**“Bondage and Freedom” The Signs of the Times, 11, 34.**

E. J. Waggoner

From a brother in Washington Territory we have received a request to explain Galatians 4:1-31, as there are some in the neighborhood who are trying to use that passage against the truth. It is impossible to give in one brief article an exhaustive explanation of the passage, since that would involve quite a lengthy dissertation on the law and the covenants. But we shall try to give a clear outline, so that the Bible student may readily grasp the apostle’s meaning. Before long we hope to give a more full exposition of this and kindred passages. {SITI September 3, 1885, p. 537.1}

To anyone who has carefully read the verses indicated, it is evident that three things are put in contrast with three other things. Hagar, ancient Jerusalem, and the old covenant, of which the first two stand as figures, are placed in opposition, to Sarah, the New Jerusalem, and the new covenant. Ishmael and Isaac stand respectively as representatives of those under the old covenant and the new. {SITI September 3, 1885, p. 537.2}

Since Hagar was a bondwoman, the apostle, in using her as a symbol of the old covenant, means to indicate that the children of the old covenant are in bondage. They who are of the new covenant, are free, as Isaac was the son of a free woman. They that are of the old covenant, are after the flesh; while they of the new covenant are, as was Isaac, children of promise. {SITI September 3, 1885, p. 537.3}

Before applying these points, let us briefly notice the difference between the two covenants. The first was made with the children of Israel when they left Egypt. Hebrews 8:9. The terms of that covenant are found in Exodus 19:3-6; 24:3-7. They were simply these. God promised to make of the Jews a great nation, a kingdom of priests, and they, in turn, promised to keep his law. This was all. Now in this covenant there was no provision for the forgiveness of sin either past or future,-no hint of Christ, through whom alone forgiveness or power to keep the law could come. Before they made this covenant, they had all broken the law, and since they were unable of themselves to keep the law, for without Christ nothing can be done (John 15:6), it is evident that that covenant or pledge to keep the law simply brought them into bondage. When we say that it brought them into bondage, we do not mean that it brought them under obligation to keep the law, for that obligation existed before any covenant was made, and whenever they violated the law they were really in bondage; but that promise brought the matter right home to them, and served to cause them to realize that they were justly condemned. {SITI September 3, 1885, p. 537.4}

Had there never been any other covenant than this, the whole world must have been lost, since without divine aid no one can keep the law, for the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Romans 8:7. Some will ask if God did not know that they could not fulfill the promise so readily made, and if it was not trifling with them to make such a covenant with them. God did indeed know that they had no power to do as they agreed, but he was not trifling with them. With this promise in mind, and a desire to keep it, they could not fail to learn their true condition-lost-and that would turn their attention to that other covenant, already in existence, which the Lord makes with his people. This is the second covenant:- {SITI September 3, 1885, p. 538.1}

“After these days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” Jeremiah 31:33, 34. {SITI September 3, 1885, p. 538.2}

The only difference between this and the first is that provision is made for sins to be pardoned, and the law is to be written in their hearts; that is, this covenant makes it possible to arrive at perfection, for that is what is meant by having the law in the heart. Forgiveness of sins is an instantaneous work, but the writing of the law in the heart is a progressive work, the work of a lifetime. When the law is fully written in the heart, then the individual is indeed sanctified; he is like Christ (Psalm 40:8), and is ready for translation. {SITI September 3, 1885, p. 538.3}

We said that this second covenant was even then in existence. So it was, in effect. It is the same covenant which was made with Abraham since that covenant was confirmed in Christ (Galatians 3:17), and Abraham had the righteousness of faith. The same covenant had been made long before, as soon as the fall, as is indicated by the sacrifices by which the people showed their faith in a Saviour whose blood would secure their pardon. Had it not existed in substance from the beginning, there could have been no salvation for any; but men did receive pardon from the beginning, and the work of restoring the law in the hearts of believers has ever since been going on. This covenant, by procuring pardon for past sins and enabling the individual to keep the law, tends to liberty. It sets men free. The other covenant could not free a soul from the bondage in which he already languished. Those who cling to that are of the flesh (Galatians 5:19, 21), since they cannot keep the law. And it may properly be said that all who are out of Christ are under the old covenant; they are in bondage. {SITI September 3, 1885, p. 538.4}

Now note in the passage under consideration, that the Galatians, who seemed willing to forego the blessings of the new covenant, are said to wish to be “under the law.” Then we may know that being children of the first covenant, being under the law, being after the flesh, and being in bondage, are all the same thing. But to be after the flesh is to be a violator the law of God (see Galatians 5:19-21), and therefore to be “under the law” is equivalent to being a violator of the law, and such are, of course, in bondage. See Romans 7:14; 2 Peter 2:19. Those who are children of the new covenant, have the law written in their hearts; they keep it, and therefore they walk at liberty. Psalm 119:45. {SITI September 3, 1885, p. 538.5}

Now we learn from the first portion of the 4th of Galatians, that this was exactly the condition of the Galatians. Says Paul: “Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?” Verses 8, 9. They were leaving Christ and going back into slavery, and this, Paul assured them, would make them children of the bondwoman. {SITI September 3, 1885, p. 538.6}

