GENESIS

Ellet J. Waggoner and Alonzo T. Jones

Chapter 1

Creation (1887)

1. What did God do in the beginning? "In the beginning God created the heaven and earth." (Genesis 1:1)

2. By what means was this accomplished? "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. ... For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." (Psalm 33:6,9)

3. Are we to understand from these words that the matter of the earth was not in existence before he spoke? "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." (Hebrews 11:3)

4. Who was the active agent in creation? "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds." (Hebrews 1:1-2)

5. Is there anything that the Son did not make? "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for

Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. (Colossians 1:16-17)

6. Since it was by the Son that the Father created all things, what is His rightful title? "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." (John 1:1,3)

7. How has the Father addressed the Son? "But unto the Son He said, Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom. ... And, You, Lord, in the beginning have laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of your hands." (Hebrews 1:8,10)

8. Then how should He be regarded by all creatures? "And again, when He brought in the first-begotten into the world, He said, And let all the angels of God worship Him." (Hebrews 1:6)

9. In what condition was the earth when it was first spoken into existence? "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." (Genesis 1:2)

10. After the creation of the substances of the earth, what was the first thing done? "And God said, Let there be light; and there was light." (Genesis 1:3)

11. What next? "And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness." (Genesis 1:4)

12. What did God call the light and the darkness? "And God called a light day, and the darkness He called night." (Genesis 1:5)

13. What do a period of darkness and a period of light together constitute? "And the evening and the morning were the first day." (Genesis 1:5)

14. Which always comes first in the formation of a day? The darkness.

Can you explain why? See Notes.

15. What was done on the second day? "And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day." (Genesis 1:6-8)

16. How is this day's work referred to by Job? "He binds up the waters in His thick cloud; and the cloud is not rent under them." (Job 26:8)

17. What was done on the third day? "And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear; and it was so. And God called the dry land earth; and the gathering together of the waters He called seas; and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth; and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind; and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day." (Genesis 1:9-13)

18. What was made upon the fourth day? "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years." (Genesis 1:14)

19. What were these lights to govern? "And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; He made the stars also." (Genesis 1:16)

20. Then what kind of days were these days of creation? 21. Does the sun make the day, or simply rule the day?

22. Tell what makes the day, and how there could be days before the sun was.--Signs of the Times, December 29, 1887--Lesson 1 - Sabbath, January 7--Genesis 1:1-18.

Notes:

The reverent reader of the Bible, who accepts the historical portion of the Old Testament, as a narrative of what actually took place, and not as a fiction, can arrive at no other conclusion than that the days of creation were literal days of twenty-four hours each. They were days composed of an evening and a morning,--a period of darkness and a period of light; and they were such days as are governed by the sun and moon.

Now in order that there should be any show of reason in the claim that the days of creation were long, indefinite periods of time, those who make such a claim ought to be able to point to some time when the sun ruled such days as that. That, of course, would be an impossibility, and so is it an absurdity to claim that the days of creation were anything other than literal, twenty-four hour days. Nobody can get any other idea from the text. But the question is presented,

"How could there be days before there was any sun?" Such a question implies ignorance, or at least forgetfulness, of what forms the day. The day is made by the revolution of the earth on its axis. Each complete revolution makes one day. As a matter of fact, the sun has nothing whatever to do in forming the day. If it should suddenly become a body of darkness, instead of a body of light, it would be days just the same, and they would be just the same length that they now are.

So there were days before the sun was appointed to rule the day. This appointment was not made until after the earth had completed three revolutions, or until three days of time had passed. The very statement that God set the two great lights in the firmament,

"... to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness" (Genesis 1:18), shows that there were days independent of the sun. These great lights were to rule in the day and then the night, which had been arranged before they were given their office.

When does the day begin? At evening, according to the record in (Genesis 1); and in (Leviticus 23:32) we read that the Jews are directed to celebrate their Sabbaths "from even unto even," and this could not be unless they regarded other days as beginning at the same time.

But why is this? Is it an arbitrary requirement? or is there a fixed reason why the day begins at evening? It is not an arbitrary matter, but the natural day begins at evening because it cannot by any possibility begin at any other time. When the earth was created, "darkness was upon the face of the deep." (Genesis 1:2)

The phrase, "in the beginning," marks the beginning of time, as distinguished from God's eternity. The speaking of the matter of the earth into existence, marked the beginning of the first day of time. But darkness covered the chaotic mass, and consequently the first

day of time began in darkness. Before the earth had completed its first revolution, however, light was created.

"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And the evening [the darkness] and the morning [the light] were the first day." (Genesis 1:3-5)

The first revolution of the earth was completed just at the dividing line between light and darkness; and so, just as the first day began in the unbroken darkness, the second day began with the darkness that had been separated, and put within bounds. And as a matter of necessity, this order must always follow.

To make the day actually begin at any other time than evening, would involve a change in the earth's revolution; and in order to count the day as beginning at midnight, a portion of time had to be ignored. Thus it is evident that the present popular mode of reckoning time is not of God's arrangement.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 2

The Creation (1883)

As the lesson for this week is a review of the whole book of Genesis, it is evident that only a few points can be touched upon. The great point to be kept in mind is the plan that runs through the whole history. This will be spoken of more fully here-after.

The Days of Creation Week

One thing that is worthy of mention in passing is the days of creation week. Several years ago it was thought to be nothing less than rank heresy to deny that these days were any other than literal twenty-four-hour days. Now, however, he who ventures to intimate that they were literal days is looked upon as an ignoramus. Very recently we saw the statement in one of the leading religious journals, that: "No one whose opinion is worth anything believes the old theory."

But for all this, we hold unflinchingly to the fact that the days were literal days. We believe that this is really a vital point, and not a mere matter of opinion. Once admit that these days were long periods, and the way is open for a disbelief in the entire Bible; for if this part of the Bible does not mean what it seems to mean, what warrant have we for thinking that any of the Bible means what it says?

Suppose the days to have been equal to one thousand of our years. Now it is evident that the seventh day of the creation week was of the same nature as the other six. If not, then the case is worse than ever, for there is nothing said by which we can infer that there was any difference. But on the seventh day God rested, and afterwards, because of His rest, He blessed it, and set it apart for man's observance.

"And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made." (Genesis 2:2-3)

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall you labor, and do all your work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord your God: in it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger that is within your gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it." (Exodus 20:8-11)

How absurd to command man to keep holy a day a thousand years long. It is sometimes urged in favor of the popular view, that: "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years." (2 Peter 3:8)

Exactly so; God is not obliged to have just so much time in which to perform His acts. He could create the world in one day as well as in a thousand years. One would be no more wonderful than the other, for the simple act of creation itself is something that man cannot comprehend. The psalmist says, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. ... For He spoke and it was [done]; He commanded and it stood fast." (Psalm 33:6,9)

This describes the work of creation. God did not speak and set forces in motion that after the lapse of ages would result in the formation of our world; but at His word everything came into existence perfect and good.

As has been said, the works of God are infinite. The mind of man can find ample scope in contemplating them. And it is proper, and pleasing to God, that we should think upon His works, for the psalmist says, "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. ... He has made His wonderful works to be remembered." (Psalm 111:2,4)

But if men were constantly engaged in their own affairs, their minds would not be set upon God and His work. In order, therefore, that man might have an uninterrupted period for meditation, God gave him the Sabbath.

The Sabbath

This institution was not an arbitrary affair, given simply for God's pleasure, that He might be remembered, but was given because man needed it. God can exist without us, but we cannot exist without God. The Sabbath was a necessity of man's nature, therefore God made it for him.

"And He said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." (Mark 2:27)

But it is not for man to use as he may see fit. It is his to use to the glory of God, and only by so doing we can he get the benefit from it. All the commandments are for man. It is absolutely necessary to his happiness that he should refrain from murder, theft, etc. It is in this sense that the Sabbath was made for man. Only by keeping all of God's commandments can men attain to the highest possible state of enjoyment both here and hereafter.

It is not in the province of these brief notes to say anything about the perpetuity of the Sabbath. The natural conclusion of any unbiased person would be that the Sabbath is of perpetual obligation. If it was necessary for man six thousand years ago, it is necessary now. If there was danger of forgetting God then, there is a thousand-fold more danger now.

And it is "the day of the Sabbath" that is to be kept. No other day but the seventh day can be the Sabbath, for upon no other day did God rest and pronounce a blessing, and no other day was sanctified.

It is not true, then, that all days are alike, and that any day will do for a memorial. All days are not alike; for one day in the week has been blessed and sanctified, made holy and set apart from the rest. It is a poor excuse for anyone to say that he can see no difference. God expects us to make a difference between the holy and the profane. Read what He says about it, and the consequences of not doing so, in "her priests have violated my law, and have profaned my holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they showed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain. And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus says the Lord God, when the Lord has not spoken. The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. Therefore have I poured out my indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, says the Lord God." (Ezekiel 22:26-31)

The Resurrection

Not only is the resurrection taught in the New Testament, but it was understood centuries before that book was written. When Abraham was called upon to sacrifice his only son, the one in whose name, it had been said, his seed should be called, there was no natural probability that the promise could ever be fulfilled.

But Abraham, like Paul, knew whom he had believed. The reason for his great faith is found in the fact that he knew that God possessed all power, and was able to raise Jesus from the dead. He had received his son by a miracle, and he knew that God was able to work another. The "friend of God" was not above believing in miracles.

Perhaps if there were more nowadays who held that relation to God a belief in miracles would be more general.--Signs of the Times, January 18, 1883--Notes on the Sabbath-school Lesson for January 27--Genesis 1; 2:1-3.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 3

In the Beginning

The brother who sent the following questions, says that there has been some dispute over them in the Sabbath-school:

1. What does "in the beginning" refer to in the first verse of the Bible? to the beginning of the first week or to some other time?

2. Was the earth created during the first week, or was it simply fitted up then, and created ages before?

3. Were the sun and moon created during the first week, as the Bible says, or were they created ages before?

1. In the Beginning

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Genesis 1:1)

In the beginning of what? Not of God's existence, because He is from eternity. Not the beginning of eternity, because eternity has no beginning. Then the text must mean that in the beginning of time God created the heaven and the earth. Time, then, begun with the first act of the creation of this earth.

2. The First Week

Now read the first verses of Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. ... And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day." (Genesis 1:1-5)

Here we have the work of the first day. What was it? It was the creation of the heaven and the earth, the creation of light, and the separating of the light from the darkness, thus forming day and night. The measurement of time by days and nights must, of course, have begun as soon as time began. So "in the beginning" refers to the first day of the first week of time, in which the heaven and the earth were created.

3. The Sun and Moon

"Were the sun and moon created during the first week, as the Bible says, or were they created ages before?"

We are quite inclined to believe that it was just as the Bible says. We know it is not fashionable nowadays to believe the Bible in all particulars, and those who do so are considered as old-fogyish; but we have never yet found any more reliable authority than the Bible.

We would advise our Sabbath-schools to stick to the Bible, and not to run after the speculations of "science, falsely so-called." (1 Timothy 6:20)--Signs of the Times, February 24, 1888--Genesis 1:1-5.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 4

Creation and Redemption

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Genesis 1:1)

In this brief sentence we have the whole of the truth of the Gospel summed up. He who reads aright, may derive a world of comfort from it.

In the first place, let us consider who it was that created the heaven and earth. "God created." But Christ is God, "the brightness of the Father's glory, and express image of His person." (Hebrews 1:3)

He himself said: "I and my Father are one." (John 10:30)

He it was who, representing the Father, created the heaven and the earth.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." (John 1:1-3)

And again we read of Christ, "By Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible,

whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him; And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." (Colossians 1:16-17)

The Father himself addresses the Son as God, and as Creator. The 1st chapter of Hebrews says that God has not at any time said to any of the angels: "You are my Son, this day have I begotten You; ... But unto the Son He says, Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom." (Hebrews 1:5,8)

And He has also said to the Son: "You, Lord, in the beginning have laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of your hands: ... by whom also He made the worlds." (Hebrews 1:10,2)

So we are well assured that when we read in the 1st chapter of Genesis, that: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," (Genesis 1:1)

--it refers to God in Christ. Creative power is the distinguishing mark of Divinity. The Spirit of the Lord through the prophet Jeremiah describes the vanity of idols, and then continues: "But the Lord is the true God, He is the living God, and an everlasting King: at His wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation. Thus shall you say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. He has made the earth

by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom, and has stretched out the heavens by His discretion." (Jeremiah 10:10-12)

The earth was made by His power, and established by His wisdom. But, "Christ [is] the power of God, and the wisdom of God." (1 Corinthians 1:24)

So here again we find Christ inseparably connected with creation as the Creator. Only as we acknowledge and worship Christ as the Creator, do we acknowledge His Divinity.

Christ is Redeemer by virtue of His power as Creator. We read that: "We have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins," (Colossians 1:14) because that, "By Him were all things created." (Colossians 1:16)

If He were not Creator, He could not be Redeemer. This means simply that redemptive power and creative power are the same. To redeem is to create. This is shown in the statement of the apostle that: "The Gospel ... is the power of God unto salvation," (Romans 1:16) which statement is immediately followed by another to the effect that the power of God is seen by means of the things that have been made.

"For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." (Romans 1:20)

When we consider the works of creation, and think of the power manifested in them, we are contemplating the power of redemption.

There has been a great deal of idle speculation as to which is greater: redemption or creation. Many have thought that redemption is a greater work than creation. Such speculation is idle, because only infinite power could perform either work, and infinite power cannot be measured by human minds.

But while we cannot measure the power, we can easily settle the question about which is greater, because the Scriptures give us the information. Neither is greater than the other, for both are the same. Redemption is creation. Redemption is the same power that was put forth in the beginning to create the world and all that is in it, now put forth to save man and the earth from the curse of sin. The Scriptures are very clear on this point. The psalmist prayed, "Create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit in me." (Psalm 2:10)

The apostle says that: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," (2 Corinthians 5:17) or a new creation. And again we read: "For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Compared with God, "Man is less than nothing, and vanity." (Isaiah 40:17)

In him "dwells no good thing." (Romans 7:18)

But the same power that in the beginning made the earth from nothing, can take everyone who is willing, and make of him that which is "to the praise of the glory of His grace." (Ephesians 1:6)--Present Truth, December 15, 1892--Genesis 1:1.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 5

In the Image of God

"And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him." (Genesis 1:26-27)

In this respect man was different from all the other creatures that God had made to live upon the earth. To him alone was given the exalted privilege of being the son of God, made in His own likeness, and partaking of His Divine nature, and of His wisdom and glory.

We read that he was made but "a little lower than the angels, and [was] crowned with glory and honor;" (Psalm 8:5) "[in] the image and glory of God;" (1 Corinthians 11:7) "after the similitude of God, [or "likeness of God" RV];" (James 3:9) and that he was "made upright," (Ecclesiastes 7:29) thus partaking also of the character of God. Oh, to have seen him then, as he came fresh from the hand of his Maker! His looks, his actions, his words, all proclaimed that he was the very image of God. No trouble then to tell to whom he belonged or who was his Father, for His image was plainly seen.

But look at the ravages of sin! What is man now? He is dwarfed and weak and filled with the seeds of pain and death. His glory is gone, his wisdom is corrupted, and his nature is sinful. He is no longer the free son of God, but is the bond-slave of Satan. The image of God is well-nigh effaced. He who was once a fit

companion for God and angels has sunk too low to be able to bear even the sight of their purity and glory.

"From the soul of his feet even unto his head there is no soundness in him; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores." (Isaiah 1:6)

But, Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us! (1 John 3:1)

He who has denied his sonship, and sold himself for nought, and allowed his Maker's image to be defaced until scarcely a trace of the likeness of God remains,--he may again become the son of God, and partake of His Divine nature and be stamped with His image!

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." (John 1:12)

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (2 Peter 1:4)

He may have his knowledge renewed "after the image of Him that created him" (Colossians 3:10), "and ... be transformed by the renewing of his mind" (Romans 12:2).

He may have a new heart given him; (Ezekiel 36:26) and a right spirit renewed within him; (Psalm 51:10) and be cleansed from all unrighteousness; (1 John 1:9) and clothed in the righteousness of God.

"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels." (Isaiah 61:10)

He may be created anew, (Ephesians 2:10; 4:24) and become an entirely new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17) now, all but his vile body, and when Jesus comes even that vile body will be changed and "fashioned like unto His glorious body." (Philippians 3:21)

Then he can again shine forth in the glory of the Father, (Matthew 13:43) and as the stars for ever and ever.

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." (Daniel 12:3)

How can this wondrous transformation be wrought? And how many can have a share in it?

"Whosoever will," (Revelation 22:17) is the answer sent forth from God, and "to as many as received Him [Jesus] to them He gave power to become the sons of God." (John 1:12)

Christ's life in human flesh and death upon the cross redeemed us and made it possible for Him to live in our hearts by faith.20 Jesus Christ is the perfect "image of the invisible God." (Colossians 1:15)

Therefore when we receive Jesus into our hearts we receive the image of God. The more we yield ourselves to Him, the deeper and deeper grows His image. The more we think upon Him and view His loveliness and glory, the more we "are changed into the same image from glory to glory." (2 Corinthians 3:18)

Is this glorious transformation taking place in you and me?--Present Truth, January 25, 1894--Genesis 1:26-27.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 6

A Story of True Love

It begins with the time when the foundations of the earth were laid, when God spoke, and it was, when "God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good;" (Genesis 1:31) and, "The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." (Job 38:7)

That was the wedding song, celebrating the union of God and His creation; for since the world to come will be only the restoration of the world that was, it could be said as truly then as ever that: "Your Maker is your husband; ... the God of the whole earth shall He be called." (Isaiah 54:5)

As the woman was taken from the man, to be his wife, it was but the continuation of God's order, that His spouse should be the entire new creation which proceeded from Him. The earth and its inhabitants were joined to the Lord.

"I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." (2 Corinthians 11:2-3)

This shows us plainly that Eve was created the bride of the Lord. But it was not Eve alone, but all men in her; for when God made man, He made him male and female, and called their name man. (Romans 1:20) In Adam all the generations of mankind were created.

The creation is the manifestation of the love of God. In it He gave His life; for it is His offspring; and His life is love.

"The Lord appeared of old unto me, saying, I have loved you with an everlasting love." (Jeremiah 31:3)

In everything that He has made, His everlasting power and Divinity--His own Being--are clearly seen. (Romans 1:20) Man in Eden, with the delight of God in him, and his land married, formed the perfect picture of the bliss of true love.

The Marriage Covenant Broken

But into this Eden the tempter came. By his subtlety he seduced man from his allegiance to his Lord. He did this by instilling doubts into their mind. Doubt is the death of love, and as soon as the first pair began to doubt God's love, the bond of union was broken. By his artful wiles, the tempter succeeded in beguiling them away from their Maker and rightful Husband, and inducing them to yield themselves wholly to him. Here was the first adultery, which has bred a host of evils. It "brought Death into the World, and all our woe, with loss of Eden."[1]

"You adulteresses! know you not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4:4)

"Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished brings forth death." (James 1:14-15)

That in the first sin man committed adultery, is evident from this: It was the attraction of the world that led them astray, for in the yielding to the temptation that was presented, we see the power of "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," (1 John 2:16) which constitute the world. The pride of life was appealed to in the words, "You shall be like God; and when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat." (Genesis 3:5-6)

Thus they became wholly joined to the world, which is adultery. The former perfect union between Adam and his Maker, wherein they were "one flesh,"--for the Word was made flesh in the beginning when man was created,--was completely broken, and a new union with Satan and sin was entered into. Then men began to walk "according to the course this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience." (Ephesians 2:2)

God's Faithful Love

Then began the long career of marital infidelity. But God did not break His covenant, which is everlasting, nor did He cast off the unfaithful bride.

"If we believe not, yet He abides faithful; He cannot deny himself." (2 Timothy 2:13)

The faithful one had left His house; but instead of saying, "Let her go; she went of her own free will, and can come back when she gets ready," or, worse still, "She has rejected me, and I will have nothing more to do with her," He came to seek the erring one, and to beg her to come back. There is nothing more humiliating than for a man to beg for reconciliation with one who has willfully turned away from him, despising his love, and publicly putting him to shame; yet that is just what the Lord did. Read the 3rd chapter of Jeremiah, and the whole of the book of Hosea. He says: "Return you backsliding Israel, says the Lord; and I will not cause my anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, says the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the Lord your God, and have scattered your ways to the strangers under every green tree, and you have not obeyed my voice, says the Lord. Turn, O backsliding children, says the Lord; for I am married unto you; and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion." (Jeremiah 3:12)

Dying Broken-Hearted for Love

But the love of God is not merely in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. He gave the utmost proof of His everlasting love that could possibly be given: "He gave himself for us." (Titus 2:14)

Life for Him was not worth living without the loved one, and so in His effort to reclaim her He humbled himself to death, even the death of the cross.

"He came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not." (John 1:11)

They would not believe in His protestation of love, and they laughed Him to scorn. He was made the sport of the drunkards, and they that sat in the gate mocked Him. The very worst indignity was heaped upon Him, and spitting in the face was added to blows. Even this did not shake "the love of Christ which passes knowledge," (Ephesians 3:19) but it broke His heart, and He died literally broken-hearted, for love of those who were all unworthy of love. In those blows and in that spitting we all had a part, for "All we like sheep have gone astray." (Isaiah 53:6)

When He was "despised and rejected of men," (Isaiah 53:3) and "hid not His face from shame and spitting," (Isaiah 50:6) we denied Him, and "hid as it were our faces from Him." (Isaiah 53:3)

And it was for us, for love of us, that "[He] endured the cross." (Hebrews 12:2)

Drawn by the Power of Love

And He is not dead in vain.

"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." (John 12:32)

"I have loved you with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn you." (Jeremiah 31:3)

That exhibition of love has broken down the enmity, the middle wall of partition that we had built between us and Him, and as we gaze upon His cross, we say, "Love so amazing, so Divine shall have my life, my soul, my all,"[2] and we give ourselves to Him, even as He gave himself to us.

The Marriage Forbidden

But behold! There is an obstacle in the way. Just as, ravished by His love, we say, "Lord, I am yours," forth steps "the old man," "the body of sin" and says, "I forbid the banns;[3] this marriage cannot take place."

And why not, pray?

"For the reason that this woman is my wife; I am married to her, and I can bring the law to witness to the fact."

"Know you not that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman which has a husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he lives... So then if, while her husband lives, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress." (Romans 7:1-3)

What a complicated case! The woman (we ourselves) is already an adulteress, because she is living in unlawful union with the lust of the flesh; and she cannot go back to her lawful husband as long as the old man of sin lives; because the law will not allow any such double union. What shall be done?

Death the Only Way of Escape

There is only one way out of the difficulty, and that method is so drastic that it looks like the end of everything. It is nothing else than death. The woman is a criminal, and worthy of death; for death is still the punishment of adultery. If we could only get rid of this seducer, whose presence is now hateful, since he is seen to be nothing but a death's head, we could be married to Him whom our soul loves.

Ah, but that is not so easy a matter. Marriage means the union of two, so that they become "one flesh," and just that intimate relation we sustain to the body of sin. Every fiber of our being is linked to

sin, and sin is our own lord and master. Our wound is incurable; the disease is in the blood. So close and vital is the union between us and the body of death that it cannot be broken except by death. We are inseparably joined together until death us do part. When the body of sin dies,--the unlawful husband,--we must die too.

Well, why not? We must die anyhow, for we are but united to a body of death. Its embraces have infected us with the poison of death, and the fruit of the union is death. The question is, "Shall we wait until we are forced to die, against our will? or shall we, like our rightful Lord, lay down our life voluntarily, that we may take it again?"

We choose the latter. Since we are united to death, and our life is nothing else but a living death, why not die at once? Let the separation from sin be effected, even though it wrench every nerve and fiber of our being, and drain our heart's blood. We choose rather to die with Him whose love is life, than to live with him whose love is hatred, sin, and death.

United in Death

"Know you not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death?" (Romans 6:3)

But death in Christ does not end all; for He laid down His life only to take it again.

"Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. ... Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him." (Romans 6:4-6,8)

The Seducer Destroyed

But what about the old man of sin? Ah, Christ is not the minister of sin. He loves us well enough to die for us, and since His love is life, it delivers us from death, and raises us up, that we may live with Him; but do not for a moment think that He who does this to win us back to our rightful union with Him, will do the same for our seducer, who must necessarily die when we do, since He is bound up with our flesh. No; we were crucified with Christ, and buried with Him, "that the body of sin might be destroyed." (Romans 6:6)

It will never again have a resurrection without our consent--never as long as we abide in Christ; "For he that is dead is freed from sin." (Romans 6:7)

Dead to the Law

"Wherefore, my brethren, you also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that you should be married to another, even to

Him that is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." (Romans 7:4)

Mind, it does not say that the law is dead; far from it; it is the law that has put us to death as criminals.

"I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." (Galatians 2:19)

A dead law could not put anybody to death. It was the law that gave me the knowledge of my sinful condition, "for by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Romans 3:20)

By I knew that I was living in adultery, and therefore doomed to death. I consented unto the law, that it is good, and delivered myself up, to receive the death penalty. But I died with Christ, and not alone, so that I have a resurrection in Him.

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)

The person who committed the sin is dead, and another has taken his place, and therefore I am "delivered from the law," (Romans 7:6) inasmuch as I am dead to that wherein I was held, namely, sin. The same law which before condemned me as an adulteress, now witnesses to my lawful union with Christ. It reckons me, the sinner,

a dead man; and as long as I reckon myself likewise to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God, and yield myself unto God, as one that is alive from the dead, it will not condemn me, for: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." (Romans 8:1-2)

Alive Unto God

Being now married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, we "bring forth fruit unto God." (Romans 7:4)

The fruit is unto holiness, and "the end everlasting life." (Romans 5:22)

Now we are in harmony with God, and so in harmony with all His perfect creation. His law--His life--fills us, and directs our movements. We are one with Him, and He is the head of the body. The love that drew us holds us. The cords of love drew us to Him, and we are bound to Him by the ties that bound Him to the cross. His goodness brought us to repentance, and the contemplation of it keeps us faithful.

Yea, we are kept by His faith.

"The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)

Think of it!

"If we believe not, He abides faithful: He cannot deny himself." (2 Timothy 2:13)

He was faithful in all our wandering from Him.

"In Him is no sin." (1 John 3:5)

Now being one with Him, we live not by anything that pertains to ourselves, but by Him.

"Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who has reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ." (2 Corinthians 5:17-18)

So we live by His faith, and therefore as long as we abide in Him, we are as secure from sin as He himself.

The New Creation

The new creation has begun, even while we are in this tabernacle, for "the life of Jesus is made manifest in our mortal flesh." (2 Corinthians 4:11)

"They that are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." (Romans 8:8-9)

Since "all things are become new," we experience the joy, the blessedness, and the power of the world to come. The Spirit is the first-fruits of our inheritance. We are thenceforth to live (not merely is it our duty so to live, but the grace and strength thereto are given to us) as we shall continue to live in the new earth.

The only difference between the condition now and in the future world is this: Then we shall live perfect lives, free from sin, having no temptations, no sinful flesh, nothing to contend with; whereas now we live the selfsame life in spite of all these difficulties. We live in the flesh as though the flesh were dead and buried, and we had already received the resurrection body. This glorious freedom is possible only by our death with Him who is the resurrection and the life. But it is possible: "He that says he abides in Him, ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." (1 John 2:6)

Do you say that this is a hard saying? Oh say not so; it is a glorious saying. It is the good and joyful news of salvation. It is the proclamation of emancipation from the bondage of corruption, and the deliverance into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. How can it be hard to live that life of righteousness, when it is no more I, but Christ, that lives in me? What marvelous love, and what a transforming power it has! It changes us into the Divine image. And

it is "stronger than death," (Song 8:6) since it has conquered death. Our union with Christ was effected in death. It was at the worst state that sin and Satan can reduce men to, that we were united to Him in love; therefore: "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 8:38-39)

Have you this persuasion?--Present Truth, September 20, 1900--Genesis 1:31.

E.J. Waggoner

Notes:

1. John Milton, Paradise Lost, Book 1.
2. Isaac Watts, Hymn: When I Survey the Wondrous Cross, 1707.
3. Banns: a proclamation by an authority, or announcement in church, of a proposed marriage.

Chapter 7

Creation and the Sabbath

1. Who was the direct agent in the creation of the earth?

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made." (John 1:1,3)

2. State briefly what was done on each of the first four days.

3. What was made on the fifth day?

"And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that has life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moves, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day." (Genesis 1:20-23)

4. What upon the sixth day?

"And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creeps upon the earth after his

kind: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." (Genesis 1:25-27)

5. How did God regard His work when it was done?

"And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day." (Genesis 1:31)

6. How did He spend the seventh day?

"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made." (Genesis 2:1-2)

7. After He had rested on the seventh day, what did He do?

"And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made." (Genesis 2:3)

8. What is the meaning of "sanctify"?

"To set apart for a holy or religious use." (Webster)

9. What is the name of the seventh day?

"But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger that is within your gates." (Exodus 20:10)

10. For whom was the Sabbath made?

"And He said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." (Mark 2:27)

11. What is necessarily implied in the statement that after God had rested upon the seventh day He sanctified or set it apart?

That He told man what He had done, and commanded him to keep it holy.

12. Give two instances of the use of the word "sanctify," which confirm this.

"And you shall set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that you go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever touches the mount shall be surely put to death: ... And Moses said unto the Lord, The people cannot come up

to mount Sinai: for You charged us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it." (Exodus 19:12,23)

"And they sanctified Kedesh in Galilee in mount Naphtali, and Shechem in mount Ephraim, and Kirjath-arba, which is Hebron, in the mountain of Judah." (Joshua 20:7, margin)

13. What is the great object of the Sabbath?

"Moreover also I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctified them." (Ezekiel 20:12)

14. How does the Sabbath serve as a "sign" to make us know the true God?

"Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever does any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. ... It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed." (Exodus 31:15,17)

15. What is God's distinguishing characteristic?

"For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols; but the Lord made the heavens." (Psalm 96:4-5)

"But the Lord is the true God, He is the living God, and an everlasting king: at His wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation. Thus shall you say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. He has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom, and has stretched out the heavens by His discretion." (Jeremiah 10:10-12)

16. What is the difference between God and men?

"Know you that the Lord He is God; it is He that has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture." (Psalm 100:3)

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:9)

"Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, He takes up the isles as a very little thing. ... All nations before Him are as nothing; and they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity." (Isaiah 40:15,17)

17. Then what was the Sabbath designed to do for men?

To be a continual reminder of God's greatness, and of their dependence upon Him, and of their duty to serve Him with humility.

18. If Christ created the heavens and the earth, who must have made the Sabbath?

Christ, for the same one that worked six days, rested on the seventh.

19. Then what relation does He sustain to it?

"Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." (Mark 2:28)

20. Then in keeping the Sabbath, whom do we honor?

21. And when the Sabbath is not kept, who is dishonored?--Signs of the Times, January 6, 1888--Lesson 2 - Sabbath, January 14--Genesis 1:20-31; 2:1-3.

E.J. Waggoner[1]

Notes:

1. PP Editor's note: This article was not included in the Pioneer Writings, but Waggoner wrote the Lessons in this series, so it is most likely that this one was also written by him.

Chapter 8

God the Creator of All Things

It is said that at a dinner party at which Macaulay attended, a lady turned to him, and said: "I have wished so much for a long time to know the history of the world, and now that we have a few minutes while they are bringing on the fish, I wish you would tell it to me."

We have a parallel to this story in the range suggested for a single Sunday-school lesson; for to study the creation of the heavens and the earth, and all things in them, together with the Sabbath which crowned the work, and God the Creator of all, is a far greater work than that assigned to Macaulay. But a few suggestive thoughts and texts may open the way for each reader to study further to advantage.

The Beginning

We begin with the beginning.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Genesis 1:1)

How did He create them?

"By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. ... For He spoke, and it was; He commanded, and it stood fast." (Psalm 33:6,9)

Our translators have inserted in verse 6 the word "done," in Italic, which we have omitted, as the Hebrew text gives no hint of any such word. The idea is not that after God spoke, something was done, but that as soon as He spoke everything was in existence.

Now concerning the Word of God, by which all things were made, read these familiar words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not one thing made." (John 1:1-3)

This refers to Christ, for "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

Not only did Christ begin the work of creation, but He himself is the Beginning. Read the following texts:

"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 [that is, "hold together"]. And He is the Head of

the body, the church; who is the Beginning." (Colossians 1:16-18 [RV])

"These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God." (Revelation 3:14)

He is "the Firstborn of all creation." (Colossians 1:15)

When He was, everything was; although everything did not at once appear.

"In Him was life," (John 1:4) and from His own infinite, eternal life everything came. All the matter of the universe is but the manifestation of His existence. Thus we read that the mountains were "brought forth," (Psalm 90:2) literally, born of the everlasting God. This is far from saying that matter is God, or any part of God. The child is brought forth by its mother, yet it is not its mother. We can never understand the mystery of creation, any more than we can understand the mystery of God's existence; but we know that ever since the creation of the world, the invisible things of God, even His everlasting power and Divinity, are revealed in the things that He has made. Everything that He has made bears the impress of His being.

Jesus Christ is "the power of God, and the wisdom of God." (1 Corinthians 1:24)

Of God we read that "He has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom." (Jeremiah 10:12)

Now hear what Wisdom says: "The Lord possessed me as the beginning of His way, before His works of old." (Proverbs 8:32, RV, margin)

In the Hebrew there is no suggestion of such a word as the "in" of the Common Version, or the "as" of the Revision; so it should read:

"The Lord possessed me, the beginning of His way."

Christ, the wisdom and the power of God, is the Beginning of all things. In Him all things are, and hold together.

Let It Be

"By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the Word of God, so that what is seen has not been made of things which do appear." (Hebrews 11:3, RV)

Christ is the Word, the expression of the Father's thought. All things are in Him, so that when He speaks, the word that goes forth from His lips contains the things named. Notice how easily He brought forth the heavens and the earth. At each successive step He merely said, "Let it be," and immediately it was. After each command, we read, "And it was so." The word rendered "so" has the

idea of stability, steadfastness--to establish, to constitute, to confirm. Thus "He commanded, and it stood fast." (Psalm 33:9)

"Say among the nations, The Lord reigns; the world also is established that it cannot be moved." (Psalm 96:10, RV)

Whatever God says is so. His saying so makes it so, because it was already in His word.

Remember now that creation is the assurance and pledge of redemption. God has a desire to the work of His hands, and has not made it to be destroyed.

