**“Editorial. The Wisdom of Jesus” The Signs of the Times, 23, 31.**

E. J. Waggoner

The Wisdom of Jesus. —“And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him. Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.... And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.” Luke 2:40-47. {SITI August 12, 1897, p. 481.1}

Of one thing each reader of this narrative should rest assured from the very beginning, and that is that Jesus was not as we sometimes see it stated, “disputing with the doctors.” He was not doing anything that would be unbecoming in a child of twelve years. He was not putting himself forward, nor “showing off.” He was not presuming to teach those learned doctors of the law, nor showing the least disrespect to them. He was listening to their instruction, and asking them questions on what they were teaching, just as every listener was expected to do. He was seeking knowledge; more wisdom may sometimes be revealed in the questions of a learner than in the instruction of a teacher. The questions of the child Jesus, asked for the purpose of gaining information, showed that he already had a marvelous perception and grasp of truth, greater perhaps than had the doctors. {SITI August 12, 1897, p. 481.2}

Later in life, when he was engaged in public labor, “the multitudes were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.” Matthew 7:28, 29, R.V. “And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagog, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?” Matthew 13:34. {SITI August 12, 1897, p. 481.3}

The true answer to this question is scarcely understood even by the followers of Jesus. If it were, there would be more of the same wisdom among them; for just as truly as Christ “emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men” (Philippians 2:7, R.V.), so then “it behooved him be made like unto his brethren” (Hebrews 2:17), so truly did he possess no advantages over his brethren, and had access to no sources of wisdom that are not open to all. {SITI August 12, 1897, p. 481.4}

Made in all things like unto his brethren. —The common idea concerning Jesus is that he was born with special wisdom, and as an infant he possessed knowledge superior to that of most men, and that he did not need to learn as other folks do, but that his wisdom was inherited, so that he knew everything without any effort. Such an idea not only makes him a monstrosity, but it places a great gulf between him and us, so that we have nothing in common with him, and derive no help from him. All our hope and consolation in Jesus rest in the fact that, as partaker of flesh and blood, he was subject to the same infirmities that we are, as weak and helpless in himself as we are, yet without sin, and by the divine life dwelling in him made “Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” He came to earth to let men know what God can do in human flesh; and just to the extent that we imagine him to have “natural” abilities superior to ours, do we deprive ourselves of the grace that is brought to us in him. {SITI August 12, 1897, p. 481.5}

The fact that Jesus was not born with greater knowledge than possessed by other infants, is indicated by the statement that he “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.” Luke 2:52. It would have been as incongruous for him to be born with perfect wisdom as to be born with full stature. He increased in wisdom as he grew in age and stature, just as other children are expected to. {SITI August 12, 1897, p. 481.6}

In the fiftieth chapter of Isaiah we have the Lord’s own statement of how he obtained the wisdom that made him the greatest Teacher the world has ever seen. That this chapter contains the words of the Lord Jesus is shown by verse 6, “I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting.” Now read verse 4 (R. V.): “The Lord God hath given me the tongue of them that are taught, that I should know how to sustain with words him that is weary; he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as they that are taught,” or “as disciples,” Christ was himself a disciple, a learner from the Father, thus showing that only they who are learners can be apt teachers. {SITI August 12, 1897, p. 481.7}

Jesus made no claims to be the possessor of special gifts. He said: “I can of mine own self do nothing.” John 3:30. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do.” Verse 19. These are not the expressions of false modesty, for Jesus spoke only truth, as he is the Truth; therefore as no man can be any weaker than not to be able to do anything of himself, or more ignorant than to know anything without being taught, even so there is no person in the world who does not possess the same advantages that Jesus did. {SITI August 12, 1897, p. 481.8}

Hear him again: “Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but *as my Father hath taught me*, I speak these things.” John 8:28. To Moses God had said concerning Jesus, “I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.” {SITI August 12, 1897, p. 481.9}

The Promises to All Believers. —All this is promised to all believers as well as to Jesus. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” James 1:5. To “the captive exile” the Lord says, “I have put my words in thy mouth.” Isaiah 51:14-16, R.V. As “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself,” even so he has “placed in us the word of reconciliation,” so that he beseeches by us. 2 Corinthians 5:19, 20. If it is given to us to pray “in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God,” then of course the same grace, and the same gifts by grace, are bestowed upon us that were bestowed upon him. “Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” Ephesians 4:7. {SITI August 12, 1897, p. 482.1}

All this knowledge of Jesus came solely from the Word of God, through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. He asked wisdom and received it, just as we may. But we must not suppose that we are to ask for wisdom, and then go to sleep and wake up wise. We are to ask in faith, and that means according to God’s promise, which is this: “My son, if thou My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.” “Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.” Proverbs 2:1-6, 9. {SITI August 12, 1897, p. 482.2}

To the simple, even to fools and scorners, God says, “Turn you at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.” Proverbs 1:23. Jesus needed no reproof, for he did not turn aside from the way. He said, “An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him; and now that he lieth he shall rise up no more.” Psalm 41:8. We have sinned, as he did not; but it we will turn at the reproof of the Lord, he will make known to us the same words of wisdom that he did to Christ; for Christ *is made* unto us wisdom, as well as righteousness.” 1 Corinthians 1:30. {SITI August 12, 1897, p. 482.3}

