**“Reason and Faith” The Signs of the Times, 22, 44.**

E. J. Waggoner

“Finally, brethren, pray for us.... that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.” (2 Thessalonians 3:1, 2.) {SITI November 5, 1896, p. 687.1}

From this we learn that the unreasonable man is the man who has not faith. He is both unreasonable and wicked; for “whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.” Sin is unreasonable. In the Bible sinners are characterized as foolish persons. “The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.” (Job 28:28). {SITI November 5, 1896, p. 687.2}

“With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.” (Romans 10:10). The heart, therefore, and not the head merely, determines whether one is or is not unreasonable. Foolishness is more a matter of the heart than of the head. Some of the most foolish people have very good intellectual faculties, but a depraved heart deceives him. {SITI November 5, 1896, p. 687.3}

“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Romans 10:17. The connection between faith and the word is shown by the text first quoted. “Pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you; and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.” {SITI November 5, 1896, p. 687.4}

The unreasonable and wicked man is the man who has not faith, and the man who has not faith is the man who does not accept God’s word without question. The really reasonable man is not the one who can argue every point, and can answer every question out of his own head, but the man who believes God. An unlettered plowboy may thus have more right reason than a culture philosopher. “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord.” (Isaiah 1:18.) How often that text is used to justify strife and debate and quibbling over the word of God. Many people take it as tho it read, “Come now, and let us argue together, saith the Lord.” No, it says, “Let us reason together,” and when the Lord begins to talk, the most reasonable thing for man to do is to keep still, except as he responds. Amen. {SITI November 5, 1896, p. 687.5}

The remaining portion of the text shows that this is all that is expected of man in reasoning with the Lord. He continues: “Tho your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” (Isaiah 1:18-20.) {SITI November 5, 1896, p. 687.6}

Now what can anybody say to that?—Only that he believes and accept it, or that he does not. To say the latter is to say that God is a liar, and that is the height of folly. Manifestly, therefore, when the Lord calls us to come and reason together with him, he means us to listen with reverent humility, and to accept what he says without any gainsaying. {SITI November 5, 1896, p. 687.7}

Mind that it is not *our conception* of what God means, that we are to accept. That would be simply to set up our wisdom in opposition to God’s which is the height of presumptuous folly. It is to say that we can not venture to accept anything from the Lord without first submitting to the test our superior judgment. But God’s mind not to be measured by man’s. He is “able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.” (Ephesians 3:2). What God is able to do, that he does. He is infinite, and there is not a word or an act of God that does not contain more than the mind of the wisest man can fathom. What impertinent folly, then, to presume to pass God’s word through the sieve our feeble intellect before accepting it! {SITI November 5, 1896, p. 687.8}

Nicodemus started in on that line with the Lord. When Jesus spoke about the new birth, he asked, “How can these things be,” in an endeavor to show that the thing was impossible. He afterwards, however, learned true wisdom by attending to the word. When Jesus spoke about the necessity of eating his flesh, the Jews asked, “How can this man give of his flesh to eat?” They thought that that question settle the matter. {SITI November 5, 1896, p. 687.9}

Notice that pure human reasoning, as expressed in the preceding question, is doubt. It is negative. It does not build up anything, but only endeavors to tear down and obstruct. It tends to make more narrow the narrow field of vision, that one already has. But God’s thoughts are infinite, and when they are received by simple faith, without any attempt to dissect and analyze them, they expand the mind. There is no limit to the development of the mind that reasons according to the Lord’s plan. {SITI November 5, 1896, p. 687.10}

The word is given to all; it carried its own credentials, so that faith comes by it; therefore faith is given to all. The only reason why any men have not faith is that they have not kept it. It is both sword and shield-a mighty weapon. “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” (2 Corinthians 10:4, 5.) E. J. W. {SITI November 5, 1896, p. 687.11}

**“The Healing Touch” The Signs of the Times, 22, 45.**

E. J. Waggoner

One of the most striking of the miracles of Jesus is told in the following few words: “And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy; who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.” (Luke 5:12, 13.) {SITI November 12, 1896, p. 705.1}

Leprosy was one of the most loathsome diseases known to the ancients, and the one the most dreaded. The leper was an outcast, compelled to keep away from even his own family. The disease was a slow, progressive death, the victim’s members dropping off one after another until death ended his misery. No other disease more aptly illustrates the defilement of sin; and this man, who was full of leprosy, very closely resembled the description given of the people, by the prophet Isaiah. “The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.” So as we study the miracle of the cleansing of the leper, we may know that we are to learn how we can obey the direction, “Make you clean.” {SITI November 12, 1896, p. 705.2}