This probably explains all that causes any controversy. Remember why it is that those who are children of Sinai are in bondage. It is not because we have nothing to do with that law which was spoken from Sinai; just the contrary. That law stands fast as the throne of God, and abates not one jot of the righteous demands. And because it is so firm, those poor sinners who know nothing of Christ’s salvation, or, knowing it, will not accept it, are in hopeless bondage-hopeless until they turn to Christ. If the law were abrogated, there could be no bondage for any. E. J. W. {SITI September 3, 1885, p. 538.7}

**“Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream” The Signs of the Times, 11, 35.**

E. J. Waggoner

**THE SABBATH-SCHOOL.**

**LESSON FOR THE PACIFIC COAST—OCT. 8**

Last week our lesson left us with Daniel about to relate and interpret the dream which had made so wonderful an impression on the mind of Nebuchadnezzar, who could not recall any portion of it. This week we have the dream itself, and a portion of the interpretation. Without the least hesitation, Daniel repeated the dream, which we quote entire. {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 550.1}

“Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image’s head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.” Daniel 2:31-35. {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 550.2}

In this dream, by these symbols, the Lord had shown Nebuchadnezzar what should be “in the latter days.” Verse 28. Beginning with his own time, the history covered by this dream reaches to the end of time. This is shown by the fact that the four divisions of the image, marked by the four different metals, represented four empires, the last of which was to be dashed in pieces by the setting up of the everlasting kingdom of God, represented by the stone which smote the image. Verses 44, 45. Immediately after relating the dream, the prophet addressed the king as follows: “Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. *Thou art this head of gold*.” Verses 37, 38. {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 550.3}

These verses are as plain a statement of fact as any in the Bible. Two things are told. First, that Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom was represented by the head of gold, and second, that his empire was universal. The second item was of course well known to Nebuchadnezzar; the first must have riveted his attention. We say that the head of gold represented Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom, because the prophet immediately adds, “And after *thee* shall arise another *kingdom;*” and the Babylonian empire did not give place to another until twenty-three years after the death of Nebuchadnezzar. {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 550.4}

The extent of the empire is indicated in verse 38: “And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.” This means universal dominion. A few years later, the prophet Jeremiah bore testimony to the same effect. The kings of Tyre, Edom, Moab, etc., with Zedekiah, king of Israel, were contemplating a revolt from Babylonian rule. To show them the folly of such an attempt, the prophet, by the command of the Lord, sent messengers to them, saying, “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Thus shall ye say unto your masters; I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me. And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him. And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son’s son, until the very time of his land come; and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him.” Jeremiah 4:4-7. {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 550.5}

This language is not figurative nor hyperbolical. It is plain history, and is substantiated by the writings of profane historians. The “Encyclopedia Britannica,” art. “Babylonia,” after telling how Nabopolassar, ruler of the province of Babylonia, revolted from Assyrian rule, says:- {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 550.6}

“The seat of empire was not transferred to the southern kingdom. Nabopolassar was followed in 604 by his son Nebuchadnezzar, whose long reign of forty-three years made Babylon *the mistress of the world*. The whole east was overrun by the armies of Chaldea, Egypt was invaded, and the city of the Euphrates left without a rival.” {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 550.7}

The city of Babylon is described at great length by Rollin (“Ancient History,” Vol. 1, book 3, chap. 1), and by Prideaux (“Connexion,” Vol. 1, book 2). Our space, however will allow us to give only the brief yet very clear description given by Herodotus, as quoted by Lenormant (“Ancient History of the East,” Vol. 1, book 4, chap. 5, section 3). It is as follows:- {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 550.8}

“The city stands on a broad plain, and is an exact square, a hundred and twenty furlongs in length each way, so that the entire circuit is four hundred and eighty furlongs. While such is its size, in magnificence there is no other city that approaches to it. It is surrounded, in the first place, by a broad and deep moat, full of water, behind which rises a wall of fifty royal cubits in width, and two hundred in height. {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 550.9}

“And here I may not omit to tell the use to which the mould dug out of the great moat was turned, nor the manner wherein the wall was wrought. As fast as they dug the moat, the soil which they got from the cutting was made into bricks, and when a sufficient number were completed, they baked the bricks in kilns. Thus they set to building, and began to brick the borders of the moat; after which they proceeded to construct a wall itself, using throughout for their cement hot bitumen, and interposing a layer of wattled reeds at every thirtieth course of the bricks. On the top, along the edges of the wall, they constructed buildings of a single chamber, facing one another, leaving between them room for a four-horse chariot to turn. In the circuit of the walls are a hundred gates, all of brass, with brazen lintels and side posts. The bitumen used in the work was brought to Babylon from the Is, a small stream which flows into the Euphrates at the point where the city of the same name stands, eight days’ journey from Babylon. Lumps of bitumen are found in great abundance in this river. {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 550.10}

