**“Progress of the Work at Healdsburg” The Signs of the Times, 10, 11.**

E. J. Waggoner

The first Sabbath in this month was a day of interest and profit to the church at Healdsburg; of profit not only to the church, but to the College, and through it to the cause throughout the State. In the forenoon, Eld. Corliss preached from Colossians 3:2, 3: “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” The responsibilities resting upon those who profess to be members of Christ’s body, were clearly set forth. We belong to the family of Christ, and are individually responsible for the reputation of the family. The danger of becoming estranged from Christ by following the pain and silly fashions of the world, was dwelt upon with earnestness. The true Christian will indeed be dead,-insensible to the allurements of the world. {SITI March 13, 1884, p. 169.1}

After the sermon, the congregation repaired to the usual place of baptism, where six souls were baptized, as evidence of their faith in the death and resurrection of Christ, and their determination to be henceforth new creatures in Christ. Four of this number were students at the College,-two of them from Mendocino County, one from Humboldt County, and one a resident of Healdsburg. {SITI March 13, 1884, p. 169.2}

In the afternoon some twenty of those who intend to labor in the various capacities in the field during the summer, met in one of the rooms of the College building, together with Elds. White, Corliss, Israel, and Healey, to consider some plans for the coming campaign. So far as a division of labor had been made, all heartily acquiesced in the suggestions of the Conference Committee, expressing themselves as willing to labor to the extent of their ability, in any field to which they might be assigned. As testimonies and exhortations were given, the Spirit of the Lord came into the meeting, and all felt strengthened and encouraged. {SITI March 13, 1884, p. 169.3}

We believe that the spirit of love and harmony that exists among the workers, and which seems to be increasing, augurs well for the success of the work. As was stated by one brother, the laborers must press together if they would see the work prosper. But it is God who sends prosperity, and blesses our efforts; in order to succeed, we must draw near to God, and when we all get near him, it follows as a natural consequence that we will be near to one another.We confidently expect to see the cause of God advanced greatly this year. If God is in the work of which there can be no doubt, and the workers go forth accompanied by his Spirit, we certainly may expect great things. {SITI March 13, 1884, p. 169.4}

During the past two weeks the missionary class has enjoyed the presence and labors of Bro. White, who has given much Bible instruction in regard to canvassing, doing colporteur work, and preparing a field for tent labor. Certainly those who go into the field with a definite plan of operations in mind, and are fortified, as far as possible, against every objection that can be made, have a far better prospect of success than those who go out trusting alone to their general, unclassified knowledge, and the inspiration of the moment, for the means to awaken the interest of the indifferent, and to answer those who make objections. It is just this definite, practical knowledge that the instructors at Healdsburg College came to impart. Brethren, remember the work, and pray for the workers. E. J. W. {SITI March 13, 1884, p. 169.5}

**“The Support of the Poor” The Signs of the Times, 10, 12.**

E. J. Waggoner

There are many Christians who use their tithe as a sort of charity fund, from which they make all their gifts and offerings, of whatever kind. But the Bible recognizes no such plan as this. The poor are to be supported, but not with the Lord’s tithe. In ancient times the following was one provision made for the poor: “And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the Lord your God.” Leviticus 19:9, 10. See also 23:22; Deuteronomy 24:19-21. {SITI March 20, 1884, p. 185.1}

Some may argue from Deuteronomy 26:12, 13 that the tithe was to be used for the support of the poor, but in this text we see not only the careful provision made for the poor, but the sacredness with which the Lord’s tithe was devoted to the one object for which it was designed. We quote the text: “When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled; then thou shalt say before the Lord thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me; I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them.” The command here referred to is found in Deuteronomy 14:22-29, where, in addition to the requirement to give to the stranger, the fatherless, etc., this statement is made: “And thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks.” {SITI March 20, 1884, p. 185.2}

