**“Studies in Romans. The Unspeakable Gift” The Signs of the Times, 22, 23.**

E. J. Waggoner

Our study this week is inseparably connected with that of last week. Only lack of space prevented the verses of each being studied together. The student, however, will read very thoughtfully the preceding verses before beginning this present study, thus preserving the connection. We have learned about our relation to God through the Spirit, and of the help which the Spirit gives us in prayer, as well as of the assurance that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose.” The grounds for that assurance are infinitely strengthened in the verses that follow:— {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 354.1}

“For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them he also called; and whom He called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall He not with him also freely give us all things?” Romans 8:29-32. {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 354.2}

**Questions on the Text**

How may we be sure that all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to his purpose. {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 354.3}

“For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.” {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 354.4}

Why did he predestinate them to be conformed to the image of His Son? {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 354.5}

“That he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 354.6}

What is said of those whom he thus predestined? {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 354.7}

“Them He also called.” {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 354.8}

What of those whom he called? {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 354.9}

“Them he also justified.” {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 354.10}

And what of those whom he justified? {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 354.11}

“Them he also glorified.” {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 354.12}

What shall we then say to these things? {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 354.13}

“If God be for us, who can be against us?” {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 354.14}

What has God done, to show that He is for us? {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 354.15}

“Spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.” {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 354.16}

What then must necessarily follow? {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 354.17}

That He must “with him also freely give us all things.” {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 354.18}

**Foreknowledge and Foreordination**

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” The word “predestinate” is the same as “foreordain,” which is found in the Revised Version. Volumes of speculation have been written about these terms, but a few words are sufficient to set forth the facts. With respect to these, as well as the other attributes of God, it is sufficient for us to know the fact. With the explanation we have nothing to do. {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 354.19}

It is plainly set forth in the Scriptures that God knows all things. Not only does he know the things that are past, but he sees the future as well. “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.” Acts 15:18. “O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thought afar off.” Psalm 139:1, 2. Thus God can tell what people even yet unborn will do and say. {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 355.1}

This does not make God responsible for the evil that they do. Some have foolishly thought it necessary to apologize for the Lord and to relieve him of the charge that if he is omniscient He is responsible for the evil if he does not prevent it, by saying that He could know if he wished, but that he chooses not to know many things. Such a “defense” of God is both foolish and wicked. It assumes that God would be responsible for the evil if he knew it beforehand and did not prevent it, and that in order not to be in a position to prevent it, he deliberately shuts his eyes from it. Thus their “defense” really puts the responsibility for all evil upon God. Not only so, but it limits Him. It makes him like a man. {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 355.2}

God knows all things, not by study and research as man learns the little he knows, but because he is God. He inhabits eternity. Isaiah 57:15. We can not understand how this can be any more than we can understand eternity. We must accept the fact and be not only content, but glad, that God is greater than we. All time, past, present, and future, is the same to Him. It is always “now” with God. {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 355.3}

The fact that God knew the evil that men would do, even before the foundation of the world, does not make him responsible for it, any more than the fact that a man can see by means of a telescope what a man is doing ten miles distant makes him responsible for that other one’s actions. God has from the beginning set before people warnings against sin, and has provided them with all the necessary means for avoiding it; but he can not interfere with man’s right and freedom of choice without depriving him of his manhood and making him the same as a stick. {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 355.4}

Freedom to do right implies freedom to do wrong. If a man were made so that he could not do wrong, he would have no freedom at all, not even to do right. He would be less than the brutes. There is no virtue in forced obedience, nor would there be any virtue in doing that which is right if it were impossible to do wrong. Moreover, there could be no pleasure or satisfaction in the professed friendship of two persons if one associated with the other just because he could not avoid it. The joy of the Lord in the companionship of his people is that they of their own free-will choose him above all others. And that which is the joy of the Lord is the joy of his people. {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 355.5}

The very ones who rail against God for not preventing the ills that he foresees since he is all-powerful, would be the very first to charge him with cruelty if he did arbitrarily interfere with their freedom and make them do that which they do not choose. Such a course would make everybody unhappy and discontented. The wisest thing for us to do is to stop trying to fathom the ways of the Almighty, and accept the fact that whatever he does is right. “As for God, his way is perfect.” Psalm 18:30. {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 355.6}

