**“The Knowledge of Want” The Signs of the Times, 23, 13.**

E. J. Waggoner

The Word says, “There is no want to them that fear Him.” That is because that when we know the Lord, we no sooner have a knowledge of want than the want is supplied. The revelation or sense of want comes from him. So when we feel the want in our soul, it is God’s way of saying he has that thing to give us. {SITI April 1, 1897, p. 195.1}

You want righteousness, do you? That is, you feel the lack of it. How did you find out that you wanted it? who told you your need?—The Lord let you know that want. How did he make you know it?—Simply by the revelation of the thing which will supply the want. {SITI April 1, 1897, p. 195.2}

If we were to go into the wilds of Africa, out of the tract of civilization entirely, where the people know absolutely nothing of the conveniences of modern life, should we find the people begging for watches, for instance?—Of course not; they would know nothing about such things. But in our cities a boy doesn’t get very old before he wants a watch. The knowledge of that thing, and the possibility of it, create the want. {SITI April 1, 1897, p. 195.3}

Why is it that you want righteousness?—It is only because the Lord has revealed righteousness to you, the knowledge of right; for there can be no knowledge of wrong without the corresponding knowledge of right. We know a thing is wrong because it is contrary to the right. {SITI April 1, 1897, p. 195.4}

In every heart there are desires, greater or less, for a better life. We do not know how many discouraged souls there are longing to be delivered from the degradation into which they have fallen. They do not know how to get deliverance; and the reason is that they do not know love. They have not learned that God is love, and they have not seen God’s love manifested in those with whom they have associated, and so they do not know how to have their longings supplied. But every desire of the human heart for anything better, every longing for righteousness, has been created by the Lord, and created in order that the soul might hold to him for the supply of the want. {SITI April 1, 1897, p. 195.5}

Whenever we want to be better than we are, the very moment that want comes, it is the plain language of God to us, saying, “Here is something that you lack; take it.” This is why there is no want to them that fear God; for every want is supplied in the very knowledge of it, if we but know it. In Christ there is everything, even the fullness of God. He is the “Desire of all nations,” and in him is all that men can desire. {SITI April 1, 1897, p. 195.6}

**Illegitimate Desire**

Men may, it is true, desire many things that are not in Christ. But we can all testify from our own experience that the receiving of those things did not satisfy the desire. There was still a want there. Then that was not the real thing that we wanted, after all. We thought it would satisfy us, but a trial of it showed that there was no satisfaction in it. {SITI April 1, 1897, p. 195.7}

It is as if we should sit at a table, hungry, and should try first one thing and then another, without finding the hunger satisfied. At last we find just the thing which the taste seemed to be calling for and which satisfied. There are longings as of the intemperate man for drink. He drinks; but he is not satisfied. The more he drinks, the more the longing is cultivated. There is this and that pleasure that men desire and indulge in, which do not satisfy. The Lord says, “Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.” Isaiah 55:2. {SITI April 1, 1897, p. 195.8}

There is not a longing in man that is not, unconsciously to himself it may be, really a drawing out after God, and for something which God can supply. So David says, “My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.” Psalm 84:2. The nature of the flesh is sinful, and always sinful. But all this longing of the flesh is dissatisfaction. There is only one thing that can satisfy, and that is God. He is the Desire of all nations, and he satisfies “the desire of every living thing.” {SITI April 1, 1897, p. 195.9}

If you really do want to be better, if you want God’s righteousness, just stop and thank him that he has given it to you. “His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.” E. J. W. {SITI April 1, 1897, p. 195.10}

**“Speculation and Faith” The Signs of the Times, 23, 14.**

E. J. Waggoner

Speculation is uncertainty. It is always a risk. A man ventures something, not knowing what the result will be. He thinks that a certain investment will be a safe one, and will yield large returns, but he is not sure. He has no means of being sure. If he could be sure of the result, it would not be speculation. Very often the man who feels the most confident of the good results of his investment is most sorely disappointed. {SITI April 8, 1897, p. 211.1}

This element of uncertainty is that which wears out the speculator, and makes him prematurely old. His nerves are always in tension. He may have all his fortune at stake, and it is impossible for him to rest in perfect ease when he knows that a very little thing may dash it from him in a moment. No wonder that a man in such a condition often finds it impossible to sleep. {SITI April 8, 1897, p. 211.2}

Faith is altogether different from this. Faith knows. It runs no risks. There is no element of uncertainty in it. Christ is the only object of faith, and he is “the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever.” He never fails. His power is almighty, and he loses nothing that is intrusted to him; no one can snatch anything from his hands. See John 10:28, 29; 17:12. {SITI April 8, 1897, p. 211.3}

