**“Importance of Bible Study” The Signs of the Times, 9, 46.**

E. J. Waggoner

No one will question the statement that those who presume to teach the Scripture should have a good knowledge of them. “For the priest lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth.” This fact is so well establish that dishonest men often take advantage to lead people astray; professing to be Bible teachers, they gain the confidence of those not familiar with the Bible, and palm off upon them the theories of man’s devising, in the place of sacred truth. There are, however, but few, even of those who profess to love the Bible and to be guided by its teachings, who recognize the necessity of a thorough study of the Bible for themselves. It is for this reason that they are so easily deceived by ignorant and unscrupulous men. {SITI December 6, 1883, p. 547.1}

If there were nothing in the Bible itself on this point, our own reason ought to teach us that if the Bible is to be our rule of life, we ought to know for selves. If it is a guide-book to tell us whereabouts we are in the journey toward the celestial city, and to warn us of the dangers and difficulties of the way, certainly everyone who is making the journey needs to be thoroughly acquainted with its contents. It was for this purpose that the Bible was written; the inspired penmen did not write for the benefit of a few, but for all. The way in which it was designed that the Bible should be studied, is thus given by Moses:- {SITI December 6, 1883, p. 547.2}

“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.” Deuteronomy 6:6-8. {SITI December 6, 1883, p. 547.3}

The last part was not to be taken literally, as the Jews afterward supposed: it is a figure to give expression to the note that the sacred truths were to be studied until they would be constantly in the mind, before the eyes, and influence both the thoughts of the head and the actions of the hand. David had the correct the idea of this injunction, for he said: “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” Psalm 119:11. There two points to be noted in this text: 1. “Thy word have by *hid* in mine heart.” How did he do this? The following verses tell: “I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.” Verse 15. Also verses 23, 48, 78. “Mine eyes prevent the night-watches, that I might meditate in thy word.” Verse 148. It was by constant study that David was unable to hide the word in his heart. Any one who reads these verses thoughtfully, will be convinced that David was not content with having a copy of the law in his possession, but that he studied it until he had, as we say, “learned by heart.” How else could he meditate upon it in the night? 2. “That I might not sin against thee.” This is why he studied the word so carefully. A blessing is pronounced on the man who meditates day and night in the law of the Lord (Psalm 1:1, 2); and this blessing consists primarily in the fact that by so doing he is kept from sin. “The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment. The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.” Psalm 37:30, 31. {SITI December 6, 1883, p. 547.4}

There is no other way than this brought to view in the Bible, whereby we may be kept from sin. We are to be sanctified through the truth, and it is by obeying it that our lives are purified. Now since none can enter heaven except those who are free from sin, it follows that it is as necessary for lay members to have the word of God in their hearts (not on their tables, or simply in their hands), as it is for preachers of the gospel. Of course the latter will be, from constant exercise, more ready in handling the word than others, but this should be the only difference. We, as a general thing, have not realized the necessity of close, personal study of the Bible. It is our standard; we draw our faith, pure and simple, from its pages; it is that which is to be our “shield and buckler,“ *i.e.*, our defense, in the time of trouble. How important, then, that we make it our constant study. {SITI December 6, 1883, p. 547.5}

The Bible is able not only to make us “wise unto salvation,” but it furnishes the best possible discipline for the mental faculties. The psalmist says: “The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding and to the simple.” Psalm 119:130. When Moses was giving his final charge to the children of Israel, he said, “Behold, I have taught you statutes, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that he should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them; for *this is your wisdom* and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all the statutes, and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’” Deuteronomy 4:5, 6. The book of the law was the only book that the Israelites had, yet there were no more shrewd and acute people among the ancients. Even to-day, the Jews, although they have said they have sadly wandered from the ancient landmarks, are the leaders in literature and the arts; and we think that we are safe in saying that their aptness is due to the fact that their ancestors were men who made the law of God there constant study. E. J. W. {SITI December 6, 1883, p. 547.6}