Now when we read in Numbers 18:21, “Behold, I have given the children of Levi *all the tenth in Israel* for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation,” we are forced to the conclusion that the tithe spoken of in Deuteronomy 14 and 20 is not the same as that which was devoted to the Levites on account of their service in the sanctuary, for the stranger could not by any possibility be counted as one of the Levites. We can harmonize the two Scriptures only on the ground that the tithe which the people themselves, together with “the Levites, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow,” were to eat, was a *second tithe,* taken after the tithe for the Levites had been given them. This view of the question is taken by all commentators of whom we have any knowledge. And there are some who claim that every third year a third tithe was collected. We quote a few testimonies:- {SITI March 20, 1884, p. 185.3}

“Another important privilege enjoyed by the poor was, what was called *second* tithes and second firstlings. Besides the tenth received by the Levites, the Israelites were obliged to set apart *another* tenth of their garden field produce; and in like manner of their cattle, a second set of offerings, for the purpose of presenting as thank offerings at the high festivals. Of these thank offerings only certain fat pieces were consumed on the altar; the remainder, after deducting the priests’ portion, was appropriated to the sacrifice feasts, to which the Israelites were bound to invite a stranger, the widow, and the orphan.” *Horne’s Introduction, Vol. 2, Part II, chap. viii*. {SITI March 20, 1884, p. 185.4}

“Besides the first-fruits, the Jews also paid tithes or tenths of all they possessed. Numbers 18:21. They were in general collected of all the produce of the earth (Leviticus 27:30; Deuteronomy 14:22, 23; Nehemiah 13:5, 10), but chiefly of corn, wine, and oil, and were rendered every year except the sabbatical year. When these tithes were paid, the owner of the fruits further gave another tenth part, which was carried up to Jerusalem, and eaten in the temple at offering feasts, as a sign of rejoicing and *gratitude to God.* These are called *second tithes.”*-*Ib., Vol. 2, Part III, chap. iii*. {SITI March 20, 1884, p. 185.5}

“Every year a tithe was paid to the Levites; and besides that a second tithe, which was carried to Jerusalem and eaten there; and every third year it was eaten at home, in their towns and cities in the country instead of it, with the Levite, poor, and stranger, and was called the poor’s tithe.”-*Dr. John Gill, on* Deuteronomy 26:12. He gives other testimony to the same effect, in his comments on the succeeding verses, and on Deuteronomy 14:23-28, and Leviticus 27:30. {SITI March 20, 1884, p. 185.6}

“Let there be taken out of your fruits a tenth besides what you have allotted to give to the priests and Levites. This you may indeed sell in the country, but it is to be used in those feasts and sacrifices that are to be celebrated in the holy city.” {SITI March 20, 1884, p. 185.7}

“Besides those two tithes which I have already said you are to pay every year, the one for the Levites, the other for the festivals, you are to bring every third year eight times to be distributed to those that want; two women also that our widows, and two children and orphans.”-*Josephus’ Ant., Book IV., chap. 8.* {SITI March 20, 1884, p. 185.8}

These testimonies, and others that might be given, together with the argument previously adduced, show conclusively that the Lord’s tithe was not used for the poor; and since it was not used either for building or repairing houses of worship, it must have been solely for those who labored in connection with sacred things. Indeed, how could it be otherwise. We read, “The tithe is *the Lord’s*.” It was to be deposited in the Lord’s treasury. Now if I owe a friend ten dollars, it will not do for me to give any part of it to a poor man, even though I know that my friend would use the money in the same way, if I were to pay it to him. It belongs to no one but to my friend, and it would be highly dishonest for me to get a reputation for liberality, by giving away that to which I have no right. No one can be charitable on another’s money. E. J. W. {SITI March 20, 1884, p. 185.9}