**About Predestination**

The text shows that “whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren.” God’s thoughts toward men are thoughts of peace, and not of evil. Jeremiah 29:11. He ordains peace for us. Isaiah 26:12. We read nothing about men being foreordained to destruction; the only thing that God has predestinated is that men should be conformed to the image of his Son. {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 355.7}

But it is only in Christ that we become conformed to his image. It is in him that we come “unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:13. Therefore it is that men are foreordained or predestinated only in Christ. The whole story is told in the following passage of Scripture:— {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 355.8}

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good-pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.” {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 355.9}

Everything is in Christ. We receive all spiritual blessings in him; we are chosen in him unto holiness; in him we are predestinated unto the adoption of children; in him we are accepted; and in him we have redemption through his blood. “God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Thessalonians 5:9. {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 355.10}

That is God’s purpose and foreordination concerning man. Still further, “whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.” Whom did he foreknow? There can be no limit; he must have foreknown all. If there were any exception, then God would not be infinite in knowledge. If he foreknows one person, then he foreknows every person. There has not been a person born into the world whose birth God did not foreknow. “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” Therefore, since every person has been known to God even before the foundation of the world, and those whom he foreknew he predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son, it follows that God has purposed salvation for every soul that has ever come into the world. His love embraces all, without respect of persons. {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 355.11}

“Then everybody will be saved, no matter what He does,” some one will say. Not by any means. Remember that the purpose of God is in Christ. It is only in him that we are predestinated. And we are free to choose for ourselves whether we will accept him or not. Man’s will has been forever set free, and God himself will not presume to interfere with it. He holds sacred the choice and will of each individual. He will not carry out His own purpose contrary to man’s will. His will is to give man whatever man decides will best please him. So he sets before man life and death, good and evil, and tells him to choose which he will have. God knows what is best, and has chosen and prepared that for man. He has gone so far as to fix it beyond all possibility of failure, that man shall have that good thing if he chooses it. But the wonderful kindness and courteousness of the great God is seen in this, that He defers in everything to man’s wishes. If man, in his turn, will but defer to God’s wishes, there will be the most delightful and loving companionship between them. {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 355.12}

**Called, Justified, Glorified**

“Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” This is completed action. We need not stumble over it, if we will but remember that everything is in Christ. In Christ we have already been blessed with all spiritual blessings. All men are called to that which God has prepared for them, but none are “the called according to his purpose” unless they have made their calling and election sure by submitting to his will. Such ones are predestinated to be saved. Nothing in the universe can hinder the salvation of any soul that accepts and trusts the Lord Jesus Christ. {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 355.13}

And all such are justified. The death of Christ reconciles us to God. “He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” 1 John 2:2. His death has secured pardon and life for all. Nothing can keep them from salvation except their own perverse will. Men must take themselves out of the hand of God, in order to be lost. Much more, then, those who accept the sacrifice, are justified. “God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 355.14}

“And whom he justified, them he also glorified.” Have we not read in the prayer of Christ for his disciples, not only for those who were with him in the garden, but also for all them that should believe on him through their word and therefore for us, “The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them”? Peter said that he was a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. God has left nothing undone. Everything that Christ has we have if we accept him. All that remains is that it should be revealed. “The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.” When God asks concerning his people, “What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?” who shall presume to say that there is something that he has overlooked? {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 355.15}

**All Things Ours**

But we have anticipated the apostle. Hear him: “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 356.1}

How shall He not? That is, How can he avoid giving us all things? In giving Christ for and to us, God could not do otherwise than give us all things, “for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist.” Colossians 1:16, 17. {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 356.2}

“Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.” 1 Corinthians 3:21-23. This, then, answers the question, “Who can be against us?” Everything is for us. “All things are for your sakes.” 2 Corinthians 4:15. {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 356.3}

A general once telegraphed to the seat of government, “We have met the enemy, and they are ours.” This is what every child of God is privileged to say. “Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 15:57. “This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith.” 1 John 5:4. This is what makes us know that all things work together for good to them that love God. No matter how dark and forbidding the things may seem, if we are in Christ, they are for us, and not against us. E. J. W. {SITI June 11, 1896, p. 356.4}

**“Studies in Romans. The Glorious Persuasion” The Signs of the Times, 22, 24.**

E. J. Waggoner

We come now to the close of the eighth chapter of Romans. It is the Pisgah of the epistle, for from it the eye of faith sees the promised land a certainty. Perhaps at this point a very brief summary of the ground already passed over may be profitable. The following is perhaps about as briefly as it can be put. {SITI June 18, 1896, p. 370.1}