"For thus says the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; He has established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited." (Isaiah 45:18)

"Your people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified." (Isaiah 60:21)

"Whatsoever God does, it shall be for ever; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it; and God does it, that men should fear before Him." (Ecclesiastes 3:14)

Therefore although the earth is defiled and corrupted, and men are depraved and lost, the fact that God made the earth, and made man to inhabit it, is proof that it, with man, will be redeemed and

restored. Nay, more, it is proof that the work of redemption has been done; for "we which have believed do enter into rest,...[because] the works were finished from the foundation of the world." (Hebrews 4:3)

"Wherefore if any man is in Christ, there is a new creation." (2 Corinthians 5:17, RV, margin)

In Christ, "who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation," (Colossians 1:15, RV) we have redemption through His blood, because "in Him were all things created." (Colossians 1:16, RV)

Let us then see what practical help there is for us in the repetition of the words, "And God said, Let it be," "and it was so," in the story of the creation. As we read the following texts we should remember that we may make them a reality to us by responding from the heart, "Amen," that is, "Let it be so," or "It is so." If we do this, we have creation repeated in us.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 2:5)

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice." (Ephesians 4:31)

"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts... Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom." (Colossians 3:15-16)

And finally: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; And you yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding." (Luke 12:35-36)

And this: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

These last texts are most closely allied to our lesson, for the first thing mentioned in creation is light.

"God said, Let there be light: and there was light." (Genesis 1:3)

Now: "It is God, who said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:6, RV)

The command to us is: "Arise, shine; for your light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon you, and His glory shall be seen upon you." (Isaiah 60:1-2)

Is it not glorious to know that simple, implicit faith in the Scripture record of creation, and the recognition of the fact that God is still the same Creator, will drive away all the darkness of sin, and make us light in the Lord?

The All-Pervading, All-Powerful Spirit

"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." (Genesis 1:2)

The word rendered "moved" is the same that is used with reference to a bird fluttering over her nest (Deuteronomy 32:11) or brooding over her eggs or young. Here we have the Spirit represented as the source of all the power that brings order out of chaos, and gives every particle of matter its right relation to every other particle throughout the universe. Milton recognized this, when, in beginning the story of Paradise Lost, he wrote:

> And chiefly Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
> Before all temples th' upright heart, and pure,
> Instruct me, for Thou know'st; Thou from the first
> Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread,
> Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast Abyss,
> And mad'st it pregnant.

There is a power the existence of which scientists recognize, yet which to them is a mystery. Following the ancient heathen philosophers, they have declared that there are various "forces" inherent in matter, and have named them "cohesion," "gravitation," etc., not heeding the obvious fact that what they were naming was not the power itself, but the working of the power, that which the

power accomplished. Thus: Cohesion is not the name of a force, but the result of the application of a force.

The word "cohesion" means holding together; and to say that atoms are held together by cohesion is absurd, since it is but another way of saying that matter holds together by holding together! There is such a thing as cohesion, for matter certainly coheres, or holds together, but the statement of that fact is far from telling us what holds it together. Scientists recognize that there is a lack in their philosophy, but they are slow to accept that which will supply the lack.

In the third volume of Nature's Miracles, Prof. Elisha Gray, in speaking of the mystery of electricity, says: I cannot but think that there is yet a simple statement to be made of Energy in its relation to Matter, that will establish a closer relationship between the different branches of physical science. And this, most likely, will be brought about by a better understanding of the nature of the interstellar substance called Ether, and its relation to all forms and conditions of sensible matter.

This substance called Ether exists not merely in the interstellar spaces, but is everywhere. It pervades all matter. It is generally accepted as a truth that light is conveyed to us by wavelike motions in this unknown substance, and light pervades all things. The so-called X-rays, that is, the unknown rays of light, prove to us that there is light even in things previously supposed to be perfectly opaque, since by them men can now see through a board; and in

view of this no man dare say that there are not rays of light that penetrate stones and all metals. God's question to Job: "Where is the way where light dwells?" (Job 38:19) still remains unanswered. God only knows, for: "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." (1 John 1:5)

In Light Visible and Invisible, Prof. Silvanus C. Thompson, after showing that the waves of light are not waves of the air, says:

They are waves of another medium which, so far as we know, exists all through space, and which we know, using Sir Isaac Newton's term, the ether. If you ask me what the ether is made of, let me frankly say, I do not know. ... They are waves of a medium which, though millions of times less dense than water or air, has yet a property that resists being torn or sheared asunder; exceeding the resistance to shear even of hard-tempered steel.

Now if we are but simple enough to believe that the God who created all things has in His Book given us an exact statement of the facts of creation, we may know this mystery that puzzles the wise men of the world. Read again (Genesis 1:2), and with it this scripture: "Whither shall I go from your Spirit? or whither shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend up into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell [literally, hole, pit, the lowest part of the earth], behold, You are there." (Psalm 139:7-8)

"God has spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongs unto God." (Psalm 62:11)

That is, power is the attribute of God.

"There is no power but of God." (Romans 13:1)

And the Spirit of God is the wielder of this power.

"Not by might, nor by power [earthly might or power], but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts." (Zechariah 4:6)

Only One Force

There are not, therefore, many forces in the universe, but only one force,--the power of the Spirit of God, who is, literally "above all, and through all, and in all." (Ephesians 4:6)

It is the Spirit of God in Christ, that holds all things together. There are not different forces, but different manifestations of one force. The "simple statement" of Energy, for which Professor Gray wished, has already been made. The Word of God is Spirit and life; "[It] is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." (Hebrews 4:12-13, RV)

The word "active" in this text is energès, which we have Anglicized as "energy." So the Energy which philosophers recognize as in all matter, but of the source of which so many of them are willingly ignorant, is the one Spirit of God.

Now we can understand why it is that the enemy of all unrighteousness has so persistently tried to induce men to reject the Scripture narrative of creation. He does not wish them to recognize the power that sanctifies and saves. For it is a fact that the Gospel is in creation.

"We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." (2 Thessalonians 2:13)

The power that is seen in all creation is the power that sanctifies. If men would only believe that which is,--would believe things as they are,--that which the earth itself reveals, they would be saved.

"Truth springs out of the earth," (Psalm 85:11, RV) because "the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." (Psalm 33:5)

God the Present Creator

In the face of all these truths that we have been reading from the Word, if we are not careful we shall still fall into or remain in a fatal

error. So far has Satan succeeded in blinding men's minds that, even though they recognize the fact that God did create all things in the beginning, they do not recognize Him as still the Creator. They say that the operations of "nature" are carried on by certain "laws," as though God had retired from business, leaving somebody or something else to carry it on. They forget that the One who created all things is still "upholding all things by the Word of His power." (Hebrews 1:3)

Let us for a moment consider the idea that things are regulated by laws, and that God himself does not work personally in all things. Is it not clear that whatever it is that works in matter must be exercising the power of God, and that therefore if it is not God himself, it must be somebody or something else equal to Him? But there is but one God, and He has not deified anything or anybody else. There is indeed a law directing and controlling all things, but it is the life of God. God's life is the law of the universe.

Bear in mind that no law that is "enacted" can enforce itself. The only law that can execute its own decrees is "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:2)

Men speak of "the law of plant life," as though the plant studied a book of law, in order to learn how it should grow. It does grow according to a certain law, but that law is the life of God in it. The commandment, "you shall not have any other gods before me," (Exodus 20:3) forbids our deifying matter or law, and shuts us up to the recognition of God himself as personally present by His Spirit,

upholding, directing, and controlling the universe and every atom in it. He is still the Beginning. The same power that in the beginning brought all things into being still works in them to keep them in existence. It is only the personal working of the Spirit of God that keeps the earth from dissolving into chaos, as at the first.

All this is "for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." (Romans 15:4)

It lets us know that the power that is exerted throughout the universe is the power that works in us to will and to do the good pleasure of God. (Philippians 2:13)

"[He] is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us." (Ephesians 3:20)

We have but to recognize God as the Creator of all things, as the ever-living, ever-working God, the One who wills our sanctification by the same Spirit that brooded over the face of the waters in the beginning, and to accept that will as ours, to be perfectly saved from sin. Just think! The God whose "exceeding great and precious promises" are given to make me a partaker of the Divine nature, and to save man from the corruption that is in the world through lust, (2 Peter 1:4) is the God whose Word brought the worlds into being. Nothing is hard for Him. He who can create a world in an instant of time, can surely save me to the uttermost. (Hebrews 7:25)

The Memorial of Creation and Redemption

"The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. His work is honorable and glorious; and His righteousness endures for ever. He has made His wonderful works to be remembered." (Psalm 111:2-4)

Literally: "He has made a memorial for His wonderful works."

By what means has God made His wonderful works to be remembered? By the Sabbath day; for when God had finished the heavens and the earth, and all their host, "He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made." (Genesis 2:2-3)

The Sabbath was given to man, to be a continual reminder of God's wonderful works. Therefore He says: "I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord which sanctify them." (Ezekiel 20:12)

It is so self-evident that the seventh day of the week, commonly called Saturday, is the Sabbath here spoken of, that we shall not here take time to dwell upon that.

Sabbath means rest; it is God's rest that we are to enter into; and the seventh day is the Sabbath--the rest--of the Lord your God. Nothing in time or eternity can ever change the fact that God created

the heavens and the earth in six days, and rested on the seventh day; and therefore the Sabbath of the Lord can never be changed. Men may make another sabbath for themselves, as they have done; but this is but a part of the working whereby they have made other gods for themselves. Nevertheless there is really only one God, and only one Sabbath.

This seventh-day Sabbath is the sign and seal of redemption. Thus: It is the memorial of creation, but not of creation as it now appears. God did not rest from His labors until "[He] saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good." (Genesis 1:31)

The Sabbath commemorates a perfect, new creation.

The Sabbath and the New Man

Now we have only to remember that that new creation which God surveyed and pronounced very good, included man. There was a new heaven and a new earth, and a new man. The Sabbath, therefore, is the sign that a perfect, new man has been created; and so it is the sign and seal of a new man in Christ; for "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

The Gospel restores man in his original perfection, and the Sabbath is the assurance that God who made a perfect man in the beginning can still do it.

"We which have believed do enter into rest." (Hebrews 4:3)

The rest here referred to is God's rest, as the verse itself shows, and that is the Sabbath, the seventh day. See the commandment, and also "[God] spoke in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all His works." (Hebrews 4:4)

"And in this place again, They shall not enter into my rest." (Hebrews 4:5, RV)

The Israelites that came out of Egypt "could not enter in because of unbelief." (Hebrews 3:19)

Belief justifies, makes righteous. So we are not required to keep the Sabbath in order to become righteous, but Sabbath-keeping is the natural, inevitable result of perfect, complete redemption--the finished work of God. When we accept God as the Creator of all things, as our Creator, then we rest in His finished work, the work which was finished from the foundation of the world; and the sign that we do thus accept Him is the keeping of His rest--the seventh day.--Present Truth, June 27, 1901--International Sunday-school Lesson for July 7--Genesis 1, 2:1-3.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 9

God's Garden

In the beginning, when the work of creation had been finished, "The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food." (Genesis 2:8-9)

The Lord still has a garden upon the earth, though Eden has long since been removed. Not the trees nor the shrubs nor the flowers were the most essential things in the garden, but the man and woman whom He created. The purpose of God was centered in these, and not in the beautiful things which surrounded them.

That purpose He has been steadily carrying out since time began. He has had a spiritual garden, in which Adam and Eve were the first plants, and which has spread out over the whole world, as the physical garden which was removed was doubtless designed to do. In this garden grow both wheat and tares; for the devil has sowed tares which have sprung up and developed more abundantly than the wheat. But the Saviour has said, "Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted, shall be rooted up." (Matthew 15:13)

And when that rooting up has taken place, the physical garden will be restored and cover the whole earth, and thus the full purpose of God will be carried out. But while in this present state the tares

grow largely in excess of the wheat, there is still abundant opportunity for the latter to attain a luxurious growth. It is "rooted and grounded in love," (Ephesians 3:17) and so has an abundance of the richest soil; for the Psalmist says, "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord," (Psalm 33:5) and, "the earth, O Lord, is full of your mercy." (Psalm 119:64)

And he also testifies that: "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." (Psalm 92:12)

"[He is] like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season; his leaf shall not wither, and whatsoever he does shall prosper." (Psalm 1:3)

This garden is also full of most beautiful flowers, which are the promises of God. Not all the tares that are growing around us can hide these from our view, or shut us out from their fragrance. God has poured out His Spirit upon all flesh, and its work is: "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified." (Isaiah 61:3)

If we will but let the Lord plant us in His garden, we shall find this world still a beautiful place in which to live.--Present Truth, October 4, 1894--Genesis 2:8-9.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 10

The Fall of Man

1. In what condition was the whole creation when it came from the hand of God? "And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day." (Genesis 1:31)

2. Did this include man also? "Lo, this only have I found, that God has made man upright." (Ecclesiastes 7:29)

3. Did man retain his uprightness? "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Romans 5:12)

4. What prohibition had God laid upon the pair in the garden of Eden? "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it; for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die." (Genesis 2:17)

5. Who first partook of this forbidden fruit? "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." (Genesis 3:6)

6. Was Adam deceived as to the consequences of the act? "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." (1 Timothy 2:14)

7. How was Eve deceived? "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." (2 Corinthians 11:3)

8. Who was the serpent? "And He laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years." (Revelation 20:2)

9. How did he begin his work? "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, has God said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Genesis 3:1)

10. When Eve repeated the prohibition, what did the serpent reply? "And the serpent said unto the woman, You shall not surely die." (Genesis 3:4)

11. What did he say that eating from the tree would do for them? "For God knows that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:5)

12. In so saying, what imputation did he cast upon God?

13. In telling them that by eating the forbidden fruit they should be like God, what was Satan instilling into their minds? Pride.

14. What was the cause of Satan's fall? "How are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how are you cut down to the ground, which did weaken the nations! For you have said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High." (Isaiah 14:12-14)

15. What always follows pride? "When pride comes, then comes shame; but with the lowly is wisdom." (Proverbs 11:2)

"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." (Proverbs 16:18)

16. What was it that brought the heathen nations into their deplorable condition? "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things." (Romans 1:22-23)

17. What was the result of Adam's transgression? "And unto Adam He said, Because you have hearkened unto the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree, of which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat of it: cursed is the ground for your sake; in sorrow shall you eat of it all the days of your life; Thorns also and thistles

shall it bring forth to you; and you shall eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread, till you return unto the ground; for out of it were you taken: for dust you are, and unto dust you shall return. (Genesis 3:17-19)

18. Was he allowed to remain in the garden? "Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." (Genesis 3:23-24)

19. How extensive were the consequences of his fall? "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men." (Romans 5:12)

20. Did death pass upon all men regardless of their character, just because Adam sinned? "For that all have sinned." (Romans 5:12)

21. What kind of nature do all men inherit? "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." (Mark 7:21-23)

22. By what means may we get rid of this evil nature, and have a better one? "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these you might be partakers of the

divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (2 Peter 1:4)

"For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith." (1 John 5:4)

Notes:

The mean cunning of the serpent may be seen in the way that Satan approached Eve. From the fact that while they were talking Eve took of the forbidden fruit, and ate, indicates that when the conversation began they were near the tree. Said the serpent, "Is it so, that God has said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Genesis 3:1)

"Is it possible that God would make so arbitrary and unjust a command?"

The object of this speech can be seen at once. It was threefold, namely:

1. To cause her to doubt the goodness of God;

2. To raise himself in her estimation to the same extent that he lowered God; and

3. To make her feel that she was being deprived of her "rights."

Pride and discontent were aroused, which prepared the way for open rebellion.

"And the serpent said unto the woman, You shall not surely die; for God knows that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:4)

Here was a square issue between Satan and God, and Eve had been worked into such a condition of doubt and discontent that she readily sided with Satan. This was the first sermon on the natural immortality of the soul of man. Notice that it was this teaching that caused the fall; consequently the teaching that man is by nature immortal, is responsible for all the evil that has ever come to mankind.

"For God knows," etc. Here again Satan charged God with deliberately withholding a good thing from Adam and Eve, so that He might keep them in a position inferior to that which their natural talents entitled them to. What was that position?

"For God knows that in the day you eat thereof, ... you shall be like God." (Genesis 3:5)

This is just what Satan said, and a literal translation of the Hebrews. Said Satan, "You might as well be like God; He knows this, and has placed this prohibition upon you, so that He may keep

you down. Now will you consent to be thus imposed upon? Don't do it; assert your rights and be free."

Who is there that doesn't recognize this kind of talk? We see that Satan caused Eve to fall, by instilling into her mind the same ideas that caused his fall. (See Isaiah 14:12-14) We see, also, whence Spiritualism comes, which claims that:

1. What the Bible calls evil is a necessity;

2. Men cannot die, no matter what they do; and

3. Each individual is the judge of his own acts, and is therefore equal to God.

But read the fate of those who call evil good: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! Therefore as the fire devours the stubble, and the flame consumes the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel." (Isaiah 5:20-24)

Beware of the flatterer. When a man begins to sympathize with you, to tell you how you are being "kept down" and abused, and what high positions you might occupy if it were not for the grasping selfishness of some in authority, then make up your mind at once that Satan is talking to you through him. Don't listen to him. Says Paul: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." (2 Corinthians 11:3)

There is a vast difference between honest praise and flattery. It is right and just to encourage people by letting them know that their good work is appreciated. But flattery is always lying. It is Satanic in its origin. Look up and read carefully what the Bible has to say of the flatterer.

"A man that flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet." (Proverbs 29:5)

See also: "Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man. For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my maker would soon take me away." (Job 32:21-22)

"The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaks proud things." (Psalm 12:3)

"He that goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flatters with his lips." (Proverbs 20:19)

"A lying tongue hates those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth works ruin." (Proverbs 26:28)

Solomon's words in (Proverbs 20:19) indicate that a tale-bearer is likely to be a flatterer. Satan's question to Eve, "Is it so that God has said..." carries with it the air of virtuous indignation. The idea designed to be conveyed was, "I would never do such a thing; just trust me, and you shall have liberty."

How aptly the apostle Peter describes the people who work in this Satanic manner: "For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." (2 Peter 2:18-19)

The man who comes with some false story about somebody else, trying to cast reflections upon him, does so only to conceal his own faults. The gist of all his talk is this: "You and I wouldn't do such things, would we?"

He is seeking to build himself up, and by flattering your vanity, to take advantage of you. Look out for such; and, above all, "be not like unto them." (Matthew 6:8)--Signs of the Times, January 13, 1888--Lesson 3 - Sabbath, January 21--Genesis 3.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 11

The Death of Adam

We find on our table a question concerning the death of Adam. The writer quotes God's words, "In the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die," (Genesis 2:17) and thinks there is some plausibility to the objection that they were not fulfilled, and that the devil told the truth when he said, "You shall not surely die." (Genesis 3:4)

But the fact is, Adam did die, for the record says that: "All the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died." (Genesis 5:5)

This therefore disposes of the supposition that Satan told the truth. Now how about the words of the Lord? Adam did not die that day, but lived nine hundred and thirty years. Our answer is found in the words of Christ: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

To say that God ought to have put Adam to death that very day, is equivalent to saying that God had no right to provide a plan of salvation for fallen man. All must admit that God does not deny himself by offering salvation to sinners. God is "just, [at the same time that He is] the justifier of him that believes in Jesus." (Romans 3:26)

Although God had announced a specific penalty for transgression, He certainly could with perfect justice remit that penalty in the case of anyone who should accept the offering which He freely provided, and which was outside the demands of the law.

Moreover, if God provided such a plan, it must necessarily, in order that strict and equal justice should be done, include all men, not excepting Adam.

And, still further, since such a plan was provided, the execution of the penalty must necessarily be stayed, in order to give man an opportunity to accept the offered salvation, if he wished; for it would be but mockery to devise such a plan and still execute the penalty without giving the fallen one any chance to accept it.

Adam had a second probation, and if, as we believe, he repented of his sin and exercised faith in Christ, he will receive eternal life when Christ comes to confer immortality; but since he was only dust, and was removed from the source of life, he necessarily, in the course of time, returned to the dust, just as God said he should. And all of his posterity being likewise of the earth earthy, (1 Corinthians 15:47) have also returned to earth. Men die now simply because they are born mortal; Adam died as the direct consequence of his sin.

The penalty, however, whose execution was stayed, still hangs over the fallen race, and when Christ shall cease to interpose in man's behalf, it will fall upon all who have not hidden in Him. Then

the folly of those whose hearts are fully set in them to do evil, because sentence is not executed speedily, will be manifested, and it will be seen that every word of God is sure.

"The Lord...is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9)

Happy are those who believe that: "The long-suffering of our God is salvation," (2 Peter 3:15) and who accept that salvation.--Signs of the Times, June 8, 1888--Genesis 2:17, 3:4, 5:5.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 12

Beginning of Sin and Redemption

There was a time when the man who dared say openly that he did not believe the whole Bible was called an infidel; in these days it is a rare thing to find a minister of the Gospel who dares say that he believes the Bible account of the creation and the fall of man.

Even the most "orthodox," men who vigorously combat the "higher criticism," do not hesitate to declare the Mosaic record "a beautiful allegory." So far have those who are set to be leaders in the church departed from the old paths, that if a man professes to believe even a little of the Bible he is not classed among the infidels.

But a man does not have to tell falsehoods continually in order to be a liar; if he occasionally lies, so that you are not always sure whether he is telling the truth or not, he cannot be considered a truthful man. In like manner, if certain portions of the Bible are untrustworthy, it could no more stand as "the Scripture of truth." (Daniel 10:21)

Therefore whoever impeaches any of its testimony brings a charge against the whole of it; and he who disbelieves a portion of it is most certainly an infidel, no matter what his profession.

The Beginning of the Word Is True

The first three chapters of Genesis are the basis upon which the entire Bible is built. With that portion torn away, there would be no foundation for the Gospel,--no proof that the Gospel is needed, no evidence of its power to save. If the first chapters of Genesis were an allegory, all the rest of the Bible would be only a myth.

All the Scripture writers accepted the first part of the Bible as the literal Word of God. Their references to it show this. The Apostle Paul speaks thus of the event which forms our lesson this week: "I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity which is in Christ." (2 Corinthians 11:3)

The Gospel which Paul preached was based upon the story of the fall and the redemption then made known; therefore that account is as true as the writings of the Apostle Paul.

"Your Word is true from the beginning." (Psalm 119:160)

An exact word-for-word rendering of the Hebrew of that verse, however, is this: "The beginning of your Word is truth."

Thus the Holy Spirit has anticipated the attacks that have been made on the beginning of the Bible, and has linked all together. Of some things it is said: "It all stands or falls together."

But of the Bible we say, "It all stands together."

For "the foundation of God stands sure." (2 Timothy 2:19)

"Every one of your righteous judgments endures for ever." (Psalm 119:160)

The Subtlety of Satan

"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast in the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, Yea, has God said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Genesis 3:1)

The extreme subtlety of "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan" is not in this text made as apparent by our version as it might be. The words of the serpent contain a sneer, a covert insinuation against the justice of God, which was made all the more effective in that the thought that God had dealt arbitrarily was suggested to Eve by a question which feigned a doubt that it was possible that He had done so monstrous a thing. It is difficult to translate into English all that, is conveyed by the Hebrew word here rendered "Yes." It is a sniff of scorn or incredulity.

Gesenius, in his Hebrew Lexicon, cites this very verse, in illustrating the meaning of the word, and renders the passage thus: "Is it even so, that God has said, You shall not eat?" etc.

Read this with that forcible breathing through the nose,--humph,--which indicates surprise, incredulity, or contempt, or all combined, and you will see how subtly doubt of God was insinuated into the mind of Eve.

Lifted Up

"Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith." (Habakkuk 2:4)

The beginning of sin was the lifting up of self. Before the foundation of the world, Lucifer, the light-bearer in heaven, who, because of his pride, fell so low as to become only a crawling serpent, said in his heart: "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north [literally, "the uttermost north"]; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High." (Isaiah 14:13)

Now it is perfectly right to be like the Lord, if one sets about it in the right way; for He says: "Be you holy, for I am holy." (1 Peter 1:16)

And Christ says: "Be you therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:48)

But perfection is not found in self-exaltation. Although God dwells in "the high and holy place," (Isaiah 57:15) and is himself

"the lofty One," (Isaiah 57:15) He dwells "with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." (Isaiah 57:15)

Christ, who is the revelation of God, says: "I am meek and lowly in heart." (Matthew 11:29)

It is evident, therefore, that whoever thinks to become like God by lifting himself up, deceives himself, and is drawing himself away from God.

"He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, love mercy, and to humble yourself to walk with God?" (Micah 6:8, margin)

"The day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low." (Isaiah 2:12)

It was by instilling his spirit--the same spirit that caused his fall from heaven--into man, that Satan compassed his fall. When Eve, in reply to the serpent's insinuation, repeated the prohibition against eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and the penalty for disobedience, the Deceiver said: "You shall not surely die; For God knows that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as God, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:4-5, RV)

It was not with an indefinite promise of being "like gods," that the serpent seduced Eve, but with the assurance that she should be like God himself. Alas! her ambition was not to be like Him in goodness, but to equal Him in knowledge and power; and this is impossible.

The Spirit That Now Works

The same spirit works in the children of disobedience today. Satan still makes thousands believe that God is unkind, and arbitrary, sitting in solitary grandeur, unmindful of the needs of man. The spirit that caused the fall of Eve is in the words so often uttered, "if God is just and all-powerful, why does He not put an end to all the misery on the earth?"

Or in these words: "God doesn't care anything about me."

And so, in their impatient and unbelieving pride, they set about righting things themselves, and succeed only in making everything worse.

In the lie that the serpent uttered there was the germ of all wickedness and every form of unbelief. In accepting it, Eve turned away from God, repudiating Him utterly. Casting off all allegiance to Him, she put herself in His place. For the lie which she believed was to the intent that she was already equal to God, and needed only to assert her right, and take of the prohibited fruit, to assume her real position.

Heathenism in all its forms was in that falsehood, and there is not a phase of error that cannot be traced to it. The fall was complete, and but for the mercy of God there never again would have been in the heart of man the slightest desire for God and His goodness.

What the Woman Saw

"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." (Genesis 3:6)

But she saw what was not so. She saw through the glass that the serpent held before her eyes. The fruit of that forbidden tree was not good for food. Its "mortal taste brought death into the world, and all our woe, with loss of Eden.[1]

But the same deception that made Eve "see" that the fruit of the tree was good for food still blinds the judgment of men. Although God "gives us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Timothy 6:16) showing no partiality, but giving "to all life, and breath, and all things," (Acts 17:25) men count it all as nothing, compared with something that is forbidden on account of its harmful nature.

A table may be loaded with the bounties of the earth, yet a tea-toper will consider that she has nothing if there is no tea; or the one who eats to tickle his palate will complain of "starvation diet" if his

particular dainty is not present. To many the world is all out of joint unless they have had their dram, or their pipe; their whole happiness depends upon something which makes slaves of them, and gives them only wretchedness.

A Too Hasty Decision

One thing that people ever since the days of Eve have overlooked is that one can never get the complete taste of anything the moment it is placed in one's mouth. The Bible tells of things that are sweet in the mouth and bitter in the belly.

A person takes a cup of tea or a glass of spirits, and fancies that it is exceedingly pleasant to the taste, and to be desired to make one wise. Some hours afterwards that same person has a headache, and wonders what is the cause, not knowing that the headache is part of the taste of the drink.

One partakes of rich viands, and thinks that he has had a delicious dinner. Later on he is terribly sick, and suffering from griping pains; he does not know that all that is part of the taste of big dinner.

If all the effects of the things that are so pleasing to the perverted appetite, but which lay a heavy tax on the system, were concentrated into the moment of putting the things into the mouth, so that the eater could not fail to recognize the connection, there would be very little intemperance in eating and drinking. But, "because sentence

against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." (Ecclesiastes 8:11)

There are thousands of people suffering from cancer, consumption, gout, and many other common diseases, which are yearly becoming more common, who will never know until the Judgment day that their diseases were simply the "mortal taste" of their delicate meat.

Yet they might know. God has given the warning; let all who know the danger labor by word and example to sound the warning to others.

The Things That Enslave Men

Another thing that should be understood is that what is wrong always enslaves its devotees, and what is good always leaves a man free. No person ever becomes a slave to anything that is really good to eat or drink.

For example: A person who is accustomed to drinking tea or spirits, or to using tobacco in any form, is utterly lost and in a maze without it. Such ones become nervous and even very irritable, and sometimes are unable to go on with any work that is in hand, if they are deprived of their favorite beverage or weed beyond the usual time.

How many there are who admit that they are "good for nothing" in the morning until they have had their accustomed stimulant, ranging from coffee to whiskey. The writer has heard dozens of people say that they "couldn't live without eating meat!" Their food and drink was their master, not their servant.

Now it is not so with the man who lives of the simple, yet delicious and nourishing food that the Creator gave to man in Eden. It is good for a man to have regular hours for big meals. But if a truly healthful liver is compelled to delay a meal for some hours, or is deprived of it altogether, or when he gets it does not find the food that he expected, but some other equally good, he is not discommoded in the least. One thing, provided it is really good, suits him just as well as another. He is never the slave of any article of food or drink, so that he cannot eat if he does not have it.

But everybody knows, most of us from experience, that this is the case with all who eat to gratify their appetite, rather than simply to live.

The Life Is More than Meat

People often say: "One might as well not live at all, as to deprive oneself of all the good things of life."

That is what Eve thought. What was the use of living, if she could not have the forbidden fruit? There are not many of us that

can throw stones at our common mother. But those same persons are often heard saying: "What is the use of living in this misery?"

And too often they put a summary end to their lives.

"Is not the life more than meat?" (Matthew 6:25)

Would it not be far better to deny the appetite, and even to eat food not quite so pleasing to the palate, and always be full of life and vigor, able to enjoy everything to the full, than to have pleasure at the table, and misery everywhere else? But this is an extreme statement of the case.

The fact is that the man who is content with the things that God gave to man in Eden as his bill of fare, gets more positive enjoyment out of the hours that he spends at the table than anybody else in the world possibly can. He alone knows the meaning of the word "delicious." Every morsel of food is a delight to him, for he alone has the "good things" of life. As he eats he thanks God, "who daily loads us with benefits." (Psalm 68:19)

And not by any means the least of the enjoyments of the clean table is the knowledge that there will be no bad taste afterwards.

What They Learned

"And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked." (Genesis 3:7)

It is most significant that the words "subtle" and "naked" are only two forms of the same word in the Hebrew. "Subtlety" is not at all a bad thing, if obtained from the right source. The Proverbs of Solomon are "to give subtlety to the simple; to the young man knowledge and discretion." (Proverbs 1:4)

And the word "subtlety" in this place is the same as the word used of the serpent; but the subtlety that the Word of God gives is something entirely different from that which comes from listening to the serpent.

The wisdom of the serpent is a desirable thing, if it be combined with the harmlessness of the dove. God is wise, and He "gives wisdom" (Proverbs 2:6); the Serpent is wise, but whoever learns of him gains only the knowledge that he is naked. It is a poor school; Christ's is far better. He says: "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and you shall find rest unto your souls." (Matthew 11:29)

It is better to know a few things that are so, than to learn much that is only emptiness and nakedness.

The Knowledge of Good and Evil

God never designed that man should know anything but good. Why should anybody wish to know anything else? Is one better off for knowing how a nauseous thing tastes? How many people are

there who think that there is a lack in their lives because they do not know how it feels to be bitten by a mad dog? Who is pining to know what it is to have small-pox or the plague?

It is far better to know only that which is good; and in spite of what some "moralists" teach, it is not necessary to know evil in order to attain to real virtue. The strongest character ever known on earth, "knew no sin." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

But He knew everything good, and there is enough of that to keep us all well employed throughout eternity.

Many who are set to be teachers of the Gospel imagine that they have to be acquainted with every form of heresy, in order to guard the flock against error. But the shepherd that leads the flock only in the green pastures that the Chief Shepherd provides, has no need to study noxious weeds. He who obeys the injunction to "preach the Word," (2 Timothy 4:2) will never feel the lack of the knowledge of unbelief. The missionary to heathen lands has no need to study the so-called "sacred books" of those who know not God. To be well acquainted with "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," (1 Corinthians 2:2) is a whole university education.

Vice No Aid to Virtue

Neither is it necessary that a man should have become acquainted by experience, with all sorts of vice, in order to be able to deal effectively with souls. It is true that God, who makes the wrath of

man to praise Him, can turn even a man's lost life to account, but be sure that good never comes from evil.

"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." (Job 14:4)

It was said of Christ, "Never man spoke like this Man." (John 7:46)

And it was because His life had always been the perfection of purity.

Losing the Knowledge of Evil

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse." (Galatians 3:13)

"Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," (Romans 3:24) we are delivered from every vestige of the fall. Therefore in Christ there is deliverance from the mixed knowledge of good and evil. The sin is "put away," (Hebrews 9:26) and only the good remains, and that is multiplied.

Who has not wished that he had never heard some things, and had never learned some forms of evil? And who has not longed to be able to forget at least some of his past life? Well, the Gospel makes provision for that. God says of the people who enter into His covenant: "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." (Hebrews 8:12)

Now God cannot forget anything that exists, and when He forgets our iniquities it is because there is no trace of them in the universe, least of all in us. Just as the haters of God at the last day "hall be as though they had not been." (Obadiah:16)

So will it be with the sins of those who have become the friends of God. Even so is it now; for God casts their sins behind His back, and buries them in the depths of the sea.

"He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." (Micah 7:19)

Christ is the tree of life, and if we feed continually on Him, and drink from the fountain of His life, the evil that comes from the forbidden tree will cease to be. The worshipers once purged shall have no more consciousness of sin. (Hebrews 10:2) Like their Master, they will "know no sin." (2 Corinthians 5:21) This is the crowning blessedness of the Gospel.

Bear in mind that we are not speaking merely of the specific sorts of sin committed, but of sin as a whole. The blood of Christ cleanses; from all sin, (1 John 1:7) so that no trace of it will remain. The carnal mind, the mind that thinks evil, is to be exchanged for the mind of the Spirit, (Romans 8:6-7,27) and it has no trace of evil in it.

Is it not glorious to know that the hardened sinner, whose mind has been filled with evil, is not obliged to be tortured after conversion with temptations from his own mind, but may have the innocence of a child, combined with the prudence of a man?

Man Hides--God Seeks

"The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10)

This was first demonstrated when "the Lord God called to Adam, and said unto him, Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9)

Sin produces fear.

"The wicked flee when no man pursues." (Proverbs 28:1)

So as soon as a man becomes conscious of sin he seeks to hide from the Lord. But that is a useless proceeding, for "the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." (Proverbs 15:3)

"Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? says the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? says the Lord." (Jeremiah 23:23)

So the Lord is sure to find every soul; and if that soul be not saved, it is only because he loves death rather than life.

Jonah thought to hide from the Lord, and he chose as his hiding-place the depths of the sea; but the Lord found him there. Yea, the Lord was there before him, and had a place all prepared for him, and from the pit of destruction He brought the runaway back to safety.

"If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall your hand lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hides not from You." (Psalm 139:9-12)

Then let no one despair because some loved one who has been the subject of many prayers has run away to escape the restraints of piety. No matter where he runs to, he will run into the arms of the Lord, which are always outstretched even to a disobedient and gainsaying people.