“The city is divided into two portions by the river, which runs through the midst of it. The river is the Euphrates, a broad, deep swift stream, which rises in Armenia and empties itself into the Erythrean [Arabian] Sea. [The river does not flow directly into the Arabian Sea, but into the Persian gulf.] The city wall is brought down on both sides to the edge of the stream; thence from the corners of the wall there is carried along each bank of the river, a fence of burnt bricks. The houses are mostly three and four stories high; the streets all run in straight lines, not only those parallel to the river, but also the cross streets which lead down to the water side. At the river end of these cross streets are low gates in defense that skirts the stream, which are, like the great gates in the outer wall, of brass, and open on the water. {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 550.11}

“The outer wall is the main defense of the city. There is, however, a second, inner wall, of less thickness than the first, but very little inferior to it in strength. The center of each division of the town was occupied by a fortress. In the one stood the palace of the kings, surrounded by a wall of great strength and size; in the other was the sacred precinct of Jupiter Belus, a square inclosure, two furlongs each way, with gates of solid brass, which was also remaining in my time.” {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 550.12}

The royal cubit was twenty-one inches. The reader will therefore see that the outer wall of the city was eighty-seven feet thick, and three hundred and fifty feet high. The city being divided into two parts by the Euphrates, the banks of which were protected by walls, the following means of passage was devised:- {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 550.13}

“In each of these walls were twenty-five gates, corresponding to the number of the streets which gave upon the river; and outside each gate was a sloped landing-place, by which you could descend to the water’s edge, if you had occasion to cross the river. Boats kept ready at these landing-places to convey passengers from side to side; while for those who disliked this method of conveyance, a bridge was provided of a somewhat peculiar construction. A number of stone piers were erected in the bed of the stream, firmly clamped together with fastenings of iron and lead; wooden draw-bridges connected pier with pier during the day, and on these, passengers passed over; but at night they were withdrawn, in order that the bridge might not be used in the dark. Diodorus declares that besides this bridge, to which he assigns a length of five stades (about 1,000 yards), and a breadth of thirty feet, the two sides of the river were joined together by a tunnel, which was fifteen feet wide and twelve high to the spring of its arched roof.”-*Seven Great Monarchies (Rawlinson), Fourth Mon., chap. 4, par.6.* {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 550.14}

The public buildings of the city were on the same magnificent scale. Of one of them we read:- {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 550.15}

“The most remarkable edifice in Babylon was the temple of Bel, now marked by the *Babil* on the northeast, as Professor Rawlinson has shown. It was a pyramid of eight square stages, the basement stage being over 200 yards each way. A winding ascent led to the summit, and the shrine, in which stood a golden image of Bel, forty feet high, two other statues of gold, a golden table forty feet long and fifteen feet broad, and many other colossal objects of the same precious material.”-*Encyclopedia Britannica, art. Babylon.* {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 550.16}

“The great palace was a building of still larger dimensions than the great temple. According to Diodorus, it was situated within a triple incloser, the outermost wall being twenty stades, the second forty stades, and the outermost sixty stades (nearly seven miles), in circumference. The outer wall was built entirely of plain baked brick. The middle and inner walls were of the same material, fronted with enameled bricks representing hunting scenes. The figures, according to this author, were larger than the life, and consisted chiefly of a great variety of animal forms.”-*Rawlinson’s Fourth Mon., chap.4, par.9.* {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 550.17}

“But the main glory of the palace was its pleasure ground-the ‘hanging gardens,’ which the Greeks regarded as one of the seven wonders of the world. This extraordinary construction, which owed its erection to the whim of a woman, was a square, each side of which measured 400 Greek feet. It was supported upon several tiers of open arches, built one over the other, like the walls of a classic theater, and sustaining at each stage, or story, a solid platform, from which the piers of the next tier of arches rose. The building towered into the air to the height of at least seventy-five feet, and was covered at the top with a great mass of earth, in which there grew not merely flowers and shrubs, but trees also of the largest size. Water was supplied from the Euphrates through pipes, and was raised (it is said) by a screw working on the principle of Archimedes.”-*Id., par. 10*. {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 550.18}

The city, thus briefly outlined, well deserved the title given to it by the prophet,-“The glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency.” It was brought to this state of grandeur by Nebuchadnezzar, whose life almost measured the length of the empire, and did fully cover the period of its glory. The empire dates, however, from about the accession of his father as governor of Babylon, in 625 B.C. (Encyc. Breit.), and with whom Nebuchadnezzar was associated in the year 606, the date of the beginning of the seventy years’ captivity of the Jews. Three years later, in 603, the prophecy under consideration begins. {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 551.1}

To the mind of man it would seem that the city so substantially built must stand forever, but God had spoken to the contrary. Said he: It “shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation.... But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there,” etc. See Isaiah 13:19-22. Also Isaiah 14:23: “I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water; and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts.” {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 551.2}

Now learn how completely the “besom of destruction” did its work, and know that no word of the Lord shall ever fail:- {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 551.3}