In the first place, the leper had confidence in the power of the Lord to heal him. He said, “Thou canst make me clean.” That is a great point. Very few really believe that Jesus Christ can cleanse them from sin. They will admit that he can save from sin in general,—that he can save others,—but they are not convinced that he can save *them*. Let such learn a lesson of the power of the Lord. Hear what the prophet Jeremiah said by inspiration of the Holy Spirit: “Ah Lord God behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee.” (Jeremiah 32:17.) {SITI November 12, 1896, p. 705.3}

He who brought the heavens and the earth into existence by the power of his word, can do all things. “But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.” Psalm 115:3. “His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.” (2 Peter 1:3.) “He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.” (Hebrews 7:25.) Christ has been given “power over all flesh.” (John 17:2.) {SITI November 12, 1896, p. 705.4}

So much for his power. Of that the leper was assured; but he was not sure that the Lord was willing to cleanse him. He said, “Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.” We need not have so much hesitancy as that. We know that he can, and he has given us ample assurance of his willingness. Thus we read that Christ “gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.” (Galatians 1:4.) It is the will of God that we should be sanctified. (1 Thessalonians 4:3.) {SITI November 12, 1896, p. 705.5}

Christ comprises everything. He is “the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” (1 Corinthians 1:24.) All things in heaven and in earth are in him. (Colossians 1:16, 17.) Therefore the apostle Paul says: “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 8:32.) The willingness of God to cleanse us from sin, is shown in the gift of his only-begotten Son for that purpose. “These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God. And this is the boldness which we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of him.” (1 John 5:13-15, R.V.) So we may “come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:16.), knowing that “if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” {SITI November 12, 1896, p. 705.6}

But the most striking feature of this miracle is the fact that Jesus touched the leper. There was not another person in all the land who would have come within a yard of him. But Jesus “put forth his hand, and touched him.” With that touch the hateful disease vanished. It is worth noting that in very many cases Jesus touched those whom he healed. When Peter’s wife’s mother lay sick of a fever, Jesus “touched her hand, and the fever left her.” (Matthew 8:15.) That same evening, “all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.” (Luke 4:40.) In his own country the people were so unbelieving that “he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.” (Mark 6:5.) {SITI November 12, 1896, p. 705.7}

In Matthew we are assured that this healing of the wick was “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our disease.” (Matthew 8:17, R.V.) We know that healing power went from him to the suffering ones who thronged round him to touch him (Luke 6:19); and this scripture assures us that he received into his own person their diseases, in exchange for his healing power. Now we have the blessed assurance that altho he is “passed into the heavens,” he has not lost his sympathy with us, but is still “touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” He comes close to us in pity, because “he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.” In all our sin and degradation, we may have inspiring thought that Jesus does not despise us, and is not ashamed to come into the closest companionship with us, in order that he may help us. The prophet, speaking of God’s dealing with ancient Israel, said, “In all their afflictions he was afflicted.” (Isaiah 63:9.) Even so it is now. As an eagle bears her young on her wings, so the Lord puts himself under his people, bearing all our sin and sorrow. He takes it upon himself, and in him it is lost, by the same process by which at the last “he will swallow up death in victory.” {SITI November 12, 1896, p. 706.1}

Christ took upon himself the curse. In order that the blessing might come upon us. (Galatians 3:13, 14). Altho he knew no sin, he was made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (2 Corinthians 5:21.) He suffered the death to which we were doomed, that we might share his life. And this exchange is made when we come into touch with him, by confessing that “Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.” How much we lose by holding Jesus off as a stranger, or by regarding faith in him as a theory. When we know that he identifies himself with us in our fallen condition, taking upon himself, and from us, our infirmities, how precious becomes the assurance, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” {SITI November 12, 1896, p. 706.2}

*“The healing of the seamless dress  
Is by our beds of pain;  
We touch Him in life’s throng and press,  
And we are whole again.”  
E. J. W. {SITI November 12, 1896, p. 706.3}*