Oh, the height of Jesus' love!
Higher than the heaven above,
Deeper than the deepest sea,
Lasting as eternity;
Love that found me,--wondrous thought!
Found me when I sought Him not. [2]

This being the case, who can measure the hope of the one who turns to seek the Lord?

The Enmity

"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed." (Genesis 3:15)

Blessed enmity! But for that enmity which God by His grace implanted into the heart of mankind, no human being, provided the race had continued, would ever have had any more desire for righteousness than the devil himself has; for the fall of man was complete; he had sold himself wholly to Satan, and "for nought."

"For thus says the Lord, You have sold yourselves for nought; and you shall be redeemed without money." (Isaiah 52:3)

But we have been "redeemed without money," even with the incorruptible life, (1 Peter 1:23) "the precious blood of Christ": "Forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Peter 1:18-19)

It is because of this enmity against sin, which the life of Christ places in every man, that we are able to "feel after" (Acts 17:27) God when He seeks us in the dark. It is "the true Light, which lights every man that comes into the world." (John 1:9)

No matter how tainted an inheritance a child may have, no matter how vicious and depraved its parents are, it has as its birthright from God a spark of the light of life, which may be fanned by the breathing of the Spirit into everlasting glory in the kingdom of God.

The Bruising

"It shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." (Genesis 3:15)

We get some sore wounds from the serpent, and the wound on our heel makes us often stumble; but we can always say: "Rejoice not against me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall arise." (Micah 7:8)

Victory is ours, for the promise is that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head, and that means its utter destruction. Christ has been tempted on every point to the utmost of Satan's power; and "His Divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness." (2 Peter 1:3)

He took part in our flesh and blood, in equal measure with us, "that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Hebrews 2:13-14)

Everyone involuntarily names Christ as the seed of the woman, who is spoken of in (Genesis 3:15). But many overlook the obvious

fact that we are the seed of the woman, as well as He. Think of the wonder of it!

The ordinary idea is reversed: instead of saying that Christ is Man, as well as we are, we learn from this verse to say that we are men, as well as He is; and therefore all the promises to the Son of man belong to us. So we have the promise renewed in these words:

"The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

"Thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 15:57)--Present Truth, July 4, 1901--International Sunday-school Lesson for July 11--Genesis 3:1-15.

E.J. Waggoner

Notes:

1. John Milton, Paradise Lost, Book 1.

2. William McComb, Hymn: Chief of Sinners Though I Be, 1864.

Chapter 13

The First Adam and the Second Adam

The first temptation that beset man on this earth was in the line of appetite.

"When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, ... she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat," (Genesis 3:6) although she had an abundance without it. It was not good for food, and she had no need of it; but she took it simply because she wished to please and gratify herself.

Christ came into the world, the new Man, the second Adam; and the first recorded temptation that came to Him was also in the line of appetite. But how different the circumstances! He was famishing, and that which was offered Him was food of the simplest kind. If the stones had been turned to bread at His command, they would have made good bread, and He was sorely in need of it; but He would not take any, because He came not to please and gratify himself.

What a contrast! The first man took that which he did not need, simply to please self, and died; the second Man refused that which He did need, because He would take nothing except from the hand of the Father, and would not please himself alone, and He is alive for evermore. (Revelation 1:18)

Why was this? It was to show us the wonderful redemption that there is in Christ Jesus. He denied himself that which was lawful, in order that we might be delivered from the power of that which is unlawful. By refusing even that which is good, He demonstrates His power in the flesh to deliver us from the evil.

But that does not state the whole case. He imparts to us the same power and the same mind, so that we ourselves may have the same mastery over self. It is not good for any person in this world to have everything he desires, even though his desires be lawful, and for that which is not injurious. For the sake of others, yea, even for our own sake, it is often necessary for us to refrain from things good in themselves. This is complete victory over the world,--the flesh,--to be complete master of self. He who can at will deny himself that which he knows is good, can more easily abstain from that which is evil, than the man can who indulges himself.

This does not mean asceticism or doing penance. The Lord does not wish us to keep ourselves on the rack. He wishes us always to be happy.

"Strengthened with all might according to His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness." (Colossians 1:11)

The necessities and distresses that we undergo for Christ's sake must be a pleasure, else there is no profit in them.

"Christ pleased not himself," (Romans 15:3) yet He found delight in doing and suffering the will of the Father. The great end is to be conquerors, and even "more than conquerors." (Romans 8:37)

"All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient," (1 Corinthians 6:12) and we must not be the servant of any. The child of God is not to be under the law but above it. This does not mean, as too many suppose, a disregard for the law, and ignoring of it; far from it. It is just the opposite of it. One is above it only in the sense that he is in the heavenly places, reigning with God, the Giver of the law. He is not bound by the law, but is loyal to it, as if himself were the giver of it, and zealous that its honor shall be maintained.

So instead of being compelled by the law to do what it commands, he acts as the maker and enforcer of the law, compelling his body to yield perfect obedience to it, and taking the keenest, sweetest delight in exercising his authority over the flesh, and seeing it submit to the law.--Present Truth, July 4, 1901--Original title: Back Page--Genesis 3:6.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 14

The Scripture Records Literal and Real

With reference to the International Sunday-school lesson for July 14,[1] do you wish us to understand by your exposition that it was a real serpent which appeared to Eve and conversed with her in the garden of Eden? I can hardly believe it to have been so.

If you think it was so, will you oblige me by stating what your reasons are for so thinking? I shall be very grateful if you can give me something to convince me, as I have some very grave doubts on the subject, and it has made me feel very miserable.

No wonder, for that is the natural effect of doubt. Nobody can ever feel any other way than miserable, if he cherishes doubt, for doubt is the most unsatisfactory condition in the world. It is also the most foolish and unreasonable thing. A thing is either true, or it is not; if it is true, it is to be believed; if it is not true, it is not to be believed, and that is the end of the matter. But to doubt--neither to believe nor really to disbelieve--is to be nowhere.

Yes; I most certainly wish all who read to understand that it was a veritable serpent that talked with Eve, just as truly as it was a real ass that spoke to Balaam, and reproved him.

"The dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbade the madness of the prophet," (2 Peter 2:16) and the serpent speaking also with man's voice, or, rather, with Satan's voice, beguiled Eve.

Why do I believe that it was a real serpent? Because I believe the Bible, of the truthfulness of which I have ample evidence. How can we help believing it? I believe that it was real, because I believe that there was a real garden at Eden, and a real man and woman in it; that there was a real tree in the midst of the garden, from which they were forbidden to eat; and that the sin committed in the garden was the beginning of all the sin and sorrow that has cursed this earth. I believe that the serpent was real, for the same reason that I believe the curse to be real.

The Apostle Paul wrote: "I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." (2 Corinthians 2:3)

Was the Apostle, writing by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, frightened at a shadow? for if it were no real serpent that beguiled Eve, then the whole story would be a myth.

Why should one doubt that the serpent was real, and still believe that the tree and the garden were real, and that the woman really ate and gave to her husband, and that they lost their purity and dominion? It is true that there are people who doubt all these things, and there are also people who doubt the entire Bible; but how anybody who professes to believe the Bible as a whole can single

out as unreal a particular item, and that a leading one, in a narrative which he otherwise accepts, I cannot understand. The mystery of godliness is great; but the mystery of doubt--the mystery of iniquity--is more incomprehensible.

Why do I believe in the absolute truthfulness of the story of the deception by the serpent? Because, I believe the Gospel. You ask what that has to do with the Gospel. I will tell you in a few words.

The Gospel is the good news of salvation from sin, and the sin from which we are to be saved is the sin that came into the world when the serpent beguiled Eve. Now the same book that tells of the fall, also makes known the way of redemption; but if I cannot implicitly believe one, I have no assurance of the other.

Do you not see that it is not a light matter whether we believe or not? All truth is one; all parts are woven together, each part with every other; break one thread, and the whole fabric is ruined.

But we will not talk of ruin, so far as the truth is concerned; for it endures for ever. We cannot affect it in the least by any doubt or unbelief; but our doubts have an influence on ourselves, in the same proportion that faith does. The ruin is to us, if we allow ourselves to doubt a single word of God; for if we doubt one thing, the whole will have no power in us. I might well ask you: "Why do you doubt the story of the serpent?"

But I will not, for I know it is not good to talk doubt, or to talk over doubts, much less to seek to manufacture a foundation for them. The best thing to do with doubt is to bury it under the everlasting mountains of truth.

"I believed, therefore have I spoken, (Psalm 116:10; 2 Corinthians 4:13) is a motto that we all do well to follow. Thank God, there is enough to believe to keep us employed throughout eternity.--Present Truth, August 15, 1901.

E.J. Waggoner

Notes:

1. This is Article 12 in this section, titled, "Beginning of Sin and Redemption," from the July 4, 1901.

Chapter 15

Abel's Sacrifice

1. What was the name of the first son of Adam and Eve? "And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord." (Genesis 4:1)

2. What was the name of the second son? "And she again bare his brother Abel." (Genesis 4:2)

3. What, occupation did each follow? "And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground." (Genesis 4:2)

4. What offering did Cain bring to the Lord? "And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord." (Genesis 4:3)

5. What was Abel's offering? "And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof" (Genesis 4:4)

6. How did the Lord regard Abel's offering? "And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering." (Genesis 4:4)

7. How did the Lord regard Cain's offering? "But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell." (Genesis 4:5)

8. What made Abel's offering more acceptable than Cain's? "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." (Hebrews 11:4)

9. What did Abel obtain by his offering? "By which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he being dead yet speaks." (Hebrews 11:4)

10. What was the defect in Cain's offering? "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood there is no remission." (Hebrews 9:22)

11. Then since Cain did not take the proper steps to secure the remission of sins, what lay at his door? "If you do well, Shall you not be accepted? And if you do not well, sin lies at the door. And unto you shall be his desire, and you shall rule over him." (Genesis 4:7)

12. Through whose blood alone may remission of sins he obtained? "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." (Romans 3:23-25)

13. Then since Abel was accepted, in whom must he have had faith? "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that

by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him does this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:10-12)

14. What is the highest attainment of faith? "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1)

"For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith." (1 John 5:4)

15. Since Abel was justified, was not his faith in Christ as perfect as ours can be?

16. What did Cain do to Abel? "And Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him." (Genesis 4:8)

17. Why did he do this? "For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." (1 John 3:11-12)

18. Of what scripture was Abel the first to demonstrate the truth? "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Timothy 3:12)

19. Is it any wonder if the world hates the righteous? "If the world hate you, you know that it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love his own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said unto you. The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also." (John 15:18-20)

20. How should the righteous feel when they are persecuted for their faith? "Blessed are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." (Matthew 5:11-12)

21. What consolation has the Christian in all tribulation? "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

Notes:

"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts." (Hebrews 11:4)

The difference between the two offerings was in the matter of faith. That is, it was faith in Abel, and a lack of faith in Cain, that made the offerings different.

By bringing "of the firstlings of his flock," Abel showed his faith in the fact that "without shedding of blood is no remission," and in the Lamb of God, whose blood alone can cleanse from sin. By this sacrifice he obtained witness that he was righteous. Here was a case of justification (making righteous) by faith. As with the woman in the days of Christ, (Matthew 9:22) so with Abel, his faith made him whole.

The same witness, and in exactly the same measure, may be obtained in this generation. Says Paul: "You have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Romans 8:15-16)

And the beloved disciple says: "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself; he that believes not God has made Him a

liar; because he believes not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." (1 John 5:9-11)

This witness is not primarily a certain feeling of pardon, but is the assurance of God's word, than which there can be no better witness. He who believes this witness, and knows that his sins are forgiven because he has complied with the conditions upon which God has promised that He will certainly pardon, will find joy and peace in believing. But the joy and peace will never come until the witness of God is accepted, for the sole reason that it is the word of God.

Although (Genesis 4:6-7) are not quoted in the lesson, the thorough student will certainly read them in studying the context, and the thoughtful student will wonder what their force may be. From the Authorized Version the reader gets the idea that Abel's desire would be to Cain, and that Cain would rule over him. But this seems forced and unnatural, because it is sin that the Lord is talking about, and Abel is not once mentioned in God's talk to Cain at this time.

Every Bible reader must have noticed that the masculine pronoun is often used to designate a neuter object, and by substituting the neuter for the masculine in this place the meaning will be more apparent. Following are the verses, with the marginal reading, as given in the Revised Version.

"And the Lord said unto Cain, Why are you wroth? and why is your countenance fallen? If you do well, shall you not be accepted? and if you do not well, sin lies at the door. And unto you shall be his desire, and you shall rule over it." (Genesis 4:6-7, RV)

This is harmonious throughout. Cain had not yet committed his great sin, but he was envious of Abel. Those envious feelings if not repressed would result, as they finally did, in murder, for in envy murder lies concealed.

So the Lord represented sin as a wild beast, just ready to spring upon its prey. It was there beside Cain's door, and its desire was to him; but as yet he had the power to rule over it, and drive it away. In this we are taught to shun the beginnings of sin.

"Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death." (James 1:14-15)

Therefore the thoughts should be carefully guarded.

"Keep your heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." (Proverbs 4:23)--Signs of the Times, January 20, 1888--Lesson 4 - Sabbath, January 28--Genesis 4.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 16

The Earth Corrupted

1. When men became very numerous on the earth, what did they do? "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose." (Genesis 6:1)

2. What commandment then was specially disregarded? The seventh.

3. In pursuing this wicked course, what good influence were they resisting? "And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years." (Genesis 6:3)

4. What is the special office of the Spirit in connection with sinners? "And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." (John 16:8)

5. By what means does the Spirit reprove the world of sin? "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." (Ephesians 6:17)

6. What two things always necessarily work together in producing a perfect character? "God has from the beginning chosen

you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." (2 Thessalonians 2:13)

"Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that you love one another with a pure heart fervently." (1 Peter 1:22)

7. Then how must the Lord have striven with the antediluvians by His Spirit? By keeping continually before them the right way.

8. By whom was the right way presented to them? "And spared not the old, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly." (2 Peter 2:5)

9. How long did God say that He would bear with them? "And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years." (Genesis 6:3)

10. At the end of that time, how great was the wickedness of men? "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Genesis 6:5)

11. What was the condition of the whole earth? "And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." (Genesis 6:12)

12. With what was it filled in consequence? "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." (Genesis 6:11)

13. What was the only consistent thing that God could then do? "And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth." (Genesis 6:13)

14. Upon whom alone did the Lord look with favor? "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." (Genesis 6:8)

15. Why did the Lord regard Noah with special favor? "These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." (Genesis 6:9)

"And the Lord said unto Noah, Come you and all your house into the ark; for you have I seen righteous before me in this generation." (Genesis 7:1)

16. Upon what alone does the Lord look in His estimation of men? "For the Lord sees not as man sees; for man looks upon the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7)

17. How was it possible for Noah to remain upright in the midst of universal corruption? "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." (Genesis 6:9)

18. What is the extent of God's requirement of man? "He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8)

19. What effect did Noah's godly life have upon the world? "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." (Hebrews 11:7)

Notes:

"And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with men, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years." (Genesis 6:3)

"The long-suffering of God" (1 Peter 3:20) was abundantly manifested here. Men were recklessly plunging into vice, disregarding the marriage relation, and violating the seventh commandment, and with that every other one, yet the Lord said that He would bear with them one hundred and twenty years.

"The long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah." (1 Peter 3:20)

Waited because God "is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9)

The Lord does not wait for sinners to desire pardon, before He makes an effort to save them, but "[He] commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

So He says through the prophet Isaiah: "I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not; I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name. I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walk in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts." (Isaiah 65:1-2)

At least two lessons should be learned from this. One is a lesson of hope and courage, because of God's intense longing for the salvation of sinners. We should also learn a lesson of forgiveness, for Paul exhorts us to forgive one another even as God has for Christ's sake forgiven us.

"And be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you." (Ephesians 4:32)

That is, willingly, gladly, and without reserve. More than this we are to be willing to forgive, to long to forgive, before the one who has offended makes any sign of repentance or of wishing to be forgiven,--from the very moment that the offense is committed. That utterly excludes all malice or hard feelings from our hearts. We have no right to entertain such feelings for a moment.

Yet though God is so long-suffering, stretching out His hands to a rebellious people, it will not do to be presumptuous, and to continue in sin, in order that He may have an opportunity to display His mercy. There will come a time when God will leave the rebellious to themselves. He will cut them off because nothing else can be done with them. But if they are cut off, it is solely their own fault. Because they deliberately reject God's gracious invitation, and choose the evil, "therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them." (Proverbs 1:31-32)

It is by His Spirit that God strives with men. This striving is not the producing of a vague, uncertain impression, but is a conviction of sin. In this work the Spirit uses a sword, "which is the word of God;" (Ephesians 6:17) a sword which is "quick living and powerful, ... piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12)

From this we learn that conviction of sin is produced by the Spirit bringing to our remembrance, and keeping before the mind, the truth of God, which condemns our evil course.

But some will imagine that the Spirit sometimes, at least, works independently of the truth of God as revealed in His word, because many persons who have not had the Bible, have been convicted of sin. Paul explains this, when he says: "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another." (Romans 2:14-15)

That is, everybody by nature knows something of right and wrong, from the traces of the law that remain in their hearts. The natural tendency is to forget, but the Spirit keeps it before the mind as much as possible, so that conviction of sin may be produced. The antediluvians had the truth brought to them by Noah, "a preacher of righteousness." (2 Peter 2:5)

We said above that the natural tendency of men is to forget the truth. So the Spirit of God has to strive with them. Some persons will submit themselves to God, and willingly yield to the influence of the Spirit. In such will be perfected "the fruit of the Spirit." (Galatians 5:22)

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." (Ephesians 5:18)

"Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." (Philippians 1:11)

But to by far the greater number of people it might be said as Stephen said to the Jewish Sanhedrin: "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you do always resist the Holy Ghost." (Acts 7:51)

With such the Spirit finally ceases to strive, because there comes a time when the law is entirely obliterated from their hearts, and they become insensible to all appeals, being unable to see any difference between right and wrong.

While the Spirit is striving with them, Satan is also working through their own natural inclinations to fasten them in sin. So Paul says of those who have pleasure in unrighteousness, that strong delusion shall come upon them, that they should all be damned.

"Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12)

Men cannot live under a continued conviction of sin; they must obtain peace of mind in some way. Those who do not obtain true peace from God, (See Romans 5:1; 8:1; Isaiah 48:18) try to get peace of mind by resisting the strivings of the Spirit, and putting from them the sense of their sin. When they have succeeded in this, they feel perfectly easy, but it is a fatal ease. It is the case which the man feels who is benumbed and about to perish with the cold. And so it often happens with the wicked that "there are no bands in their death." (Psalm 73:4)

A seemingly peaceful death is not by any means a sure sign of acceptance with God.

"Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." (Genesis 6:9)

The man who walks with God must be a perfect man, for God is perfect, and two cannot walk together except they be agreed. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3)

The man who walks with God, must forsake his own ways, and adopt the ways of God.

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says

the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:7-9)

David speaks thus of those who walk with God: "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep His testimonies, and that seek Him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity; they walk in His ways." (Psalm 119:1-3)

Then to walk with God is to keep the commandments of God. Those who walk in the way of His commandments, must be perfect, for "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." (Psalm 19:7)

The law of God is the righteousness of God: "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished. Hearken unto me, you that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear not the reproach of men, neither be afraid of their revilings." (Isaiah 51:6)

It is His will: "Behold, you are called a Jew, and rest in the law, and make your boast of God, and know His will, and approve the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law." (Romans 2:17)

"I delight to do your will, O my God: yea, your law is within my heart." (Psalm 40:8)

It is a transcript of His character, a description of the ways of God. All that God requires of men is that they should do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him. And in order that they may know what justice and mercy are, and what they must do to walk with Him, He has described himself and His way in His law.

The life of the man who thus walks with God, is the best sermon that can be preached to the ungodly. Such a life can be lived only by faith, for "without faith it is impossible to please Him." (Hebrews 11:6)

They who seek righteousness in any other way than by faith, will come short of it. And so it was by faith that Noah obeyed God and condemned the world.--Signs of the Times, January 27, 1888--Lesson 5 - Sabbath, February 4--Genesis 6:1-13.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 17

The Flood

1. When the world became wholly corrupt, what did God determine to do? "And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth." (Genesis 6:13)

2. What provision did the Lord make for the preservation of righteous Noah? "Make an ark of gopher wood; rooms shall you make in the ark, and shall pitch it within and without with pitch. And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. ... But with you will I establish my covenant; and you shall come into the ark, you, and your sons, and your wife, and your sons' wives with you." (Genesis 6:14,17-18)

3. Had there ever been anything to indicate the possibility of a flood? "The Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth." (Genesis 2:5)

4. In obeying the command of the Lord to make an ark, what grace did Noah manifest? "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." (Hebrews 11:7)

5. After the ark was completed, and Noah and his family had gone into it, what wonderful thing took place to convince the people of the truth of what Noah had preached? "And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creeps upon the earth, there went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah." (Genesis 7:7-9)

6. How long after this before the flood began? "And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth." (Genesis 7:10)

7. Was it possible then for Noah to do anything more for the people? "And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him; and the Lord shut him in." (Genesis 7:16)

8. How long did it rain? "And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights." (Genesis 7:12)

9. What besides rain from heaven helped to make the flood? "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." (Genesis 7:11)

10. How extensive was the flood? "Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." (2 Peter 3:6)

"And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bore up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth. And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth, and every man: All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark." (Genesis 7:17-23)

11. How long did the waters remain at their height? "And the waters prevailed upon the earth a hundred and fifty days." (Genesis 7:24)

12. How long did Noah have to remain in the ark? "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." (Genesis 7:11)

"And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more. And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry. And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried. And God spoke unto Noah, saying, go forth of the ark, you, and your wife, and your sons, and your sons' wives with you." (Genesis 8:12-16)

13. When Noah came out what did he do? "And Noah built an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savor." (Genesis 8:20-21)

14. What did the Lord say about floods in the future? "And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth." (Genesis 9:11)

15. What pledge did he give to confirm this promise? And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and

you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh." (Genesis 9:12-15)

16. What peculiar force is there in the expression, "I do set my bow in the cloud? "And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald." (Revelation 4:13)

"As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spoke." (Ezekiel 1:28)

17. Then how strong was the assurance that there should never be another universal flood? God has pledged His own glory that it shall not be.

18. Will this earth never be destroyed by any means? "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." (2 Peter 3:10)

19. What word has decreed this? The same word that created the earth in the beginning, and that destroyed it once by a flood. (2 Peter 3:5,7)

20. Why will this destruction take place? "And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all." (Luke 27:26-27)

21. What description have we of the wickedness that shall be in the last days? "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." (2 Timothy 3:1-5)

22. Will the earth be filled with violence as it was before the flood? "Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good." (2 Timothy 3:3)

23. Who alone will be saved from the destruction that comes because of this wickedness? "The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness has surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walks righteously, and speaks uprightly; he that despises the gain of oppressions, that shakes his hands from holding of bribes, that stops his ears from hearing of blood, and shuts his

eyes from seeing evil; He shall dwell on high: his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure. your eyes shall see the king in His beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off." (Isaiah 33:14-17)

Notes:

From the flood, and the time just before it, many lessons are drawn for us. We are told that "as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man." (Luke 17:26)

The wickedness of man will be just as great before the coming of the Lord, as it was in the days before the flood. To many this seems incredible, but if it were not so, God would not destroy the earth. Men will be lovers of their own selves, and utterly indifferent to the welfare of others, except as the welfare of others may contribute to their own selfish gratification. They will be incontinent and fierce, and so, through sensuality, violence will fill the earth as it did in the days of Noah. (See 2 Timothy 3:1-7)

Many think that the spread of civilization and the general diffusion of knowledge will be an effectual bar to any such moral degeneration. But these very things, which may be instruments of the highest good, will be what will bring the world to the condition that it was in before the flood.

The Egyptians were the wisest people in the ancient world, yet their idolatry was of the grossest character. The Greeks were the

most intellectual people who ever lived; it is doubtful if the civilization of the present day is equal to that of ancient Greece; and it is certain that in the fine arts and in scientific knowledge they were far superior to any nation now in existence. And yet they were heathen, and their worship was often characterized by the grossest licentiousness.

No; intellect never can keep a nation from moral degradation. In fact, it was their knowledge, or rather their trust in their own wisdom, which led to their ruin.

"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things." (Romans 1:22)

Nothing but humble faith in Christ, can keep any soul from ruin.

The elements that will result in bringing this world into the degraded state that existed before the flood, are working today.

• First, men are trusting to science, and to their own wisdom.

• Second, many who occupy the highest positions, are teaching that evil is a necessity, and that there is in reality no such thing as evil, but that what we call evil is only a lesser form of good.

This position was taken by Professor Fiske, of Harvard College, in a lecture in Oakland, last summer. Anyone can figure out the result of such a theory, if it should become general; and the fact that such men hold it is evidence that it would not require a miracle to make it general.

• Then there is Spiritualism, a cardinal doctrine of which is that there is no atonement, and that every man is his own judge, and is amenable to no one but himself; that his own heart is the only tribunal before which he is to be judged.

Read (Mark 7:21-25) and (Galatians 5:19-21), and you will find out what will result when men follow the natural promptings of their own hearts.

Now bear in mind the fact that the corner-stone of Spiritualism, namely, a belief that man is by nature immortal and cannot die, is part of the faith of the mass of professed Christians, and you will see how the way is prepared for all to accept the teachings of Spiritualism, as soon as Satan shall present to them the forms of their dead, whom they believe are really alive.

This is but the barest outline, yet the reader can see from it how easily men may be led into the grossest sins. At the same time they will talk of virtue, and will actually think that they are working for the up-building of humanity. Such power has Satan to blind those who do not receive the love of the truth.

It is becoming quite common to say that the flood was limited in extent. Such a statement is directly contrary to the express declarations of Scripture. Peter says that: "The world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." (2 Peter 3:6)

And the word of God has decreed that the heavens and the earth which followed the flood, shall be destroyed by fire. The flood, then, must have been as extensive as the heavens and the earth which now exist, and as the destruction at the last day. To limit the flood to a small portion of the earth, is virtually to deny that "the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up." (2 Peter 3:10)

It is, in fact, to place one's self among the scoffers who say: "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." (2 Peter 3:4)

Let all take heed how they receive the word of God.--Signs of the Times, February 3, 1888--Lesson 6 - Sabbath, February 11--Genesis 6:13 to Genesis 9:15.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 18

Saved in the Ark

The title of the lesson for this week is "Noah Saved in the Ark," but the Scripture cited, namely, the 8th chapter of Genesis, does not correspond thereto, inasmuch as it tells us only of the closing scenes. We shall therefore have a brief study of the flood in general, without regard to the text referred to in the lesson outline.

Unbelief and Blindness

Everyone will have heard of the doubts that have been cast upon the Scripture record of the flood. Not only avowed infidels, but many professed ministers of the Gospel, do not believe that there ever was a general flood, covering the whole earth.

The same cause of unbelief exists in this case as in that of the story of creation. Satan has instilled doubts of that in the minds of men, in order that they might become blinded to the power of the Gospel, and especially to the Sabbath, the sign of the cross, which creates new men.

As disbelief of the story of creation hides the beginnings of this world, so disbelief of the story of the flood hides the view of the end; for the days of Noah are referred to by the Saviour as a parallel to the days of the coming of the Son of man.

"But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." (Matthew 24:37-39)

The adversary of God and man would be glad to have all men ignorant concerning the coming of the Lord; and that is the cause of the disbelief in the record of the flood.

Willing Ignorance

Still further: We are told that: "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." (2 Peter 3:3-4)

How is it that these scoffers thus throw discredit upon the promise of the Lord's coming, and declare that there is no evidence of any such thing? The answer follows: "For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the Word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water, and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same Word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men." (2 Peter 3:5-7)

Further on we are told that "the elements shall melt with fervent heat," (2 Peter 3:10) and that "all these things shall be dissolved." (2 Peter 3:11)

At the day of Judgment there will be a sea of fire overwhelming the earth, just as the waters covered and destroyed the earth in the days of Noah.

From the margin of our Bible, together with the reading of the Revised Version, we can get a more clear idea of the text than we now have. We know that when the earth was created it was a watery mass.

"Darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." (Genesis 1:2)

Then the waters were separated, some remaining on the surface of the earth, and the larger portion of it being stored up in the earth. These are called "the water under the earth." (Exodus 20:4)

That is, in the beginning, "of old," the earth was "compacted out of water and amidst water," or "consisting of water," a large portion of which was stored up in the earth. Now by this water "the world that then was perished." After Noah went into the ark, "all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." (Genesis 7:11)

The very material out of which the earth was composed, and which was stored up in it, was made the agent of its destruction. If men were not willingly ignorant of this fact, they would not be blind to the coming of the Lord, and the approaching destruction of the world by fire.

The flood reduced the earth almost if not quite to its original chaos. At that time all the changes took place, which by unbelievers are attributed to the lapse of ages. Whole forests of huge trees were buried deep in the earth. These have since turned to coal, which has generated large amounts of oil and gas. As a consequence, there is a vast amount of fire stored in the earth, reserved till the flood of fire that is to overwhelm it.

As in the time of the flood the water out of the depths of the earth united with that which poured forth from the open windows of heaven, so in the last day the fires in the interior of the earth will unite with that which comes down from God out of heaven, to destroy the earth.

All things have not continued as they were from the beginning of creation. Once was the world destroyed by the very elements out of which it was composed, and all the agencies are ready for its second destruction, which, instead of leaving it more curse-marked than before, as was the case with the flood, will cleanse it from the curse, so that there will be a new earth, as in the beginning.

The texts already quoted prove that the flood was universal. It was as extensive as the fires of the last day will be. To deny this is to deny the writings of the apostles, and thus to undermine the Gospel. The 3rd chapter of 2 Peter mentions three worlds:

1. The world that was "of old," from the creation;

2. Another, the one that now is, since the flood; and

3. The third, the new earth, which will emerge from the fires of the day of the Lord.

The three worlds are the same world in three different stages of existence. The universality of the flood is denied only by those who do not credit the prediction that the earth is to be destroyed again, this time more completely than before, by fire.

Saved by Water

There is reference to the flood, which sometimes puzzles the reader. The first portion of the text tells us that by the same Spirit by which Christ was raised from the dead, He went in the days of Noah, "while the ark was a preparing," and "preached unto the spirits in prison," that is, to the captives of sin, shut up under the law. "The longsuffering of God waited one hundred and twenty years, while Noah was building the ark, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism does also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh,

but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 3:19-21)

Just a word about the expression, "saved by water." In the margin of the Revision we have this reading:

"Few, that is, eight souls, were brought safely through water."

The Greek word is the same as that in (Acts 23:24), where we read that the two centurions were commanded to provide beasts for Paul, whereby they might "bring him safe" to the governor; and a close parallel to the one in Peter is found in (Acts 27:43-44), where we read of Paul's escape from shipwreck, together with his traveling companions. Some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship, "they escaped all safe to land." (Acts 27:44)

By means of the boards and broken pieces of the ship the people who were with Paul were all conveyed through the water to a place of safety; and by the ark Noah and his family were brought safely through the water. So here we see that the ark, and not the water of the flood, is referred to as the means of salvation.

Baptism Does Now Save Us

"The like figure whereunto baptism does also now save us." (1 Peter 3:21)

How does baptism save us? By the resurrection of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 3:21)

"Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:3-4)

"As many of you as have been baptized into Jesus Christ have put on Christ." (Galatians 3:27)

Baptism means being enclosed in the life of Christ as really as Noah was shut up in the ark. Only in the ark could he find safety, and only in Christ is there salvation for any man.

Baptism saves us, but not if it is only a form. It is not the washing of the body in water, but "the answer of a good conscience toward God;" it is the cleansing of the conscience by the water of the life of Christ.

Riding on a Sea of Fire

But there is a still further parallel. When the waters overflowed the earth, destroying it, Noah and his family, safe in the ark, rode upon the sea. That which covered up the corrupt earth with its wicked inhabitants, bore righteous Noah in safety. Even so it will be in the last days, the day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

Before the final act of Judgment, the holy city, the New Jerusalem, will come down from God out of heaven, and will take its place upon the earth. We know that it comes down upon this old earth, before it is made new, because we read in Revelation 20 that at the close of the thousand years during which the earth will lie desolate, the second resurrection--the resurrection of the wicked--will take place, and that Satan will then go forth among them to deceive them, and to gather them together to battle.

"And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." (Revelation 20:9)

After that the new heaven and the new earth are seen. And where will the New Jerusalem be all the time that the flames are devouring the earth with its wicked inhabitants? It will be riding on the lake of fire as securely as the ark rode on the billows of the flood. The saints of God inside of it will be saved through the fire. They will be able to dwell with the devouring fire, and with everlasting burnings.

"The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness has surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walks righteously, and speaks uprightly; he that despises the gain of oppressions, that shakes his hands from holding of bribes, that stops his ears from hearing of blood, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil." (Isaiah 33:14-15)

The Ark of Safety

It is just that great salvation that is secured by baptism into Christ, by being hidden in Him.

"We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks." (Isaiah 26:1)

Its walls shall be called Salvation, and its gates Praise, (Isaiah 60:18) because: "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved." (Psalm 46:5)

Its strength is simply the strength of the everlasting God, our refuge. The safety of the saints in the city, as it rides on the billows of fire that will rise literally "mountains high," will be only the safety that everyone now finds, who is hidden in the Rock of Ages.

Not rocks nor hills could guard so well,
Fair Salem's happy ground,
As those eternal arms of love,
That every saint surround.[1]--Present Truth, July 11, 1901--Genesis 7.

E.J. Waggoner

Notes:

1. Isaac Watts, Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament, "Psalm 125," 1719.

Chapter 19

Look Unto Jesus

The insignificance of human works when viewed by God is forcibly indicated in the familiar story of the tower of Babel. The people said: "Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men built." (Genesis 11:4-5)

They thought to reach heaven; but so far short of if did they come, that God is represented as having to come down even to see it. Very often when we fancy that we are doing a great thing, and think that everybody must surely be looking on, we have not accomplished enough to attract any notice at all.

It is quite common to hear people echo the poet's wish that we might see ourselves as others see us. We may be glad, however, that we do not. We should have more foolish notions, and commit more blunders, than we now do. Some of our friends think so highly of us, at times, at least, that nobody would be able to live with us, if we saw ourselves as they see us. And others hold us in such low esteem that if we saw ourselves with their eyes we should not want to live.