“The traveler who passes through the land is at first inclined to say that there are no ruins, no remains, of the mighty city which once lorded it over the earth. By and by, however, he begins to see that though ruins, in the common acceptation of the term, scarcely exist, though there are no arches, no pillars, but one or two appearances of masonry even, yet the whole country is covered with traces of exactly that kind which it was prophesied Babylon should have. Vast ‘heaps or mounds, shapeless and unsightly, are scattered at intervals over the entire region where it is certain that Babylon anciently stood, and between the ‘heaps’ the soil is in many places composed of fragments of pottery and bricks, and deeply impregnated with nitre, infallible indications of it having once been covered with buildings.”-*Rawlinson, Fourth Mon., chap. 4. par. 15*. E. J. W. {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 551.4}

**“Whom Shall We Obey?” The Signs of the Times, 11, 35.**

E. J. Waggoner

We have received the following from a subscriber in Ohio:- {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 552.1}

“I have been a reader of your paper since last spring, and am much interested in the reading of it. I am of your belief in regard to the Sabbath, but am at a loss to know what to do. The commandment says Sabbath, and our civil law is very strict on Sunday observance. Paul says, ‘Servants, obey your masters,’ ‘Obey the magistrates,’ and many other passages teach us the same thing. If we disobey the law, we disobey the Testament; if we do that, we disobey God. Give me light.” {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 552.2}

This we can easily do. Once Peter and John were brought before the magistrates, and were commanded with threatenings as not to speak any more in the name of Jesus. Without the least hesitation they replied: “Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” Acts 4:19, 20. This refusal to obey the command of the magistrates was no idle boast, for when the two apostles were liberated, they went to preaching the same as before. Then the whole company of apostles were arrested and thrown into jail. When they were brought before the rulers, and reminded of the prohibition that had been laid on them, Peter, and all the other apostles answered boldly, “We ought to obey God rather than men.” Acts 5:29. {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 552.3}

It is the duty of every man to live a quiet, peaceful life. We are to submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake (1 Peter 2:13), and to be subject for conscience sake (Romans 13:5). But it would be impossible for a man to break the law of God for the Lord’s sake, or to disobey God for conscience sake. Therefore the sacred writers evidently mean that we are to obey men when civil laws do not interfere with the law of God. We are to be subject to the “higher powers,” but there is no earthly power equal to God. He is the Most High. We say emphatically, that when human laws directly conflict with the law of God, those human laws must be broken. And the man who thus breaks human law, in order that he may keep God’s law, will have a conscience void of offense both toward God and toward man. {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 552.4}

This is one of the first principles of human law. Blackstone in his commentary says that if a law of man is in direct opposition to the law of God, we are in duty bound to break that law. Earthly rulers derive their power from God, therefore they have no power to contravene his will. {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 552.5}

The three Hebrew children in the court of King Nebuchadnezzar, refused to obey the monarch’s of unqualified demand for every one to bow before the image which he had set up. Daniel 3. The fact that their refusal would subject them to serious “inconvenience,” did not affect them in the least. They boldly told the king that they would not disobey God in order to please him, took the consequences, and by their sturdy faithfulness gained a place in the inspired role of honor (Hebrews 11) as those who through faith “quenched the violence of fire.” They did not know, however, that they would be thus delivered, but that made no difference. {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 552.6}

Daniel, also, the only man of whom it is recorded that the Lord sent him a message telling him that he was “greatly beloved,” had a similar experience. He was a faithful servant of the king, leaving no duty unperformed, and yet when a decree was issued interfering with his duty to God, he paid no attention to it. In his forced disregard of the edict, he honored the king with all the respect possible, but much as he honored the king, he honored God more. Who does not know that these faithful men, who dared to obey God in spite of the laws and threats of kings, were more faithful in the surface of the rulers than were any of the troop of time-serving politicians who professed great respect for the laws of men, while they despised the authority of God? {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 552.7}

It is more difficult for people to reason correctly in regard to the Sabbath than about almost anything else. Christians who applaud Daniel and his companions for their course, are afraid to keep the Sabbath of the Lord, lest they should offend man. Suppose the Government should pass a law making it obligatory on men to blaspheme the name of God; would the brother feel that he is in duty bound to swear? Suppose a law should be passed commanding him to steel, would the brother’s conscience compel him to steal? If adultery were made legal, and severe penalties were pronounced against those who should refuse to engage in it, would he feel it to be his plain duty to violate the seventh commandment? Of course he would not. Well, the third, seventh, and eighth commandments are on the same foundation as the fourth. God says: “The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in yet thou shalt not do any work.” No man, nor set of men, nor entire nation, has any right to pass a law conflicting with that. They have no right to say that any individual shall not keep that day, or to attempt to compel him to refrain from working on any other day; for the commandment which sets apart the seventh day for rest, also sets apart the other six days for work. If the civil law says, You must keep Sunday instead of the Sabbath, it is not only my privilege, but it is my duty to break that law. Under whatever circumstances we are placed, we must remember that “we ought to obey God rather than men.” That sentence settles the whole matter. {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 553.1}

So far as this special case is concerned, we would say that we have many hundred brethren in Ohio, and none of them have as yet found any serious difficulty in keeping the Sabbath. Should they be brought to the issue where they must decide between God’s law and a conflicting civil law, we trust that they would have no hesitancy in deciding what to do. E. J. W. {SITI September 10, 1885, p. 553.2}