Christ is the “tried stone,” the “precious corner-stone,” the “sure foundation;” and “he that believeth in him shall not be confounded.” His ability to keep is shown in the fact that he upholds all things by the word of his power. Hebrews 4:13. When the Lord would encourage us to put our trust in him, he says, “Lift up your eyes on high, and see who hath created these, that bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by name; by the greatness of his might, and for that he is strong in power, not one is lacking.” Isaiah 40:26, R.V. {SITI April 8, 1897, p. 211.4}

So it is as unto “a faithful Creator” that we are to commit the keeping of our souls to him. That which may be known of him, even “his eternal power and Godhead,” is clearly revealed in the things that he has made, so that all have ample opportunity to become acquainted with him. Therefore the language of faith is, “I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have trusted, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” 2 Timothy 1:12, margin. {SITI April 8, 1897, p. 211.5}

Faith knows nothing of worry. There is no straining of the nerves to the utmost pitch of anxiety, for fear of what may happen in the future. He who knows the Lord would as soon think of worrying lest a comet should strike the earth, or lest the earth should come into collision with some other planet, and thus be wrecked, as to worry lest at some future time the Lord might allow him to fall. His strength is in quietness and confidence. Under the shadow of the Almighty he abides secure, and is not afraid, knowing that nothing present or to come can separate the soul from that “everlasting love.” E. J. W. {SITI April 8, 1897, p. 211.6}

**“What Can He Say?” The Signs of the Times, 23, 17.**

E. J. Waggoner

In a meeting of the Foreign Missionary Society of the American M. E. Church, a returned missionary to Persia, who was described as “full of enthusiasm for his work,” spoke as follows: {SITI April 29, 1897, p. 2.1}

I am often asked by the Persians how it is, if the Christian religion be the pure Gospel I claim, that my nation, Christian America, has a far longer list of crimes than Persia? What can I reply? What can I do but bow my head in shame, and raise my heart in prayer to God to lift the cloud from rum cursed America? O, this Christian nation will have to rouse from her slumber, and sweep this evil from her borders, ere she can hold out pure hands to other nations, asking them to accept her Bible and her God! {SITI April 29, 1897, p. 2.2}

A man who would have any trouble in answering such a question as that asked by the Persians, ought to get better acquainted with the Gospel before going out as a missionary. He should learn that the Gospel is “the power of God unto salvation to *every one* that believeth,” no matter in what land he dwells. He should be able to assure the questioners that the Gospel is an individual matter, and that therefore America is not, never was, and never will be Christian, and that it is not possible that any nation on earth, as a nation, can be Christian. {SITI April 29, 1897, p. 2.3}

The fact that America “has a far longer list of crimes than Persia,” is all the evidence that is needed to show that it is not Christian; for Christianity means freedom from sin. America is no more a Christian nation than Persia is. {SITI April 29, 1897, p. 2.4}

But it would doubtless be most galling to the missionary’s “patriotism” to make such an answer as that. And that is the trouble with too many missionaries, both home and foreign. A mistaken loyalty to their native country interferes with their loyalty to the Gospel. If they could but learn that true Christianity is only a sojourner on this earth,—a pilgrim and a stranger even in the land of his birth,—and that his citizenship is in heaven, they would not be embarrassed by such questions as were asked the missionary to Persia. The only country in which they would have a special interest, as a country, would be the heavenly country. {SITI April 29, 1897, p. 3.1}

But would not the same charge against the Gospel remain unanswered, namely, that it can not be as pure as is claimed, or else it would have more influence in diminishing crime in America?—Not by any means. The Gospel cleanses from sin and crime all who accept it, and no others. If it were less pure than it is, it would be more generally accepted; but then it would be of no use. The Lord himself gave no warrant for supposing that the majority of men in any nation would accept the Gospel, but, on the contrary, warned his followers that they must always be comparatively few in number, and must suffer persecution. {SITI April 29, 1897, p. 3.2}

The Gospel knows nothing about natural or artificial boundaries on this earth. It is to be “to all people.” It knows nothing about states and governments. Its mission is to “every creature.” Kingdoms may rise and fall, nations may extend their boundaries, and others may be absorbed, but none of these things concern the ambassadors for Christ. They are the representatives of no country but heaven, and are accredited to no earthly government, but to the world as a whole, and to the whole world considered as individuals, who are to be transformed by it, and made to live a different life as individuals. When all of Christ’s ambassadors fully realize this truth, then will their mission be clothed with a dignity and power befitting its exalted origin. E. J. W. {SITI April 29, 1897, p. 3.3}