Neither is it any better for us to see ourselves as God sees us, as many well-meaning souls often wish they could. The fact is, self-consciousness is the worst thing in the world for people. We do not

need to see ourselves at all, and the Lord does not wish us to. He says: "Look unto me." (Isaiah 45:22)

It is only while we are "looking unto Jesus," (Hebrews 12:2) that we are able to "run with patience the race that is set before us." (Hebrews 12:1)

We have the "eternal weight of glory while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)

"Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, [we are] changed into the same image." (2 Corinthians 3:18)

We become like what we look at. If we look at ourselves, we only increase our faults; if we look at the Lord Jesus we do not see ourselves at all, but the glory of God, and thus we become transformed into His Divine image.--Present Truth, December 19, 1901--Original title: Back Page--Genesis 11:4-5.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 20

A Question of Figures

A brother in Philadelphia sends the following three questions on one of the Sabbath-school lessons, which he wishes answered through the Signs of the Times:

1. How do you prove that Adam lived 233 years with Methuselah? Smith's Dictionary says it was 243 years. So does the Bible. By an error in copying, the lesson came short just ten years. This was better than to have had the number too large.

2. How do you count to get 352 years in the 20th question? The genealogy of Shem, in Genesis 11:10-26 counts only 262 years from the flood to Abram.

The brother's difficulty arises from the fact that he supposes Abram to have been born when Terah was seventy years old. The fact is that Abram was not born till Terah was one hundred and thirty years old. We learn this as follows:

• Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran; (Genesis 13:4)

• He did not go out of Haran until his father was dead; (Acts 7:4) and

• Terah, his father, was two hundred and five years old when he died. (Genesis 11:32)

Now a very slight mathematical calculation will enable anybody to see that Abram was born when Terah was one hundred and thirty years old: 205-75=130. With this in mind, the brother will have no difficulty in finding that from the flood to the birth of Abraham was 352 years.

3. If Noah was five hundred years old when Shem was born (Genesis 5:32), and Shem was one hundred years old when Arphaxad was born (Genesis 11:10); two years after the flood, how could Noah have been six hundred years old when the flood came? (Genesis 7:11).

The brother has fallen into the same difficulty here as in the case of Abram; he evidently thinks that Abram, Nahor and Haran were all born at the same time, and that Shem, Ham and Japheth were also born at one time. But the Bible does not say so.

Terah was seventy years old when his first son was born, but Abram was not born until sixty years later, so we have seen. So (Genesis 5:32) tells how old Noah was when his eldest son was born; but that oldest son was not Shem. From (Genesis 10:21 and 9:22-23) we learn that Japheth was the oldest son of Noah, and that Ham was the youngest, and that consequently Shem was the second son.

Although Abram was undoubtedly the youngest of the sons of Terah, he is mentioned first because he is the only one of importance. Shem was the second son of Noah, yet he is always mentioned first because he is the one from whom the genealogy of Christ is reckoned.--Signs of the Times, March 9, 1888--Genesis 5:32; 7:11; 9:22-23; 10:21; 11:10-26, 32; 13:4.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 21

The Call of Abram

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram." (Genesis 12:1)

Abram was a native of Ur of the Chaldees, not far from the mouth of the Euphrates; though, through the river deposits of ages, the ruins of Ur are now about 125 miles from the Persian Gulf and about six miles from the Euphrates. The oldest of its temples are certain ones whose bricks bear the name of Urukh, who calls himself "King of Ur and Accad." The signet cylinder of Urukh's son, Ilgi, has been found and is preserved in the British Museum. Urukh is supposed to have lived about a hundred years, or perhaps a little more, before Abram left Ur.

Terah was Abram's father and an idolater, for "[he] served other gods." (Joshua 24:2)

These gods were mostly the sun, the moon, and the planets. Sin, or Hurki, was the moon-god; San, or Sansi, was the sun; Vul was the god of the atmosphere; Nin was Saturn; Merodach was Jupiter; Nergal was Mars; Ishtar was Venus; and Nebo was Mercury. With each of these and in his worship was associated a female divinity. Ana was the god of the lower world, the lord of darkness or death. The chief seat of his worship was Erech. (Genesis 10:10) The principal temple at Erech was built by Urukh to Sin, the moon-god. He also built temples to the sun to Belus and his wife Beltis, as well

as to many others, for he was a mighty builder and a devout worshiper of the gods.

It was in such a place, and amidst such idolatry, that Abram was born and grew up, his own people and even his own father serving those gods. Yet Abram turned from it all and served Jehovah. When all about him had forsaken the true God and served idols and walked in their evil ways, Abram stood faithful to the Lord. While all others did not like to retain God in their knowledge, Abram gave himself up to the sincere worship of the Lord. Therefore he became "the friend of God," (James 2:23) "[and] the father of all them which believe." (Romans 4:11)

"For if you be Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:29)

It was from the midst of this idolatry that God called Abram to go out into a land which He would show him, and he obeyed, "and he went out not knowing where he went." (Hebrews 11:8)

For, "the God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran [Haran], and said unto him: 'Get you out of your country, and from your kindred, and come into the land which I shall show you.' Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran; and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein you now dwell." (Acts 7:2-4)

Coming out of Ur, Abram was accompanied by Terah, his father, Lot, his nephew, and Sarai, his wife. (Genesis 11:31) It seems that Nahor had preceded them to Haran, and had built that city, for Haran was "the city of Nahor." (Compare Genesis 24:10 with 27:43) Haran was on a tributary of the Euphrates, the Belichus, about seventy-five miles northeast of Carchemish.

"And they came to Haran and dwelt there... And Terah died in Haran." (Genesis 11:31-32)

And after his father died, Abram, in obedience to the call which the Lord had given him in Ur, went on to the land which should be shown him.

"So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him; and Abram was seventh-five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came." (Genesis 12:4-5)

God had said to him while he was in Ur: "I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless you, and curse him that curses you; and in you shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Genesis 12:2-3)

And now when Abram had passed through the land unto the plain of Moreh, the Lord again appeared to him, and said: "Unto your seed will I give this land." (Genesis 12:7)

"And He gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on; yet He promised that He would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child." (Acts 7:5)

"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He says not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to your seed, which is Christ. ... And if you be Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:16,29)

"For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." (Romans 4:13)

And, by faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. ... And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. ... Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared for them a city." (Hebrews 11:9-10,13-14,16)

If we will be Christ's we must take His yoke upon us and learn of Him, for He is "meek and lowly in heart," (Matthew 11:29) and it is meekness and lowliness in heart which we must learn of Christ, that we may be His. And if we be His, then are we Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. So says Christ: "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth." (Matthew 5:5)--Signs of the Times, January 13, 1887--Notes on the International Lesson, January 30--Genesis 11:31 to 12:7.

A.T. Jones

Chapter 22

Promises to Abraham

1. When did the Lord first appear to Abraham? "And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken: The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran." (Acts 7:2)

2. What did He then say to him? "And said unto him, Get you out of your country, and from your kindred, and come into the land which I shall show you." (Acts 7:3)

3. To what place did Abraham go from Mesopotamia? "Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran; and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed into this land, wherein you now dwell." (Acts 7:4)

4. How long did Abraham stay in Charran (Haran)?

5. After the death of his father, where did he go?

6. Locate, as nearly as possible, all these places on the map.

7. Where do you find the record of these events of which Stephen speaks? "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house, unto a land that I will show you: And I will make of you a great nation, and

I will bless you, and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless you, and curse him that curses you: and in you shall all families of the earth be blessed. So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came." (Genesis 12:1-5)

8. How old was Abram when he went into the land of Canaan? "So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran." (Genesis 12:4)

9. How old was he when his father died?

10. When the Lord told Abram to leave his native country, what promise did he make? "And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless you, and curse him that curses you: and in you shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Genesis 12:2-3)

11. What expression shows that this promise was not merely a local affair?

12. How extensive was it?

13. What will be the condition of the world when this promise meets its fulfillment?

14. Who are they who are blessed? "Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law does he meditate day and night." (Psalm 1:1-2)

15. Then what will all the world do when this promise is fulfilled?

16. And when God's will is thus perfectly performed, what will be on this earth? "Your kingdom come, your will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven." (Matthew 6:10)

Notes:

The answer to question 9 will be readily seen by those who connect (Genesis 12:4 with Acts 7:4). He went out of Charran [or Haran] into Canaan when his father was dead, says Stephen. Moses says that he was seventy-five years old when he went into Canaan. So he was seventy-five years old, and his father died.

From a single expression in the promise contained in (Genesis 12:2-3), we know that it was not a local affair. That expression is

this: "In you shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Genesis 12:3)

It embraces all the inhabitants of the earth. But it is not fulfilled until all the inhabitants of the earth are blessed. That condition does not now exist, and has never yet existed. Now we learn in (Psalm 1:1-2) who are blessed,--those who love and obey the law of God. Of course; if the curse came because of sin, the blessing will come only when there is obedience.

Therefore, when this promise is fulfilled, every inhabitant of the earth will be delighting in the law of the Lord. In harmony with this are the words of Christ in his prayer, (Matthew 6:10) showing that such a state exists only when the kingdom of God exists on earth.--Signs of the Times, March 26, 1885--Lesson for the Pacific Coast - April 15--Genesis 12:1-5.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 23

Call of Abraham

1. Where did Abraham live when the Lord first appeared to him? "And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran." (Acts 7:2)

2. What did the Lord say to him? "And said unto him, Get out of your country, and from your kindred, and come into the land which I shall show you." (Acts 7:3)

3. What promise did the Lord then make to him? "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house, unto a land that I will show you: And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless you, and curse him that curses you; and in you shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Genesis 12:1-3)

4. What did Abraham then do? "Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein you now dwell." (Acts 7:4)

5. How old was he when he went to the land of Canaan? "So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went

with him; and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came." (Genesis 12:4-5)

6. Did he know before he started where he was going? "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house, unto a land that I will show you." (Genesis 12:1)

"And said unto him, Get out of your country, and from your kindred, and come into the land which I shall show you." (Acts 7:3)

7. In thus going from his home, what did he manifest? "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing where he went." (Hebrews 11:8)

8. What promise did the Lord afterward make him? "And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now your eyes, and look from the place where you are northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which you see, to you will I give it." (Genesis 13:14-15)

9. To whom besides himself was the promise made? "To your seed for ever." (Genesis 13:15)

10. How numerous did the Lord say that his seed should be? "And I will make your seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall your seed also be numbered." (Genesis 13:16)

11. Had Abraham any children at this time? "And Abram said, Lord God, what will you give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus." (Genesis 15:2)

12. What did the Lord again say as to the number of his posterity? "And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if you be able to number them; and He said unto him, So shall your seed be." (Genesis 15:5)

13. How did Abraham regard the word of the Lord? "And he believed in the Lord." (Genesis 15:6)

14. How did God regard Abraham's faith? "He counted it to him for righteousness." (Genesis 15:6)

15. What is meant by faith being counted for righteousness? The forgiveness of sins.

"But to him that works not, but believes on Him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describes the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputes righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose

iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." (Romans 4:5-8)

16. Through whom were the promises confirmed to Abraham? "And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." (Galatians 3:17)

17. And who are the promised seed? "And if you be Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:29)

18. What is the inheritance of which they, with him, are heirs? "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." (Romans 4:13)

Notes:

"Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." (Romans 4:3)

What was involved in this? Nothing less than the forgiveness of sins,--the imputing of righteousness without works. Paul, after stating that Abraham's faith was counted to him for righteousness, says that David describes the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputes righteousness without works, but solely on account of

faith, in the following words: "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." (Romans 4:7-8)

This counting a man righteous without works is the stumbling-stone over which so many fall. Some say that it is impossible, while others go to the other extreme and say that it at once and forever releases the believer from all obligation to make any effort. But it is done, and it does not release the individual from obligation to put forth continued effort.

How else can a man gain acceptance with God? He cannot do good deeds to make up for his past sins, for it is impossible for him to do more than his duty at any one time. Besides, an evil deed cannot be canceled by a good one. If he gets rid of the sins that he has committed, they must be taken away as an act of free grace on the part of God. Faith is the condition on which they will be removed.

Take Abraham as an example. The Lord made a promise to him, that would have staggered most men, it was so great, so incomprehensible. But Abraham "staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and was fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform; and therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness." (Romans 4:20-22)

The Lord made a great promise; Abraham said, I believe; and the Lord, in return for that simple faith, declared his sins forgiven. Thenceforward Abraham lived by faith, and thus it could be said by the Lord: "Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." (Genesis 26:5)

He could not have done this without faith, for "without faith it is impossible to please God." (Hebrews 11:6)

In what did Abraham have faith? In just the same thing that we are required to have faith if we would obtain the forgiveness of sins and eternal life,--that is, in the death and resurrection of Christ. Paul says that the promise to Abraham was confirmed in Christ.

"And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." (Galatians 3:17)

Therefore Abraham's faith was of the same nature that ours must be. He believed in Christ, "whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." (Romans 3:25)

No one can possibly have more perfect or more intelligent faith, than Abraham had, for he is "the father of all them that believe.

... Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it [righteousness] was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." (Romans 4:11,23-25)

But why is it that this faith does not tend to presumption, and to looseness of life? The reason is this: The possession of such faith as Abraham had, indicates humility, and submission to the will of God. Faith and humility are co-existent. Neither can exist without the other.

"Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith." (Habakkuk 2:4)

The man who will implicitly trust God's word, even against his own judgment, shows that he believes that God knows more than he does; he has put himself into God's hands, to be guided as God shall think best. Then of course as long as he retains that faith, he will gladly do the will of God. Thus true faith always leads to obedience. Abraham's faith was shown to be perfect by his works. (James 2:21-24)--Signs of the Times, February 17, 1888--Lesson 8 - Sabbath, February 25--Genesis 12:1 to 15:6.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 24

Promises to Abraham -- Continued

1. Under what circumstances was the promise first made to Abraham?

2. Repeat this promise? "And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless you, and curse him that curses you; and in you shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Genesis 12:2-3)

3. What condition of things will exist when this is fulfilled?

4. What scripture contains additional features of the promise? "And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now your eyes, and look from the place where you are northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which you see, to you will I give it, and to your seed for ever. And I will make your seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall your seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto you." (Genesis 13:14-17)

5. When was this promise made? "And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now your

eyes, and look from the place where you are northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward." (Genesis 13:14)

6. What did the Lord promise at this time? "And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now your eyes, and look from the place where you are northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which you see, to you will I give it, and to your seed for ever." (Genesis 13:14-15)

7. To whom besides Abraham was the land promised?

8. How long was it said that they should have it?

9. How numerous did the Lord say his seed should be? "And I will make your seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall your seed also be numbered." (Genesis 13:16)

10. If his seed was to be "as the dust of the earth," how much of the earth would it occupy?

11. Then to what was the promise equivalent?

12. How much territory does Paul say that the promise included? "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." (Romans 4:13)

13. Why did the Lord make such great promises to Abraham? "Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he has spoken of him." (Genesis 18:18-19)

Notes:

In our last week's lesson we learned that the first promise was made to Abraham while he was in his native country, when God told him to go out into a land which he should show him. (Genesis 12:1-3) We found that the promise affected not only Abraham, but all the people who should live at a certain time upon the earth; that at that time all would be blessed, and would, consequently, be keeping God's commandments.

After Lot had separated from Abraham, we find the promise renewed, with some additional particular. This will be found in (Genesis 13:14-17) There we find that land was promised to Abraham, and to his seed, and that it was to be theirs forever.

In the sixteenth verse we learn that his seed was to be "as the dust of the earth." This is but another way of saying that his descendants should fill the whole earth. That being so, it follows that the promise given at that time was that he and his descendants should possess the

whole earth. In (Romans 4:13) we learn that this conclusion is correct.

We must not fail to note, however, as recorded in (Genesis 18:18-19), that the Lord's promise to make of Abraham a great nation, was based on the fact that Abraham would command his children and his household after him, that they should keep the way of the Lord.--Signs of the Times, April 2, 1885--Lesson for the Pacific Coast - May 2--Genesis 13:14-17.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 25

Abraham and Lot

1. When Abraham left his native land, whom did he take with him? "And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came." (Genesis 12:5)

2. After his sojourning in Canaan, where did he go? "Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there." (Genesis 12:10)

3. Why did he go there? "And there was a famine in the land; ... the famine was grievous in the land." (Genesis 12:10)

4. How was he prospered while there? "And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold." (Genesis 13:1-2)

"And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels." (Genesis 12:16)

5. How was Lot situated as regards wealth? "And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents." (Genesis 13:5)

6. What was the consequence of the great wealth of both Abram and Lot? "And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together; for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle; and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt then in the land." (Genesis 13:6-7)

7. How was Abraham affected by this strife? "And Abram said unto Lot: 'Let there be no strife, I pray you, between me and you, and between my herdmen and your herdmen; for we be brethren.'" (Genesis 13:8)

8. What generous part did Abraham act? "Is not the whole land before you? separate yourself, I pray you, from me; if you will take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if you depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." (Genesis 13:9)

9. How did Lot respond to this generous offer? "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as you come unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east; and they separated themselves the one from the other." (Genesis 13:10-11)

10. What alone seemed to influence Lot in his choice?

11. Near what city did Lot pitch his tent? "Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom." (Genesis 13:12)

12. What was the character of the men of Sodom? "But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." (Genesis 13:13)

13. Did Abraham lose anything by his generosity? "And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now your eyes, and look from the place where you are northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which you see, to you will I give it, and to your seed for ever. And I will make your seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall your seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto you." (Genesis 13:14-17)

14. What great battle was fought some years after? "And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar;) and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim; With Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings with five." (Genesis 14:8-9)

15. What happened to the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and their people? "And the vale of Siddim was full of slimepits; and the

kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain. And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way." (Genesis 14:10-11)

16. Who else was taken captive? "And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed." (Genesis 14:12)

17. What do you think was the indirect cause of Lot's misfortune?

18. What charge is given to the rich? "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." (1 Timothy 6:17-19)

19. How sure may a man be of retaining riches? "Labor not to be rich; cease from your own wisdom. Will you set your eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven." (Proverbs 23:4-5)

20. What proverb was fulfilled in the case of Lot? "He that is greedy of gain troubles his own house; but he that hates gifts shall live." (Proverbs 15:27)

Notes:

Now note the result:

• Abraham was unselfish, and was willing to take whatever should be left, yet his wealth increased right along;

• Lot eagerly took the first choice, looking out for his own interests, and lost everything.

It doesn't always pay, even from a worldly standpoint, to be too eager for gain. We would not dwell unduly on the course of Lot, for the Bible makes no comment upon it; but we cannot but note that Abraham appears as the grand patriarch worthy of our admiration.

While the Bible says nothing directly concerning Lot's course, there is a great deal suggested in the statement that: "The men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." (Genesis 13:13)

It is strongly implied that Lot knew this, and that he ought therefore to have kept away from there.

"[He] pitched his tent toward Sodom," (Genesis 13:12) but we find that before long he was in Sodom. No doubt it was a good business town, affording a good market. Having started towards Sodom with the idea of bettering his fortunes, it was a very natural thing for Lot to go into Sodom for the same purpose.

"But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." (1 Timothy 6:9)

We do not learn that Lot himself was at all swerved from virtue by the wickedness with which he was surrounded; on the contrary, we know that he was very much vexed by it; but he suffered terribly in the loss of his family and his property.

"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy, (1 Timothy 6:17) is the exhortation of the apostle Paul. Riches themselves are not an evil; but trusting in them is. Money is a good thing; but the love of it is the root of evil.

"For the love of money is the root of all evil." (1 Timothy 6:10)

When men set their hearts on riches, then they show where their trust is. The man who didn't know what to do with his goods, and so pulled down his barns and built greater, and said to his soul: "Soul, you have much goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry," (Luke 12:19) trusted in his riches, and not in God. So does every man who hoards up his wealth. Such a man is an idolater; he sets gold ahead of the Lord; he tacitly says that his sole dependence for support is in his hoarded treasure, thus grieving God.

The warnings in the 6th chapter of 1 Timothy are not all for the rich. The poor may love money, and by their strivings after it for its own sake, even though they strive in vain, they may show that they trust in uncertain riches, rather than in the living God.--Signs of the Times, February 24, 1888--Lesson 9 - Sabbath, March 3--Genesis 12:5 to 14:12.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 26

Lot's Choice

Though the place of Sodom and Gomorrah was as beautiful "as the garden of the Lord," the people were so corrupt that neither earth nor Heaven could endure them but a little while longer.

"The men of Sodom were wicked and sinners exceedingly before the Lord." (Genesis 13:13)

And, "behold, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination." (Ezekiel 16:49-50)

This was the iniquity of Sodom. And though Lot found the place beautiful, he found the people abominable; and his righteous soul was "vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds." (2 Peter 2:7-8)

But, "evil communications corrupt good manners." (1 Corinthians 15:33)

And although Lot is given by the word of God the title of "just" and "righteous," yet his family was so far influenced by the "evil communications" of those wicked people, that his wife did not escape destruction, and his daughters, though they escaped, showed themselves more thoroughly familiar with the wicked ways of Sodom than with the righteous ways of their father.

"Lot's choice" was a miserable choice. Worldly prosperity is no evidence of the fear of God, but rather tends to make the naturally corrupt heart still more corrupt. Let it be the aim of all to "walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham," (Romans 4:12) that we may all be partakers with him of the same promise in view of which he ever lived and walked.--Signs of the Times, January 20, 1887--Notes on the International Lesson, February 6--Genesis 13:1-13.

E.J. Waggoner

Scripture Statements vs. Conjecture

We cannot refrain from expressing the wish that the writers of the Sunday-school lesson notes in some of the religious papers, would occasionally read what the Bible says upon the subject of the lesson. If they should, it would save them from some egregious blunders, and would be a mercy to the pupils whose ideas are molded in large measure by the lesson notes in their favorite journals.

The lesson entitled "Lot's choice" was improved by nearly everyone to moralize on the wickedness of Lot. The Christian Standard writer ended his sentimentalism as follows: "Lot pitched his tent towards Sodom, then entered the city, ceased to be shocked by its gross sins and idolatry, was humiliated by being captured and plundered by the five kings. His soul hardened against even such direct warnings as angel messengers from Heaven. At last forced to flee from the city empty-handed, and look back on what once seemed the garden of the Lord, as a fiery furnace, he makes his home in the caves of the earth, and finally ends life a drunken outcast, dishonored by men and disowned by God."

Now read in (2 Peter 2:4-8) that God condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah with an overthrow, turning them into ashes, "and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds)." (2 Peter 2:7-8)

Lot may have been selfish in his choice of territory, although the Scripture nowhere gives any intimation of such a thing. But we do have emphatic testimony to his righteousness, and that he himself was uncontaminated by the horrible wickedness around him, and from which he suffered greatly. Unscriptural morals are among the worst things written.

In this connection we would call attention to the International Lesson Notes that are given every week in the Signs of the Times.

The writer indulges in no guess-work, but directs the student's attention solely to the Bible. Sunday-school teachers and students will find it to their advantage to read the Commentary Department in the Signs. Those notes alone will more than make up for the price of the paper.--Signs of the Times, February 24, 1887

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 27

A Lesson in Unselfishness / Abram and Lot

When Abraham left his native country at the call of God, and came into the land of Canaan, he took his nephew Lot with him. For some time they remained together, Lot accompanying Abraham in all his journeyings. From the 12th chapter of Genesis we learn that they passed through Canaan, and went down into Egypt; our present lesson tells of their return to Canaan.

"And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai; unto the place of the altar, which he had made here at the first; and there Abram called on the name of Jehovah." (Genesis 13:2-4)

Abraham a Preacher

We see that Abraham did not forget his mission in the land, which was to preach the Gospel. Bear in mind what was said concerning the expression, "called on the name of the Lord." In the Hebrew the words are exactly the same as those in (Exodus 34:5), where we read that the Lord descended in the cloud to Moses upon the mount, and "proclaimed the name of the Lord."

Now it is evident that this is correctly rendered; because it is exactly what the Lord did on that occasion, as we learn from the

succeeding verses; and it is equally evident that it would be most improper--absolutely impossible--to render the expression, "called on the name of the Lord," as in (Genesis 12:8; 13:4). Therefore we are justified in giving to the term in these instances the same rendering that it has in Exodus, where we know it is correctly rendered. So we render the last part of (Genesis 22:4) literally, thus: "And there Abram proclaimed the name of the Lord," or, which is the same thing, "preached in the name of the Lord."

Division in the Church

"And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle, and the herdmen of Lot's cattle; and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt then in the land. And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray you, between me and you, and between my herdmen and your herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before you? separate yourself, I pray you, from me; if you will take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if you will depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." (Genesis 13:5-9)

We have termed this a division in the church, for Abraham's large family was emphatically a church--a congregation of believers. Abraham was "called out," which is the literal meaning of the Greek word commonly rendered church; and we have seen that his sole

business in the land of Canaan was to proclaim the name of the Lord, and to establish the worship of the true God.

The immense wealth that God gave him contributed to this end; it was simply a means of supporting the workers. Rightly used, as it was, it gave Abraham prestige among the people of the land, and assured him a hearing wherever he went. But while possessions bestowed by the Lord, "for it is He that gives the power to get wealth," (Deuteronomy 8:18) are designed as a great blessing,[1] they may, and often do, prove a source of trouble and backsliding from God. A blessing misused and its source unrecognized, always becomes a curse; for a curse is simply the wrong side of a blessing.

So the first trouble in the church in the land of Canaan, even as it was in the church in the days of the apostles, (See Acts 5:1-10; 6:1) was over the matter of the division and distribution of funds. In the case before us it was Lot that made the mistake, and Abraham who acted strictly according to Christian principle.

The Secret of Abraham's Generous Conduct

This is found in the last five verses of chapter 13, together with (Genesis 15:5-6).

"And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now your eyes, and look from the place where you are northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which you see, to you will I give it, and to your seed for

ever. And I will make your seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall your seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto you. Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord." (Genesis 13:14-18)

"And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if you be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall your seed be. And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness." (Genesis 15:5-6)

Abraham remembered the promise of God, that the whole earth was to be given to him and to his seed; therefore he could afford to be generous. The man who has everything can always be generous; in fact, we should expect him to be. Now the same promise applied equally to Lot, for "they which be of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham." (Galatians 3:9)

We are also included in the promise; for "Christ has redeemed us from the curse,... That the blessing of Abraham might come on [us] through Jesus Christ." (Galatians 3:13-14)

"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 early Christians not only gave liberally, but "took joyfully [even] the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance." (Hebrews 10:34)

It was this knowledge that made Abraham so generously courteous. He looked for a better country, that is, a heavenly, and whatever of temporal possessions he might have were only an incident. He knew that he was but a sojourner in the land; then why should he strive for the possession of any portion of it?

All men are but sojourners, equally with Abraham, and if they recognized that truth there would be no wars. Who would not think it most foolish, even in small children, to fight for the possession of soap bubbles? Yet the greater part of mankind is engaged in equally foolish and profitless work.

"The world passes away, and the lust thereof; but he that does the will of God abides for ever." (1 Timothy 6:17)

It is useless to contend over that which we cannot hold, even if we succeed in seizing it. As to the everlasting possession that God gives, the fact that God himself gives it to us shows that it is not to be gained by strife and contention; and nobody can take it from us, even though they kill us. Moreover the inheritance is inexhaustible, therefore we may be very "ready to distribute." (1 Timothy 6:18)

All Things Common

If Lot had been as mindful as Abraham was, of the purpose for which God had sent them into the land, he would not have separated from Abraham in the way he did. It might indeed have been necessary for them to separate for the more extensive proclamation of the name of the Lord; but it would not have been over a division of property.

Lot was a righteous man, and he did not allow his wealth to corrupt him, for his character remained pure even in Sodom; but he allowed the cares of this world to prevent him from being a missionary, and so he eventually lost all that he had. Earthly possessions are for no other purpose than to be used in the propagation of the Gospel; whoever uses them to this end will always have "all sufficiency in all things, ... being enriched in everything to all bountifulness." (2 Corinthians 9:8,11)

But those who attempt to hold them for their own personal use, will finally lose everything. They may be saved, as Lot was, yet it will be "so as by fire." (1 Corinthians 3:15)

On this basis, and on this only, can men have all things common, as was the case in the early church. "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." (Acts 4:32)

And as a matter of course, "Neither was there any among them that lacked." (Acts 4:34)

Modern Socialism aims at an equal distribution of property, but it is radically defective, and can never succeed. Its principles, while they seem to many to be Christian, are directly opposed to Christianity, as everything must be that leaves Christ out.

• The Christian way is for each one to say that what he has does not belong to him, but is given him in trust, to be used for the benefit of the world;

• The human way is for each one to say that he has a right to what belongs to somebody else, and that the world owes him a living.

The former method will provide everybody with all he needs all the time; the latter loads some down temporarily with that which they cannot use, while others are destitute, and at last leaves all empty-handed, for their riches take wings of fire, and in smoke fly away towards heaven.

So we say that if Lot had not allowed his wealth to tie him up, so that he could not continue in the missionary work, but had remembered that it was not his, his life would not have been the total failure that it was.

Opulence and Sin

"Lot lifted up his eyes and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere,...even as the garden of the Lord; ... Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan, ... and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom ware wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." (Genesis 13:10-13)

Now read what God afterwards said to Israel--the church--when they had lost the missionary spirit, and had become like the heathen round them: "Behold this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy." (Ezekiel 16:49)

While it is true that wealth is a blessing from God, if received as from Him, the majority of mankind, who are poor, have no reason to complain; because poverty is a still greater blessing than wealth.

"Hearken, my beloved brethren, Has not God chosen the poor in this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He has promised to them that love Him?" (James 1:5)

Jesus said unto His disciples: "Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 19:23)

Better, infinitely better, poverty in this world, with the heirship of heaven and earth, than to have the whole world and lose our souls.

Look abroad over the world in history or at the present time, and see where the simple virtues are most prevalent, and where vice most abounds. The inhabitants of tropical and semi-tropical lands, where abundance of food grows almost spontaneously, and people can live with scarcely any exertion, are invariably of looser morale than their brethren of lands where severe toil must be put forth in order to enjoy the products of the earth. This does not apply to the natives of those regions, whose desires are moderate, so much as to those who go there because of the ease with which wealth may be gained. It is in the North, where the climate is severe, and the earth in many places yields but a scanty supply, that the Word of God finds freest course. Compare the Scandinavian countries with Italy and Spain.

In the early history of the United States, and especially in the Colonial period, when the population was mostly confined to the North-east, where the land is rocky and responds only to the most patient industry, the simple, sturdy virtues were predominant. But when wealth began to multiply from the rich farming lands and the mines of the far West, and when money literally flowed from the ground, in the oil regions, dissolution and crime increased in proportion. There is no other country on earth where wealth is so abundant, and no other country has degenerated as the United States has in the last few years. When wealth accumulates, men always decay.

"They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. ... But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content." (1 Timothy 6:9,6-8)--Present Truth, July 25, 1901--International Sunday-school Lesson for August 4--Genesis 13:1-18.

E.J. Waggoner

Notes:

1. "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, says the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for you shall be a delightsome land, says the Lord of hosts." (Malachi 3:10-12)

Chapter 28

Abraham and Melchizedek

1. Where did Abraham dwell when Lot was taken captive? "And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner; and these were confederate with Abram." (Genesis 14:13)

2. When he heard of Lot's misfortune, what did he do? "And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan." (Genesis 14:14)

3. What success did he have? "And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people." (Genesis 14:15-16)

4. Who went out to meet Abraham on his return with the spoils? "And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale." (Genesis 14:17)

5. Who else met him and brought refreshments? "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine." (Genesis 14:18)

6. Who was Melchizedek? "He was the priest of the most high God." (Genesis 14:18)

"For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace." (Hebrews 7:1-2)

7. What besides giving him refreshments did Melchizedek do for Abraham? "And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth." (Genesis 14:19)

8. Which was the greater man, Abraham or Melchizedek? "Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. ... And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better." (Hebrews 7:4,7)

9. What did Abraham give to Melchizedek? "And blessed be the most high God, which has delivered your enemies into your hand. And he gave him tithes of all." (Genesis 14:20)

"Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils." (Hebrews 7:4)

10. What did the king of Sodom say to Abraham? "And the king of Sodom said unto Abram: 'Give me the persons, and take the goods to yourself.'" (Genesis 14:21)

11. What reply did Abraham make? "And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up my hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is yours, lest you should say, I have made Abram rich." (Genesis 14:22-23)

12. What only did Abraham reserve of the spoils? "Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion." (Genesis 14:24)

13. What had he taken out before he reserved the portion for the young men who went with him? "And blessed be the most high God, which has delivered your enemies into your hand. And he gave him tithes of all." (Genesis 14:20)

14. Since Abraham said that he would not take so much as a shoe latchet that belonged to the king of Sodom, whose property must he have regarded the tithe which he gave to the priest of the Lord? "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's; it is holy unto the Lord." (Leviticus 27:30)

15. Who is our priest? "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession." (Hebrews 4:14)

16. Of what order is he the priest? "Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." (Hebrews 6:20)

17. Then ought we not to pay tithes as well as Abraham?

18. What words of the apostle Paul indicate that our great High Priest should receive tithes of us? "And here men that die receive tithes; but there He receives them, of whom it is witnessed that He lives." (Hebrews 7:8)

19. What did Jesus himself say concerning men's duty to pay tithes? "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these you ought to have done, and not to leave the other undone." (Matthew 23:23)

Notes:

But although Abraham was a man of peace, he could fight when it was necessary. Taking three hundred and eighteen of his servants he pursued the enemy, and brought back Lot and his family, and everything that had been taken from Sodom. We must not

understand that Abraham's servants comprised the whole of the army, for we learn that Amer and Eshcol were confederate with him, and accompanied him on the expedition. Doubtless each of these had a large number of followers.

It was not a small thing for Abraham to conquer Chedorlaomer and his confederate kings. The seat of Chedorlaomer's kingdom was beyond the Euphrates; and a glance at the map will show how extensive his kingdom was when the city of Sodom was subject to him. Rawlinson says of his defeat by Abraham: "The actual slaughter can scarcely have been great, but the prisoners and the booty taken had to be surrendered; the prestige of victory was lost; and the result seems to have been that the Mesopotamian monarch relinquished his projects, and, contenting himself with the fame acquired by such distant expeditions, made no further attempt to carry his empire beyond the Euphrates. (Seven Great Monarchies, First Monarchy, chap. 8.)