**“The Four Kingdoms” The Signs of the Times, 11, 36.**

E. J. Waggoner

**THE SABBATH-SCHOOL.**

**LESSON FOR THE PACIFIC COAST—OCT. 10**

**THE FOUR KINGDOMS**

Last week’s lesson gave us a view of Babylon in the height of its power and glory, an empire spreading over the inhabited portion of the earth, having a capital that was “the glory of kingdoms,” the wonder of the world. We have also a prophetic view of its after condition, and learn from history how completely those prophecies have been fulfilled. We have now to learn how its royal power was broken. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 566.1}

“And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee.” Daniel 2:39. That is all the space devoted to the overthrow of that mighty empire. With all of its greatness, it would pass away in a night, like the last snow of winter with the spring shower. A striking lesson of the fleeting nature of all earthly possessions, is taught in that brief statement concerning the proud kingdom of Babylon. Elsewhere in the Bible we find the history which enables us to trace the succession of kingdoms; we shall first note that, and afterwards know the exact harmony with it, of the records of profane history. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 566.2}

In the fifth chapter of Daniel we learned that “Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.” Verse 1. From the second verse (margin), we learn that this Belshazzar was the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar. It was formerly supposed that he was a sole king, and that he was also called Nabonadius; but later researches have shown that Nabonadius was the king. He married the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, and Belshazzar was his son, and was associated with him in the empire. On this occasion Belshazzar had charge of the city, because his father, having gone out to fight the Persians, had been defeated, and had retreated to Borsippa, a few miles below. Although an army was encamped under the walls of the city, Belshazzar gave himself up to the enjoyment of an idolatrous and licentious drunken debauch. The vessels of the house of God were brought out, in contempt of Him to whom they had been dedicated, and were used in the service of the abominable deities whom they adored as supreme. But in the midst of the wild revel a hand appeared on the wall, tracing unknown characters and letters of fire. Terror struck the hearts of all, and especially Belshazzar. Great rewards were promised to the one who should read the writing, and after some delay Daniel was brought in. Read the fifth chapter entire. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 566.3}

“And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.” Daniel 5:25-28. Short, but terribly plain. Notwithstanding Daniel had said, “Thy kingdom *is divided*, and given to the Medes and Persians,” Belshazzar gave the promised gifts to Daniel, and went through the form of making him the third ruler in the kingdom, that is, next after himself, Nabonadius being first. The sentence thus announced by the prophet, was executed without delay. The record says, “In that night was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans slain, and Darius the Median took the kingdom.” Verses 30, 31. From the sacred record, then, we learn that the breast and arms of silver (Daniel 2:32), represented the empire of Media. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 566.4}

The date in the margin of Daniel 5 (B.C. 538) is that which is uniformly assigned to the fall Babylon. We have space for only a brief sketch of its capture, but before giving that, we shall note two or three prophetic utterances concerning it, that the student may see how accurately prophecy is fulfilled. “Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings [compare Daniel 5:6], to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron.” Isaiah 45:1, 2. “And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men; and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is the Lord of hosts.” Jeremiah 51:57. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 566.5}

Now we will quote a few paragraphs from Rawlinson (Fourth Mon., chaps. 8, par. 51-53), says he gives the description in the most condensed form. As you read, compare with the above texts, and with Daniel 5. Bear in mind, also, the description of Babylon, as given last week:- {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 566.6}

“Withdrawing the greater part of his army from the vicinity of the city, and leaving behind him only certain *corps* of observation, Cyrus marched away up the course of the Euphrates for a certain distance, and there proceeded to make a vigorous use of the spade. His soldiers.... dug a channel or channels from the Euphrates, by means of which a great portion of its water would be drawn off, and hoped in this way to render the natural course of the river fordable. When all was prepared, Cyrus determined to wait for the arrival of a certain festival, during which the whole population were wont to engage in drinking and reveling, and then silently in the dead of night to turn the water of the river, and make his attack. All fell out as he hoped and wished. The festival was held with even greater pomp and splendor than usual; for Belshazzar with the natural insolence of youth, to mark his contempt of the besieging army, abandoned himself wholly to the delights of the season, and himself entertained a thousand lords in his palace. Elsewhere the rest of the population was occupied in feasting and dancing. Drunken riot and mad excitement held possession of the town; the siege was forgotten; ordinary precautions were neglected. Following the example of their king, the Babylonians gave themselves up for the night to orgies in which religious frenzy and drunken access formed a strange and revolting medley. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 566.7}

“Meanwhile, outside the city, in silence and darkness, the Persians watched at the two points where the Euphrates entered and left the walls. Anxiously they noted the gradual sinking of the water in the river bed; still more anxiously they watched to see if those within the walls would observe the suspicious circumstance, and sound an alarm to the town. Should such an alarm be given, all their labors would be lost. If, when they entered the river-bed, they found the river-walls manned and the river-gates fast-locked, they would indeed be ‘caught in a trap.’ Enfiladed on both sides by an enemy whom they could neither see nor reach, they would be overwhelmed and destroyed by his missiles before they could succeed in making their escape. But, as they watched, no sounds of alarm reached them-only a confused noise of revel and riot, which showed that the unhappy townsmen were quite unconscious of the approach of danger. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 566.8}