**“Bible Study at Healdsburg College” The Signs of the Times, 9, 46.**

E. J. Waggoner

The managers of this institution, recognizing the facts briefly mentioned above, determined that this should be a place where education of the true kind might be obtained. To this end there are several classes in the Bible, adapted to the capacity of the various students who attend. At a certain hour in the day, nearly the entire school is engaged in these Bible-classes. Those students who are not of our faith are not required to pursue the study unless they wish to, but most of them do so from choice. There are certain classes engaged in studying Old Testament history, in which those of any denomination can join without scruple. {SITI December 6, 1883, p. 548.1}

Soon after the camp-meeting this fall, an advanced class was started. This class is engaged in purely denominational work. The design is to fit men and women for active duty in the field, especially in the work of holding Bible-readings. At present it consists of thirty-seven members, whose ages range from sixteen to sixty years. The average membership thus far is thirty-four. Of this number, four-fifths will doubtless engage in active missionary work during the coming year. Several of them have already done a good service. {SITI December 6, 1883, p. 548.2}

In this class the different points of our faith are taken up in a systematic manner, from a Bible stand-point, “What does the Bible say?” is the one question constantly before the class. Each student is expected to turn to every passage in which reference is made, and follow the reader. This tends to produce readiness in finding Scripture texts. Questions are asked freely by both teacher and students, until everything is made clear to the minds of all. When a subject has been canvassed in this way, each member of the class is required to give a series of questions such as he would use in presenting the matter to one not of the faith. Quite often students have the privilege of showing the connection between certain texts before the class, or else of presenting it in writing. We hold that when a person knows a thing he can tell it: consequently the ability to state the different points clearly is made the test of knowledge. {SITI December 6, 1883, p. 548.3}

This class, we said, is designed to fit men and women for work in the field; but we believe that it should not be limited to those who expect to leave their homes. As already shown, it is the duty of every one to know the Bible for himself, that he may be protected against the deceptions of Satan. There should be scores engaged in such study where there is one now. Do you say that the process just described is a slow one, and takes too much time? There is no royal road to a knowledge of the Bible any more than to a knowledge of geometry. It is true that the Lord could give us at once a perfect knowledge of the Bible if he wished, but we do not read that he ever did so. He has given us minds, and expects us to use them. He is not in so great need of workmen, that he will employ those who do not use all the means placed in their power. Those who have attained in the eminence as Bible students, and have been leaders in the cause, have become so by hard, unremitting labor. The way is open for others to follow their example. {SITI December 6, 1883, p. 548.4}

But we do not expect any to accomplish this work without the help of the Lord. There is nothing which a person can undertake with so much assurance of divine aid as a study of God’s word. Great results may be accomplished in a short time, if we earnestly and prayerfully apply ourselves to the task. Do not say that you cannot afford the time; our time is given us for no other purpose than to work in the service of God, and to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Lord. But little of it yet remains, and Satan is mustering his force for a desperate final conflict. It is not enough that we have a sword; we must have it drawn from the scabbard, and sharpened for use. Let us awake, and put on the whole armor of God. E. J. W. {SITI December 6, 1883, p. 548.5}

**“The Sabbath-School. 1 Corinthians 16; 2 Corinthians 1-4” The Signs of the Times, 9, 47.**

E. J. Waggoner

**Lesson for Pacific Coast.-December 22.
1 COR. 16; 2 COR. 1-4.
NOTES ON THE LESSON.**

“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.” 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2. Paul does not here command the church at Corinth to make a collection, but simply gives them directions as to the manner of making it; the text shows that they had previously understood the necessity for such a collection. When Paul was at the council led at Jerusalem, and received “the right hand of fellowship” from the apostles and elders there, that he should go on to the heathen, it was desired of him that he should remember the poor (Galatians 2:9, 10); it was in accordance with this wish that he had previously asked the Corinthian brethren to give of their means. {SITI December 13, 1883, p. 557.1}