**“Systematic Giving” The Signs of the Times, 10, 13.**

E. J. Waggoner

It will be readily seen that so far as tithes are concerned, the Bible plan of supporting the cause is very systematic. Each one gives in the same proportion. There is no fixed time at which persons should set apart their tithe, because it is to be the *first-fruits* of whatever they may receive, at whatever time it may come in. Whenever a man receives any part of his income, his first duty should be to take out the Lord’s tithe, putting it in a place by itself. If he should at once credit his cash account with the amount of tithe set aside, he would be doing more nearly right still, for since the tithe does not belong to him, his books show just what money he really has on hand. There would then be less temptation to use the tithe while it remains in his hands, for the fact that it is not his own would appear more real. As to when the tithe should be paid into the treasury, will often depend on circumstances; many churches, however, have an arrangement for the treasurer to visit each member once a month, to collect whatever tithes they may have on hand. This plan has many advantages, but it does not hinder anybody from handing in his tithe during the interval, if he so desires. {SITI March 27, 1884, p. 201.1}

The fact can be well-established, I think, that the Bible plan is that men should also be systematic in their offerings. Why should we not think so? “God is not the author of confusion,” and there is order and system in his works. But we need not depend on our unassisted reason for the establishment of systematic offerings. A familiar Bible text settles the matter beyond controversy. We quote:- {SITI March 27, 1884, p. 201.2}

“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. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.” 1 Corinthians 16:1-3. {SITI March 27, 1884, p. 201.3}

It is evident from even a casual reading of this text that the apostle has reference to offerings, and not to the tithes. For (1) that which the churches were to lay aside is called “liberality,” a term that, as we have seen, cannot be applied to the tithe. (2) Paul said that this especial contribution was “for the poor saints which are in Jerusalem.” Romans 15:26; but the tithe, we remember, was not used for the support of the poor. And (3) the tithe is the *first-fruits* of the increase, and could not therefore always be paid on any day of the week; for while some might every day be receiving that which they could tithe, others might not receive anything as often as once a month. {SITI March 27, 1884, p. 201.4}

The question will arise, Was this order designed to be followed by all Christians, or was it merely a local and temporary arrangement? We answer, that while the necessity for this special collection would soon cease to exist, the plan is one that should be pursued by all. The fact that the apostle made the arrangement, not for one church merely, but for many, and that it was of sufficient importance to be preserved in the inspired writings for all generations, is sufficient evidence of this. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable.” We can see nothing more toward profit in this text, than that our offerings to the poor and to various worthy the objects, should be according to a definite plan. {SITI March 27, 1884, p. 201.5}

When God gave laws through Moses for the government of his people, he gave direction concerning the poor as follows: “If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother; but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth.” Deuteronomy 15:7, 8. The word “lend” is used here, but the verses following plainly shows that they were to expect no return; and he immediately after follows the statement, “For the poor shall never cease out of the land.” {SITI March 27, 1884, p. 201.6}

The New Testament bounds in exhortations by Christ and the apostles, to care for the poor, and the quotation last made was reaffirmed by Christ shortly before his crucifixion, when he said, “For ye have the poor always with you.” Matthew 26:11. {SITI March 27, 1884, p. 201.7}

Now, query: If it is our duty to care for the poor, and they are to be ever-present with us, would it not be negligence on our part, if we did not make constant provision for them? Is it not because people let their offerings depends so much upon impulse, that there is so much suffering among the poor? Much needless suffering would be avoided if all made systematic offerings as a matter of principle. The heart is often touched by scenes of woe, or by appeals for aid, but, because no previous preparation has been made, we have nothing to give, and our sympathy is useless. To say to a brother or sister, “Be ye warmed and filled,” or to wish it,

and not give them those things which are needful to the body, profits no more at the present time than it did in the days of the apostles. {SITI March 27, 1884, p. 202.8}

The text under consideration (1 Corinthians 16:1, 2) plainly teaches that our offerings, for the poor at least, are to be made from a fund which is the result of sums of money regularly set apart for that purpose. These weekly deposits are to be made after a calculation of our income, of which they are to be a definite proportion. What that proportion should be, each one must determine for himself. The amount once laid aside, it should be considered as sacred as the tithe. Although it is in our own power to say how much we will give, whether more or less, when the amount to be given is decided in our minds, we have placed the matter out of our own hands. Having once vowed, even though the vow were not uttered a record of it is made in Heaven, and God will surely require it of us. “When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it; for the Lord thy God will surely require of thee; and it would be sin in thee.” Deuteronomy 23:21. As was recommended in the case of the tithe, a good way to do is to not only set the sum apart in a place by itself; but place it to the credit of our cash account; then there will be less danger of temptation to use it for ourselves. {SITI March 27, 1884, p. 202.1}