“At last shadowy forms began to emerge from the obscurity of the river-bed, and on the landing places opposite the river-gates scattered clusters of men grew into solid columns,-the undefended gateways were seized-a war-shout was raised-the alarm was taken and spread-and swift runners started off to ‘show the king of Babylon that his city was taken at one end.’ In the darkness and confusion of the night, a terrible massacre ensued. The drunken revelers could make no resistance. The king, paralyzed with fear at the awful writing on the wall, which too late had warned him of his peril, could do nothing even to check the progress of the assailants, who carried all before them everywhere. Bursting into the palace, a band of persons made their way to the presence of the monarch, and slew him on the scene of his impious revelry. Other bands carried fire and sword through the town. When morning came Cyrus found himself undisputed master of the city, which, if it had not despised his efforts, might with the greatest ease have baffled them.” {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 566.9}

The historian says that if the city had not despised the efforts of Cyrus, it might with the greatest ease have baffled them. Very true; but it had been prophesied that they should be drunken, and the word of God, which foretold the destruction of Babylon, cannot fail. For further description of this affair, see Rawlinson, at length; and “Rawlinson Ancient History,” Book 4, chap.1, article 2, sections 1-4. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 566.10}

“And Darius the Median took the kingdom.” Says Rawlinson: “The genius of Cyrus was essentially that of a conjurer, not of an administrator.... In Babylon he gave the entire direction of affairs in the hands of a Mede, to whom he allowed the title and style of king.”-*Fifth Mon., chap. 7, par. 35*. Rollin says (Book 4, chap. 1, art. 3, sec. 1): “When Cyrus judged he had sufficiently regulated his affairs in Babylon, he thought properly to take a journey into Persia. In this way thither, he went through Media, to visit his uncle Cyaxares, to whom he carried very magnificent presents, telling him at the same time that he would find a noble palace at Babylon, all ready prepared for him; and that he was to look upon that city as his own. Indeed, Cyrus, as long as his own uncle lived, held the empire only in co-partnership with him, though he had conquered and acquired it by his own valor. Nay, so far did he carry complaisance, that he let his uncle enjoy the first rank. It is Cyaxares who is called in Scripture Darius the Mede, and we shall find that under his reign, which lasted but two years, Daniel had several revelations.” At the death of Darius, Cyrus very naturally assumed sole control of the empire. See Daniel 6:28. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 566.11}

“And another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.” Daniel 2:39. We have found two universal empires, Babylon and Medo-Persia, corresponding respectively to the head of gold, and the breast and arms of silver, of the image. We have seen (Daniel 2:38) that Babylon was a universal empire. Ezra 1:2 shows the same of the Persian monarchy: “Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.” In harmony with this, Rawlinson says (Fifth Mon., chap. 7, par. 26): “Babylon became ‘an astonishment and a hissing’-all her prestige vanished-and Persia stepped manifestly into the place, which Assyria had occupied for so many centuries, of absolute and unrivaled mistress of Western Asia.” In those days, whoever ruled Asia, ruled the world. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 566.12}

Now we have the third kingdom in succession. That it is also a universal monarchy, is stated in the verse just quoted. A very brief reference to another prophesy to identify this third kingdom, must suffice for this lesson. In the 8th of Daniel, verses 3-8, we find part of a vision which Daniel saw. He saw a ram standing by a river; the ram was so very powerful and fierce that no beast could stand before him, “but he did according to his own will.” While the prophet was still looking, he saw a goat come from the west, running with incredible swiftness. This goat came to the ram, with fury, and smote him, and cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him; and there was no power that could save the ram from the wrath of the goat. Verses 20 and 21 explain this: “The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media Persia. And the rough is the king of Grecia.” Then since the goat overpowered the ram, the prophecy teaches that Grecia succeeded Medo-Persia as mistress of the world. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 566.13}

“And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things; and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.” Daniel 2:42. In passing, we must ascertain the name of this fourth universal empire, for universal it must be, since it is more powerful than all the preceding. This is the last of a series of four kingdoms reaching from the time of the prophet to the close of earthly things. Three-Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Grecia-have already been identified. Now, although this one is nowhere named in prophecy, if we anywhere find mention of a universal empire, other than the three just named, we shall know that it is the fourth, the one represented by the legs of iron. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 567.1}

Such a kingdom we find mentioned in Luke 2:1: “And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.” None but a universal monarch could issue such a decree, and his name is sufficient to identify him as a Roman. So, then, Rome was the fourth kingdom. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 567.2}

“And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters’ clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.” Daniel 2:41-43. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 567.3}

This partially explains itself; the full interpretation must be left for another lesson. We simply note the closing act. “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.” Verse 44. Here we have the fifth universal empire-the kingdom of the God of Heaven-represented by the stone, which dashed the image in pieces. That this kingdom is yet future, is clearly evident from the fact that the earthly governments are yet on this earth; when that is set up, no room will be found for them. Its subjects, moreover, will never die, for it is not to be “left to other people.” Its king will be the one of whom David prophesied that his throne should endure “as the days of Heaven” (Psalm 89:29); and its subjects will be all who, at the coming of the Lord, are found “meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” E. J. W. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 567.4}