This text is considered by first-day writers as the end of controversy on the Sunday question. Dr. Barnes remarks: “There is here clear proof that the first day of the week was observed by the church at Corinth as holy time.” It is not claimed by him or anyone else, so far as we know, that there is here anything like a commandment for Sunday observance, but simply that Paul recognizes the observance of Sunday as something already established. Now we wish to call attention to two things: 1. If the Sunday-Sabbath was then a fixed institution in the church, there must have been a time when it originated,-a time when the commandment was given. This cannot be denied, for it is well known, and admitted by all men of judgment and candor among first-day people themselves, that there was a long period when the first day of the week was considered only a working day, and the seventh was the only recognized day of rest. See Exodus 20:8-11, and others. We repeat, then, that if this order of things were changed, a commandment to that effect must have been given. But since no one can find such a commandment, or any hint of such a thing, we deny that any such change was made. 2. From Dr. Barnes himself we will show that his “clear proof” that Sunday was observed by the Corinthians as a day of rest is an assumption unwarranted by the facts in the case. After quoting the Greek of the phrase, “lay by him in store,” he says: “Let him lay up at home, treasuring up as he has been prospered. The Greek phrase, ‘by himself,’ means, probably, the same as ‘at home.’ [All the best authorities agree on this; they make no question but that the apostle’s words literally mean that the offering should be laid by and treasured up at home.] Let him set it apart, let him designate a certain portion; let him do this *by himself*, when he is at home, when he can calmly looked at the evidence of his prosperity.” Now the moment it is admitted (and it cannot be denied) that the laying by was a personal affair with each individual at home, and not at church, then all that is assumed for first-day observance vanishes into nothingness. Moreover, to “calmly look at the evidence of his prosperity” is not generally considered to be the proper manner in which to keep the Sabbath. The Bible teaches a different way. See Isaiah 58:13. The passage under consideration is the last place in the Bible where the first day is mentioned; there are seven other places where it is found, and all of them give just as much support to the Sunday cause as this one does, and no more. {SITI December 13, 1883, p. 557.2}

“I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first-fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,) that ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth.” 1 Corinthians 16:15, 16. Paul here shows that those who are *addicted* to the ministry of the saints are worthy of the highest regard; others are to submit themselves to such. There is consistency in this, for Paul says that those who sow bountifully shall reap also bountifully; not simply in temporal things, but in spiritual. The *amount* given does not matter; that will depend on circumstances; but those who devote themselves to the service of the Lord, by caring for his saints, are by him especially honored even here. {SITI December 13, 1883, p. 557.3}

The reader must not fail to compare the two verses just quoted, with the 16th verse of the 1st chapter. Paul says that he baptized the household of Stephanas, and our Pedobaptist friends find in that statement proof that Paul baptized infants; “for it is not probable,” say they, “that there were no children in the family; and if there were, then of course they must have been baptized, since they formed a part of the household.” This is to many sufficient evidence in favor of so-called infant baptism. But let us apply the same reasoning in 1 Corinthians 16:15, 16. Here the word “house,” is used instead of “household,” but no one will dispute that in both instances family is meant. Paul says in this place that the house of Stephanas “have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.” Consistency requires of those who find infant baptism in 1 Corinthians 1:16 should on this text reason thus: “Of course there were infants in his family, and consequently we have here undoubted proof that in the early church children were so precocious that from their earliest infancy they worked diligently for the support of the saints.” Remember that Paul is speaking of the same family in both instances. But concerning the latter text Pedobaptists would say, with all reason, that if those of the family would come to years of discretion were given to hospitality, and to the service of the church, it is all that is required by the text; and thus they demolish their previous argument for infant baptism; for in order to reap any benefit from the statement that a household was baptized, they must prove that in *every* instance where something is dedicated of a *household*, the same action is predicated of all the infants of that household, should there be any. This they would not attempt to do. When we remember that the strongest proof for infant baptism is found in the baptism of the households of Lydia and the jailer, we see that nearly the whole theory is evaporated by the consideration of this one text. {SITI December 13, 1883, p. 557.4}