In the first chapter we have the theme of the epistle put in a few words, the gospel of Christ, the power of God unto salvation. It is to both Jew and gentile, and has been made known to all through the works of God. The condition of men who have refused to learn of God is then described. {SITI June 18, 1896, p. 370.2}

The second chapter shows us that at heart all are the same; that all are to be judged by one and the same standard; and that knowledge and high profession do not in themselves recommend any one to God. Obedience to God’s law is the only mark of an Israelite indeed and an heir of God. {SITI June 18, 1896, p. 370.3}

The third chapter emphasizes the preceding points, and especially that there are no obedient ones. “By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” But there is nevertheless hope for all, because the righteousness of the law is put within and upon all who believe in Christ, so that a man is made a doer of the law by faith. One God justifies both Jews and Gentiles alike through faith. Faith is not a substitute for obedience to the law, but insures the doing of it. {SITI June 18, 1896, p. 370.4}

The fourth chapter we have Abraham set forth as an illustration of righteousness gained by faith. We learn also that faith in Christ’s death and resurrection is the only way by which to inherit the promise to the fathers, which promise embraced nothing less than the possession of the earth made new. The blessing of Abraham is the blessing that comes by the cross of Christ. And since the promise to Israel was only the repetition of the promise to Abraham, we learn that Israel consists of those in every nation who gain the victory over sin through the cross of Christ. {SITI June 18, 1896, p. 370.5}

Abounding love and grace, and salvation through the life of Christ, may serve as the barest outline of chapter 5. {SITI June 18, 1896, p. 370.6}

New creatures in Christ may serve to bring to the mind of the faithful reader the main thought of the sixth chapter. It sets forth death, burial, resurrection, and life with Christ. {SITI June 18, 1896, p. 370.7}

In the seventh chapter we learn how close is the union between Christ and believers. They are married to him, so that they are “members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” The struggles by which freedom is secured from the first husband the body of sin, are vividly portrayed. {SITI June 18, 1896, p. 370.8}

The eighth chapter, the crown of the book, describes the blessings of the free-born son of God. The hope of future immortality is the actual possession, through the Spirit, of the present life and glory of Christ. Those who are in Christ are predestined to eternal glory. And thus we are brought to {SITI June 18, 1896, p. 370.9}

**The Shout of Triumph**

“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:31-39. {SITI June 18, 1896, p. 370.10}

**Everything for Us**

The apostle has asked, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” The answer must be, “No one.” God is greater than all, and none can pluck anything out of his hand. If he who has power to make all things work together for good is for us, then it is certain that everything must be for us. {SITI June 18, 1896, p. 370.11}

But the question often arises in the minds of people, “Is God really for us?” People often wickedly charge Him with being against them; and even professed Christians sometimes think that God is working against them. When troubles come, they imagine that God is fighting against them. Now that question is forever settled by one fact, and that is, that God is he who gives himself for us, and who justifies. Read the question and answer:— {SITI June 18, 1896, p. 370.12}

“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” {SITI June 18, 1896, p. 370.13}

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s own chosen? Shall God, who justifies them? Impossible. Well, God is the only one in the universe who has the right to lay anything to the charge of any; and since he justifies instead of condemning, we must be free. We are free if we believe it. Whom does he justify? “The ungodly.” That leaves no doubt but that he justifies us. {SITI June 18, 1896, p. 370.14}

And what about Christ? Will he condemn us? How can he, when he gave himself for us? But he gave himself for us, according to the will of God. Galatians 1:4. “God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” John 3:17. He is risen again for our justification, and he is at the right hand of God for us. He interposes himself between us and the death that we have deserved. Then there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. {SITI June 18, 1896, p. 370.15}

“But,” says one, “Satan comes to me and makes me feel that I am such a sinner that God is angry with me, and that there is no hope for me.” Well, why do you listen to him? You know his character. “He is a liar and the father of it.” What have you to do with him? Let him accuse all he will; he is not the judge. God is the judge, and he justifies. Satan’s sole object is to deceive men, and allure them into sin, making them believe that it is right. Be sure, then, that he never tells an unforgiven man that he is a sinner. God does that by his Spirit, in order that the guilty man may accept the pardon that he freely offers. {SITI June 18, 1896, p. 370.16}