**“Another ‘Check’ Wanted” The Signs of the Times, 11, 36.**

E. J. Waggoner

A little more than two years ago, one of our brethren went into Humboldt County, to hold meetings and do general missionary work. The weather was unfavorable with four meetings, but by faithful labor several persons were brought to see the light of truth, and began to keep the Sabbath. As some of these have been members of the M. E. Church, the minister in charge, one Mr. Woodward, preached a sermon, in which he attempted to overthrow the work already done, and attacked every doctrine which he thought was believed by Seventh-day Adventists. This sermon, when duly endorsed by the President of the University of the Pacific as “cogent and timely,” was labeled a “Check on Adventism,” and sent out to the world, that it might stop the progress of Seventh-day Adventism, just as it had in Humboldt County. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 568.1}

Well, two years have passed, and we are now inclined to agree with the learned Doctor who pronounced the book “cogent and timely.” At the time the “check” was given, there were six or eight Seventh-day Adventists in that county. Now there are more than one hundred who are firm in the truth, and zealous in its propagation; there are two good houses of worship completed and in use; one more is in process of construction; and the ground has been purchased for a fourth, which will be erected within two months. There is no other county in the State, where the cause is in so flourishing a condition. We have often wondered, of late, if it would not pay to get Mr. Woodward to visit some other county, and give Adventism another “check.” {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 568.2}

We do not wish to give him so much praise as to turn his head. Perhaps the same results would have been seen if he had not put on his little brake. The truth has power in itself, and must produce convictions in the hearts of the honest. “What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?” Jeremiah 23:28, 29. Yet we believe it is the providence of God that unreasonable men should open up the store-house of error, in attempts to overwhelm the truth of God, so that all may see the difference between the chaff and the wheat. So we do not get excited when some one threatens to “expose the whole thing,” knowing that God can cause even the wrath of man to praise him, and that none can do anything against the truth, but for the truth. E.J. W. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 568.3}

**“Death and the Coming of the Lord” The Signs of the Times, 11, 36.**

E. J. Waggoner

In a sermon recently preached in New York by Dr. R. S. Storrs, from Revelation 22:20: “He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” Then he proceeded to answer the question as follows:- {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 568.4}

“It was only natural and proper, we may think, that he should utter this prayer to Christ. But we may not so freely repeat it after him. There is a certain tremor of hesitation, natural to the heart, in echoing the words. We would rather, for ourselves, know beforehand, if it might be, the moment when the summons is to come; we would rather see the Master after all, and in a gradual approach; we would rather make special and protracted preparation for the voice which is to call us from all the circles of life on earth, to go and be henceforth with him. At any rate, we do not feel at liberty to offer a prayer for sudden death, and in this we are right. We have no right to offer such a prayer. Even John did not offer it until the Master had manifested to him his purpose of coming quickly.” {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 568.5}

If Dr. Storrs had studied the Bible as thoroughly as he studied history, he could not have spoken such words, and then have deliberately written them for publication. There is just one correct statement in the paragraph, and that is, that it is not right to pray for death. That is true; it is not right to pray for sudden death, nor for any other kind of death; but it *is* right to pray for the coming of the Lord, and to long for it, as the following texts clearly prove:- {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 568.6}

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in the earth, as it is in heaven.” Matthew 6:10. This is what Christ himself commanded us to pray. Now when we read these words: “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.” (2 Timothy 4:1, 2), we know that the kingdom comes only when Christ comes; therefore Christ taught his disciples that they should daily pray for his coming. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 568.7}

Again, Paul says: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.” 2 Timothy 4:7, 8. The crown of life, then, is to be given only to those who love the coming of the Lord. Paul and Dr. Storrs do not seem to agree on this subject. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 568.8}

We have no disposition to carp at Dr. Storrs. He is an able man, and we admire his talent. He is no more out of the way than are thousands. The trouble with him is, that while in history he searches for himself, and draws his own conclusions, in matters of Bible doctrine he accepts unquestioningly what the multitude believe. From his standpoint, it was very natural to say that we ought not to pray for the coming of the Lord. But what a terrible doctrine it is which obliges its adherents to deliberately throw aside the only hope which Christ left his church. What doctrine does this? The doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul-the theory that men go to heaven at death. The doctrine of the second coming of Christ is the “blessed hope” (Titus 2:13), the hope with which Christ comforted his sorrowing disciples; but the dogma of inherent immortality ignores all this. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 568.9}

People sometimes say that it makes no difference what we believe concerning the immortality of the soul; that it is not of any practical importance whether we believe that it is inherently immortal, or dependent on Christ for immortality. Does it make any difference whether or not we believe the words of Christ? Is it a matter of no importance that we lay hold on the only hope that Christ has left us? If there were nothing else against the doctrine of natural immortality, this alone would condemn it. Of course it will not do for people to say that the Lord is not coming at all, for the Bible is full of assertions that he is; and since the people have settled it for themselves that men receive their reward at death, they combine the two. Since the idea is getting so prevalent that death is the coming of the Lord, it is proper for us to devote space to examine it in the light of Scripture. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 569.1}