This event, which stopped the course of an empire, is passed by in the Scripture narrative with a word. Rawlinson says that the word "slaughter" (Genesis 14:17) is too strong a rendering of the original. The Hebrew does not mean more than "defeat" or "overthrow." When we read that... "Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold, "Genesis 13:2" we cannot form any estimate of his greatness. But when we think that on an expedition of this kind he was able to arm three hundred and eighteen servants that were born in his own house, we know that he was not an ordinarily rich man. This one item, more than any other, gives us an idea of how God had

prospered Abraham. In his case we have a comment on the words of our Saviour: "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. But seek you first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:31-33)

Abraham's first desire was to have the righteousness of God; he looked for a heavenly country, and God gave him the wealth of this. We must not expect to see such wealth given to everyone who seeks God and His righteousness; He has not promised more than food and raiment, and, having that, the Christian will be content. But that is sure to be given. Says David: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." (Psalm 37:25)

So, "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." (1 Timothy 4:8)

The first recorded instance of tithing is this one, where Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, the priest of the most high God. Abraham had a right to all the property that he recovered from the Chaldeans, and this right the king of Sodom acknowledged when he said: " Give me the persons, and take the goods yourself." (Genesis 14:21)

But Abraham answered: "I have lifted up my hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is yours, lest you should say, I have made Abram rich." (Genesis 14:21)

Abraham would not be under obligations to a wicked man. The wealth that he had was received through the blessing of God; and now he would not give anybody a chance to say anything that would detract from the glory of God. So Abraham returned the goods to him, with the exception of a share for the young men who went with him.

But before Abraham had this talk with the king of Sodom, he had taken out a tithe of all, and had given it to Melchizedek.

"And he gave him tithes of all." (Genesis 14:20)

This was before the young men took out their portion. From this, then, we learn how we should pay tithe. The tithe should be the first-fruits. It should come out before we take out of our earnings that which is necessary for our support.

"The tithe ... is the Lord's." (Leviticus 27:30)

When we pay it to Him, we are simply giving to Him His own. For this reason Abraham could say that he would not keep back anything that belonged to the king of Sodom. One-tenth of all the

wealth of Sodom belonged to the Lord, and ought to have been given to Him. But the king was an unfaithful steward, and had kept the Lord's money. But when it came into Abraham's hands, he promptly gave the Lord that which belonged to Him.

"Will a man rob God?" (Malachi 3:8)

Alas! too many do. How is it with you, reader? Have you stolen property in your possession?

Many will ask the question, "Who was Melchizedek?"

The best answer that we can give is that he was "king of Salem, ... and ... priest of the most high God." (Genesis 14:18)

Our information does not go beyond this. That he was a type of Christ is stated in Psalms and in Hebrews. Christ is a high priest, "after the order of Melchizedek." (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5:10; 6:20, etc)

He combines the kingly and the priestly office in one person. And since Abraham paid tithe to Melchizedek, the type of Christ, surely the children of Abraham ought to pay tithe to Christ, the great high priest after the order of Melchizedek.--Signs of the Times, March 2, 1888--Genesis 14:13-24.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 29

God's Promise to Abraham

Our last lesson left us with Lot separated from Abraham, and on his way to Sodom. Although the nephew of Abraham improved his worldly condition by his new move, he was very soon in a position where be owed all that he had, and possibly his own life, to his generous uncle.

The king of Sodom rebelled against the powerful King Chedorlaomer, to whom he had become subject, and the latter, with his confederate kings, came against the king of Sodom and the other kings of the plain, and reconquered them.

"And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way. And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed." (Genesis 14:11-12)

News of this was brought to Abraham, who took three hundred and eighteen of his own servants, with some chiefs who were friendly to him, and pursued the victorious army. Coming upon it at night, he scattered it, and recaptured all the prisoners and the property.

This encounter might well give Abraham some uneasiness, for he could scarcely expect anything else than that the hosts of the East

would return in stronger force, and give him trouble. But God did not forsake Abraham, but appeared to him in a vision, saying: "Fear not, Abram: I am your shield, and your exceeding great reward." (Genesis 15:1)

God Our Defense and Reward

We have all things in having the Lord himself, He is our righteousness, our strength, our light, our reward, and our salvation. He does not merely impart strength, righteousness and salvation to us, but He himself is all that to us. So He is our reward. Having Him, we need nothing more. The psalmist says: "Whom have I in heaven but You? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside You." (Psalm 73:25)

Or, as the Norwegian has it: "When I have You, I have no desire for anything on earth."

There is nothing also that one can desire; for since "in Him all things consist," (Colossians 1:17, RV) that which is not in Him cannot continue. Note here that God never promises or gives anything to His people separate from himself. The land that He promised to Abraham could be inherited by him and his seed only as they were in Christ; and the countless seed of Abraham are only those who are Christ's.

"And if you be Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:29)

Those who have not God as their strength, their life, their salvation,--who are not satisfied with Him as their portion, can never have any part in the inheritance promised to Abraham.

Abraham's Descendants Not to Be Servants

Abraham evidently understood what God meant, but he could see no other way for the inheritance to come than through his servant Eliezer. He said: "What will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me, You have given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is my heir." (Genesis 15:2)

Verse 2 is thus given in the Revision: "He that shall be possessor of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus."

But it was not God's purpose that the seed of Abraham should be a race of servants. So the Lord said to him: "This shall not be your heir; but he that shall come forth out of your own bowels shall be your heir. And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now, toward heaven, and tell the stars if you be able to number them; and He said unto him, So shall your seed be. And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness." (Genesis 15:4-6)

The Faith That Is Righteousness

Why should Abraham's simple belief in the promise that he should have a posterity as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sand of the sea be counted to him for righteousness? Only because it was righteousness; for we may be sure that God does not play at a thing, calling it so when it is not so.

"With the heart man believes unto righteousness." (Romans 10:10)

Read the context, and see that the thing which the heart believes unto righteousness is that Christ, the Word, is very nigh, even in the mouth and in the heart. Now remember that Abraham "believed in the Lord." He believed in Christ revealed in his flesh, and that from the life at Christ all this would be wrought.

"For how many soever be the promises of God, in Him is the yes; wherefore also through Him is the Amen, unto the glory of God through us." (2 Corinthians 1:20, RV)

So we see that the promise to Abraham was in Christ, and Abraham saw Christ in it. It was the Gospel to Abraham. It was no half-way Gospel, dimly get forth, but the complete Gospel of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. We read that Abraham "staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief," (Romans 4:20) although the vastness of the promise to a man in his circumstances was enough to stagger one; but he was "fully

persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for offenses, and was raised again for justification." (Romans 4:21-25)

What Abraham Believed

That which Abraham believed in, was the offering of Christ for sin, and His resurrection for our justification. That is, he believed that Christ was already crucified "from the foundation of the world," (Revelation 13:8) and that He had come in his flesh with His resurrection life. He believed in and experienced the power of the resurrection; and he knew that God, who could make a new man of him, could make millions more.

More than this, he saw Christ revealed to all the world in his flesh, recognized as descended from him according to the flesh, and he knew that the power that could perform this is the Divine power that gives to us "all things that pertain unto life and godliness." (2 Peter 1:3)

So God indicated to Abraham, and through Abraham to us, that his seed is to be composed only of those who, through Christ, are free from sin.

A Covenant Confirmed by Death

Then God made a covenant with Abraham. The Hebrew idiom expressing, to make a covenant, is, "cut a covenant." It always implies the shedding of blood. The covenant was based on the life of God, the shed blood of Christ. In the deep sleep that fell on Abraham, in which "a horror of great darkness fell on him," (Genesis 15:12) God said to him: "Know of a surety that your seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterwards shall they come out with great substance. And you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." (Genesis 15:13-16)

What does this tell us? In the first place it confirms the statement that the faith which was counted to Abraham for righteousness was faith in the resurrection; for he was plainly told that he should die without inheriting the land. Not only so, but none of his posterity could have any inheritance in the land of Canaan until after four hundred years.

"He gave him no inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on; yet He promised that He would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child." (Acts 7:5)

Abraham died in faith, not having received the promised inheritance. It is evident that he never looked for a possession in the land except by means of and after the resurrection of the just. The covenant taught Abraham not only that death could not break it, but also that death--the death of Christ, and his death with Christ--was the very means by which it would be established.

When the Land Was to Be Possessed

Another thing that we learn from the verses quoted is that Abraham's seed were to return to the land "in the fourth generation," after four hundred years of sojourning and oppression. That is, they were to inherit the land at that time. There would then be nothing in the way of their possessing the country, for the iniquity of the Amorites would be full.

But the children inherit from the father, not the father from the children. The seed cannot enter into the inheritance of the father before the father himself possesses it. Therefore since there was a definite promise that Abraham's seed should inherit the land of Canaan after four hundred years, it follows that this was the time appointed for the resurrection. If the children of Israel had not failed, because of unbelief, to possess the land, the resurrection of all the righteous dead would have taken place at the time of the Exode.

Giving the Heathen a Chance

Again, we learn that God will not cut off the heathen, as long as there is any hope that they will accept the Gospel. He would not allow the Israelites to dispossess the Canaanites of their land until the Canaanites had sinned so grievously that the land could not hold them. And in the meantime there was salvation for any of them who would accept a place among the people of God, as demonstrated by the case of Rahab.

This truth shows the fallacy and the blasphemy of the doctrine of a future probation--a probation after death. It is not necessary, because God has given all men "a chance" ever since the creation, "so that they are without excuse" if they have not repented. (Romans 1:18-21) And to claim that a future probation is necessary, is blasphemous because it charges God with trifling with men, and not dealing in the same way with all.

Canaan to Be Possessed Only by the Righteous

Still further: from the passage in Genesis we learn that the land of Canaan could be possessed according to God's promise only by righteous people. The Canaanites were cast out because their cup of iniquity became filled up. The Israelites who came out of Egypt could not enter because of unbelief. Therefore those who did enter did not hold the possession, because they did not keep the faith; and they were at last carried far away into captivity because of their sins.

The promise was of land for an everlasting possession; not that it should pass from one generation to another, but both Abraham and all his seed were to possess the land for ever. But an everlasting possession means an everlasting life in which to possess it; and everlasting life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore it follows that all talk about the fulfillment of the promise by the emigration of the Jews to Palestine is not only absurd, but is a denial of the Gospel.

The promise is to us, if we have the faith of Abraham. Christ is now in the heavens until the time of restoration of all things; and in the meantime He comes to us by the Spirit, in the power of His resurrection, to bless us, in turning us away from our iniquities, so that we may share the inheritance with Abraham when He appears in glory.

"Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." (Hebrews 4:1)

"The upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it." (Proverbs 2:21)--Present Truth, August 1, 1901--International Sunday-school Lesson for August 11--Genesis 15:1-18.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 30

Promises to Abraham--Continued

1. Repeat the promise made to Abraham after Lot had separated from him.

2. Where is this promise found?

3. What did this promise embrace? "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." (Romans 4:13)

4. How great a posterity did the Lord say Abraham should have? "And I will make your seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall your seed also be numbered." (Genesis 13:16)

5. On another occasion, what did the Lord say of his posterity? "And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if you be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall your seed be." (Genesis 15:5)

6. Had Abraham at this time any children? "And Abram said, Lord God: 'What will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?'" (Genesis 15:2)

7. How did he regard this promise from the Lord? "And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness." (Genesis 15:6)

8. How did the Lord regard Abram's belief?"

9. How old was Abram when the Lord next appeared to him? "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be perfect." (Genesis 17:1)

10. What part of the promise did the Lord at this time renew? "And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly. ... And I will make you exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come out of you." (Genesis 17:2,6)

11. What name did the Lord at this time give him as a continual reminder of this promise? "Neither shall your name any more be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made you." (Genesis 17:1)

12. What is the meaning of "Abraham"? "Father of a great multitude." (Genesis 17:5, margin)

13. What did the Lord at this time say He would give to Abraham and his seed? "And I will give unto you, and to your seed after you,

the land wherein you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." (Genesis 17:8)

14. How long did the Lord say they should possess this land? "An everlasting possession."

15. And how much land have we learned that they were to have? "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world." (Romans 4:13)

16. On what condition was this promise given? "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be perfect." (Genesis 17:1)

17. Then to what other promise is this equivalent? "But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." (Psalm 37:11)

Notes:

The promise made to Abraham after Lot separated from him, will be found in (Genesis 13:14-17). It will be remembered that the promise embraced a grant of land, and this land, we learned (Romans 4:13), was the whole earth.

In (Genesis 17:1-8), we have the same thing repeated. At that time the Lord gave him his name, "Abraham," meaning, "a

multitude of nations," or a "father of many nations." This would serve to continually keep in mind the promise that his seed should be as the dust of the earth, and as the stars of heaven.

God also at this time repeated the statement that he would give the land (the earth) to Abraham and his seed for an "everlasting possession." As noted in our last lesson, this promise was on condition that Abraham should walk perfectly before the Lord. Since a meek person is a follower of Christ, and therefore perfect, it follows that this promise is equivalent to that already learned in (Psalm 37:11).--Signs of the Times, April 9, 1885--Lesson for the Pacific Coast - May 9--Genesis 17:1-8.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 31

Abraham's Plea for Sodom

1. Who came to Abraham while he lived in Mamre? "And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre; and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him; and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground." (Genesis 18:1-2)

2. Who were these men? "And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom; but Abraham stood yet before the Lord." (Genesis 18:22)

"And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground." (Genesis 19:1)

3. Did Abraham recognize the Lord as one of the three men?

4. How did Abraham show his hospitality? "And said, My Lord, if now I have found favor in your sight, pass not away, I pray you, from your servant: Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort you your hearts; after that you shall pass on: for therefore are you come to your servant. And they said, So do, as you have said. And Abraham hastened into the tent unto

Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat." (Genesis 18:3-8)

5. What exhortation based upon this occurrence is given to us? "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." (Hebrews 13:2)

6. When the men rose to go, what did Abraham do? "And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom; and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way." (Genesis 18:16)

7. What did the Lord say? "And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?" (Genesis 18:17-18)

8. Why did the Lord honor Abraham in this manner? "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he has spoken of him." (Genesis 18:19)

9. What did the Lord say of Sodom and Gomorrah? "And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous." (Genesis 18:20)

10. What did Abraham say to the Lord? "I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom; but Abraham stood yet before the Lord. And Abraham drew near, and said, Will You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city; will You also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from You to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from You; shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:21-25)

11. What reply did the Lord make? "And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes." (Genesis 18:26)

12. In what spirit did Abraham continue his plea? "And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes." (Genesis 18:27)

13. What was the second request, and the reply? "Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: will you destroy all the

city for lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it." (Genesis 18:28)

14. What concession did the Lord still further make in answer to Abraham's earnest prayer? "And he spoke unto Him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And He said, I will not do it for forty's sake." (Genesis 18:29)

15. How did Abraham still further pray, and what was the result? "And he said unto Him, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And He said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there." (Genesis 18:30)

16. For what still smaller number did the Lord say He would spare Sodom? "And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And He said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake." (Genesis 18:31)

17. Finally, how many righteous persons did the Lord say would save Sodom? "And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And He said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake." (Genesis 18:32)

18. In this simple narrative, what scripture do we see fulfilled? "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." (James 5:16)

19. Cite some notable instances where wicked men's lives were spared on account of a righteous man. "But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, you should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God has given you all them that sail with you. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me." (Acts 27:21-25)

"And it was so, that after the Lord had spoken these words unto Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against you, and against your two friends: for you have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job has. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that you have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job. So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the Lord commanded them: the Lord also accepted Job." (Job 42:7-9)

20. What relation do the righteous sustain to the people of the earth? "You are the salt of the earth." (Matthew 5:13)

21. Will the presence of righteous men always be sufficient to save the wicked from merited punishment? "Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast: Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, says the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness." (Ezekiel 14:19-20)

22. What is the only safe place for people to occupy? He that dwells in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress; my God; in Him will I trust. Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings shall you trust; His truth shall be your shield and buckler." (Psalm 91:1-4)

Notes:

We cannot always judge people by their appearance. In fact, judging from the appearance is about the most unsafe thing a person can do. Those three men who came to Abraham were no doubt very ordinary looking. Very likely they looked heated and dusty. Nevertheless two of them were angels, and one was the Lord himself. What a lesson for us, and how forcible are the words of the apostle: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." (Hebrews 13:2)

How many people are there who would invite the Saviour into their houses if He passed by just as He used to walk along the dusty roads of Judea and Galilee? Isaiah said that there was no beauty in Him that He should be desired. When we think of all the circumstances of the case, we shall be less likely to justify ourselves by condemning the ancient Jews for not accepting Christ. Their conduct was inexcusable; but would we have done any better?

It may not be amiss in connection with this incident in Abraham's life, to speak of the ancient practice of feet washing. Many people claim that in washing His disciples' feet, as recorded in (John 13:1-17), the Lord was simply impressing on them the importance of hospitality, and that He did a thing that was very common in those times. Christ's own statement to Peter: "What I do you know not now," (John 13:7) and also the simple fact that it was a thing absolutely unknown for a host to wash the feet of a guest, ought to be sufficient to disprove this; Abraham was the prince of hospitable men; but he said to the men: "Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree." (Genesis 18:4)

They were to wash their own feet, just as they were to rest themselves. No principle of hospitality or courtesy required one man to wash another's feet; but Christian fellowship does require just that, and not only that, but all the service one for another that may be implied by it.

Another lesson that ought not to be lost sight of may be learned from Abraham's prayer for Sodom.

• First, Abraham asked for just what he wanted, and

• Second, he was importunate. He gained confidence as he proceeded.

There is altogether too much formality in prayer. By this we do not wish to be understood as favoring in the slightest degree that familiar style of speech that is becoming common, with a certain class, and which cannot fail to shock a reverent person. Prayer should be uttered just as one cannot help uttering it if he realizes the greatness of the One whom he is addressing; but still the petitions should be such as would be made to a father.

A great deal of the formality in prayer is due to the fact that people don't expect to have their prayers answered. In fact, all the formality in prayers comes from that source. The people who have the most faith will be the most careful in their petitions.--Signs of the Times, March 9, 1888--Lesson 11 - Sabbath, March 17--Genesis 18:1-32.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 32

Abraham Pleading for Sodom

The time had come when Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, had filled up the measure of their iniquity, and like the inhabitants of Canaan afterward, and the antediluvians before, the earth could bear them, and the justice of God could spare them, no longer.

Yet they, as all others, were called, and were given an opportunity to escape the impending ruin. The Lord kept it not a secret from Abraham, and sent Lot to call whoever he could induce to escape. The responsibility for every wicked man's destruction is upon himself; God calls all, and will save all who will give him the opportunity.

"Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" (Genesis 18:17)

"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He reveals His secret unto His servants the prophets." (Amos 3:7)

And Abraham was a prophet.

"Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for you, and you shall live: and if you restore her not,

know you that you shall surely die, you, and all that are yours." (Genesis 20:7)

He was God's trusted servant, and the Lord would not destroy that city, so fearfully wicked as it was, without telling Abraham; He would not bring the flood without telling Noah; He would not give up Israel without sending them prophets in abundance; He did not at the last destroy Judah till, in addition to all the prophets, He had sent them His own Son, who, as He beheld the city in her stubbornness of spiritual pride, burst into weeping, exclaiming: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kill the prophets, and stone them which are sent unto you, how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not!" (Matthew 23:37)

"If you had known, even you, at least in this your day, the things which belong unto your peace! but now they are hid from your eyes. For the days shall come upon you, that your enemies shall cast a trench about you, and compass you round, and keep you in on every side, and shall lay you even with the ground, and your children within you; and they shall not leave in you one stone upon another; because you knew not the time of your visitation." (Luke 19:42-44)

That has been and is the trouble with all, they know not the time of their visitation.

• The people upon whom the flood came knew not the time of their visitation;

• The cities of the plain knew not the time of their visitation; nor Jerusalem.

• Felix knew not the time of his visitation, although he trembled at the message of God.

• Agrippa knew not the time of his visitation, although, by the earnest words of Paul, he was almost persuaded to be a Christian.

• Nero knew not the time of his visitation, though God called him twice.

It is a fearful thing to be so dulled by the influences of sin that we cannot perceive the gracious visitation of the love of God.

"Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart." (Hebrews 3:15)

"We ... beseech you that you receive not the grace of God in vain. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Corinthians 6:1-2)

Ten righteous people would have saved Sodom and the cities of the plain! No community knows, no city knows, no nation knows, the world itself does not know, what it owes to the few humble, pious people of God. They who fear God and walk in the steps of Christ are the salt of the earth. It is they who preserve from

destruction the vast multitude of the wicked; they are the light of the world, and God still bears with the wicked in patient waiting that they may in that light see His goodness and glorify Him in the day of visitation. The long-suffering of God is salvation. It is the history of the human race illustrated over and over, that as long as there is any possibility of getting any good out of a nation or a people, so long God suffers them to remain, though there be iniquity in them. But when all hope of good is gone, then that people is given over, as were those in the lesson today. Sodom and Gomorrah are made an example to all who live ungodly.

"And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly." (2 Peter 2:6)

But in this lesson on Sodom, there is a special lesson for all who live today. It is a lesson of the greatest importance. Jesus said: "As it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." (Luke 17:28-30)

The announcement is now being made throughout the land and to the ends of the earth, that the time is at hand when the Son of man will be revealed in a glory that will cover the heavens. Accompanying the announcement is a message of God which will make ready a people prepared for the Lord. If the message is heeded

by you, you may be among that people. That message is the Third Angel's Message:

"If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation. ... Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." (Revelation 14:9-10,12)

And that which follows closely upon the message is the coming of the Lord: "I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. ... And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped." (Revelation 14:14,16)

Thousands of people will study the lesson of Sodom today, and will wonder why they and those others listened not to the call of God, and knew not the time of their visitation; and yet will reject the message of God today, and will not now know the time of their visitation. It is easy enough now to believe that the flood, or this destruction of Sodom, came and destroyed all but those who believed and escaped. It is easy enough now to express surprise at the people there for not believing the message of God. It is easy enough now to do all this, and at the same time do exactly as they did in rejecting the message of God in our day, as they did in theirs.

God has now in the earth a message of warning, of entreaty, and of salvation, as really as he had in the days of Noah or of Lot. It must be believed and heeded as really if we would escape a destruction as real as was then. While the world stands, Paul's words to the men of Antioch are ever apt: "Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; behold, you despisers, and wonder, and perish: For I work a work in your days, a work which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." (Acts 13:40-41)--Signs of the Times, February 3, 1887--Notes on the International Lesson, February 20--Genesis 18:23-33.

A.T. Jones

Chapter 33

The Revealer of Secret Things

Whoever reads the Old Testament thoughtfully cannot fail to be impressed with the fact that the people who knew the Lord in the days of which it tells, lived on very intimate terms with Him. It could really be said of them that they knew Him. They did not merely know of Him, but they were personally acquainted with Him.

Simple Living Gives Clear Vision

If you ask for the reason for this familiarity with God, you will find it in this, that the lives of the people in those days were more simple than the lives of people now. They did not live in so great a rush. They did not have so many artificial wants to be supplied. There were not so many inventions as there are now, to make living complex. For it should not be overlooked, that what are called "modern conveniences" have greatly increased the trouble of living.

People often wonder how our forefathers managed to live without the "improvements" that we have. The truth is that they lived much better and more happily than the most of their descendants. Many inventions have now made wants that then were unknown, and people were then, as a general thing, more satisfied and contented. They lived peaceful lives, and had time to think. They did not have so many books, but they studied the vast book in which God is

revealed, and He was to them a personal Being, and not an article in the creed.

Abraham's Intimacy with God

Nowhere is the intimacy that existed between God and men more strikingly apparent than in the history recorded in the 18th chapter of Genesis. The Lord himself, accompanied by two angels, visited Abraham in visible form, enjoyed his hospitality, and talked familiarly with him.

When Abraham first saw them he could not recognize in them anything more than ordinary travelers, and such he received them. Yet when he learned, as he soon did by their conversation, that his guests were heavenly beings, it does not seem to have made any difference with him. He did not become embarrassed, and begin to apologize. There was the same free yet dignified hospitality. One would think that he had been accustomed to meet and talk with heavenly messengers every day, and so he had. He was acquainted with the Lord, and to see Him face to face did not throw him out of balance.

How to Treat Our Fellow-Men

There is one thing that we must not forget in reading this narrative, and that is the instruction it gives us as to how to treat our fellow-men. Abraham treated the Lord and His angels just as if they were really ordinary men, because he was accustomed to treat mere

men as courteously as if they had been the Lord. He did not have two sets of manners; his best were for everyday use; and when the Lord came to visit him, he could not do any better than he was in the habit of doing. This is true courtesy, true hospitality. It is the courtesy that comes from daily association with the inhabitants of the court of the King of kings.

God Cannot Keep Aloof from Men

When Abraham's guests started away, he accompanied them a little distance. Than the Lord said: "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?" (Genesis 18:17-18)

That is to say: "How can I keep a secret from Abraham?"

That is the language of one with regard to another, whose friendship he values; and this was the case. The Lord loves the society of men, and has chosen them for His intimate companions. He cannot hold himself aloof from them. It is wonderfully helpful and encouraging to know that it is not mere pity, that prompts God to seek to save us. It is not merely because He has compassion on us in our fallen condition, but because He loves us. His love for us, and His desire for our companionship, leads Him to search us out. How greatly He longs for us may be learned from the sacrifices He makes to obtain us.

The Lord thought so much of Abraham, that He could not keep anything secret from him; but Abraham is not the only one so favored.

"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant." (Psalm 25:14)

Jesus says: "You are my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you;" (John 15:14) and friends share one another's secrets. Again Jesus said: "The Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He does." (John 5:30)

But Jesus also prayed that His disciples might know that the Father loved them even as He loved Him.

"I in them, and You in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that You have sent me, and have loved them, as You have loved me." (John 17:23)

Therefore we may be sure that God will show us all things that He does.

"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He reveals His secret unto His servants the prophets," (Amos 3:7) and He reveals His secret to them in order that they may in turn pass it on to whomsoever will hear.

The Joy of the Revelation

Many fail to get the comfort that they should from the statement that there is nothing secret that shall not be revealed, because they do not sufficiently consider the connection. Jesus was sending the disciples out to preach, and in forewarning them of persecutions that they must endure at the hands of wicked men, He added: "Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak in light: and what you hear in the ear, that preach upon the housetops." (Matthew 10:26-27)

We see that the hidden things that are to be revealed are the deep things of God, which we in turn are to proclaim to the world.

"He reveals the deep and secret things; He knows what is in darkness, and the light dwells with Him." (Daniel 2:23)

God Knows Whom He Can Trust

The best reading of (Genesis 18:17-18) is: "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; and Abraham shall surely become a great nation," etc.

The connecting word is "and," and not "seeing." That Abraham should become a great nation comes in incidentally, and not as the reason why the Lord would favor him with His confidence. The

reason for that is found in the next verse: "For I know him." (Genesis 18:19)

That was why the Lord could not keep His plans hidden from Abraham: He knew him; He could trust him. How easy of comprehension the character of God is! We do not trust our secrets with those whom we do not know, but only to those whom we know, and whose loyalty is approved. God knows whom He can trust, and He trusts those whom He knows.

"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He has spoken of him." (Genesis 18:19)

What God's Foreknowledge Does For Us

The expression, "I know him," implies more than mere acquaintance. Gesenius renders it: "I have chosen him, that he may command," etc.

The French of Segond, and the Swedish also have: "I have chosen him."

That is, the Lord had known, or recognized, Abraham in the multitude as a kindred spirit, and had singled him out. He knew what Abraham would do, and He had chosen him to do that very

thing. The Lord knew Abraham so well that He allowed Abraham to know Him.

In this we have a sidelight on the unnecessarily difficult question of foreknowledge; for it is evident that the saying that God had known, or chosen, Abraham, indicates that He foreknew him. He knew him beforehand. He knew Abraham before Abraham knew Him. He knows us before we can possibly know Him, He knew Cyrus more than a hundred years before he was born, and appointed him to the great work of his life. He knew Jeremiah, and ordained him to be a prophet, before his birth. So also with Samson, John the Baptist, and, in fact, everybody; only most people will not accept God's foreknowledge, with the position of labor and blessing to which it calls them.

Then let us be glad and rejoice in God's foreknowledge and fore-ordination, for: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. 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. 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?" (Romans 8:28-31)

Commandments of Righteousness

God said of Abraham: "He will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." (Genesis 18:19)

He knew that there would be force to Abraham's commands--the force of his own righteous life. He would command, and it would be done. Here we see a likeness to God's commands: "He spoke, and it was; He commanded, and it stood fast." (Psalm 33:9)

Why? Because His own life was in the word spoken. When men "say, and do not," (Matthew 23:3) there is no life in their teaching, and it cannot be expected that there will be any results. The scribes and Pharisees, as the successors of Moses, taught good precepts; but they did not cause the people to do righteousness, because there was not the power of righteousness in their utterances. When a man has learned to rule himself in righteousness, that is, to submit himself completely to the rule of the Spirit, he can rule others; but there will be nothing of the despotic in his commands.

Parents Saved in the Salvation of Their Children

"They shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He has spoken of him." (Genesis 18:19)

Abraham's salvation depended upon his children. This is strikingly suggested in the fact that the promise could be fulfilled to him only through his Seed--Jesus Christ. In that the Lord indicates that the salvation of the fathers depends largely upon their sons.

"Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the Government shall be upon His shoulder." (Isaiah 9:6)

God could not bring upon Abraham that which He had spoken of him, unless he so commanded his children that they kept the way of the Lord. If the father allows his children to go to destruction, there is fear that he will also be destroyed. The Christian must be able to say with Christ: "Here am I, and the children whom You have given me." (Isaiah 8:18)

The last part of the 18th chapter of Genesis is taken up with the account of Abraham's intercession for the city of Sodom. It reveals in a striking manner the humble boldness of Abraham. There was no self-assertion, he was most humble and respectful, and yet he pressed his petitions with increasing boldness. Each point gained gave him confidence to press another. This speaks volumes for the longsuffering kindness of the Lord. He can be pleaded with in behalf of weakness and transgression.

"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:16)--Present Truth, August 8, 1901--International Sunday-school Lesson for Aug. 18--Genesis 18:16-33.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 34

Destruction of Sodom (1888)

1. While Abraham was pleading with the Lord for Sodom, what were the two angels who accompanied him doing? "And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom; but Abraham stood yet before the Lord." (Genesis 18:22)

2. At what time did the angels reach Sodom? "And there came two angels to Sodom at even." (Genesis 19:1)

3. How did Lot greet them? "And Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground." (" (Genesis 19:1)

4. What trait had Lot in common with Abraham? Hospitality.

5. How did he exhibit it? And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and you shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night. And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat." (Genesis 19:2-3)

6. What place of honor did Lot occupy in the city of Sodom? "And Lot sat in the gate of Sodom." (Genesis 19:1)

7. Cite other instances that indicate that those who sat in the gate occupied an office of public trust. "Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king." (Daniel 2:49)

"And when the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai sat in the king's gate. ... In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the door, were wroth, and sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. And the thing was known to Mordecai, who told it unto Esther the queen; and Esther certified the king thereof in Mordecai's name." (Esther 2:19,21-22)

"And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and reverenced Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence. Then the king's servants, which were in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, Why do you transgress the king's commandment?" (Esther 3:2-3)

"Wisdom is too high for a fool: he opens not his mouth in the gate." (Proverbs 24:7)

"Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land." (Proverbs 31:23)

"The elders have ceased from the gate, the young men from their music." (Lamentations 5:14)

8. What words of the Sodomites corroborate this? "And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with you, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door." (Genesis 19:9)

9. Did Lot participate in the wickedness of the Sodomites? "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds." (2 Peter 2:6-8)

10. What was the crying sin of Sodom and Gomorrah? "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." (Jude 7)

11. What marked contrast was there between the hospitality of Lot and the actions of the men of Sodom? "But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: and they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men

which came in to you this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them. And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him, and said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly.

12. What did the angels say to Lot? "And the men said unto Lot, Have you here any besides? son in law, and your sons, and your daughters, and whatsoever you have in the city, bring them out of this place: For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord has sent us to destroy it.(Genesis 19:12-13)

13. What did Lot do? And Lot went out, and spoke unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city." (Genesis 19:14)

14. How did his sons-in-law regard his appeal? "But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law." (Genesis 19:14)

15. What did the angels say as soon as it was morning? "And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take your wife, and your two daughters, which are here; lest you be consumed in the iniquity of the city." (Genesis 19:15)

16. What steps did they take to hasten Lot and his family? "And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord

being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city." (Genesis 19:16)

17. What earnest charge did the angels give them? "And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for your life; look not behind you, neither stay in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest you be consumed." (Genesis 19:17)

18. As soon as Lot had escaped, what did the Lord do? "The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and He overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground." (Genesis 19:23-25)

19. What happened to his wife because she disregarded the command of the angels? "But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt." (Genesis 19:26)

20. What warning is given to us, in view of such facts as this? "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him." (Hebrews 2:1-3)

21. What did Jesus say of the condition of the world just before his second coming? "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." (Luke 17:28-30)

22. What will he do when he is revealed? "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

23. Of what was the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah an example?" (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9)

"And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." (Jude:6-7)

24. What charge is given to us who are living in these last days? "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be

overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:34-36)

25. What warning is given us? "In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away; and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife." (Luke 17:31-32)

Eternal Fire

The student may also notice that the fire which doomed the cities of the plain is called "eternal fire." (Jude 7) Yet it is not now burning. Then when the wicked, at the last day, shall be driven away into "everlasting fire," (Matthew 25:11) we need not conclude that the fire will never cease to burn.

But must it not continue to burn forever, if it is not quenched? Not by any means. The fire that consumed Sodom and Gomorrah was not quenched, and as a consequence it turned them into ashes. If it had been quenched, they would not have been turned completely to ashes, but some ruins would have been left standing. Well, we read that the wicked shall be burned up root and branch, (Malachi 4:1) and that "they shall be ashes." (Malachi 4:3)

Now when a thing has been reduced to ashes what becomes of the fire that did the work? It goes out for lack of combustible material to feed upon. So it was with the "eternal fire" that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah: so it will be with the "everlasting fire" that shall destroy those who are found wicked at the last day; and from that fire will come forth the renewed earth, purified from the curse, and restored to its Eden beauty.--Signs of the Times, March 16, 1888--Lesson 12 - Sabbath, March 24--Genesis 19:1-26.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 35

The Destruction of Sodom (1887)

When Abraham had reduced to ten the number in whose behalf he would plead with the Lord to spare Sodom, and the Lord had said He would not destroy it for ten's sake, Abraham ceased to plead any further. It has been supposed that ten was just the number of Lot's family and connections. And this seems probable from close attention to the narrative. We find Lot and his wife, and his two daughters that escaped, making four. Then we read of "his sons-in-law, which married his daughters," (Genesis 19:14) and that these daughters were two, which seems to be implied in the words of the angels to Lot, "Arise, take your wife, and your two daughters," (Genesis 19:15) which are here.

This would seem to imply that there were two daughters who were not there. Then besides these we read of his "sons" (verse 12), which would require at least two. Thus we have Lot and his wife, and his two daughters unmarried, two sons, and his two daughters and their husbands, his sons-in-law, making just ten.

It is, therefore, most probable that when Abraham ceased pleading at the number ten, he had in view Lot and his whole family. And when the Lord agreed that if these were righteous, the city should stand, it seems that Abraham considered that sufficient, for if these should not be found righteous, it would be unreasonable to ask anything more.