“For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.” 2 Corinthians 1:5. There is in this verse a wonderful amount of comfort to the Christian, if it only be appreciated. It is simply a fulfillment of the promise, “As by day, so shall thy strength be.” Dr. Clarke well says that from this “we learn that he who is upheld and a slight trial, need not fear a great one; for if he be faithful, his consolation shall abound as his sufferings abound. Is it not as easy for a man to lift one hundred pounds weight as it is for an infant to lift a few ounces? The proportion of strength destroys the comparative difficulty.” The angel said to Daniel, “The people that do know there God shall be strong, and do exploits.” Daniel 11:32. The Lord himself said to the Jews that if they would obey him, five of them should chase an hundred, and an hundred of them should put ten thousand to flight. Leviticus 26:8. Would there be anything that the people of God could not do or endure, if they only had faith in God? With each new trial, fresh consolation would come, and each new duty entered upon would bring strength for its own accomplishment. What reason is there, then, in discouraged? Suppose the way is rough; “as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.” If a man be in Christ, he can do all things. Philippians 4:13. Christ himself said, “In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” John 16:33. Why should the fact that Christ has overcome the world, impart courage to us? Because it is an assurance that we can do the same, for all his strength is freely given to us, if we will but accept it. “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” 1 John 5:4. Is it, then, proper to say of any one man that he is a “weak Christian”? To be a Christian is to be in Christ, and those that are in this condition are partakers of his power, which is infinite. Just to the extent then that a man is weak in the Christian life, is he out of Christ, and, consequently not a Christian. This does not mean, however, that a man must be strong in himself; “our sufficiency is of God.” {SITI December 13, 1883, p. 557.5}

“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” 2 Corinthians 4:7. This shows that there is a purpose in are being weak. We are compared to frail earthen vessels, that might be easily broken. If such vessels were subjected to rough usage, and were still preserved intact, it would indicate that some special care had been exercised, for the destruction of the vessels would be the natural result. So if we are preserved from the snares of the enemy, it will indicate that some power far superior to ourselves is entitled to the credit. But Christ cannot work in us, if we feel so strong as to make the attempt to do the work ourselves. And since, having no strength, we often act as though we have it, it is certain that if we *had any* strength of our own, we would not give the Lord a chance to work at all, and we would be lost. We therefore repeat that it is a wise providence that has made us as weak as we are, in order that the power of Christ may rest upon us. Instead of becoming discouraged over our natural weakness, we ought rather, with Paul, to take pleasure in the fact, and “glory in the infirmities; for when I am weak, then am I strong.” E. J. W. {SITI December 13, 1883, p. 557.6}

**“The Coming Conflict” The Signs of the Times, 9, 47.**

E. J. Waggoner

For more than thirty years Seventh-day Adventists have held that the people of the United States would make a law for the enforcement of Sunday observance upon all classes of persons, regardless of their nationality or religious belief. Although for many years there was no inclination of such a movement, and the idea that such a thing could ever be done in this country was ridiculed, this denomination did not cease nor change their preaching, knowing that time would prove its truth. Their confidence did not arise from any fanaticism, but was based on a fair interpretation of the sure word of prophecy. {SITI December 13, 1883, p. 559.1}

It was this belief that led them to be so zealous in presenting the claims of God’s law, especially of the fourth commandment. Knowing that the Bible recognizes no Sabbath but the seventh day, and that the only authority for Sunday observance is that of the Catholic Church, which regards the change it has made in God’s law as the badge of its power, they justly concluded that the enforcement of Sunday observance would be causing all to receive the “mark of the beast.” But those who receive this are threatened with a most terrible punishment, and it is plainly declared that those who are prepared for the Lord’s coming will be the ones who have kept “the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus,” and “have the father’s name in their foreheads.” With this knowledge, they could do no other wise than to earnestly proclaim the truth, not with any hope of hindering or preventing that which they saw must take place, but in order that all who wished to obey God rather than men, might know what his will is. {SITI December 13, 1883, p. 559.2}

Time has made the study of the above-mentioned prophecy almost unnecessary, except for the purpose of showing the exact fulfillment of God’s word. The thing which was predicted is now upon us. There is a thoroughly organized party now in existence, whose sole object is to “maintain *existing Christian features* in the American Government, and to secure such an amendment to the Constitution of the United States as will indicate that this is a Christian nation, and to place all the Christian laws, institutions, and usages of our Government on an undeniable legal basis and the fundamental law of the land.” This may not seem so bad to the casual reader, but when he learns that some of the “existing Christian features” are in direct opposition to the Bible, he cannot fail, if he be indeed a Christian, to regard it as a serious matter. It has been claimed, and is still by some, that it is not the design of this party to do violence to anybody’s religious convictions, but we have seen too much to be deceived. In California and some parts of the East, the spirit of the movement has been clearly manifested. The zeal of very many arises, not so much from love to the Sunday, which is the only “Christian usage” that is made much of in this contest, as from hatred to the Sabbath of the Lord. {SITI December 13, 1883, p. 559.3}