How little we have realized the wonderful depths and heights and breadth of wisdom that is contained in the Word of God, to be freely bestowed on all who will humbly, patiently, and prayerfully study them. Both Solomon and he who is “greater than Solomon” derived all their wisdom from this source alone, as we have learned by the inspired testimony of Solomon. God, who through Solomon said, “My son, if thou wilt receive my words,” “then shalt thou understand,” was speaking to his Son Jesus, and also to us, whom he accepts as sons equally with Jesus. Jesus listened and learned. He says, “The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.” Isaiah 30:3. He has said to us that if any man willeth to do his will, he shall also know. John 7:17. {SITI August 12, 1897, p. 482.4}

This wonderful knowledge is not hidden from children. Nay, the things that are hidden from the worldly wise and prudent are revealed unto babes. “I have more understanding than all my teachers; for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients,”—the old men,—“because I keep thy precepts.” Psalm 119:99, 100. This is not to the praise of the child, but of the Word, which any child, as well as Timothy and Jesus, may know. {SITI August 12, 1897, p. 482.5}

One thing must not be forgotten, and that is that such wisdom accompanies only true humility. The simplicity of real childhood must be maintained. We must always, even with the knowledge which the Word gives, confess that we know nothing except as we are taught. Natural pride, stubbornness, unwillingness to acknowledge that we have nothing and are nothing, are the hindrances to the acquirement of true knowledge; but we have the assurance that the same God whose power bestows upon us the wisdom of Christ is able also to give us his meekness. Let us then be not rebellious, but submissive to the Word of wisdom. E. J. W. {SITI August 12, 1897, p. 482.6}

**“Editorial. Independence” The Signs of the Times, 23, 33.**

E. J. Waggoner

Independence. —The feeling of independence is inherent in human nature. The first declaration of independence against God was made by Lucifer, in the courts of heaven, and next, at his instigation, by man in the Garden of Eden, when he set about to make himself equal to God, and thus independent of his authority. The first marked feature to manifest itself in the infant is the disposition to have its own way; and unless this disposition is checked, it grows stronger with years until even in early youth he declares his determination to have his own way, regardless of what anybody else may say or think. {SITI August 26, 1897, p. 513.1}

Who Shall Rule? —This is easily answered in the case of the infant. That the child is of right subject to the parent, is so self-evident as to need no special argument. The child is *not* independent of its parents. Why not?—Simply because *it is not*. It can not be. It depends upon them for existence in this world, and after it sees the light of day it is as dependent as before. It is absolutely impossible for it to maintain an independent existence. If forsaken by its mother, and left with no one else to take her place, it would perish in a very short time. For years the child is the most helpless of animals; it is absolutely dependent on the exertions of others for its existence. Then of course it must be subject to those who provide for it, because— {SITI August 26, 1897, p. 513.2}

Dependence Means Subjection. —He who provides a thing has a right to say how that thing shall be used. To partake of one’s bounty,—to be absolutely dependent,—and at the same time to rail against him, and to use all one’s power against him, is the basest ingratitude. Whoever does that is by common consent regarded as lost to all sense of justice. So long as one is absolutely dependent on another, that other must of right have the controlling voice in the dependent one’s affairs. {SITI August 26, 1897, p. 513.3}

Who Is Independent? —Who is there that is indebted to no one for his existence?—Not one; as already seen, every child is of right subject to its parents. But the parents themselves,—whence to they derive their support, their life itself?—“God that made the world and all things therein, ... giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; ... for in him we live, and move, and have our being.” Acts 25:24-28. The parents of every child, yea, every person in the world, are as absolutely dependent on God for existence and its continuation, as the infant is upon its parents. The strongest and wisest man in the world is far more helpless compared with God, than the newborn infant is compared with him. When Peter stepped out upon the water at the word of Jesus, he was conscious of the fact that he was dependent upon Jesus for support. But he was just as much dependent on that support when walking on the land. {SITI August 26, 1897, p. 513.4}

God the One Ruler. —Those who are nearest to God, beholding his power and glory, and who themselves occupy the highest position of all created beings, do humble reverence to God, saying, “Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power; for thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they were, and were created.” Revelation 4:11, R.V. “Know ye that the Lord he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.” Psalm 100:3. Therefore, just as the child is of right subject to his parents, because dependent on them for existence, so all men are of right subject to God, absolutely dependent on him for life, and breath, and all things; and this is the very lesson that God would have both parents and children (and that includes everybody) learn from the relation of parent and child. The child is dependent on its parents, in order that both it and they may see their common dependence upon God; and the child is by the nature of things compelled to be dependent on its parents until it comes to years of discretion, in order that, in the proper order of things, it may learn the lesson of dependence, and pass from the recognition of dependence upon its parents to the recognition of its dependence upon God; nay, more, long before it ceases to be dependent upon its parents, it should learn the lesson that it is subject to them, for the reason that all are subject to God. {SITI August 26, 1897, p. 513.5}