"And the Lord went His way, as soon as He had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place." (Genesis 18:33)

The two angels that had departed from Abraham and the Lord went on toward Sodom, and came to Sodom at evening. Lot, sitting at the gate of the city, arose to meet them and invited them into his house to stay overnight. The angels proposed to stay in the street all night, but Lot, not knowing but that they were only men, and knowing the dreadful wickedness of the place, "pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat." (Genesis 19:3)

The men of Sodom, however, knew of their coming, and before very long a great crowd gathered from every quarter and surrounded the house, demanding that the angels whom they thought men, should be delivered up to them. Lot attempted to remonstrate with them, but it only made them worse and they attempted to break the door. Then the angels drew Lot into the house and shut the door, and smote the mob with blindness, "both small and great; so that they wearied themselves to find the door." (Genesis 19:11)

Then the angels made known to Lot who they were, and said to him: "Have you here any besides? son-in-law, and your sons and your daughters, and whatsoever you have in the city, bring them out of this place: For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them

is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord has sent us to destroy it. And Lot went out, and spoke unto his sons-in-law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law. And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take your wife, and your two daughters, which are here; lest you be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for your life; look not behind you, neither stay in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest you be consumed." (Genesis 19:12-17)

Here the personal pronoun changes from "they" to "he," and from "we" to "I," showing that the Lord, with whom Abraham had talked, had come to Sodom, and that he was the One in whose power the destruction lay. Lot pleaded to be allowed to stop in the little city--Zoar--and the Lord granted that, and "the sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and He overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground." (Genesis 19:23-25)

"As it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but the same day that Lot

went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." (Luke 17:28-30)

The people of those cities arose that bright, beautiful morning, as they had arisen morning by morning, year after year, always. One went about this business, another that; one to his merchandise, another to his building; one to his eating and drinking, another to his planting. To them all things were as they always had been. They knew of nothing unusual that was about to occur; and, worse than that, they would not be convinced that there was.

When Lot spoke to them of the destruction that hung over the place, to them it was only foolish mockery. And when they saw Lot and his two daughters--and his wife as far as she went--running swiftly across the plain, we have no doubt but they sent after them many a ribald shout. They knew nothing, they believed nothing, they feared nothing, of any destruction coming. But it came. Their unbelief did not delay it a moment, nor did it temper the terror when it came.

"Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." (Luke 17:30)

The Lord sends a message to the world that He is coming again. He gives line upon line, precept upon precept, prophecy upon prophecy, and sign upon sign, that His coming is at the doors, and that men must be ready to meet Him in peace without spot and

blameless. But His messengers are despised, His word is slighted, and all His tokens are set at naught. Men will not believe that He is coming. To them all things go on as usual, and as they always have gone. But one of these days will be the last, as it was with Sodom.

Christ has declared that the end of the world shall be. He points to a certain generation and says that that generation shall not pass away before He himself appears. And in that generation He will appear as surely as destruction came upon Sodom. Men may not believe it, as those of Sodom did not; these may treat the message as mockery, as did those; these may scoff at the messengers, as did those; but none of these things will nullify the promise of Christ, nor delay His coming, nor deliver those who are not prepared to meet Him when He does come.

When now in preparing to meet the Lord, men separate themselves from the world and from everything in the world, they will be counted as foolish as was Lot when he left Sodom and hurried across the plain. But there, those who left all were the ones who escaped, while those who remained to scoff remained to perish.

"Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." (Luke 17:30)

"Arise, and depart; for this is not your rest; because it is polluted, it shall destroy you, even with a sore destruction." (Micah 2:10)

And as you depart, "remember Lot's wife." (Luke 17:32)--Signs of the Times, February 10, 1887--Notes on the International Lesson, February 27--Genesis 19:3-25.

A.T. Jones

Chapter 36

The Test of Faith (1888)

1. What was the character of Abraham? "Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." (Genesis 26:5)

2. Were his early associations favorable to the formation of such a character? "And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus says the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor; and they served other gods." (Joshua 24:2)

3. For what reason was Abraham counted righteous? "For what says the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." (Romans 4:3)

4. What will true faith do? "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which works by love." (Galatians 5:6)

"For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith." (1 John 5:4)

5. What did the Lord do to test Abraham's faith? "And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham; and he said, Behold, here I am. And He said, Take

now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and get into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell you of." (Genesis 22:1)

6. How did Abraham obey? "And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him." (Genesis 22:3)

7. How long did they travel before they came to the place? "Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off." (Genesis 22:4)

8. What did Isaac say to his father as they were going together to the place of sacrifice? "And Isaac spoke unto Abraham his father, and said, My father; and he said, Here I am, my son. And he said: Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" (Genesis 22:7)

9. What was Abraham's reply? "And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together." (Genesis 22:8)

10. When they came to the place what did Abraham do? "And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood." (Genesis 22:9)

11. How far did he proceed toward slaying Isaac? "And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son." (Genesis 22:10)

12. How was he prevented from completing the sacrifice? "And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here I am. And He said, Lay not your hand upon the lad, neither do any thing unto him." (Genesis 22:11-12)

13. What did the angel of the Lord say was now proved? "For now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son from me." (Genesis 22:12)

14. How were Abraham's words, that God would provide himself a lamb, fulfilled? "And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son." (Genesis 22:13)

15. What promise did the Lord make because Abraham had done this? "And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself I have sworn, says the Lord, for because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son; that in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and your seed shall possess

the gate of his enemies; and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because you have obeyed my voice." (Genesis 22:15-18)

16. What made this a peculiarly strong test of Abraham's faith? Isaac was Abraham's only son (Genesis 22:2); there was no earthly hope that he could ever have another; and more than all, God had promised that his numerous seed should come through Isaac. (Hebrews 11:17-18)

17. What did Abraham believe that God was able to do? "Accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." (Hebrews 11:19)

18. What did this act prove concerning Abraham's faith? "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Do you see how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" (James 2:21-22)

19. What wonderful title did Abraham thus gain? "And the scripture was fulfilled which says, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness; and he was called the Friend of God." (James 2:23)

20. Who may share this blessing? "So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." (Galatians 3:9)

The question that troubles many people is, How can it be true that: "A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law, " (Romans 3:28) and also that: "By works a man is justified, and not by faith only." (James 2:24)

This question is answered in the case of Abraham, as cited above. In the first instance he was justified by simple faith, without works. Works could not have entered into that justification. Afterwards when he offered Isaac, he was justified by works, but, let it never be forgotten, that work was the outcome of his faith; it was the evidence of perfected faith. If it had not been for Abraham's faith, he never would have performed that work.

"Faith wrought with his works." (James 2:22)

That is, faith made use of works, to show that it was not dead, but was in active existence. So faith is necessarily first. There cannot be works that will justify, without underlying faith. A man is justified by works, and not by faith only, simply because "faith without works is dead." (James 2:20)

And so if he has "faith only," unaccompanied by works, it is not real faith at all. Yet whatever good works are manifested in a man's life, must be the result of faith; and thus it is true that: "The just shall live by faith." (Romans 1:17)--Signs of the Times, March 23, 1888--Lesson 14 - Sabbath, April 7--Genesis 22:1-18.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 37

The Test of Faith (1901)

Doubtless everybody who has read the history of Abraham and Isaac has thought that the test that Abraham was called upon to undergo was the severest that could possibly come to any man. Yet, few readers grasp all the details, and comprehend all that was involved in it. Let us briefly rehearse the facts.

Abraham was an old man, as men reckon, when he received the promise from God that he should have a son. He was seventy-five years old, and his wife was sixty-five. They had no child, and, humanly speaking, it was impossible for them to have one. Nevertheless God assured them that it should be as He said--that they should have a son of their own.

But not at once did God fulfill the promise. The promised son was to be His gift, received by faith, and it must be very apparent that it was wholly His gift; and also the faith of Abraham and Sarah must be so strengthened and purified that the deadness of their bodies would not in the least degree diminish their assurance that it would be even as God said.

Accordingly, they had to wait twenty-five years before the birth of Isaac. It was thus that their faith became strong, purged from everything earthly and fleshly, and centered only in Christ.

How different from men's ideas! People talk about faith getting weak through long waiting; and most of the joyous professions of "faith"--statements to the effect that "now I fully believe the Lord"--that one hears come as the result of a gift already received. In their joy over finding their desires fulfilled, people fancy that they have perfect faith in God. But that is not true faith. It is not the faith that comes by hearing the Word of God, but a manufactured faith. It is of the same nature as that expressed in the remark,

"I'll believe you when I see you do the thing."

It is not that kind of faith that justifies and gives peace with God. Abraham believed God when the promise was first made known to him; and, with the exception of one misstep, which resulted from uninstructed faith rather than absence of it, his faith grew stronger as the years of waiting passed. And "by faith even Sarah herself received power to conceive seed when she was past age, since she counted Him faithful who had promised," (Hebrews 11:11) although she had once laughed at the mention of such a thing. There is a great lesson for us in this; for only those who walk in the steps of our father Abraham can share the promise with him.

"Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (John 20:29)

At last Isaac, the child of promise and of long expectation was born. The joy of Abraham and Sarah was more than ordinary joy when "a man is born into the world;" (John 16:21) for the promise

ran "in your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed," (Genesis 28:14) and "in Isaac shall your seed be called." (Genesis 21:12)

They well know that this meant the Messiah, Jesus, and that on the Seed that was to be born in Isaac's line depended their eternal salvation, and that of the whole world. No other person, save Mary of Nazareth, ever had such wondrous reason to rejoice over the birth of a son.

In this joy Abraham and Sarah lived for twenty-five years, until Abraham was one hundred and twenty-five years old, and Sarah one hundred and fifteen. Isaac was twenty-five, in the full vigor of young manhood. Then came the supreme test: "Take now your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and get into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell you of." (Genesis 22:2)

Cutting Off the Messiah

From what we have already learned, we know that this meant literally the cutting off of the Messiah. The call tested not merely Abraham's fatherly love, but his faith in God's love, who "so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

He had believed that God would give him a son, through whom the Messiah should be born, and now he was called on to sacrifice that son, and, seemingly his hope of salvation, since another son was not in the question.

Faith in the Resurrection

But "by faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall your seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure." (Hebrews 11:17-19)

Abraham could offer up his only begotten son, because of his confidence that God had--not would, but had--already offered up His only begotten Son, and that by virtue of the death and resurrection of Christ, Isaac would be raised from the dead. That is, the Messiah yet to be born of Isaac's line would raise Isaac from the dead in order that He might be born! (Yet in the face of this, men talk about the pre-existence of Christ as though it were a debatable question.)

This was but a test of the faith by which Abraham first received Isaac; for the birth of Isaac was life from the dead. Abraham did not lose sight of the promise that in Isaac his seed should be called, and he knew that the same power that brought Isaac into the world would raise him from the dead.

A Fiery Trial

However, if anybody thinks that Abraham set about the execution of this order with a light heart, let him read the story of Gethsemane. Although Christ knew that He came into the world for the express purpose of giving His life for it, and had repeatedly told His disciples that He should be crucified and should rise again the third day, the night of His betrayal was the trial of His life.

Be sure that Satan whispered all sorts of doubts into Abraham's mind before he set out on his journey to the land of Moriah. It is no sin to be tempted; the sin comes only in yielding to the temptation; and Abraham let all the doubts that Satan could suggest be swallowed up in the promise of God.

A Type of Christ

Isaac was a type of Christ. In him we see all the particulars of Christ's birth, life, and death pictured out.

• He was born of the Spirit, contrary to nature, as men understand it.

• On him rested the salvation of the world, because of the promise of God; and

• In his cutting off it looked to human understanding as though all hope was lost, even as to the disciples it seemed that everything

perished when Christ was laid in the tomb. Yet that very cutting off was what was to beget a living hope in thousands; and so the offering of Isaac assured salvation, since it was the crowning act of faith, by which we are saved.

• Christ carried the cross on which He was to be offered, and Isaac carried the wood for the altar on which he was to be offered.

• Christ offered himself voluntarily, although sent by the Father; and Isaac likewise meekly yielded himself to death; for he was young and strong, and his aged father could not have bound him to the altar without his consent.

The Climax of Faith

"And on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you." (Genesis 22:4-5)

Here we have the climax of faith. In those two verses we read (Hebrews 11:17-19), which have already been quoted. Abraham knew that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead, and he expected that it would be done at once, so that they would came back together. For notice that his words to the young men were that they would both go to worship, and that both would return to them. There was no trace of doubt in this faith.

We do not need to follow the history farther, for we well know the result. Now that Abraham had showed that his faith was perfect, (See James 2:22) and that he believed the simple word of God, that word was confirmed by an oath. Thus we see that the strongest assurances come as the result of faith, instead of faith depending on the fulfillment of something. Faith itself is "the evidence of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:2)

It was for our sakes that God confirmed the promise by an oath. Abraham did not need it; but in order that we who flee to Christ for refuge might have strong consolation. (See Hebrews 6:18) God gives us even stronger assurances than He did Abraham.

The Friend of God

"And he was called the friend of God." (James 2:28)

That test brought Abraham and God very near together. They were bound together by mutual suffering and mutual sacrifice. In offering up his only begotten son, Abraham entered fully into the experience of God in offering up His only begotten Son. Abraham became the special friend of God, not because of any partiality on the part of God, but because no one who had not passed through that experience could possibly be so closely bound to Him. True friendship is not a matter of fancy, but the communion of souls that are bound together by a peculiar experience common to both, and by mutual understanding.

The honor of being friends of God may be ours as well as Abraham's, and we may each be received into as close fellowship, if we are willing to share His sacrifice and suffering.

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy." (1 Peter 4:12-13)--Present Truth, August 15, 1901--Genesis 22:1-14.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 38

Promises to Abraham--Continued

1. After Abraham had obeyed the command to offer up Isaac, what did the Lord swear to do?

"By myself have I sworn, says the Lord, for because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son: That in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because you have obeyed my voice." (Genesis 22:16-18)

2. How numerous did he say Abraham's seed should be?

3. Where have we found similar expressions? "And I will make your seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall your seed also be numbered." (Genesis 13:16)

"And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if you be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall your seed be." (Genesis 15:5)

4. What did the Lord say that Abraham's seed should possess? "Your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies." (Genesis 22:17)

5. What is indicated by the statement that his "seed shall possess the gate of his enemies"?

6. Then with what other scriptures already learned, is this parallel? "And I will bless them that bless you, and curse him that curses you; and in you shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Genesis 12:3)

"For all the land which you see, to you will I give it, and to your seed forever." (Genesis 13:15)

"For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." (Romans 4:13)

7. What further shows that the promise in (Genesis 22:16-18) is the same as those already learned? Compare (Genesis 22:18) with (Genesis 12:3; 18:18).

8. Why did the Lord now say that He would do this thing? "And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because you have obeyed my voice." (Genesis 22:18)

9. And what have we before found was the condition on which the promise was based? "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of

the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He has spoken of him." (Genesis 18:19)

10. What did Stephen say as to the fulfillment of the promise recorded in (Genesis 13:15; 17:18)? "And He gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on; yet He promised that He would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child." (Acts 7:5)

11. What do we know concerning all of God's promises? "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9)

"For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." (2 Corinthians 1:20)

12. Then what must we conclude concerning these promises to Abraham?

Notes:

"Your seed shall possess of the gate of his enemies." (Genesis 22:17)

Ancient cities, as is well known, were surrounded by walls, and the only means of entrance was by means of gates, which were well guarded. Whoever controlled those gates, controlled the city. If an

enemy could gain possession of the gates of a city, they could keep the inhabitants closely confined within, or could admit whomsoever they chose. So to possess the gate of one's enemies would signify supreme rule.

When it was promised that Abraham's seed should "possess the gate of his enemies," we understand that his seed was eventually to occupy all the territory then occupied by those who were antagonistic to him. But this was equivalent to the inheritance of the earth, thus showing that this text is parallel with (Genesis 12:13; 13:15; Romans 4:13), which have already been considered.

Notwithstanding these promises, which were made to Abraham as well as to his seed, Abraham died without seeing their fulfillment. Stephen says that God did not give him enough of the land to set his foot on, although He promised that He would give him the whole of it. But we know that the Lord is not slack concerning His promises, and that all His promises are yea and amen; they cannot be broken. Every one will be fulfilled to the letter.

This being the case, we must conclude that the Lord did not intend that Abraham should receive the inheritance immediately, but that the promise should be fulfilled to him at some future time. When we read that Abraham "died in faith," (Hebrews 11:13) although he had not received the inheritance, we know that this was the way he understood the Lord. Had Abraham not thus understood the Lord, he would have died discouraged, instead of "in faith."--

Signs of the Times, April 16, 1885--Lesson for the Pacific Coast (May 16)--Genesis 22:16-18.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 39

Bartering for the Birthright

1. How old was Isaac when he was married? "And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Padan-aram, the sister to Laban the Aramean." (Genesis 25:20)

2. How old was he when his two sons were born? "And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel, and his name was called Jacob; and Isaac was three score years old when she bore them." (Genesis 25:26)

3. What were their names? "And the first came out red, all over like a hairy garment; and they called his name Esau. And after that came his brother out, ... and his name was called Jacob." (Genesis 25:25-26)

4. What difference was there between them? "And the boys grew; and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents." (Genesis 25:27)

5. How did the parents regard them? "And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison; but Rebekah loved Jacob." (Genesis 25:28)

6. What did Jacob have as Esau came in one day from a hunting trip? "And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint." (Genesis 25:29)

7. What did Esau say to Jacob? "And Esau said to Jacob: 'Feed me, I pray you, with that same red pottage; for I am faint'; therefore was his name called Edom." (Genesis 25:30)

8. What did Jacob reply? "And Jacob said: 'Sell me this day your birthright.'" (Genesis 25:31)

9. How did Esau reason concerning the birthright? "And Esau said: 'Behold, I am at the point to die, and what profit shall this birthright do to me?'" (Genesis 25:32)

10. What transaction was thus made by the two brothers? "And Jacob said: 'Swear to me this day'; and he swore unto him; and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way; thus Esau despised his birthright.'" (Genesis 25:33-34)

11. What was the birthright, and what was its importance to anyone?

12. How did Esau regard his birthright? "Thus Esau despised his birthright." (Genesis 25:34)

13. How highly did he value it? He considered it worth no more than a meal of victuals to satisfy present necessity.

14. What language is used concerning Esau for this proceeding? "Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright." (Hebrews 12:16)

15. How did he afterward feel concerning the blessings of his birthright? "For you know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." (Hebrews 12:17)

16. Relate, in brief, the circumstances. (Genesis 27:1-40)

17. Was he able to get back the birthright? "For you know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected." (Hebrews 12:17)

18. Why not? Because he had deliberately sold it, and could not alter the trade.

19. What is the exhortation given to us in this connection? "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For

you know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." (Hebrews 12:14-17)

20. If we are children of Abraham, what is our birthright? "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." (Romans 4:13)

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." (Colossians 1:12)

"Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knows us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John 3:1-2)

21. Through what are we made heirs of this inheritance? "Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Colossians 1:13-14)

22. What does the Spirit through Paul say of one who despises his heavenly birthright? "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer

punishment, suppose you, shall he be thought worthy, who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and has done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Hebrews 10:28-29)

23. How may we do this? "For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica." (2 Timothy 4:10)

24. What can you say of the condition of one who deliberately barters his interest in the blood of Christ, and his hope of eternal life, for a little present enjoyment? "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose you, shall he be thought worthy, who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and has done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know Him that has said, Vengeance belongs unto me, I will recompense, says the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Hebrews 10:29-31)

Notes:

Esau might have had a share in the promise if he had wanted it. True, Paul says that before the birth of Jacob and Esau, it was said unto Rebekah: "The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." (Romans 9:12-13)

But this was simply because: "God, who ... calls those things which be not as though they were, (Romans 4:17) could foresee just what kind of character Esau would develop. God is no respecter of persons, and He does not bestow His favors arbitrarily. Esau was rejected, not simply because he deliberately sold his right to the promised inheritance, but because of the utter lack of faith, which led him to so lightly esteem the promises of God.

The objector will no doubt say that Jacob appears in a worse light than Esau does, and that if God is a respecter of character, and not of persons, Jacob was less entitled to regard than Esau was. But that is a very superficial view of the case.

So far as character is concerned, there is no man that has by nature anything that is worthy of the approbation of God. Even the zealous Paul, whose great aim was "to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men," (Acts 24:16) and who could say before the Jewish council: "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day," (Acts 23:1) said that he had suffered the loss of all things that he might win Christ, "and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." (Philippians 3:9)

God respects an upright character, but since there can be no perfect character except through the faith of Jesus Christ, (Galatians 2:16) it is evident that His promises and favor must be extended to the one whose faith gives promise of a growth toward perfection.

So far as the record shows, at the time of which our lesson treats, Esau had naturally the advantage of Jacob; but Esau lacked faith, and Jacob possessed it, and from that time we see a growth for the worse in Esau, and for the better in Jacob. God never showed any approval of Jacob's course in securing the blessing; on the contrary Jacob had to suffer grievously on account of his duplicity; but through the faith that Jacob had, although it was crude and uninstructed, God could work for his complete moral reformation.

Peter shows the work of true faith, when he says to the people of God that they may suffer manifold temptations, "that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 1:7)

And in that day this will be found to be the case with Jacob. The case of Rahab may be taken as an illustration. James says that Rahab the harlot was justified by works when she had received the messengers and sent them out another way: "Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?" (James 2:25)

And Paul says that "by faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace." (Hebrews 11:31)

Yet in concealing the spies, for which she received the promise that she should not perish, she deliberately lied. (See Joshua 2) She was not saved because of her falsehood, but because of her faith that the God of the Israelites was the true God. She acted up to the best light that she had. Among the heathen it was esteemed a virtuous thing to lie, and she knew no better. But her faith brought her into relation with God's people where she could learn the way of truth. Thus we see that "the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, [for,] the just shall live by faith." (Romans 1:17)

Esau is not the only one who has sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. An old pipe, a plug of tobacco, a jug of whiskey, the pleasure party, the card table, and other "good things" of this life have been sufficient to cause many to turn their backs on their heavenly inheritance. Esau said: "Behold, I am at the point to die; and what profit shall this birthright do to me?" (Genesis 25:32)

Thousands of others when brought face to face with some duty, the performance of which would interfere with their worldly interests, have virtually said the same thing. They have said: "I know that this is the truth of God, but if I should obey it I couldn't make a living," thus intimating that they did not believe the promises of God would be of any profit to one who should die for them. It is more than probable that many who have accepted the truth, are putting self and selfish pleasures above the service of God, and are thus bartering their birthright. Let such beware lest they complete the sale and then find it too late to repent. And, "let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." (1 Corinthians 10:12)--

Signs of the Times, March 30, 1888--Lesson 15 - Sabbath, April 14--Original title: The Commentary--Genesis 25:20-34.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 40

Isaac the Peacemaker

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." (Matthew 5:9)

What is a peacemaker? Most people suppose that it is one who separates people who are fighting, or who acts as mediator between two persons who are quarreling, bringing them into at least outward agreement. A peacemaker is this and much more: it is one who literally makes--manufactures--peace, and who always keeps a stock on hand, so that nobody and nothing can exhaust the supply.

The man who makes peace by being so peaceable that it is impossible for anybody to quarrel with him, is a peacemaker in a far higher sense than is one who merely induces belligerents to cease their outward warfare. It was this sort of peacemaker that Isaac was. Read the story of how he made peace in the land of the Philistines, whither he had gone on account of a famine in the land of Canaan. No apology is necessary for reprinting it.

"Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year a hundredfold: and the Lord blessed him. And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great: For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him. For all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, the

Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth. And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us; for you are much mightier than we. And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. And Isaac dug again the wells of water, which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them. And Isaac's servants dug in the valley, and found there a well of springing water. And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours: and he called the name of the well Esek [contention]; because they strove with him. And they dug another well, and strove for that also; and he called the name of it Sitnah [hatred]. And he removed from thence, and dug another well; and for that they strove not: and be called the name of it Rehoboth [room, or wideness]; and he said, For now the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." (Genesis 26:12-22)

Take in the whole situation, and you have a most striking lesson. Isaac was wealthy and powerful. His father Abraham had so many trained servants in his own household that he could arm them and pursue a victorious army and put it to flight; and Isaac had inherited all his father's wealth and had greatly increased it. The Philistine king himself acknowledged that Isaac was mightier than he; yet at his request that Isaac should leave him, Isaac left without a word. This was the first instance of Isaac's peaceable disposition.

It would have been but natural for Isaac to respond to Abimelech, when the latter said, "Go from us; for you are much mightier than

we." "Go yourself; I am more powerful than you are, and you cannot help yourself; I have as much right to the country as you have; and shall stay where I please."

That would have been natural; but Isaac was born of the Spirit, and therefore the peace of God reigned in his heart; so to avoid all trouble he quietly went away.

Then the Philistine herdman claimed a well of water which clearly belonged to Isaac. It had formerly belonged to his father, and Isaac's servants had dug it out afresh.

"There," someone might say, who believes in one's standing up for his rights, "that is just what might have been expected: let people impose on you once, and they will keep on imposing on you; when once they find that you will not resist, they will take everything you have."

Well, it didn't work that way in the case of Isaac, as the story shows. True, the Philistines did take advantage of Isaac's meekness to seize two valuable pieces of property that belonged to him; but at the last God made room for him, and he really lost nothing; whereas if he had stood on the defensive, some lives might have been lost, and no property on earth is worth as much as one human life.

The second well was dug, and the herdmen strove for it; but Isaac would have no strife, so he quietly went away and dug another. What a marvelous exhibition of meekness! Why was the account

written? In order that we might know how all might act; who claim to be heirs of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

"Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." (Galatians 4:28)

It is said of the Christians immediately after the great Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured out so abundantly, and all were filled with it: "Neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own." (Acts 4:32)

That being the case, it is evident that none of them would have fought or gone to law to recover any property which a covetous person might have seized. Whenever professed Christians make use of carnal weapons, or go into the courts of earth, in defense of their possessions, they really deny God; they tacitly say that their support is the same as that of the world, and that God does not specially care for His people, but that they must look out for themselves. Oh, how little real Christianity there is in the world!

It is a hard thing for those who have riches, or for those who want to have riches, and who trust in them, to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Isaac had riches; but he held them only under God, and therefore he would not strive for them. The man who does not claim anything that he has as his own, has no occasion or inclination to fight for it.

When at last the Lord had made room for Isaac, he built an altar, and preached in the name of the Lord, just as Abraham had done. "And he built an altar there, and called upon the name of the Lord." (Genesis 26:25)

What effect do you think his preaching would have had if he had quarreled with the Philistines, even in the most dignified and legal way, for the possession of his property? Do you not see that when Isaac proclaimed the name of the true God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the heathen readily saw that he believed in the existence of such a Being?

But if Isaac had striven with them, and had insisted on maintaining his "rights," they would have said: "If you believe in a God that made heaven and earth, and that still upholds all things by the word of His power, why do you not trust Him to take care of you, and to protect you? You make use of exactly the same methods that we do; what is the difference between you and us?"

How often the name of God is blasphemed among the heathen through the worldly policy and unbelief of professed Christians! Who will show himself to be a child of God indeed, by keeping the peace of God, which Christ left to all His followers?--Present Truth, August 22, 1901--Genesis 26:12-25.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 41

The Harvest Blessing

"And Isaac sowed ... and received ... a hundredfold; and the Lord blessed him. (Genesis 26:12)

The Hebrew particle which is rendered "and" has also a host of other uses. In fact, there is scarcely any connective for which it does not stand. Gesenius, the Hebrew lexicographer, tells us that: "This particle is very widely extended in its use, since the Hebrews, in many cases in which sentences require to be connected, did not make any precise distinction of the manner of connection; and thus in the simplicity of ancient language they made use of one copula, in cases in which, in more cultivated languages, adversative causal, or final particles would be used."

Instances are numerous in which the same word so often rendered "and" is correctly rendered "because." With this explanation we may be sure that we are not taking any liberty with the text when we read it thus: "Isaac sowed ... and received ... a hundredfold; because the Lord blessed him."

Segond has it: "Car l'Éternel le bénit." "for the Lord blesses him." The blessing of the Lord does not come because of our prosperity, but is the cause of it. Man may sow, but it is God who gives the increase. He does not always give us material wealth, as an evidence of His blessing; yet we have this sure promise: "Bring all the tithes

into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, says the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed; for you shall be a delightsome land, says the Lord of hosts." (Malachi 3:10,12-13)

However, no thought of what we may receive should ever enter into our service to God; for in that case it would not be service to God, but mere self-serving. God's promise to Isaac was" "I will multiply your seed." (Genesis 26:24)

This was a repetition of the promise to Abraham, that God would bless him by giving him an abundant posterity. Now take notice of the significance of the statement occurring in the same chapter, that God blessed Isaac in giving him an abundant harvest for his sowing. God multiplied his seed that he sowed, and from this Isaac could learn the reality of God's promise when He said: "I will multiply your seed," (Genesis 26:24) meaning his own posterity. Thus every returning harvest is a reminder to us that God will multiply godly men and fill the earth with them, and it is at the same time an announcement of the coming gathering of the faithful at the final harvest, which is the end of the world and the coming of Christ.--Present Truth, August 22, 1901--Genesis 26:12.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 42

Scattering and Finding

In the scripture assigned for the International Sunday-school lesson we have read that: "Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year a hundredfold." (Genesis 26:12)

The Revised Version has "found" in the place of "received," and this is also in the margin of the Common Version. As indicated there, it is the exact rendering of the Hebrew. Isaac sowed, and found.

Now this suggests a great truth, which we may learn if we will think as we read. What does one do when he sows grain? He scatters the grain on the ground, does he not? He actually throws it away. And this is the meaning of the Hebrew word, to sow. It means, to scatter, as we might naturally expect. So we may read the text thus: "And Isaac scattered in that land, and found in the same year a hundredfold."

He scattered, and he found. Now we have the lesson clearly set forth before our eyes. "There is that scatters, and yet increases; and there is that withholds more than is meet, but it tends to poverty." (Proverbs 11:24)

"Cast your bread upon the waters; for you shall find it after many days;" (Ecclesiastes 11:1) and when you find it, you will find more

than you cast away. Would it not then be the part of wisdom to scatter--sow--all that we have? Keep all the talents you have, whether of money, intellect, or strength, in constant use to God's glory, and they will increase. Withhold nothing, or you will lose it.

A man there was, though some did count him mad;

The more he cast away, the more he had.--Present Truth, August 22, 1901--Genesis 26:12.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 43

Jacob's Vow

1. Relate the means by which Jacob secured the blessing.

2. Was this honorable on the part of Jacob? "And he said, Your brother came with subtlety, and has taken away your blessing." (Genesis 27:35)

3. What is the meaning of the name "Jacob"? "And he said: 'Is he not rightly named Jacob [margin: "A supplanter"]? for he has supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he has taken away my blessing.' And he said: 'Have you not reserved a blessing for me?'" (Genesis 27:36)

4. How did Esau regard Jacob for his course in securing the birthright? "And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him." (Genesis 27:41)

5. What did he purpose to do? "And Esau said in his heart: 'The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob.'"

6. What did Jacob's mother advise him to do? "And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah: and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, your brother Esau, as touching you, does comfort himself, purposing to kill you.

Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee to Laban my brother to Haran; and tarry with him a few days, until your brother's fury turn away; until your brother's anger turn away from you, and he forget that which you have done to him: then I will send, and fetch you from thence; why should I be deprived also of you both in one day?" (Genesis 27:42-45)

7. Into how many years did the "few days" expand? More than twenty.

8. What sort of a sleeping-place did Jacob have one night on his journey? "And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran.

And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep." (Genesis 28:10-11)

9. What dream did he have there? And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it." (Genesis 28:12)

10. Who stood at the head of the ladder? "And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon you lie, to you will I give it, and to your seed." (Genesis 28:13)

11. What promise did the Lord make to him? "And your seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in you and in your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with you, and will keep you in all places whither you go, and will bring you again into this land; for I will not leave you, until I have done that which I have spoken to you of." (Genesis 28:14-15)

12. What did Jacob say when he awoke? "And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said: 'Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not.'" (Genesis 28:16)

13. What did he say of that place? "And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." (Genesis 28:17)

14. When the Lord appeared to certain of his servants what did he say to them? "And he said: 'Draw not nigh hither; put off your shoes from off your feet; for the place whereon you stand is holy ground.'" (Exodus 3:5)

"And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose your shoe from off your foot; for the place whereon you stand is holy. And Joshua did so." (Joshua 5:15)

15. What may we learn from this? That the presence of God in any place makes that place holy.

16. Where has the Lord promised always to be? "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20)

17. What lesson should this teach us? That places dedicated to the worship of God are sacred, and should always be entered with reverence.

18. What did Jacob do in the morning? "And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel; but the name of that city was called Luz at the first." (Genesis 28:18-19)

19. What vow did he make? "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that you shall give me I will surely give the tenth unto you." (Genesis 28:20-22)

20. What was the extent of Jacob's desire from the Lord? "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on." (Genesis 28:20)

21. Could he have asked for less?

22. Yet what did he purpose to do? "Of all that you shall give me I will surely give the tenth unto you." (Genesis 28:22)

23. Is it right to make vows or pledges to the Lord? "Vow, and pay unto the Lord your God; let all that be round about Him bring presents unto Him that ought to be feared." (Psalm 76:11)

24. When a person makes a vow, what should he be careful to do? "When you vow a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he has no pleasure in fools: pay that which you have vowed. Better is it that you should not vow, than that you should vow and not pay." (Ecclesiastes 5:4-5)

25. Why should we be so careful to pay our vows? "When you shall vow a vow unto the Lord your God, you shall not slack to pay it; for the Lord your God will surely require it of you; and it would be sin in you." (Deuteronomy 23:21)

Notes:

God is able to make a small quantity equal to the largest amount. When the widow had only a handful of meal, and a small cruse of oil, the Lord made that small amount sufficient support for a family of three for a full year. (1 Kings 17:8-16) With only five loaves and two small fishes, the Lord fed more than five thousand people. (John

6:8-13) It may be said that these were miracles. So they were; and he who does not see a miracle in his being kept alive and provided with daily food, "knows nothing yet as he ought to know." (1 Corinthians 8:2)

"It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning." (Lamentations 3:22-23)

Surely since God gives us everything that we have, working miracles daily for our support, and is able to multiply a handful of meal into many barrels, He may well be depended on to make a little go a great ways for one of His servants.

Some people there are who refuse ever to make a pledge for the Lord's cause. They profess to believe that it is wrong to do so. How they can think so in the face of the Scripture record is a mystery. Not only does the Scripture contain instances of vows that have been made, but it expressly commands us to make vows.

The man who refuses to make a reasonable pledge to the Lord's cause, for fear that when the time comes he may be unable to pay, is in the same condition as one who refuses to make a profession of religion, for fear he will not be able to hold out. Such ones show a total lack of confidence in God, indicating that they expect to have to do in their own strength all that is done. Their action is equivalent to saying: "I am afraid that the Lord will fail me; I dare not run the risk."