**“Feeling at Liberty” The Signs of the Times, 22, 45.**

E. J. Waggoner

The religion of Jesus Christ is not simply one of emotions. It does not quench feelings, but it consists of more than emotions. It is a fact. It holds good when a person can have no emotions. It holds good when the body is paralyzed, and the nerves are numb,—when there is scarcely enough consciousness left to take notice of anything, and the mind has almost ceased to work. The man who knows Christ does not then have to reason out his hope, but rests in the consciousness of the fact of the life. {SITI November 12, 1896, p. 4.1}

It is a glorious truth that the religion of Christ needs not to be reasoned out. We do not have to trace evidence, and weigh arguments to know at any time what it is. This does not mean that God discounts the intellect with which he has endowed his creatures, but that faith is superior to reason. Human reason, not guided by the Spirit of God, leads to folly. Faith is the guide of reason; but the truth of the Spirit of God is not to be reasoned out, else there would be partiality; the kingdom of heaven could not in that case be received by a child as well as by a philosopher. But “the world by wisdom knew not God.” (1 Corinthians 1:21). The righteousness of God is not revealed to reason, but to faith. When one is at the very point of death, and the brain so sick and sore that it is a positive task to think at all, one can lie perfectly still and *know* that he is accepted, not because he feels that he is, but because God has said so. He need not look about to see if his feelings correspond to the demands, but he can rest in the Lord, knowing that he is in his hands. {SITI November 12, 1896, p. 4.2}

There are times, and they will come to every Christian, when he will not *feel* that he is free. He may be depressed in body. The weather often has an effect on people, and at any rate we are all still in the flesh. The flesh is still unconverted, and it will always remain so; for it is enmity against God, and can not be subject to him. It will demand that we serve it in this and that thing, and will demand satisfaction. Then is the time we want to know that we are free. If there is any doubt then we are in danger. {SITI November 12, 1896, p. 4.3}

The devil knows the weakness of the flesh, and he will work to regain his position. You say: “I am in doubt, and do not know. The other day in meeting the Lord seemed to set me free; but I do not feel so now. If I were free why should I feel so depressed?” And when we begin to hesitate and temporize, the devil, who is an expert in his art, brings us into discouragement and captivity. It is a fact that the Lord has proclaimed liberty to the captives. He holds the keys still, and the devil never can get hold of them. He has loosed the bonds of every man. David says, “O Lord, truly I am thy servant; ... thou hast loosed my bonds,” and it is true of every soul. There is not a soul in the world who might not say with truth, “Thou hast loosed my bonds;” and it be continued to say it on the authority of God’s word, he would continue free; for the Lord has proclaimed liberty to every captive. {SITI November 12, 1896, p. 4.4}

It is not a matter for feeling, but for practical use. When the enemy comes to destroy, when the flesh would rise up to assert its domination, then is the blessedness of this word, “I am free.” God has freed from that power, and he has power to maintain the freedom. Why should the experience of so many professors be fitful, now rejoicing and then again gloomy and full of doubt? God has declared freedom; will he put us in prison again? {SITI November 12, 1896, p. 4.5}

How many times we hear people talking about being in the dark—“it was light, but now it is gloom.” They have simply allowed Satan to thrust them into the dark cell, because they wandered near Doubting Castle. Bunyan had the truth of the thing when he told the story of Christian and Hopeful in Doubting Castle. They had been lying there in the dark for a week or more when Christian bethought himself of the key of Promise which he had in his bosom, which opened every door and gate in the castle, and they walked at liberty, because they believed the Lord. {SITI November 12, 1896, p. 4.6}

Now why should we be in Doubting Castle when the Lord sets us free and enlightens the gloom? We have the promise that the word is not far off. It is not in heaven, that we should go up to bring it, nor across the sea, that we should send for it. It is night thee, even in thy heart. So to every one that key has been given, and all can be free all the time, if they will use it. The Lord never puts us in bondage, and the time for us to assert our liberty is when the enemy would drag us back into captivity. He would be a strange man who, when the notice came to him in prison that he had been pardoned and set free, should wait until he felt free, before walking out at liberty. It would show that he did not believe in the genuineness of the pardon, or that he doubted its authority. It is because people do not believe God, that they refuse to assert their freedom when he proclaims it to every soul. E. J. W. {SITI November 12, 1896, p. 4.7}

**“Hear the Word” The Signs of the Times, 22, 46.**

E. J. Waggoner

Since the religion of Jesus Christ has to do with the heart, the inner life and thought of men, and not merely with outward acts, it is evident that it must deal with individuals, and not with masses. The following texts of scripture plainly show this:— {SITI November 19, 1896, p. 721.1}

