ,-when they were united as brethren on equal terms, and admitted to baptism without the necessity of a previous circumcision,-when the Mosaic features of this society were lost in the wider character of the New Covenant,-then it became evident that these men were something more than the Pharisees or Sadducees, the Essenes or Herodians, or any other sect or party among the Jews. Thus a new term in the vocabulary of the human race came into existence at Antioch about the year 44. Thus Jews and Gentiles, who under the teaching of Paul believed that Jesus of Nazareth was the Saviour of the world, ‘were first called Christians.’” {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 329.7}

“Herod the King.” It is not to be wondered at that many persons find it difficult to distinguish between the several Herods mentioned in the New Testament. In character they were all alike,-slaves of lost ambition, and monsters of cruelty. This Herod was Herod Agrippa I., grandson of Herod the Great, who ordered the massacre of the infants, and nephew of Herod Antipas, who caused John the Baptist to be beheaded, and father of Herod Agrippa II., called simply Agrippa, Acts 26. The Herod under consideration is designated as “Herod the King,” because he was the first one since Herod the Great, who had ruled over Judea. On this, Paley, in his “Evidences” makes the following point:- {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 329.8}

“The accuracy of our historian, or rather the unmeditated coincidence which truth of its own accord produces, is in this instance remarkable. There was no portion of time, for thirty years before, or ever afterwards, in which there was a king at Jerusalem, a person exercising that authority in Judea, to whom that title could be applied, except the last three years of this Herod’s life, within which period the transaction recorded in the Acts is said to have taken place.” {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 329.9}

The death of James and the prospective death of Peter pleased the Jews. It seems that the church had lost some of that “favor with all the people,” which they gained soon after the day of Pentecost. The reason for this may be found in the fact that they were making many converts, and necessarily showing the errors of the Jewish Church. However much of the favor of the world the people of God may gain on account of their upright course, they may be sure that in time they will lose it for the same reason. The purer the lives and doctrines of God’s people, the more will they be heeded by the world, and an apostate church. {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 329.10}

The antithesis in verses 4 and 5 of chapter 12 is worthy of notice. Peter was in prison with no prospect of coming forth until he was led to execution. He was constantly guarded by four soldiers, two of whom were in the cell with him, and two before the door. Added to this, he was chained to the two soldiers in the cell. There was no use of trying to bribe the guard, for should they allow him to escape their lives would be forfeited. All this was done by Herod; “but prayer was made without ceasing of the church under God” for Peter. {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 329.11}

The disciples had no power to draw the bolts of Peter’s prison door, nor could they hope for any favor from the king, but they had a key that would admit them to the presence of the King of kings, before the weakest of whose messengers Herod’s whole army was as nothing. Well was it for Peter that the church could do nothing but pray. {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 329.12}

Although the disciples had been earnestly and persevering praying for Peter, they could not believe that their prayers were answered. We are not to suppose that they had been praying without any faith, but that they did not expect that their prayers would be answered in that manner. They may have expected that the Lord would so move Herod’s heart that he would release Peter; at any rate it is evident that God did more for them than they had hoped. Their surprise, however, showed that they did not have that full faith that comes from an intimate acquaintance with God. It is as easy for him to do a great deed as a small one; nothing is too hard for him. Therefore we ought ask and expect great things from him. {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 329.13}

“Then said they, It is his angel.” Why the disciples should think that Peter’s guardian angel should come to them, it is needless to inquire. In their surprise and excitement they themselves may not have been able to give a reason. But it is not out of place to state what the text does *not* mean. It does not mean “The angel Peter,” as we have seen it misquoted. Some commentators say that it was the belief among the Jews at that time that departed souls of good men officiated as ministering angels. Whether or not some Jews believed this is of no consequence, for it is certain that the Bible Christians entertained no such belief. The fact that Protestant commentators can now believe such a theory, gives a clue to the rapid spread of modern Spiritualism. {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 329.14}

Angels are not departed dead men. This may be proved (1) by the fact that “the dead know not anything,” Ecclesiastes 9:5; that “their thoughts perish,” as soon as they die, Psalm 146:4; and that they know absolutely nothing about that which would concern them most if they were conscious, Job 14:21; Ecclesiastes 9:6; and (2) by the fact that angels were in existence before any man had died, Genesis 3:24, and even before man was created, Job 38:4-7. Angels are a superior order of being, entirely distinct from man. And this distinction will remain throughout eternity, for saints will never become angels. The promise to the righteous is, that in the resurrection they shall be “equal unto the angels,” and this of itself shows that they will never become the angels. Angels are now “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation;” and it was in this capacity that one of them rescued Peter from prison. E. J. W. {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 329.15}