The case then stands thus: When God tells a man that he is a sinner, it is in order that the man may receive his pardon. If God says that a man is a sinner, then he is a sinner, and ought to acknowledge it, but “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” And this is true, no matter who tells us that we are sinners. Suppose that Satan tells us that we are sinners; we do not need to parley with him, or to stop a moment to discuss the question; we can let the accusation go, and comfort ourselves with the assurance that the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin. God doesn’t condemn even when he convicts of sin; and nobody else has any business to condemn. If they do condemn, their condemnation does not amount to anything. Therefore there is no condemnation to those who trust the Lord. Even Satan’s accusations may serve as encouragements to us; for we may be sure that he will never tell a man that he is a sinner, so long as that man is in his power. Since God is for us, everything is for us. {SITI June 18, 1896, p. 370.17}

**Everlasting Love**

“The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.” Jeremiah 31:3. Since this is so, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” His love is everlasting, and knows no change. And his love is for us; therefore nothing can separate us from it. Our own deliberate choice can reject it, but even then his love continues the same; only we have in that case removed ourselves from it. “If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he can not deny himself.” 2 Timothy 2:13. {SITI June 18, 1896, p. 370.18}

Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword, separate us from the love of Christ? Impossible, since it was in those very things that his love for us was manifested. Death itself can not separate us from his love, since he so loved us that he gave himself to die for us. Death is the pledge of his love. Sin, that separates us from God, does not separate us from his love, for “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” “Him who knew no sin be made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him.” 2 Corinthians 5:21. {SITI June 18, 1896, p. 370.19}

“In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.” It must be so, since everything is for us. Since Christ suffered hunger, and distress, and peril, and even death itself, in order that he might deliver us, all those things are for us. It was through death that he gained the victory for us; therefore even in death we gain an overwhelming victory. Those whom Satan persecutes even to death, gain the greatest victory over him. That which seems to be a victory for Satan, is his most crushing defeat. {SITI June 18, 1896, p. 371.1}

Behold what a wonderful provision God has made for our salvation! It is easy enough to see that if Satan did not trouble us at all, we should be saved. If our enemy would leave us entirely alone, we should have no trouble. So on that side we are safe. But he will not leave us alone. He goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Very well, God has so ordered it that even his attempts to destroy us help us along. Death is the sum of all the ills that Satan can bring upon us, and even in that we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. “Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” {SITI June 18, 1896, p. 371.2}

**A Good Persuasion**

“For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.” Isaiah 30:15. “For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.” Hebrews 3:14. Our faith is the victory. God alone is our strength and salvation. Therefore our strength consists in confidence in him. “Trust ye in the Lord forever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.” Isaiah 27:5. {SITI June 18, 1896, p. 371.3}

The apostle Paul had been “in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.” He says: “Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.” 2 Corinthians 11:24-27. Surely he is one who can speak with the authority of great experience. Hear, then, what he says: {SITI June 18, 1896, p. 371.4}

“Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” {SITI June 18, 1896, p. 371.5}

**No Fear for the Future**

Only to those who willfully reject the love of God is there “a fearful looking for of judgment.” Christ says to us, “Be not therefore anxious for the morrow.” He does not desire that we should have our minds filled with fear and anxious forebodings. Some people can never be at rest, even under the most delightful circumstances, because they are afraid that something terrible will happen by and by. Now it makes no difference what may come, since neither things present nor things to come can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. We are assured that things to come, as well as things present, are ours. 1 Corinthians 3:22. Therefore in Christ we may sing:— {SITI June 18, 1896, p. 371.6}

*“Let good or ill befall,
It must be good for me,
Secure of having Thee in all,
Of having all in Thee.”
E. J. W. {SITI June 18, 1896, p. 371.7}*

 **“‘The Knowledge of Christ’” The Signs of the Times, 22, 25.**

E. J. Waggoner

“The Knowledge of Christ.” —“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 3:18. The trouble with so many people is that they do not know the value of the treasure which they have received. They receive Christ, and are blessed; then, by reason of not increasing in the knowledge of him, they are conscious of a great lack, and so hastily conclude that the gift which they have received is not great enough, and that God must have another to reserve for them-as though God had any greater gift than Christ, or that when he gave Christ, he made some reservation. No; with him he freely gives us “all things.” If we have received Christ, our part is to study him, that we may know that in him all our wants are supplied. {SITI June 25, 1896, p. 392.1}

“Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly [places.” Ephesians 1:15-20. E. J. W. {SITI June 25, 1896, p. 392.2}