And yet those very persons who are afraid to promise to do what they know to be their duty, have no hesitancy in giving a note to a man, promising to pay him a certain sum of money at some future time. The sincerity of any who profess to think it wrong to pledge, may well be doubted.

The Lord has said: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20)

Yet how many who go to the prayer-meeting, where there undoubtedly are more than two who have come in the name of Jesus, could say: "The Lord is in this place, and I knew it not"?

The Lord was at Bethel before Jacob had his dream; so the presence of the Lord in any place does not depend upon our recognition of it. We do not have to wait until the prayer-meeting is over, in order to be able to say that the Lord was present. Those who do so, lose a great deal of the blessing of His presence. But we should begin the meeting knowing that He is there because He has promised to be there; in that case we shall be prepared to receive the fullness of His blessing.--Signs of the Times, April 6, 1888--Lesson 16 - Sabbath, April 21--Genesis 27 to 28:22.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 44

From Earth to Heaven

An infidel once thought to tease a little girl by asking her: "How far is it to heaven?" She replied: "I don't know, sir; but I sent a message there this morning, and got an answer back in less than a minute."

It was this nearness of heaven to earth that Jacob learned that lonely night at Bethel. Up to that time he had been an ignorant believer. He was not "a profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright." (Hebrews 12:16)

He had a believing nature, or rather, we may say, he had retained his childish faith; but it was uninstructed. He believed in the promise made to his father, so much that he was willing to use any means to secure this inheritance, but he was so ignorant of spiritual things that he did not know God can be worshiped only "in spirit and in truth," (John 4:24) and that He must fulfill His own promises. It was an exceedingly crude faith that he had, but God recognized it and responded to it.

"When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." (Psalm 27:10)

This Jacob learned also that night. It is true that his parents had not cast him off, yet he was nevertheless an outcast from his home.

He had the birthright, but he was a fugitive from home, with no possessions but a traveling staff. Then God gave him his first real lesson in fatherhood and home. For the first time Jacob had a conception of the magnitude of the Father's house, in which there are many mansions. That night he learned that God is everywhere--that heaven is His throne, and the earth His footstool, (Isaiah 66:1) and that one cannot travel so far as to be out of His presence.

"Whither shall I go from your spirit? or whither shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend up into heaven, You are there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall your hand lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hides not from You; but the night shines as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to You." (Psalm 139:7-12)

There are many professed Christians today as ignorant as Jacob was. Often, if their eyes were opened, they would be compelled to exclaim, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not." (Genesis 28:16)

Wherever one may go or stay, it can truly be said: "The Lord is in this place."

The sad thing is that His people do not recognize His presence. When one awakes to the truth that God is in every place,--not as a

dim theory, but as a living personality,--the earth to him becomes new, and heaven rests upon it. Then one first begins really to live. To see God everywhere, in everything that He has made, and where nothing at all is visible to the eye of the body,--more than this, to feel Him, and know Him, is the highest wisdom possible to man.

"And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." (Genesis 28:17)

Do not make the mistake of confounding the word "dreadful" with "frightful." The Hebrew word here rendered "dreadful" is identical with that which in (Psalm 111:9), is translated "reverend": "Holy and reverend is His name." (Psalm 111:9)

That is, the name of God is holy and to be feared. Think of this word as synonymous with awful, that is, "filling with awe." Such is the place and the presence of God; and they who dwell in His house will never be found indulging in light and foolish talk or actions. A knowledge of God's presence must produce a dignity and steadiness of character.

"Holiness becomes your house, O Lord, for ever." (Psalm 93:5)

Yet this consciousness of being in God's house, in His immediate presence, by no means begets sadness, gloom, or melancholy. Quite the contrary. There are no long, woe-begone faces in His house.

"Happy are they who dwell in your house: they will be still praising You." (Psalm 84:4)

Before Jehovah's awful throne,
You nations bow with sacred joy.
(Isaac Watts, Psalms of David, "Psalm 100," 1719.)

Christ the Connecting Link

What is the ladder that Jacob saw, set up on earth with the top reaching heaven, and "the angels of God ascending and descending on it?" (Genesis 28:12)

John contains the answer in the words of Christ to His disciples: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter you shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." (John 1:51)

It is He who unites earth to heaven, and makes both one. "In Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth; and in Him all things consist." (Colossians 1:16-17)

In coming to earth, He has brought heaven with Him, and His presence recognized makes a heaven of any place in earth.

In Him all my wants are supplied,
His love makes my heaven below.
(Annie Wittenmeyer, Hymn: Jesus is Might to Save)

Christ is so much greater than anybody has ever yet realized. No one has yet comprehended to the full, "what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, [of the] love of Christ, which passes knowledge." (Ephesians 3:18-19)

He is the substance of all reality. Scientists have for years vainly sought "the missing link;" if they would only look to Christ in simple yet perfect faith, they would find it. In Him is life, for He is the Word of life which was from the beginning: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." (1 John 1:1-2)

And it is His life that gives every created thing its existence and its distinctive character. He it is, also, who gives to all things in creation their family likeness. There is indeed a unity in all nature; but instead of teaching, as evolutionists imagine, that all things are but developments of one original portion of matter, which evolved itself from nothing, this likeness reveals the presence of Him from whom all things have come.

The highest intelligent creature is indeed related to the lowest plant, but this relation is not that of offspring to parent, but of brotherhood, because all things, high and low, great and small, draw their life from one common Source. From the bosom of God all

created things draw their nourishment; for in Christ all things were created and still consist, and He is in the bosom of the Father.

"[God] dwells in the high and holy place, "and at the same time with Him," (Isaiah 57:15)

"On the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, "He is on earth with His people." (Hebrews 8:1)

"He is not far from every one of us." (Acts 17:27)

But that alone is not enough; we must by our conscious recognition of His presence, come near to Him. God has united all men in himself, "if haply they might feel after Him and find Him." (Acts 17:27)

Many jostle against Him in the throng; few touch Him by faith; but the few know the reality of the joys of heaven. Christ is the first and the last, the beginning and the end, "the fullness of Him that fills all in all," (Ephesians 1:23) so that when we come unto Him by intelligent faith we at once receive the end of it. Thus in Him, earth and heaven meet.--Present Truth, August 29, 1901--International Sunday-school Lesson for September 8--Genesis 28:10-22.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 45

The Land and the Church

When God appeared to Jacob in his dream at Bethel, He said to him: "I am the Lord God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac; the land whereon you lie, to you will I give it, and to your seed; and your seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in you and in your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Genesis 28:13-14)

This was the repetition of the promise that God had already made to Abraham and Isaac, and which they both understood. It was the promise "that he should be the heir of the world," (Romans 4:13) and was "to Abraham and to his seed." (Luke 1:55)

That same land that was promised to Jacob that night, had also been promised to Abraham and to his seed, "for an everlasting possession." (Genesis 17:8)

Now the world--"this present evil world" (Galatians 1:4)--"passes away, and the lust thereof; but he that does the will of God abides for ever," (1 John 2:17) and his everlasting abiding place is this earth made new and fit for new creatures, as in the beginning. This new earth is the land which was promised to Jacob, and the promise holds good to us, if we keep God's commandments; for we read:

"Honor your father and your mother; that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God gives you." (Exodus 20:12)

To that land--the earth made new--the true church occupies a peculiar relation--a relation which the church has vainly sought to attain in this world. This will be better understood when we learn that God's purpose with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was not to build up a nation, like the nations of the earth, but a congregation of worshipers, nowadays known as a church.

This appears in the parting blessing of Isaac to Jacob, but is concealed by our translation of the word. Isaac said to Jacob: "God Almighty bless you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, that you may be a multitude of people." (Genesis 28:3)

In the margin we find, "an assembly of people," and in the Revised Version, "a company of peoples," both of which more nearly express the real meaning. The Hebrew word in this place is the same that in almost every instance of its occurrence is rendered "congregation," and sometimes "assembly," which is the same thing. Take, for instance: "In the midst of the congregation will I praise You." (Psalm 22:22)

This text is quoted in (Hebrews 2:12), where we find the word "congregation" rendered in the Greek by the word commonly translated "church," which appears in the English. So, coming back to our study, we may read Isaac's inspired words to Jacob thus: "God Almighty bless you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you; that

you may be a church of people," that is, a vast congregation of people "called out" from the world, and separated from it. That this blessing was realized, we see in the vast host that God called out of Egypt by Moses, which is called: "the church in the wilderness." (Acts 7:38)

They did not enjoy the fullness of the blessing, however, because they lost sight of the object, and fixed their affections on this earth, instead of on heavenly things. They wanted to be like the nations, and such they became. But as such they lost their power; for all the power either the churches as a whole or its individual members can have, is over the world to come. Whenever the church and Christians seek any sort of worldly power, they become weak: "like any other man," (Judges 16:17) but when they are entirely separated from the world and worldly policy they have real power, above that of all the kings of the earth.--Present Truth, August 29, 1901--Genesis 28:13-14.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 46

The Recognition of God

And Jacob vowed a vow, saying: "If God will be with me, in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God; and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that You shall give me I will surely give the tenth unto You." (Genesis 28:20-22)

Jacob had learned that God is everywhere and that everything exists only in Him, and so he accepted Him as his God. His vow expressed recognition of God, and is not to be considered as a bargain made with the Lord. This is apparent on the face of it, because when all things are known to come from God, one cannot think of enriching Him by giving a portion back to Him.

"All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's; it is holy unto the Lord." (Leviticus 27:30)

God has reserved the tithe to himself, just as He has reserved the seventh day out of the week.

"The seventh day is the Sabbath," (Exodus 20:10) and nobody can change it. It is God's Sabbath day, whether anybody keeps it holy to Him or not. Likewise the tithe is the Lord's, even though we

do not give it to Him. If we withhold it, and use it upon ourselves, we are guilty of robbery. (Exodus 20:10)

What good does it do God for us to devote the seventh day to Him, and to give Him the tenth part of our earnings? No good whatever; for, "Who has first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things." (Romans 11:35-36)

God's requirements are not for His own benefit, but for ours. It does us good to recognize God, and to acknowledge Him in all our ways; for to know Him is life eternal. The Sabbath was given that men might know God and His sanctifying power. (Exekiel 20:12,20) The tithe serves the same purpose, also, in a different way.

We are constantly receiving life from God,--continually earning, by the strength that He gives us, the means of continuing our existence. Now we are forgetful creatures, and apt to lose thought of God; but if as often as anything comes to us from His hand, we religiously lay aside one-tenth to be sacredly devoted to His cause, we cannot forget Him. It is simply an acknowledgment of the fact that: "In Him we live, and move, and have our being." (Acts 17:28)

The tithe is a test of our trust in God, not merely for temporal things, but for eternal salvation; for if, through stress of poverty, or the fear of want, we keep the tithe, how can we make it appear that we trust God as our everlasting Saviour? If we cannot trust Him to

provide us a living for a few days or years, how can we trust Him to keep our souls alive in eternity?

"In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." (Proverbs 3:6)--Present Truth, August 29, 1901--Genesis 28:20-22.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 47

Jacob and the Angel

1. How long was Jacob with his uncle Laban? "This twenty years have I been with you; your ewes and your she goats have not cast their young, and the rams of your flock have I not eaten." (Genesis 31:38)

2. Was his service an easy one? "That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto you; I bore the loss of it; of my hand did you require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night. Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from my eyes. Thus have I been twenty years in your house; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your cattle: and you have changed my wages ten times." (Genesis 31:39-41)

3. How did God prosper him? "And your father has deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me. If he said thus, The speckled shall be your wages; then all the cattle bore speckled: and if he said thus, The ringstraked shall be your hire; then bore all the cattle ringstraked. Thus God has taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me. ... Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely you had sent me away now empty. God has seen my affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked you yesternight." (Genesis 31:7-9,42)

4. When Jacob fled from Laban, how did the Lord interpose to protect him from Laban's wrath? "It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt: but the God of your father spoke unto me yesternight, saying, Take heed that you speak not to Jacob either good or bad." (Genesis 31:29)

5. As Jacob went on his way, who met him? "And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him." (Genesis 32:1)

6. What did Jacob say, and what did he call the place? "And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host; and he called the name of that place Mahanaim." (Genesis 32:2)

7. For what purpose are angels sent to earth? "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14)

8. What message did Jacob send to Esau? "And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom. And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall you speak unto my lord Esau; Your servant Jacob says thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now: And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and womenservants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in your sight." (Genesis 32:3-5)

9. What news did the messengers bring back? "And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to your brother Esau, and also he comes to meet you, and four hundred men with him." (Genesis 32:6)

10. How was Jacob affected by this news? "Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands." (Genesis 32:7)

11. What good reason had Jacob for fearing Esau?

12. What prayer for deliverance did he make? "And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which said unto me, Return unto your country, and to your kindred, and I will deal well with you: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which You have showed unto your servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray You, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And You said: 'I will surely do you good, and make your seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.'" (Genesis 32:9-12)

13. What precautions did he take for safety? "Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands; and said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the

other company which is left shall escape. ... And he lodged there that same night; and took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother; two hundred she goats, and twenty he goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams, thirty milch camels with their colts, forty kine, and ten bulls, twenty she asses, and ten foals. And he delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by themselves; and said unto his servants, Pass over before me, and put a space between drove and drove. And he commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau my brother meets you, and asks you, saying, Whose are you? and whither go you? and whose are these before you? Then you shall say, They be your servant Jacob's; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau: and, behold, also he is behind us. And so commanded he the second, and the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, On this manner shall you speak unto Esau, when you find him. And say moreover, Behold, your servant Jacob is behind us. For he said, I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me. So went the present over before him: and himself lodged that night in the company." (Genesis 32:7-8,13-21)

14. When Jacob was left alone who encountered him? "And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him." (Genesis 32:24)

15. How long did he wrestle with the stranger? "Until the breaking of the day." (Genesis 32:24)

16. Who was it that was wrestling with him? "Yea, he had power over the Angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto Him: he found Him in Bethel, and there He spoke with us; even the Lord God of hosts; the Lord is his memorial." (Hosea 12:4-5)

17. What act opened Jacob's eyes as to the real nature of his antagonist? "And when He saw that He prevailed not against him, He touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with Him." (Genesis 32:25)

18. What did the Lord then say? "And he said, Let me go, for the day breaks." (Genesis 32:26)

19. What may we conclude from this? That as soon as Jacob found out who it was that he was wrestling with, he ceased wrestling, and threw his arms about the Lord.

20. What reply did Jacob make to the Lord's request? "I will not let You go, except You bless me." (Genesis 32:26)

21. How urgent was Jacob's plea? "Yea, he had power over the Angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto Him: he found Him in Bethel, and there He spoke with us." (Hosea 12:4)

22. Why was Jacob so urgent at this time?

23. What evidence did he finally receive that his prayer was successful? "And He said unto him, What is your name? And he

said, Jacob. And He said, Your name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince you have power with God and with men, and have prevailed." (Genesis 32:27-28)

24. What was involved in this blessing? The pardon of all the sins of his past life.

25. Into what condition do sinners usually come before obtaining pardon? "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." (Romans 7:24-25)

26. What further evidence did he have that he had prevailed with God and with man? (See Genesis 33:1-16)

27. What exhortation is given us from this case? "Therefore turn to your God; keep mercy and judgment, and wait on your God continually." (Hosea 12:6)

28. Of what time in the history of the people of God was this experience of Jacob a figure? "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which stands for the children of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time your people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." (Daniel 12:1)

"Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." (Jeremiah 30:7)

29. What will be granted to all those who finally prevail? "To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." (Revelation 3:21)

Notes:

The reason why Jacob was so urgent when he found out with whom he had been wrestling, was that he felt that he had come to a crisis in his life; he had no earthly friends who could help him, his own brother was his sworn enemy; and he knew that if God did not interpose to help him he was lost.

He knew also that this calamity had come upon him because of his own wicked course. And since sin separates from God, he knew that if Esau met him before he made his peace with God, he would be eternally lost. For this reason he had sought that retired place to pray.

We can imagine the agony of mind which he suffered while he was wrestling with one whom he doubtless supposed was a robber; he had retired to seek the Lord in this emergency, and precious time was rapidly passing while he was being kept from his purpose by this stranger.

And it requires no stretch of imagination to believe that as soon as he found that his antagonist was the Lord, whom he had come to seek, he ceased wrestling, and threw his arms about the Lord, while he declared: "I will not let You go, except You bless me." (Genesis 32:26)

This holding onto the Lord was indicative of his importunity and the strength of his faith, and is an example for all who seek special blessings from the Lord.--Signs of the Times, April 13, 1888--Lesson 17 - Sabbath, April 28--Genesis 31:38 to 32:28.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 48

Face to Face with God

When Jacob had by treachery secured the birthright and the father's blessing, "Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then I will slay my brother Jacob." (Genesis 27:41)

Rebekah heard of Esau's purpose, and she told Jacob of it, and said to him: "Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee to Laban my brother to Haran; and tarry with him a few days until your brother's fury turn away; until your brother's anger turn from you, and he forget that which you have done to him; then will I send and fetch you from thence." (Genesis 27:43-45)

Alas, poor woman, she little knew the depth of fury that was in Esau's heart. He was a "profane person," (Hebrews 12:16) "[and] did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever." (Amos 1:11)

The "few days" had lengthened into twenty years, but never had Rebekah dared send for Jacob. Now, after long exile, he was venturing back, driven by unbearable oppression in the place whither he had fled for safety.

Uncertain as to the state of Esau's mind, Jacob sent messengers ahead to greet him, and to seek his favor; but those had returned, bringing the alarming news that they had met Esau coming to meet him with four hundred men. The situation was most critical, and Jacob might well be "greatly afraid and distressed." (Genesis 32:7)

But Esau's company was not the only band that was ahead of Jacob and his family. Before this, as he went on his way, "the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said: 'This is God's host: and he called the name of the place Mahanaim.'" (Genesis 32:1-2) [margin: "that is, Two hosts, or camps."]

"The angel of the Lord encamps round about them that fear Him, and delivers them." (Psalm 34:7)

There were two companies encamped on the plain,--one with no strength at all, and the other with all power,--and between them they were invincible without striking a blow. What a blessed thing to know ourselves as part of "the whole family in heaven and earth." (Ephesians 3:15)

Jacob saw the angels of God, and called it God's host--Mahaneh. Then he saw his own feeble company, and straightway doubled it--Mahanaim--two hosts. It is as though God's hosts of angels, strong and mighty as they are alone, have double power when doing service for those who shall be heirs of salvation.

It was night, and the next day Jacob must meet his revengeful brother. How could he face him? There was only one way: he must first meet God. So, having done all that lay in his power to provide for the safety of his family, he remained alone by the brook Jabbok, to have a season of secret prayer. He must know that there was no separation between himself and God, before he could meet his angry brother.

Now it is sin alone that separates men from God, and prevents Him from exercising His strong arm in their defense; therefore we know that Jacob went to the secret place of prayer to confess his sin to God, and to receive the assurance of pardon and of union with God. What a grand thing it was that years before he had learned the way into the house of God.

"And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a Man with him until the breaking of the day. And when He saw that He prevailed not against him, He touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as He wrestled with him. And He said, Let me go, for the day breaks. And he said, I will not let You go, except You bless me. And He said unto him, What is your name? And he said, Jacob. And He said, Your name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince have you power with God and with men, and have prevailed. And Jacob asked Him, and said, Tell me, I pray You, your name. And He said, Wherefore is it that you do ask after my name? And He blessed him there." (Genesis 32:24-29)

We read of Jacob that "by his strength he had power with God: Yea, he had power over the Angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto Him: he found Him in Bethel, and there He spoke with us; Even the Lord of hosts; the Lord is his memorial." (Hosea 12:3-5)

It was "by his strength" that Jacob prevailed. And what was his strength? It was his helplessness. Jacob wrestled all night with one whom he supposed was a man seeking to take his life; but when that mysterious stranger touched his thigh and put it out of joint, he knew that he was in the presence of God. Then what did he do? He most certainly did the only thing that a man under such circumstances, with his thigh suddenly put out of joint, could do--he threw his arms round the neck of the angel for support.

And now a wonderful thing happens: the victor turns suppliant. He who had power utterly to disable Jacob with a light touch, begs the stricken, clinging man to let Him go. What does this show? That God cannot tear himself away from the helpless one that clings to Him for support. He is the Almighty, and can easily loose the joints of the stoutest wrestler, but He cannot unloose the arms that confidingly clasp His neck. Jacob caught at that word: "Let me go," and declared: "I will not."

Ah, with what boldness we may draw near to God.

"The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force." (Matthew 11:12)

Do not fail to notice how Jacob first began His request to God. He said: "You said, Lord, I will surely do you good, and make your seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude." (Genesis 32:12)

He pleaded God's promise. He told God what He had said; and when one does that, and remembers that God cannot lie, he has the things that he asked for. Only one thing is necessary to enable anyone to have all good things that He needs, and that is to believe that God is true.

From henceforth Jacob had a new name. Up to that time he had been the "supplanter,"--the one who in the battle of life would stoop to take a mean advantage of his brother, and, catching him by the heel, would trip him up. But that method could not give him a real victory. He earned the name Israel--prince, overcomer, by yielding himself up.

Now we know who are Israel. They are the sons who overcome. No matter what the nationality--the man who has power in prayer with God, is an Israelite. The first one who received the name was a Syrian; since then men of every nation under heaven have been enrolled by that name in God's book. Such ones have power indeed.

"He that overcomes, and keeps my works unto the end, [says the Lord,] to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be

broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father." (Revelation 2:26-27)

No enemy can stand before the face of the man who can stand before the face of God. He who can see God face to face and have his life preserved, need have no fear of man. Esau's fury was disarmed while Jacob was weeping in the arms of God. Before that Jacob was afraid, but he said: "What time I am afraid, I will trust in You." (Psalm 56:3)

And then, having seen the Lord, he could say: "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid." (Isaiah 12:2)--Present Truth, September 5, 1901--Genesis 32.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 49

A Man of Noble Birth

The history of Joseph is one of the most interesting and instructive to be found in the Bible. In it all the virtues and graces are set forth, yet in so natural a manner as not to make the possessor seem lifted out of the range of ordinary mortals.

Joseph is one of the few Bible characters of whom no evil is recorded, yet he is very human in his goodness. His life shows how a young man may cleanse his way, and keep his life pure under the most unfavorable conditions, by taking heed to it according to the word of God. (Psalm 119:9--Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to your word.)

Both Moses and Samuel were early thrown into the midst of evil, but their earliest life was spent in surroundings the most favorable to piety. Joseph, on the other hand, was born into a family where envy and strife, and consequently "confusion and every evil work" (James 3:16) prevailed. The two wives of Jacob were naturally jealous of each other, and the two concubines did not by any mean contribute to the happiness of the family. The sons of these unequal and unnatural unions, were selfish, envious, quarrelsome, cruel, revengeful, and vicious in their lives.

The little lad Joseph, early deprived of his loving mother's care, might naturally have been expected to grow up like his brothers: but

he did not. On the contrary, his life from first to last presents a direct contrast to theirs in almost every particular.

It seems as though Joseph was specially exposed to temptation, for when only seventeen years of age he was set to caring for the flock, with the sons of the two maid-servant concubines, (Genesis 37:2) where there was opportunity for him to learn all sorts of wickedness; but their vicious practices made no impression on his pure mind, except that in innocence, and with a desire for their reformation, he "brought unto his father their evil report." (Genesis 37:2)

"The wicked plots against the just, and gnashes upon him with his teeth," (Psalm 37:12) and, "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Timothy 3:12)

In being envied and hated by his brethren, as well as in his early knowledge of the fact that God designed great things for him, Joseph was a type of Christ; and the figure is carried to completion in Joseph's kindness to his brethren, in return for their abuse, and in his being the means of their salvation.

In the illustration on the next page the contrast between Joseph and his brethren is strikingly presented by the artist. He was frank, free, open, joyous, and kind-hearted; they were deceitful, morose, sour, and vindictive; and these characteristics are shown in their respective attitudes.

Joseph knew that the others hated him, and he had doubtless been made to feel their spite in many petty ways, even when at home with their father; nevertheless he gladly and patiently accepted the task of finding them and inquiring after their welfare. Joyfully he came to greet them after his, weary wandering, but he encountered only cross, hateful looks, bitter words, and rough usage.

Saved from immediate death, he was sold into slavery so that to him and to his father the suffering was far worse than death. But his mind was soon absorbed in the duties of his new life. What a change for the shepherd lad, from feeding sheep on the plain to a place in the palace of the highest officer of the king of Egypt!

But his head was not turned, nor his mind corrupted, by the display of wealth, and by the contact with vice in more seductive forms than he had ever seen in his country home. Why not? Because "God was with him." (Acts 7:9)

Yet in reality God was no more with him than with every other young man; for: "He is not far from every one of us," (Acts 17:27) and, "In Him we live and move, and have our being." (Acts 17:28)

But Joseph recognized the Divine presence, and loved it. His members were yielded as instruments of righteousness to God, and he was fully under the Spirit's control.

It was no ordinary temptation that came to Joseph, for to seductive beauty was added high position. Surely Potiphar's wife

must have great influence, and there was no knowing what preferment might come to Joseph if he but listened to her desires. Many servants would have thought it a high honor to be thus singled out as Joseph was; but none of those things moved him. When tempted in the most open and pressing manner, he rehearsed the entire situation, and said: "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9)

Faithfulness to God made him faithful to his earthly master. And what was the immediate reward of his loyalty and virtue? "His feet they hurt with fetters; he was laid in irons." (Psalm 105:18)

Surely he might be excused for becoming downcast and morose, and for murmuring at his fate, if such things are ever excusable. But they are not, and Joseph wasted no time in self-pity. The road to power lay through the dungeon, and if his life were to end there, he would make it fruitful. Even in captivity he was "a fruitful bough." (Genesis 49:22)

He could not see any farther into the future than anybody else can, who is in sore distress from the seeming destruction of all earthly hope, and whose outlook is dark and gloomy. It was necessary to serve in prison, in order to be brought to Pharaoh's notice, and to become even his lord; but Joseph could not know that. Nevertheless he did not worry about the future, nor murmur over the present. Whatever his hand found to do he did it with his might, and for such hands there is always plenty to do. The man with whom God abides will be a ruler even though he be a slave in prison.

With Joseph's final vindication, and his elevation to a place far above that of his former master, Potiphar, and of his success as a deliverer, we have not now to do. That which concerns us most at the present time is the fact of the possibility for a youth to receive such an impulse to virtue that no evil associations can cause him to swerve from the right way.

In the case of Samuel, and especially of Moses, who was for a longer time with his godly mother in a quiet home, we can see clearly the laying of the foundation of such a character; but, so far as the record is concerned, we must go farther back for it in the case of Joseph. What can account for the marvelous difference between the character of Joseph and that of the other sons of the same father, but the fact that Joseph was the child of love, while the others were the fruit of marriages of convenience?

All know the deception that was practiced upon Jacob, by which he got a wife whom he did not love, and how he got the two secondary wives, for whom he never could have had any affection. There could never have been any real happiness in Jacob's household; but between him and Rachel, the beautiful mother of Joseph, there was a bond of love that never was broken. Certainly Joseph had a far nobler birth than his elder brothers, and a much better start in life,--just such a start as every child ought to have.

But although we may not have had the advantage of such a free birth as this, by our earthly parents, we may even now secure all the

advantages of it, and far more, through the eternal Father, "who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love." (Colossians 1:13, RV)

Christ is the Son of pure, perfect, everlasting love, and so is free, and of nobler birth than the kings of the earth; and we in Him may be heirs of the same true nobility, partakers of the Divine nature, and free indeed.--Present Truth, February 14, 1901--Genesis 37 to 39.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 50

Plotting Against the Just

1. Where did Jacob dwell? "And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan." (Genesis 37:1)

2. In what light did the patriarchs consider their residence in the land of Canaan? "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." (Hebrews 11:13)

3. To what did they look forward as a permanent residence? "But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He has prepared for them a city." (Hebrews 11:16)

4. How many sons had Jacob? "Now the sons of Jacob were twelve." (Genesis 55:22)

5. Which one did Jacob love the most? "Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colors." (Genesis 37:3)

6. How did Joseph's brethren regard him? "And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren,

they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him." (Genesis 37:4)

7. What made them hate him still more? "And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. And his brethren said to him, Shall you indeed reign over us? or shall you indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words. And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to you to the earth? And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying." (Genesis 37:5-11)

8. Upon what errand did Jacob send Joseph? "And Israel said unto Joseph: 'Do not your brethren feed the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send you unto them.' And he said to him: 'Here I am.' And he said to him: 'Go, I pray you, see whether it be well with your brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again.' So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem." (Genesis 37:13-14)

9. When his brethren saw him coming, what did they propose to do? "And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. ... Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say: 'Some evil beast has devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.'" (Genesis 37:18,20)

10. What did they do with him when he came? "And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stripped Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colors that was on him; and they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it." (Genesis 37:23-24)

11. How did they afterwards dispose of him? "And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. And Judah said unto his brethren: 'What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh.' And his brethren were content." (Genesis 37:25-27)

12. For how much did they sell him? "Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver; and they brought Joseph into Egypt." (Genesis 37:28)

13. How do the wicked ever regard the just? "The wicked plots against the just, and gnashes upon him with his teeth." (Psalm 37:12)

14. What trait was it that moved Joseph's brethren to sell him into Egypt? "And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt; but God was with him." (Acts 7:9)

15. What scripture was verified in their case? "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." (James 3:16)

16. In what class is envy placed? "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like." (Galatians 5:19-21)

17. What is said of those who do such things? "Of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:21)

18. What course did they take to deceive their father? "And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood; and they sent the coat of many colors, and they brought it to their father; and said: 'This have we found: know now whether it be your son's coat or no.'" (Genesis 37:31-32)

19. When Jacob saw the coat, what did he at once conclude? "And he knew it, and said: 'It is my son's coat; an evil beast has devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces.'" (Genesis 37:33)

20. How did this affect Jacob? "And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said: 'For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning.' Thus his father wept for him." (Genesis 37:34-35)

21. Can you recall any actions of Jacob that were of a similar character to this wicked deception? Relate them.

22. When had Jacob been forgiven for his wicked deeds?

23. What important lesson may we draw from this? That although a sin may be forgiven, the results of it may remain, and the one who committed it will often have it brought before him, and will suffer in consequence.

24. What scripture is fulfilled even in this life? "For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged; and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again." (Matthew 7:2)

Notes:

Joseph has been the subject of a great many moral lectures against tale-bearing. Well-meaning but ignorant persons have censured him as the cause of all the discord in Jacob's family. Such censure is most unjust. Joseph's brothers were envious of him; but their envy was only the outgrowth of their own wicked hearts,

"For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." (James 3:16)

A corrupt heart is the only soil in which envy can grow. There is not a particle of evidence that Joseph did any wrong. He is one of the few Bible characters concerning whom no evil is recorded. His father loved him more than all the rest of his sons, because he was more worthy of his love than they were.

The same thing moved his brothers to think of killing him, and afterward to sell him, that moved Cain to kill Abel; because their own works were evil, as his were righteous. (See 1 John 3:12) We do not mean to intimate that Joseph was born without faults; but he certainly had the fear of God before his eyes.

It is worthwhile in passing, to note the features in which Joseph's experience resembled that of Christ:

• Joseph was hated by his brethren; Christ came unto His own, and His own received Him not, (John 1:11) neither did His brethren believe in Him. (John 7:5)

• Joseph was sold into slavery; Christ was sold to His enemies.

• And both suffered thus, not on their own account, but that they might deliver others.

Of course it is not designed to place Joseph on the same plane with Christ, but he may be considered as in some respects a type of Christ.

If it was wrong to allow envy and jealousy to control the heart in those days it is equally wrong now. Indeed, it would seem that in this age of gospel light and privileges, with the experience of men for ages past written out for our learning, it must be worst then to indulge in such feelings now than then. And, so, it is more dangerous now than then.

The nearness of the coming of the Lord is given as a special reason why peace and love should prevail. Says the apostle: "Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest you be condemned; behold, the Judge stands before the door." (James 5:9)

What a terrible thing it would be if he should open the door and find us thus engaged.

"Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby: If so be you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a

living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, you also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:1-5)

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1)--Signs of the Times, April 20, 1888--Lesson 18 - Sabbath, May 5--Genesis 37.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 51

Joseph Sold into Egypt

Who that has ever read the Bible at all does not know the story of Joseph and his brethren? To most it is little, if anything, more than an interesting story; but it is really one of the most striking likeness of the work of Christ to be found in the Bible. Of all the Old Testament characters, Joseph is throughout his whole life the most complete type of Christ. This is set forth most vividly in the scripture appointed for our present lesson, although we have only a partial view.

It is often said of a child who exhibits unusual strength of character, that he is "wise beyond his years." If that were ever an allowable expression it might be used of Joseph; but it is not. At twelve years of age Jesus astonished the learned scribes and doctors of the law by the depth of his understanding; and the account of it is given us, not to show us how different He was from other children, but to teach us what all children of that age ought to be and know.

So Joseph, before he was seventeen, had wisdom from God, that made him envied and hated by his brethren, who were many years older than he. Like Daniel, he had understanding in visions and dreams. The secret of his wisdom is given in: "The wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits." (James 3:17)

"Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." (Matthew 5:8)

Joseph was pure in heart, and therefore he had communion with the great Source of wisdom and knowledge. "First pure." That is not only the requisite for wisdom, but it is the beginning of it. In order to be wise, one needs only purity of heart. This ought to be, and often is, most found in children, and it is for this reason that the deep things of God are hid from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes.

"The wicked plots against the just, and gnashes upon him with his teeth." (Psalm 37:12)

"All they that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." (2 Timothy 3:12)

So, "the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt." (Acts 7:9)

Thus it was with Christ. His pure life was a constant reproof to the wickedness and hypocrisy of the rulers of the Jewish people. His righteousness exceeded the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, and so He would not resort to the multitudinous forms and ceremonies to which they had recourse to conceal their emptiness. They hated Him, because He was better than they; and when at last they seized Him, and delivered Him bound to the

Roman governor, "Pilate knew that for envy they had delivered Him." (Matthew 27:18)

"And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not your brethren feed the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send you unto them. And he said to him, Here I am. And he said to him, Go, I pray you, see whether it be well with your brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem." (Genesis 37:13-14)

In like manner Christ, came to declare the name of His Father unto His brethren. Joseph went to "see the peace" of his brethren, and to carry greetings from their father: and Christ came preaching peace.

"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." (John 1:11)

They said, "Let us kill Him," even as Joseph's brethren said when they saw him coming. Seldom has the church had a reformer whom it has not slain, or attempted to slay.

"Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?" (Acts 7:52)

But not every one who is on the side of the hosts of evil is willfully bad. Many are not decidedly against the truth, but they are simply not for it. They would be in favor of it, with all the heart they

have, if others were; but they are "unstable as water," and must needs go with the wind of public sentiment.