We do not believe that even Seventh-day Adventists, as a general thing, realize the gigantic proportions to which this movement has grown, or the long and rapid strides with which it is now going forward. In the East, conventions are constantly being held; many men spend their entire time in advocating the measure. One Synod of the Covenanter Church, in Pennsylvania, pledged $10,000 for the support of the “National Reform Party” during the coming year. Their missionary efforts are very similar to those of our people; and when we remember what an amount of men and means the party has at its disposal, and that its views are by no means so unpopular as those we advocate, we can imagine the progress which is being made. One convention of two or three days’ continuance, is usually all that is needed to settle the movement in a place. The local clergymen then take it up, and take it before their people. They also take it advantage of the temperance sentiment of the people, making them believe that this movement is the only hope for prohibition. The publishers of the *Christian Statesman* the organ of the party, are urging their subscribers to send the names of those who are not receiving the paper, and then to follow up the sample copies which will be sent, by letters or visits, for urging the parties to subscribe. {SITI December 13, 1883, p. 559.4}

In view of these things the General Conference, at its recent session, passed the following resolution:- {SITI December 13, 1883, p. 559.5}

WHEREAS. We, as students of prophecy, have for years anticipated the present Sunday movement, and understand that there is a conflict before us, the magnitude of which can scarcely be appreciated; and, {SITI December 13, 1883, p. 559.6}

WHEREAS, Thousands of earnest Christians are laboring sincerely for the enforcement of the Sunday Law, who would not do so if the claims of the true Sabbath were placed before them: therefore, {SITI December 13, 1883, p. 559.7}

*Resolved*, That we remind our people of their duty to place the great light which God has given them upon the Sabbath question before others; and we urge that this be done before the leaders of this Sunday movement have opportunity to represent the issues of this question in a false light.” {SITI December 13, 1883, p. 559.8}

If this resolution is complied with, we have not much time to spare. Next year will be a great year in politics, being the time of the national campaign, and the “Reform Party” will not be silent. Our people will be brought face to face with this question, and how are they prepared for it? There are many who might do a great deal of good in their own neighborhood, by holding Bible-readings, if they only were qualified; but they do not feel that they are able to bring out the truth as it should be. Many believe the truth, but yet could not give a satisfactory reason for their belief. Such cannot hope to be able to benefit others, or even to hold their present positions very long against the sophisms of the opposition. None should rest satisfied until they are intelligently sound in the faith. We quote from an article by Mrs. E. G. White, in the last *Review:* “Our people, who are expecting such great and important events soon to transpire, should know the reasons of their faith, that they may be able to give an answer to every man that shall ask them a reason for the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear. In his word God has revealed truth that will benefit his church. As a people, we should be earnest students of prophecy; we should not rest until we become intelligent in regard to the subject of the sanctuary, which is brought out in the visions of Daniel and John.” {SITI December 13, 1883, p. 559.9}

These prophecies, and the sanctuary question, have been the subject of special study in the Bible-class at Healdsburg College. Next term, beginning January 2, it is the design to connect with these the subject of the Sabbath, in all its bearings,-considering the Bible evidence for the seventh-day Sabbath, the claims and objections of the opposition, the Sabbath in prophecy, the change, and the restoration,-in short, all that pertains to this vital question. This will be done with special reference to the struggle into which, as upholders of Bible truth, we may expect to be forced very soon. The investigation will be very thorough, and all will have an opportunity to be sure that they understand what they believe. Shall we not anticipate the coming conflict, and fortify ourselves and our position? Those who hold these truths are but a little company, and there is a place in the work for every one. Even should our service be to “only stand and wait,” let us wait as minute-men, ready for instant action wherever the Master may call us. And do not delay in your preparation, for the demand for laborers is urgent, and “the King’s business requires haste.” *Now* is the time. E. J. W. {SITI December 13, 1883, p. 559.10}