**“Questions” The Signs of the Times, 9, 28.**

E. J. Waggoner

Please answer through your paper the following questions:- {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 330.1}

1. Do Seventh-day Adventists hold that the fact that God rested on the seventh day, and blessed it, and sanctified it, as *authority* for its observance among men? {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 330.2}

2. Do they teach that the ten commandments were enjoined *by Moses,* or *through him* upon any beside the Hebrews and those who were circumcised as proselytes to their religion? {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 330.3}

3. Do they teach that Christ enjoined the observance of the fourth commandment upon the Gentiles who became Christians? If so, cite their Scriptural authority. {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 330.4}

ANSWER. 1. YES. Webster defines the word “sanctified” thus: “1. To make sacred or wholly; *to set apart to a holy for religious use; to consecrate by appropriate rites;* to hallow..... 4. To impart sacrednesss, venerableness, inviolability, title to reverence and respect, or the like to; *to secure from violation; to give sanction to*.” When therefore it is stated in Genesis 2:3, that God sanctified the seventh day, it means that he set it apart to a religious use, gave sanction to it; in other words, he commanded that men should observe it. The word “hallowed,” found in the fourth commandment, is translated from the very same word that is rendered “sanctified” in Genesis 2:3. The fourth commandment introduces nothing new; it simply repeats the command to keep holy the Sabbath-day, refers to the events of the creation week, and states in closing that at that time God commanded the observance of the Sabbath. When God rested upon the seventh day, it became his Sabbath-day or rest-day; the blessing which he pronounced upon it made it superior to the other days of the week; the crowning act of sanctifying it made its observance obligatory on men. {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 330.5}

2. The ten commandments were enjoined neither *by Moses* nor *through* him, but by the Creator himself. See Exodus 20:1, and onward. When Moses, at a later date repeated these commandments, he said, Deuteronomy 5:22, “These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me.” {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 331.1}

Now as to the question, “Were the ten Commandments enjoined upon any beside the Hebrews and those who were circumcised as proselytes to their religion?” We answer, The commandments were for all men, irrespective of race or condition. Paul says that “the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons.” 1 Timothy 1:9, 10. Now read in Romans 1:21-32 Paul’s description of the heathen nations, and you will see that they did these very things, and that consequently the law was made for them. The law was not made for a righteous man but for sinners; but since there are none who are righteous, Romans 3:9, 10, 23, the law must have been made for all. {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 331.2}

Suppose we particularize in regard to the commandments. Would our friend claim that none but Jews were under obligation to worship the one true God to the exclusion of all others? If so, then he must hold that the heathen committed no sin in worshiping the creature instead of the Creator. Were only the Jews forbidden to take God’s name in vain? Did God design to allow all except the Jews to kill, commit adultery, steal, bear false witness, etc., at pleasure? Most assuredly not. The missionaries of all Christian denominations teach the heathen to avoid all these things, and they do so on the authority of the ten commandments alone. They recognize the truth of Paul’s argument that the law was made for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews. The Jews, as a nation, did not exist till several hundred years after the flood, yet we find that before the flood murder, theft, adultery, were regarded as sins, and all the inhabitants of the earth were destroyed on account of those sins. We must conclude, therefore, that the law existed long before it was spoken upon Sinai; and that it was binding upon all the inhabitants of the earth. In the case of the Sabbath the evidence is very clear, for (1) As shown above, we are expressly told that the observance of the Sabbath was enjoined in Eden; (2) There was then but one man upon the face of the earth; then of course it was to Adam that the Sabbath commandment was given; but (3) Adam stood as the representative of the whole human family; therefore the Sabbath was given for the whole human family; and this agrees with our Saviour’s words, “The Sabbath was made for man.” {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 331.3}