The Responsibility of the Independent One. —We speak now of the one who chafes under proper restraint, and who imagines himself to be independent, for God alone is independent. Well, since God alone is independent, from him alone may we learn the responsibility that one really assumes when he asserts his independence. God is self-existent; his name is I AM; no other being in the universe contributes the slightest particle to his support. Therefore he has a right to do as he will, and none can question him and say, “What doest thou?” “Our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased” (Psalm 15:3); and none have ever been able to withstand him; “For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?” He who would stay the Lord in any of his purposes, must be one who has first given to him; but there are none such. {SITI August 26, 1897, p. 514.1}

What It Means. —The one therefore who assumes that he is independent, and who asserts his independence, takes upon himself the responsibility of maintaining his own existence. When the headstrong youth declares his independence of his father’s control, the father sometimes allows him to carry his declaration to its legitimate conclusion, and attempt to provide for his own support. Now it may be that the youth from that time is able to live without his father, although but for his previous dependence he could not now be seemingly independent, but it is impossible for him to be independent of God. He goes out into the world in his boastful pride, declaring himself to be independent even of God. He blasphemes the name of God. He will not be dependent on any being, not he. But wait! He is breathing, yes, even breathing out defiance to God. Where did you get your breath, my friend? Did you make it?—No, you didn’t have anything to do with it. “You found it ready made and used it, and the supply is kept up while you are asleep. Now, no matter who made it, it is certain that you did not, and therefore if you are determined to be independent, you must at once cease using it. Of course no other man made it, any more than you did; God alone made it. Now the only way for you to be independent of God is for you to provide your own air, and use no other. Everybody who declares independence against God, puts himself under obligation to make his own air. You can not do it?—No, of course you can not. If you cease using God’s air you will immediately die. Whose life are you using, then?—Why, God’s and his only. Certainly then it is nothing more than common fairness that he be allowed to direct his own life. Every man who breathes is by that very act under obligation to devote his life to the Lord, for him to control. {SITI August 26, 1897, p. 514.2}

“His Mercy Endureth Forever.” —We have said that sometimes an earthly father tells his rebellious sons that he may look out for himself if he will not acknowledge parental authority; but this God does not do. “His mercy endureth forever.” “He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” Matthew 5:43. “He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.” Luke 6:35. This is the goodness of God that leads men to repentance. If men would only acknowledge the truth that is evident in every breath they breathe, the very drawing of their breath would draw them to God. How easy is it to believe God?—Just as easy as it is to breathe. Then “let everything that hath breath praise the Lord,” and thus prepare the way for God to show them his salvation. E. J. W. {SITI August 26, 1897, p. 514.3}

**“Discovering Truth” The Signs of the Times, 23, 33.**

E. J. Waggoner

Discovering Truth. —The astronomer does not make the celestial bodies which his telescope reveals; they were in existence before he saw them, and all that he has done is to look steadily and patiently at some particular portion of the heavens, until the new light suddenly dawned upon his vision. Even so with a man searching for hid treasure or for something that is lost. He digs faithfully, or patiently searches for it, until he finds it; but when he has found it, he can not take any credit to himself for its existence. He did not manufacture it; he simply had the patience to keep looking until he found the right place, or till his eyes became accustomed to the light, and could distinguish objects. Then he had only to look and see that which was plainly visible. It is exactly the same way in the study of divine truth. Truth and wisdom come from God alone. He is the author of truth, because he is the truth. No man can manufacture or invent truth, for it exists from eternity. All that anybody can do is to open his eyes and see it. One reason why more people do not know and have the truth is that they think that to acquire it requires special qualifications and a sort of genius, whereas all that is necessary is open eyes. The natural man wishes to “work out” theories, so that he may have the credit of being wonderfully clever; but truth comes only to him who acknowledges his ignorance, and does not desire to gain applause for wisdom which does not and can not originate with him. If our sight is defective, we have only to pray to the Lord to anoint our eyes with eyesalve, and open them, that we may behold wonderful things in his law. Revelation 3:15; Psalm 119:18. E. J. W. {SITI August 26, 1897, p. 3.1}

**“Inciting to War” The Signs of the Times, 23, 33.**

E. J. Waggoner

Inciting to War. —It does not augur well for the prospects of peace, when leading church teachers declare that the three conditions of justifiable warfare are,—the command of the prince, a just cause, and a good intention-and that the first cause “relieves the individual soldier from all moral responsibility for his military action,” that “it is lawful for Christian men at the command of the magistrate to wear weapons and to serve in the wars;” and, even worse still, that “in war men have the opportunity of rising to higher levels of virtue than they would have thought possible of attainment.” Such teaching is not calculated to make men acquainted with God as the One who “maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth.” He who “hath the power of death, that is, the devil,” has, by means of his skill in passing himself off as an angel of light, attained to a very prominent position as a religious teacher, so that counsels of war and death are largely supposed to be a part of the Gospel of life and peace. E. J. W. {SITI August 26, 1897, p. 3.2}