First, Christ said to his disciples, “If I go away, I will come *again*.” He did not promise to come *again and again*, but simply “another time; once more.” Paul’s words in Hebrews 9:28 agree with this: “And unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” Now since he comes only once more, it is certain that death cannot be that coming, for death is constantly occurring. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 569.2}

He promised to come “again.” The word “again” indicates another of the same kind. Christ was on the earth in the flesh; he was seen by thousands. Now if he comes “again,” a “second time,” he must come in person. The departure of the soul for Heaven cannot be another advent of Christ. If any think this is a far-fetched argument, let them read the account of Christ’s ascension: “And when he had spoken these things, *while they beheld*, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, *shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven*.” Acts 1:9-11. No amount of philosophical theorizing can ever wrest that scripture so as to make it teach a coming of the Lord at death. Those who hold to that theory, must deny the statement of the angels. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 569.3}

Something more in the same line. Read Revelation 1:7: “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him.” Every eye does not see when a man dies. Thousands die in solitude, unseen by mortal eye. So here is another text that is either unknown to those who hold that the theory we are considering, or else is denied by them. Moreover, this shows that John knew what he was praying for when he uttered the words found in Revelation 22:20. He was not praying for death, but for the Lord to come in the clouds of heaven. Every follower of Christ may and should offer the same prayer. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 569.4}

Still further, we read in Matthew 24:27, that “as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, *so* shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” Who ever saw or heard of such a phenomena at the death of anyone? It is utterly impossible for a man to believe those words of the Lord, and still believe that death is the coming of Christ. Ought not the words of Christ to be believed rather than the theories of men? {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 569.5}

When Christ comes, it is to take his people to himself. He doesn’t take one before another, as Paul shows in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17: “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 569.6}

Here we see that both the righteous dead and the righteous living are taken to be with the Lord at the same time, at his coming. And this is just what the same apostle teaches in 2 Timothy 4:6-8, already quoted. He says that the Lord will give him a crown of righteousness “*at that day*.” At what day? Why, the day referred to in the first verse, when Christ comes in his kingdom to judge the living and dead. “At that day,” says Paul, the Lord will give me a crown, “and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing.” Yes, at the coming of the Lord all who love him shall receive a crown, and all at the same time. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 569.7}

Look once more at 1 Thessalonians 4:15: “We which are alive and remain under the coming of the Lord.” Now if it be true that the “coming of the Lord” is equivalent to “death,” we can substitute the latter word in the verse, and we shall then have the sublimely ridiculous statement that “we which are alive and remain [alive] until death, shall not go before them which are asleep”! If there is one *special class* of persons who live until they die, what becomes of those who do not live until they die? We should like to have Dr. Storrs turn his logical mind to the solving of this conundrum. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 569.8}

We turn to the second chapter of 2 Thessalonians. Paul says: “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind.... as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” Verses 1-4. Paul assured them that the Lord would not come until after the great apostasy, and the full establishment of the papacy. The papacy was fully established in the sixth century; but would Dr. Storrs have us believe that between the first and sixth centuries no one died? He is too good a historian not to know all about the bloody persecutions during the reign of Nero, Domitian, and others, in which hundreds of Christians yielded up their lives for the faith. Yet Christ could not come until after the setting up of the papacy, and he has not come. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 569.9}

There is scarcely any limit to the texts that might be quoted to show the absurdity of the idea that death is the coming of the Lord. There is just one more passage that we wish to notice. It shows that none of Christ’s disciples entertained the idea that death was his coming. Christ had met his disciples at the Sea of Galilee. He had questioned Peter concerning his love, and had showed him by what kind of a death he would be called upon to show his love. Then Peter looked around, and seeing John, asked, “Lord, and what shall this man do?” Jesus answered, “If I will that he tarry till I come? What is that to thee.” John 21:21, 22. Suppose we substitute death for the coming of the Lord, and then we have the Master saying, “If I will that he tarry [remain alive] until he comes, what is that to thee?” What a horrible doctrine it is that makes such nonsense of our Lord’s simple language. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 569.10}

But notice: Just as soon as Jesus asked Peter what difference it was to him if John should live until the coming of the Lord, the disciples, assuming that Christ had declared that John *should* remain until his coming, began to spread abroad the statement that John would never die! They knew very well that death and the coming of the Lord have nothing in common. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 569.11}

If all our readers do not agree with us in saying that the idea that death is the coming of Christ is both absurd and unscriptural, we have underrated their sagacity. If any hold that idea after carefully reading the texts we have quoted, we should be glad to hear from them, that we may together consider the matter further. We do not care to hear from any who cannot give a reason for their belief. We do not expect to hear from any. May the Lord help all to study well all that relates to the coming of the Lord, and to speedily learn to pray, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” E. J. W. {SITI September 17, 1885, p. 569.12}