But now the question naturally arises, “If it was intended that the Gentiles should keep the law, why was it spoken only to the Jews at Sinai? It will not be out of place to consider this matter as briefly as possible. In the beginning God talked with man, and made known to him his will. It was his design that Adam should be the head of a race of sinless beings. But Adams sinned; having violated God’s law, he was under sentence of death, but a plan was devised whereby he might escape the consequences of his sin. But as the population increased, sin increased until the whole world had gone astray from God, and the flood was sent to destroy all the inhabitants. Then Noah and his family alone remained to re-people the earth, and to them was intrusted the responsibility of keeping alive the knowledge of God. Again man was unfaithful to his trust, and soon the whole world was lost in idolatry. Only one family, that of Abraham, remained upright. Since he alone was loyal to God, he was chosen as the depository of God’s law. God did not act arbitrarily, or use partiality, when he selected Abraham; he made himself known to him, because He alone wished to retain God in his knowledge, and he alone would command his household after him to keep the way of the Lord. Genesis 18:19. On account of Abraham’s faithfulness, the promise was made to him that he should be a great nation, and that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed. See Genesis 12:2, 3. {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 331.4}

Isaac and Jacob, and their families, were the singular ones of the time in which they live, in that they alone worshiped the true God. Jacob, or Israel, went into Egypt, and there his descendants became a great nation, the Israelites. While here there were so oppressed and hindered in their worship, that when God delivered them it was necessary to repeat his law to them. Why did he give them his law? Because they alone, of all the inhabitants of the earth, would receive it. Other people were not prohibited from learning of God, and of keeping his law, but in conformity with God’s promise to Abraham they were obliged to be adopted into the family of Abraham. {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 331.5}

But the Jews were often unmindful of their obligation to God, and forgot him, until, on account of their stubborn rebellion, they were finally rejected as a nation. God would accept them as individuals, but as a nation they were deprived of the high honor of being the depositories of his law. What then? Did God change his plan, and violate his promise to Abraham? By no means. Read Romans 2:28, 29: “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” And Galatians 3:27, 29: “For as many of you as had been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.... And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” God did not cast off Israel, but simply ordained that the badge of citizenship should no more be outward circumcision, but circumcision of the heart, that is, a cutting off and putting away of the carnal mind, bringing it into subjection to God’s law. All who would do this were to be enrolled as Israelites, and those who remained disobedient, even though they could trace their ancestry back to Abraham, were no longer counted as a part of Israel. See Romans 2:28, 29; 9:6-8. {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 331.6}

And so it is the Israelites still, and they alone, who are God’s chosen people. As in the former dispensation, the Gentiles who accepted God and his law became a part of the literal Israel, and shared all their privileges, so now the Gentiles are exhorted to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, but in doing so they cease to be Gentiles and become Jews, apart of the true Israel. Those who do not become Israelites, have no part in the promises, since the promises were made to Israel, and to none other. Romans 9:4. {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 331.7}

3. This question has really been answered above. All who become Christians must keep the law and consequently the fourth commandment. Christ enjoined obedience to the law: “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for *this is the law* and the prophets.” Matthew 7:12. And he taught obedience not to a portion of the law only, but to the whole. “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Matthew 5:17, 18. To the young ruler he said, “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” Matthew 19:17. Does any one say that these words were addressed to the Jews? We reply that Christ taught none directly except Jews. The gospel was not preached to the Gentiles until sometime after his ascension. But just before his ascension he commissioned his disciples to teach all nations and baptize them: “Teaching them,” said he, “to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” Matthew 28:20. All that Christ said was for all. He did not teach one thing for one class of hearers, and another thing for another class. {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 331.8}

Did Christ, then, enjoin the observance of the fourth commandment? We reply, Yes. Upon Gentiles? Yes; upon all who desire to obtain eternal life. Christ, however, enjoined nothing upon his own authority. He commanded nothing new. “My doctrine,” said he, “is not mine, but his that sent me.” John 7:16. He came to do, not his own will, but that his Father. It was not at all necessary that should reiterate the commandments. They had been given in the most formal and solemn manner, and, like all laws, must remain in full force until as formally repealed. Even if Christ did not mention the law at all, we would understand that it stood unchanged, but as above quoted, he declared in the most positive terms that it should never pass away. Christ and the Father are one, that is, there is the most perfect harmony in all their thoughts and actions. They were one in creating the world; one in giving and upholding the law; one in the plan of salvation. E. J. W. {SITI July 26, 1883, p. 331.9}