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” Isaiah 55:1. {SITI November 19, 1896, p. 721.2}

“We see Jesus.... crowned with glory and honor, that he by the grace of God should taste death, *for every man*.” Hebrews 2:9. {SITI November 19, 1896, p. 721.3}

“For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work.” Mark 13:34. {SITI November 19, 1896, p. 721.4}

Consequently the Lord says, “Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” Revelation 22:12. {SITI November 19, 1896, p. 721.5}

In order that we may properly carry on the work assigned, “*unto every one of us* is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” Ephesians 4:7. The Spirit distributes gifts for the work, “dividing *to every man severally* as he will.” 1 Corinthians 12:11. {SITI November 19, 1896, p. 721.6}

For the manner in which men perform the work left them by the Lord, every man is responsible to God alone. “Who art thou that judgest another mans servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth.Yea, he shall be holden up; for God is able to make him stand.” Romans 14:4. {SITI November 19, 1896, p. 721.7}

The same principle applies also in matters of faith. “Let *every man* be fully persuaded in his own mind.” “Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God.” Romans 14:5, 22. Jesus said, “if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.” John 12:47. “*Every one of us shall give account of himself* to God.” Romans 14:12. {SITI November 19, 1896, p. 721.8}

Since no man can answer for another in the judgment day, but each one must give account of himself, it is evident that no one can believe for another, or prescribe another’s belief. Each man stands accountable to God for himself, independently of priest or minister. {SITI November 19, 1896, p. 721.9}

It is further evident, also, that no man can be justified before God for believing something just because some other person does, even though that thing be true. “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Romans 10:10. Faith is the appropriation of the living presence and power of Christ, in his word. Accepting a theory merely, and that, too, on the authority of some other person, is no more like real faith than taking food at another person’s hands and putting it in a safe place in the cupboard is like eating. {SITI November 19, 1896, p. 721.10}

Some one will ask, “How about *hearing* *the church*, if each one is to decide his own faith and practice for himself? Is each individual to set himself and his ideas in opposition to the church?” By no means. And this brings up a principle that is too often lost sight of. A few words may suffice to set it forth. {SITI November 19, 1896, p. 721.11}

First, let it be understood that “the church” is not a law-making body. “There is one lawgiver,” and that is God. The church is composed of members who, altho they have different offices and different work, are in their relation to God absolutely equal. The greatest minister, even tho he was called pope, has no more authority to lay down rules for faith and practice than the poorest and most ignorant child. And a thousand men assembled in council, have no more authority in matters of faith than each man has individually. Truth rests on God’s word, and not in numbers in influence. {SITI November 19, 1896, p. 721.12}

That which is committed to the church is the word of God. This, and this alone, is to be spoken. This we are to hear. The fact that a number of men are agreed on a certain point, is no evidence that the thing is true. In a matter of faith, one hundred men are as likely to be wrong as one man is; and they are all sure to be wrong if they say anything aside from the word of God. Therefore if “the church” does not speak the word of God, it is no more to be listened to than is any individual. {SITI November 19, 1896, p. 721.13}

The “right of private interpretation” is not involved in this question. It is not a matter of interpretation, but of loyalty to the plain word of God. For one man to accept an interpretation of scripture simply because another man says that it is correct, is to accept that other man as pope; but for each man to set his own judgment and authority against everybody else, and to interpret scripture according to his own judgment, is to make himself a pope, and that is no better. What then shall we do?—Accept the Holy Spirit, the divinely-appointed guide. The gift of the Holy Spirit is to every man, to guide him individually into all the truth, which is the pure word of God. {SITI November 19, 1896, p. 721.14}

The Spirit will not lead a man to set himself in opposition to his brethren. He will take the word of God just as it reads, and humbly rest upon it. If all in the church do the same, there will be perfect unanimity because the word says the same thing to every man. But if his brethren do not the same, he will not fight them, nor create a rebellion. The child of God will never resist authority. He will hold to the truth, and if the “authority,” whether it be the church or the state, condemns him, he will submit to the condemnation and punishment, yet not compromising the truth. In this way he will be a true follower of the Master, “also, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously;” yet who never swerved in his steadfast witness to the truth. {SITI November 19, 1896, p. 721.15}

E. J. W.