But some one will say, “I don’t believe God wants us to give because we feel obliged to; I believe he would better have us give cheerfully; and there is something repulsive in such a methodical way of making offerings.” Well, excepting the last statement, we believe just so too. But is it so that God is more pleased with service that is performed fitfully, yea, almost by accident, than with that service which is the result of a settled purpose? Does he take greater delight in one who gives to his cause or to the poor on a certain occasion, because it happens to be convenient, than in one who *makes* it convenient to give whenever there is need? Most assuredly not. Joshua said, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord;” and his pious determination stands as a continual rebuke to those who neglect to choose once for all the course they will pursue. {SITI March 27, 1884, p. 202.2}

Let us hear the words of the apostles: “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God love with a cheerful giver.” 2 Corinthians 9:7. Our giving is to be the result of a *cheerful determination*. God loves a cheerful giver yet he is pleased that we should have a previous “purpose” in our hearts. It is with giving as with any other service, it should be done from principle, yet willingly. Take, for instance, the Sabbath. There is a specific command for its observance, and all our plans in all time, are to be made with reference to it. The commandment is unconditional and unyielding; and yet God requires us to “call the Sabbath a delight.” The fact is, if the duty is irksome, our only way is to do it faithfully, and *make* ourselves like it. And if we go about in the duty from principle, resolved to like it because it *is* our duty, God will give us grace to find in it our highest pleasure. The carnal mind is enmity against God, and not subject to his law but it is possible for us to be so changed as to love him, and to delight in his law. {SITI March 27, 1884, p. 202.3}

One more thought in regard to systematic giving. Paul desired that the Corinthians should “abound in this grace also.” 2 Corinthians 8:7. The ability to give, then, is one of the graces, and like all others is bestowed by God. Verses 1, 2. But graces grow only by constant exercise; therefore there should be constant giving, else we shall be lacking in one of the graces, and thus fail of eternal life. The great object to giving is after all more for our own benefit than for the benefit of others. God could miraculously supply the wants of his cause and of the poor, but we would be the losers. We must be like Christ if we would inherit the kingdom of God; and of him we are told that “though he was rich,” yet for our sake “he became poor.” Perfect unselfishness characterized his whole life. Unlike him, selfishness is that which prompts every act of our natural heart, the only way to overcome is by a determined performance of those things which selfishness would lead us to avoid. As Napoleon said, “Find out what the enemy wants, and then do exactly the opposite.” This plan, persistently followed, will drive the enemy from the field, and give us a glorious victory. {SITI March 27, 1884, p. 202.4}

The greatest favor God can bestow upon us in this life is to allow us to have a part in giving to his cause, and to the poor. If God should transform us into the divine image, by an act of his mighty power, we would not be the gainers thereby, for we would be liable to fall with the first temptation that presented itself; and if, having transformed us, he should keep us in that condition by the same power, we would be mere machines. God designs that we shall work out our own salvation, in order that we may have a moral character of our own; he will give us assistance, without which we can do nothing, yet we must do the work ourselves. {SITI March 27, 1884, p. 202.5}

What has been said concerning systematic offerings is not designed to cut off special offerings. Thank offerings and sin offerings are as necessary now as in the days of Moses, and every Christian will feel called upon at times to make them. This we should do whenever the necessity arises, but should not even then neglect to “lay in store” our regular contribution. We would again emphasize the fact that the benefit to be derived from offerings is gained only by continuous giving. If our whole contribution would amount to about five dollars, it would be far better to pay ten cents every week than to pay the entire sum at the end of the year. It would be as wise to think of doing all our praying on the first or last day of the year, has to do all our giving for the year at one time, and then think know more about it. {SITI March 27, 1884, p. 202.6}