Such a man was Reuben. He would gladly have rescued Joseph from his murderous brethren, for he had no desire to kill him. We see that they readily fell in with his proposal not to kill Joseph, but to put him into a dry well; and we may be sure that if he had only had enough strength of character to assert himself, he might as the oldest, have turned aside all their ill will, and sent Joseph back to his father in safety. But he temporized, and therefore his good intentions went for nothing, and he became one with those who had no thought of good. Indeed such a temporizer is really worse than the brutally wicked, since he has impulses to good of which they know nothing, and allows them to be stifled.

In Reuben we see the type of Pilate, who could have rescued Jesus from the mob if he had had the courage of his convictions. Reuben proposed a compromise, to save the life of Joseph; Pilate said to the Jews who were clamoring for the death of Jesus, "I will scourge Him, and let Him go." (Luke 23:22)

But there was no reason for doing Joseph any harm, and there was no cause for scourging Jesus, since no fault was found in Him. Having made some concessions to the spirit of murder, everything had to be yielded. A compromise with error is always a victory for the devil. Truth and error, righteousness and sin, will not mingle.

The greatest lesson of all, however, both in the case of Joseph and that of Jesus, is how all things work out the will of God. It is true that Joseph's brethren sold him to the Ishmaelites to gratify their own hateful, envious dispositions; yet we read that: "[God] sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant." (Psalm 15:17)

And Joseph himself, seeking afterward to comfort his brethren, said: "Be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that you sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life." (Genesis 45:5)

In this he represented the tender lovingkindness of Jesus, who said: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34)

But the main thought now before us is that God causes the wrath of man to praise Him. So, "the kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth against your holy child Jesus, whom You have anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever your hand and your counsel determined before to be done." (Acts 4:26-28)

God works all things after the counsel of His own will. Whether we will or not, His will must be done. If God's will is done with our

will, it is well for us; if our wills are opposed, our very obstinacy and opposition will accomplish His purpose, but we shall suffer.

When His will is done through us, He counts it the same as though we had done it; but if we do not wish His will to be done, then our sin is as great as though we had defeated His purpose, even though our act accomplishes His design.

Thus since God's purpose will be carried out in any case, how much more sensible for us to yield to it gladly, than to be unwilling instruments of it.

The comfort and hope that we get from this story of how God's will is done even by men who are doing their utmost to thwart it is this: Since the wrath of men praises God; since even our hatred and opposition are used in His service, how much more must our willing mind be used by God, even though we have no power.

How easy it is for us to know that our faith is counted for righteousness, when even our unbelief and rebellion work out His righteous will.--Present Truth, September 26, 1901--International Sunday-school Lesson for October 6--Genesis 37:12-36.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 52

The Consequence of Pleasing God

1. To whom did Joseph's brethren sell him? "Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver; and they brought Joseph into Egypt." (Genesis 37:28)

2. What did the Midianites do with him? "And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard." (Genesis 37:36)

3. Who was with Joseph in this strange hand? "And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian." (Genesis 39:2)

4. What was the consequence to Joseph of the Lord's being with him? "And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him; and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand." (Genesis 39:3-4)

"And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him, and delivered him out of all his affliction, and gave him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of

Egypt and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house." (Acts 7:9-10)

5. What was the result to Potiphar, from having a godly man in his house? "And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field." (Genesis 39:5)

6. How much responsibility was placed upon Joseph? "And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favored." (Genesis 39:6)

7. How old was Joseph when he was sold into Egypt? "These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report." (Genesis 37:2)

8. When he was strongly tempted in Potiphar's house, what noble stand did he take? "But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master knows not what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand; there is none greater in this house than I; neither has he kept back any thing from me but you, because you are his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:8-9)

9. Did he stand firm to this resolution? "And it came to pass, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her." (Genesis 39:10)

10. What was the immediate result of his upright conduct? "And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spoke unto him, saying, After this manner did your servant to me; that his wrath was kindled. And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound; and he was there in the prison." (Genesis 39:19-20; read also verses 11-18)

11. Who was with Joseph still? "But the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison." (Genesis 39:21)

12. What can always be said by one who has the Lord for a companion? "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." (Psalm 23:1-6)

13. How was this verified in Joseph's case? "But the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison." (Genesis 39:21)

14. What trust was committed to Joseph in the prison? "And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it." (Genesis 39:22)

15. Why was this? "The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the Lord was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper." (Genesis 39:23)

16. What scripture was fulfilled in Joseph's case? "When a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him." (Proverbs 16:7)

When David had committed the grievous sin of taking the wife of Uriah, and his sin had been brought home to his conscience, he cried out to the Lord: "Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in your sight." (Psalm 51:4)

He realized that his sin was primarily against God. So when Joseph was tempted to wrong his master, he recalled how his master had trusted him by putting everything into his hand, he said: "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9)

Every act which shows a lack of love for our neighbor, shows a lack of love for God; the wrong which one may do to his fellow-man is only secondary; the greater wrong is against God. Only conscientious souls realize this; those who have not the "fear of God" before their eyes, (Psalm 36:1) will not stop to consider the interest of their neighbor, when it comes in conflict with their own pleasure.--Signs of the Times, April 20, 1888--Lesson 19 - Sabbath, May 12--Genesis 39.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 53

God Was with Him

"And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him, and delivered him out of all his afflictions." (Acts 7:9)

These are the words of Stephen as he stood before the council full of the Spirit of God, and with a face like an angel. God was with Joseph. When was God with him?

• God was with him when his brethren cast him bound into the pit in the wilderness, and when he went down to Egypt as a slave.

• God was with him when he was a bond-servant in the house of Potiphar, and He was with him when he resisted the temptations of his mistress.

• God was with him also when he was in prison, no less than when his captivity ended, and he was made ruler over all the land of Egypt.

God did not come to him, but He went with him. He did not merely come to deliver him from his afflictions, but He went into prison with him. It was because God was with him that he was delivered.

Let this fact be remembered, that the Lord goes to prison when His servants go there for His sake. Christ said that when He comes in glory He will say to some, "I was in prison, and you came unto me," (Matthew 25:36) and to others that they did not visit Him when He was in prison. There are many people who think much of being with the Lord in heaven, when He comes, but who do not realize the necessity and the blessedness of being with Him here in this present time. And it is a mistake to suppose that we have the presence of the Lord only when everything seems to favor us. When Jacob said: "All these things are against me," (Genesis 42:36) God was with him as much as when he was in Bethel or Peniel, and was preparing, out of those afflictions, the means of his future sustenance. So very often it is the case that we can have God with us only by suffering affliction.

Joseph, for instance, could not have kept God with him without going to prison. He might have kept out of prison if he had been willing to deceive his master, and sin against God, but not otherwise. Now it is certain that if Jesus of Nazareth had been in the place of Joseph, He would have done as Joseph did, and would have been obliged to suffer imprisonment for refusing to sin. Indeed, it was only because Jesus was with him, that he resisted the temptation and went to prison. He had the choice, therefore, of going to prison with the Lord, or of staying out of prison without the Lord. Joseph did not hesitate a moment in choosing.

When Jesus was on earth His delight was to do the will of God, whose law was within His heart.

"Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do your will, O my God: yea, your law is within my heart." (Psalm 40:7)

He said: "I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love." (John 15:10)

Not one of the ten commandments did He slight, not even the fourth.

"As His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read." (Luke 4:16)

Every one who reads the New Testament must say, in the words of Canon Knox-Little: "It is certain that our Lord when on earth did observe Saturday, and did not observe Sunday." (Sacerdotalism, p. 75)

Now we read of Jesus Christ that: "[He is] the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." (Hebrews 13:8)

He kept the commandments when He was in the earth, because they were in His heart before He came to earth. They were His life. He did not come to earth to act a part, but to reveal God to men; and this He could do because He was in the beginning with God, and was God. He was the same on earth that He was in heaven, and He is the same in heaven that He was on earth.

"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." (Hebrews 13:8)

Therefore it is absolutely certain that if Jesus were on earth today, in the flesh, as He was eighteen hundred years ago, He would keep "the Sabbath day according to the commandment." (Luke 23:56)

In other words, it is certain that He would keep the seventh day, and would not keep Sunday. What then would be the result? Just this:

• If He were in Russia, He would be banished;

• If He were in America, He would be imprisoned, and driven to work in the chain-gang;

• If He were in England, He would have His goods sold, if He had any, and if not, He would be thrust into prison, for refusing to recognize Sunday as worthy of receiving in the slightest degree the honor due to the Sabbath of the Lord.

Indeed, when He was on earth, He suffered imprisonment, and every form of indignity, simply because of His faithfulness to the law of God.

It is only by the faith of Jesus that any man can keep the commandments of God. Whoever is truly faithful and keeping the

commandments of God, even though the laws of men forbid him to keep them, can be so only if the Lord is with him. If for that faithfulness he suffers the loss of all things, or goes to prison, he may have the comfort of knowing that he is sharing the affliction with the Lord.

But if he knows the Lord to that point, he will know that poverty and imprisonment with the Lord, are more to be desired than riches and freedom without Him. With Moses, he will find that "the reproach of Christ," (Hebrews 11:26) is greater riches than all the treasures of earth.

• The Egyptians did not know that they were sending the Lord to prison when they put Joseph into the dungeon.

• The Jewish rulers did not know that they were sending the Lord to prison when they shut up His apostles.

• The princes of this world did not know that they were crucifying the Lord of glory when they condemned the humble Galilean carpenter to death.

Yet they might have known, because in every case the penalty of the law was inflicted because of loyalty to the truth, and whatsoever is of the truth is of God.--Present Truth, September 12, 1895--Genesis 39.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 54

In Prison with the Lord

The life of Joseph is a practical illustration of the words of Christ: "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." (Matthew 5:8)

At home in the vale of Hebron he had recoiled from the coarse words and actions of his brothers, and received in dreams from God intimations of future events. Sold into Egypt, and thrown at the tender age of save seventeen into the society of vicious servants, and a still more vicious mistress, he retained his integrity. Most youths of that age would be carried away by their surroundings; but Joseph had character, and his life in Potiphar's household was pure as in his father's tent.

"And to what profit?" some in his position would be inclined to ask.

"They will not believe that I am innocent; I might as well have the satisfaction of doing the thing, since I shall be suspected anyhow," is language that is not infrequently heard. Oh, it is under just such circumstances that one's character, or lack of it, appears. The one who wishes to sin, but who is restrained only by fear of the consequences, will take advantage of the opportunity if he can do so without being found out, or if he is sure to be suspected of it whether he does it or not.

But Joseph did not regard the committing of sin as any satisfaction. A conscience void of offense was to him the highest satisfaction. When tempted from a quarter where even to be noticed was flattery, he was firm as a rock. To the strongest assaults upon his virtue, he replied: "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9)

It was not with him even a question of how he could keep from sinning; but in him we find an illustration of the scripture: "Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin; for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." (1 John 3:9)

"And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him." (Acts 7:9)

"And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison. But the Lord was with Joseph." (Genesis 39:20-21)

Joseph had not forsaken God, and God did not forsake him; when Joseph had to go to prison, God went there with him.

Most people look on going to prison as a great disgrace; "jailbird" is with them the worst form of reproach. But the truth is, that there is no disgrace whatever in going to prison. Hardship and suffering there may be, but not disgrace. The disgrace connected

with prison life is all in the sin that brings the victim there, and if the prisoner be innocent, and especially if he is imprisoned because of his uprightness, the prison is no disgrace, but on the contrary a palace of honor. There is a special blessing for those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:10)

No one need ever be afraid or ashamed to go anywhere with God. Any place is pleasant where He is; for "in His presence, is fullness of joy." (Psalm 16:11)

The man with whom God goes to prison is far more free, than the man who can go where he chooses, and who chooses a way apart from God. God's presence with Joseph gave him favor with all with whom he came in contact.

"The keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his hand; because the Lord was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper." (Genesis 39:22-23)

Here we have the same word as in (Psalm 1:3), where we read of the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, that "whatsoever he does shall prosper." (Psalm 1:3)

Joseph's case shows that the prosperity that comes from keeping God's law and taking it for one's life is very real. No amount of "political influence" or of "standing in" with prominent men of shady reputations could have won that position of trust for Joseph. The Hebrew slave had confidence reposed in him, because God was with him.

The keeper of the prison did not know this last fact; he knew nothing of God's influence in the matter; he only knew that Joseph was trustworthy. But we well know that Joseph's faithfulness soon made the name of God known, not only in the prison, but in the palace as well.

Few men would regard a prison, where one is held in bondage, as a place to win success; but Joseph found it so. That prison was the way to the palace, and to the governorship of Egypt. Joseph did not know that at the time, but it made no difference to him. He knew that God was with him, and he was content with that.

Instead of bemoaning his fate, and brooding over his unjust treatment, he improved his time in preparing to be ruler of Egypt. He did not know that he was fitting himself for that position, but he nevertheless went the right way about it, namely, making himself useful where he was, without worrying about either the future or the past.

Be sure that Joseph did not associate so much with the Lord without becoming well acquainted with Him. So when the two most notable prisoners in the prison had dreams that troubled them, Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me then, I pray you." (Genesis 40:8)

"The secret things belong unto the Lord our God," (Deuteronomy 29:29) and, "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." (Psalm 25:14)

Now Joseph began to reap some of the visible fruits of his purity of life. The pure in heart see God; and they who see God--not occasionally merely, but continually--are seers. The wisdom that is possible to the soul that is joined to God, is beyond all calculation. Such a one sees clearly where others stumble in darkness.

The way to deliverance, not only for Joseph himself but for all his people, was through the prison. In this Joseph was still the type of Christ. Christ had to be bound, in order to break the bands from His people. Joseph's committal to prison was his release from slavery; and so we see that instead of saying that Joseph's loyalty to righteousness got him into difficulty, we may rather say that it procured for him freedom and honor. People generally take too short views.

Still it was not for his own sake that all this happened to him; Joseph, as a figure of Christ, was to be the saviour of his people; and

no man can truly serve others except by personal sacrifices and suffering.

It is marvelous how well a man can get along, and keep not only "abreast of the times," but far ahead of them, when shut up in prison, away from the world. This shows us not merely that a man can get along without the world, but that real separation from the world is the best way to prosperity.

This does not mean that one must shut himself up in a cloister, or be out of touch with human needs; but the rush and gossip of the world do not tend to make one really wise or useful. Some of the best things in the world have come from prisons. The world would probably never have been blessed with Pilgrim's Progress, if John Bunyan had not gone to prison; and some of the brightest of the epistles of Paul were written in a dungeon, in chains. It all depends on whether or not God is with the man.--Present Truth, October 3, 1901--International Sunday-school Lesson for Oct. 13--Genesis 39 and 40.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 55

Joseph Before Pharaoh

1. What is wisdom? "And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." (Job 28:28)

2. Who have a good understanding? "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do his commandments; his praise endures forever." (Psalm 111:10)

3. How was this shown to be true in the life of Joseph? (See Genesis 40)

4. Who had a dream two years later? "And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed; and, behold, he stood by the river." (Genesis 41:1)

5. What was the dream? "And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well favored kine and fat-fleshed; and they fed in a meadow. And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill favored and lean-fleshed; and stood by the other kine upon the brink of the river. And the ill favored and lean-fleshed kine did eat up the seven well favored and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke. And he slept and dreamed the second time: and, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good.

"And, behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them. And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, it was a dream." (Genesis 41:2-7)

6. What success did Pharaoh have in getting his dream interpreted? "And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh." (Genesis 41:8)

7. How was Joseph's experience in prison now turned to his favor? "Then spoke the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day: Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the captain of the guard's house, both me and the chief baker: And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream. And there was there with us a young man, a Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret. And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored unto my office, and him he hanged. Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh." (Genesis 41:9-14)

8. What did Pharaoh say to Joseph when he came before him? "And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there

is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of you, that you canst understand a dream to interpret it." (Genesis 41:15)

9. Who did Joseph say of himself, and to whom did he ascribe the power? "And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me; God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." (Genesis 41:16)

10. After Pharaoh had related his dream, how did Joseph interpret it? "And there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land; and the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous." (Genesis 41:30-31)

11. What did he say the repetition of the dream indicated? "And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass." (Genesis 41:32)

12. What advice did he give to Pharaoh? "Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities." (Genesis 41:33-35)

13. What did Pharaoh think of this advice? "And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants." (Genesis 41:37)

14. Whom did Pharaoh think was the most suitable for the work which Joseph had advised? And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is? And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God has showed you all this, there is none so discreet and wise as you are: You shall be over my house, and according unto your word shall all my people be ruled; only in the throne will I be greater than you." (Genesis 41:38-40)

15. To what position did Pharaoh advance Joseph? "And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without you shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt." (Genesis 41:41-44)

16. What scripture was fulfilled in the history of Joseph in Egypt? "The wicked watches the righteous, and seeks to slay him. The Lord will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged." (Psalm 37:32-33)

17. What sure promise is given to those who trust and serve the Lord? "Commit your way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noonday." (Psalm 37:5-6)

Notes:

Pharaoh showed his appreciation of the fact that true wisdom comes from God to those who are His servants in truth, by saying of Joseph when he had advised that men be appointed to preserve food for the time of famine: "And Pharaoh said unto his servants: 'Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?'" (Genesis 41:38)

He knew that there was no use in looking further. A man to whom God had given such wisdom, was just the one to carry out the work which he had advised. The question may arise, "Was this knowledge that Joseph had miraculous? Did God give him special knowledge, just because he was a good man?" We believe not, at least not wholly. The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom. Says the psalmist: "A good understanding have all they that do His commandments." (Psalm 111:10)

The law of God is infinite in breadth, and it is that in which a righteous man meditates. Surely then it ought to make him broad-minded. When the mind contemplates little things, it contracts; when it dwells upon great themes, it expands. Therefore since the law of God is the greatest thing, "exceeding broad," (Psalm 119:96)

it must enlarge the understanding of the man who thinks of it continually, in order that his way may be right. Take the book of Proverbs alone. The man who studies that book carefully, and who follows its teachings cannot go wrong. It is the best book in the world for a man to study, who wants to be successful in business. It is fully in harmony with the words of our Saviour: "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33)

But we are not to suppose that every man who studies the word of God and walks in its light, will have an equal amount of knowledge. God gives man the power to get wealth, but He does not give equal ability to all. So He does not give to all equal ability to acquire knowledge. And this should keep those of superior ability from boasting over those of less ability.

"For who makes you to differ from another? and what have you that you did not receive? now if you did receive it, why do you glory, as if you had not received it?" (1 Corinthians 4:7)--Signs of the Times, May 4, 1888--Lesson 20 - Sabbath, May 19--Genesis 41.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 56

God's Servant Exalted

"Behold, my Servant shall deal prudently; he shall be exalted, and extolled; and be very high." (Isaiah 3:13)

Christ the Pattern

These words of God were spoken directly concerning Christ; but Christ, as the servant of God; sets the pattern of service for all other servants; for all who yield themselves to God, to serve Him, are accepted as His servants. Christ declares himself to be the pattern, in these words: "Whosoever would be great among you shall be your servant, and whosoever would be first among you shall be your bond-servant, even as the son of man came not to be ministered unto [served], but to minister [serve], and to give His life a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:26-28, RV, margin)

But Christ was made in all things like His brethren, in order that they might in all things be like Him. He has no honors that He does not share equally with His brethren; for we are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." (Romans 8:17)

So as He sets the pattern for the kind of service to be rendered, we may be sure that He is also an example of the honors and promotions to be received. Every true servant of God--every one who gives undivided service,--no matter who or where he may be,

or how meager his advantages have been, has the promise that he shall deal prudently, and shall be exalted.

Natural Promotion

It was therefore really in the natural order of events when Joseph, who was faithful as a shepherd lad, doubly faithful and loyal as a slave in the house of Potiphar, and who still served with cheerfulness and fidelity when he was most unjustly shut up in prison, should be exalted and placed very high. His governorship of Egypt began in prison, or, earlier still, when he was caring for his father's sheep.

Being pure in heart, and knowing God's Word as a life, and not as a mere creed, Joseph had insight into the secret things of God; so when the King of Egypt had dreams that he was sure meant something, but he knew not what, Joseph was the one man who was ready at a moment's notice to give the interpretation.

Calamities Are Stepping-Stones to Success

Here we see an illustration of how "all things work together for good to them that love God." (Romans 8:28)

It was cruelly thoughtless in the chief butler, to whom Joseph had brought such a cheering message, to pay no more heed to him after he was out of prison. Two long years Joseph was compelled to wait after freedom had seemed almost in sight. It might well seem that

his bondage would never end, when suddenly a messenger came with the command for him to appear at once before Pharaoh, and within a few hours at most Joseph was the second man in the kingdom in name, and the first in real power.

But what if the butler had thought of Joseph, and had secured his release from prison as soon as he himself gained his liberty? Doubtless Joseph would never have been heard of again. But God had a great work to be done,--a work affecting the whole world, even to the end of time,--and His servant had to be kept where he could be found for service when he was needed. Joseph was serving God as faithfully in prison, as he ever did anywhere, and it was because he was a real servant of God under every condition, that he was so marvelously exalted.

The Wisdom of Obedience

"And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is? And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God has showed you all this, there is none so discreet and wise as you are: You shall be over my house, and according unto your word shall all my people be ruled." (Genesis 41:38-40)

Here we have a practical fulfillment of a truth stated long afterwards through Moses: "Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do so in the land whither you go to possess it. Keep therefore

and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." (Deuteronomy 4:5-6)

Joseph's wisdom was nothing more than that which naturally comes with perfect obedience to the law of God,--not mere forced compliance with its precepts, but a life which springs from the inborn Word. God gave Joseph success, and caused all that he did to prosper, in harmony with this truth: "Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law does he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he does shall prosper." (Psalm 1:1-3)

"The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." (Job 28:28)

"A good understanding have all they that do His commandments." (Psalm 111:10)

Wisdom and understanding are as natural to the one whose life is the law of God, as beauty and odor are to the flower. Such lives as that of Joseph are recorded in the Bible, not as something strange and unique, but to show what is really the natural state of everyone whose life is wholly the Lord's.

How To Get Employment

One of the commonest complaints that men (and boys) make is that they "cannot get any employment." Joseph had no difficulty. He could get all his own work, and that of others, as well. Everybody was willing to let him work.

The keeper of the prison turned all his work over to Joseph, and even the king entrusted all his duties to him. And Joseph welcomed all the work that came. That was the reason why he had so much to do.

And right here we discover the reason why so many people are out of work. They are afraid of overwork, of doing too much. They carefully calculate how much, or how little, they ought to do for their wages, or how much they feel like doing, and when work is slack their employers have no difficulty in determining that they can easily dispense with their services.

But real worth makes a place for itself. The man who knows, and who can do, and who, above all, is hungry for work, and not merely for wages, will never be long out of employment. There is lots of work waiting to be done in the world, but it yields only to the one who will do it, and not to the one who merely toys with it.

When Joseph was in prison, receiving no wages, he put all his heart and strength into the work, as much as though it had been his

own private business. Whoever will do that, will find that he is wanted. Most men out of employment would laugh to scorn the suggestion that they should take hold and do something, working for nothing rather than be idle.

"I can't afford to work for nothing," would be the reply. But a man can afford to work for nothing a great deal better than he can afford to be idle for nothing. Real, lasting success comes to the men who love work for its own sake.

"And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a chain of gold about his neck; and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee; and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt." (Genesis 41:42-43)

Exalted Through Humility

Here again, without the slightest straining of the matter, we see in Joseph the likeness of Christ. It was not merely after his humiliation, but because of it, that Joseph received honor from the king, and homage from the people. The mind was in him that was also in Christ Jesus, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant; ... Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." (Philippians 2:6-7,9-10)

"He that humbles himself shall be exalted." (Luke 14:11)

The Prince of Life

Lastly, the name given to Joseph was most significant. Zaphnath-paaneah, according to Egyptian etymologists, means: "Prince of the life of the world," or, "Saviour of the world."

Bread is the staff of life; and as Joseph had supreme control of all the corn in the land, he was literally prince of the life of the world; and he was, under God, of course, or, by God working through him, the saviour of the world; because it was through his wisdom and energy that corn was laid up in abundance, "and the famine was over all the face of the earth: And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt. And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands." (Genesis 41:56-57)

It was no fancy title that was given to Joseph. In this, Joseph was a type of Christ, the Saviour of the world, the Prince of life, the Bread of life that came down from heaven to give life to the world.

But we should see more in this than Joseph as a type of Christ. We should see in it the truth that we, like Him, are to be saviours of the world: for as Christ is the Bread of life, so: "We being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread." (1 Corinthians 10:17)

Bread is made solely to be eaten, that men may get life from it; so as Christ gave himself for the life of the world, we likewise "ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." (1 John 3:16)

This we do in holding them always ready for any kind of service, no matter how humble, hard, or exacting.--Present Truth, October 10, 1901--Genesis 41:38-49.

E. J. Waggoner

Chapter 57

Divine Forbearance

Filled with the Spirit of inspiration, Jacob on his death-bed said: "Joseph a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall: The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot him, and hated him: But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob." (Genesis 49:22-24)

Whatever happened to Joseph tended to his advantage, "for God was with him." (Acts 10:38)

But if we leave the story of Joseph with merely the thought that he was a wonderfully successful man, we shall make a great mistake. His life history was not recorded for the sake of making us wonder, but to show us the sure result of loyalty to God and faithfulness to duty. Of every man who delights in the law of the Lord it is said: "Whatsoever he does shall prosper." (Psalm 1:3)

Yet professed Christians will even today, in the face of this testimony of the Scripture, argue that strict obedience to the law of God, including the fourth commandment, will lead to ruin. We must remember that the Bible is not a book of amusing stories, but a guide to everlasting life.

The likeness of Joseph to Jesus is nowhere more apparent than in his treatment of his brethren. To be sure he spoke harshly to them when they first came to Egypt to buy corn, but that was only in keeping with what another in his position would have done, and was for the purpose of proving them. Even in his seeming harshness, however, he was kind to his brethren, providing for their needs without cost, giving them bread for nothing. And now the time had come when Joseph could no longer refrain from making himself known to his brothers.

"And he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud; and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; does my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that you sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years has the famine been in the land; and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing [ploughing] nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance." (Genesis 45:1-7)

Notice the tender regard for the feelings of his brethren, who had never shown any consideration for his feelings. How careful Joseph was to avoid giving his brethren pain, and to make their wicked

conduct appear a slight matter. There was not a word of reproach. Not a word was uttered about the injury done him; there was no hint of the years of loneliness and suffering and anguish. On the contrary he would make as though he had never been in any worse condition than he then was, and he seemed to give his brethren credit for the good results which followed their unnatural deed.

How natural it is for us, even when we feel the most kindly-disposed toward an offender, to say something intended to cause him to feel the heinousness of his offense, and the great concession that we are making in passing it by; but Joseph did not spoil his record. He had never complained in time of trial, and he did not indulge in any accusations or insinuations when he had his persecutors in his power. He manifested only whole-souled generosity that marked him a true type of Him who on the cross said of His murderers: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34)

Joseph recognized that he was sent as a saviour of life. He had been charged with the mission to save the lives of his brethren who had hated him, and God was in Him to do it, even as "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." (2 Corinthians 5:19)

From the action of Joseph we may learn how we are to act as ambassadors for Christ, to whom is committed the ministry of reconciliation.

How different things look to us after the bitter experience has past. When Jacob heard that Simeon had been kept a captive in Egypt, he said: "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and you will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me." (Genesis 42:36)

But they were not against him; on the contrary there were all working for him--working out a great deliverance, and a peaceful, happy old age. We can see it clearly enough; yet when our trials come we complain, just as though ours were exceptions to the rule that "all things work together for good to them that love God." (Romans 8:28)

If we were absolutely sure that good would result, we should bear the trial and the pain uncomplainingly; but in spite of all the assurances and all the examples of God's Word, we persist looking at things as they seem now, instead of from the standpoint of eternity.

Does anybody suppose that when we stand by the river of life in the Paradise of God we shall have any regrets or sorrow for what we have suffered here? Of course not. We know that we shall not, then what is the use of doing so here? We know that if God be for us nothing can be against us, and that all things work--are now working--together for good to them that love God. Moreover, it is our privilege and our duty to look at things from the eternal side instead of from the temporal side; for God is our dwelling-place, and He inhabits eternity.

"Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)

The glory is being worked for us while we look, if we only look beyond the seen to the unseen. Why not do it, and get all the joy and happiness as we pass along, instead of putting the bliss off till the future?--Present Truth, October 17, 1901--International Sunday-school Lesson for October 27--Genesis 45:1-15.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 58

Confidence in God's Promise

"And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, It may be that Joseph will hate us, and will certainly requite us [literally, "he will surely return upon us,"] all the evil which we did unto him. And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Your father did command before he died, saying, so shall you say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray you now, the transgression of your brethren, and their sin; for that they did evil unto you: and now, we pray you, forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father. And Joseph wept when they spoke unto him. And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we are your servants. And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you thought evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear not: I will nourish you and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spoke kindly unto them [to their hearts]. And Joseph lived in Egypt, he, and his father's house: and Joseph lived a hundred and ten years. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: but God will surely visit you, and bring you up out of this land unto the land which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died, being a hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt." (Genesis 50:15-26)

It is characteristic of evil-minded people, that they cannot comprehend goodness in another. They cannot conceive of such a thing as disinterested benevolence. They imagine some ulterior motive in every kind act they see. This is expressed in God's words to the wicked: "You thought that I was altogether such a one as yourself." (Psalm 50:21)

So Joseph's brethren thought that he had shown kindness to them out of respect for his father, but that now he would surely have revenge, and do to them as they had done to him. Their suspicions showed what they would have done in the same circumstances.

"And Joseph wept when they spoke unto him." (Genesis 50:17)

Nothing can wound love more than to suspect it. He was not angry, but grieved. It was not that his feelings were hurt (he had suffered too much injustice and oppression to be wounded by misunderstanding of his motives), but he wept even as Jesus did over Jerusalem, when He said: "If you had known, even you, at least in this your day, the things which belong unto your peace!" (Luke 19:42)

It was sad that Joseph's brethren had received only the physical benefit of his kindness all these years, and had not understood it well enough to be won by it and be transformed by it.

"We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." (2 Corinthians 13:8)

How plainly this is demonstrated in the case of Joseph and his brethren. God had by dreams foretold that his brethren should bow down before him. They had taken effectual measures as they thought, to make it impossible for such a thing ever to take place. They had said: "Let us slay him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams." (Genesis 37:20)

By selling him as a slave they had separated him from them so completely that for years they themselves believed him to be dead; yet it transpired that what they did to prevent the fulfillment of his dreams was what brought it about.

"As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good." (Genesis 50:20)

"[He] works all things after the counsel of His own will." (Ephesians 1:11)

"Who is he that says, and it comes to pass, when the Lord commands it not?" (Lamentations 3:37)

"The Lord of hosts has purposed, and who shall disannul it? and His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" (Isaiah 14:27)

Whatever the Lord thinks will surely be done, no matter though all the world tries to prevent it. All that is done will only further His plans. This is for our comfort; for just as in the case of Joseph His purpose was to save life, so now: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." (1 Thessalonians 4:3)

And though Satan and all his hosts array themselves against us they cannot thwart God's will. His will must be done, and will be done. The only question is: "Shall it be done in spite of us to our destruction, or with our hearty assent, to our salvation?"

Joseph's hope was in the promise made of God unto the Fathers. See the article on "The Hope of the Promise." (PP Editor's note: Waggoner is referring to another article that appeared in this same issue of October 24, 1901. That article is now included in the collection of articles, Paul and the Early Church.) He knew that when God said to Abraham: "Know of a surety that your seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; but in the fourth generation they shall come hither again," (Genesis 15:13) and afterwards confirmed this promise with an oath, saying: "Your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies." (Genesis 22:17) He was promising the inheritance through the resurrection, when death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed. He understood the glorious hope that God was holding out to Israel, and died full of faith in it.

The course of Joseph, in directing that his bones should not be buried in Egypt, but should be kept until God delivered His people, is a lesson even for us.

"By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones." (Hebrews 11:22)

During all the oppression, when the children of Israel experienced that which their fathers had made Joseph undergo, they had the bones of Joseph as a constant reminder of his trust in the faithfulness of God, and how it had been justified. Never had they any excuse for forgetting the promise of God; and during the forty years' wandering in the wilderness, the bones of Joseph were a constant reproof of their unbelief and murmuring. That same promise is ours today. The fact that they to whom it was preached did not believe it, and "could not enter in, because of unbelief," (Hebrews 3:19) does not in the least shake the surety of it.

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9)

Thus, "the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation." (2 Peter 3:15)--Present Truth, October 24, 190188--Genesis 50:15-26-- PP Editor’s Note: The Pioneer Writings collection that comes on the EGW CD has listed this article as October 17, 1901. This is wrong it should be October 24.

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 59

Man's Thought and God's Thought

"The patriarchs moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt; but God was with him, and delivered him out of all his afflictions." (Acts 7:9-10)

Joseph saw the hand of God in the matter, and said to his brethren: "You thought evil against me, but God meant it for good." (Genesis 50:20)

The full force of the Hebrew is not given in the translation, for both clauses have the same verb in the Hebrew; and the verse really reads thus: "You thought evil against me, but God thought good."

The contrast, it will be seen, is very striking: Joseph's brethren thought evil against him, even planning his death; but God thought good, even purposing "to save much people alive;" (Genesis 50:20) and God's thought prevailed. So much more powerful was God's good thought than Joseph's brethren's evil thought that their evil design was made to work out God's good purpose. How vividly this illustrates the truth that: "[God] works all things after the counsel of His own will," (Ephesians 1:11) making even "the wrath of man to praise Him." (Psalm 76:10)

So we need not fear or worry even though a wicked man seems to succeed in his evil way, and "brings wicked devices to pass," (Psalm 37:7) or, literally, "does his thoughts."

It makes no difference how much evil a man may think against us, nor how fully he may accomplish his designs; if God thinks good, all the evil will come to nothing, and only good will result. How calmly confident, then, we ought to be, since God says: "I know the thoughts that I think toward you, thoughts of peace, and not of evil." (Jeremiah 29:11)

Aggrieved Love

As soon as Jacob was buried, his sons said to one another: "Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him."

So little did they appreciate Joseph's character and understand real forgiveness, that they thought that Joseph had for years been cherishing hatred against them, and had been dissembling out of deference to his father. So they came begging Joseph to forgive them, and pleading, as though it were necessary, that their father had left word that he should do so.

"And Joseph wept when they spoke unto him." (Genesis 50:17)

The severest blow that can be given is to discredit one's expressions of love. We can easily picture to ourselves how Joseph's

tender heart was grieved at the thought that his brethren had so little perception and understanding of the genuineness of his kindness toward them; but how often are we guilty of the same lack of appreciation of God's kindness and love. How often God must be grieved as He sees His children doubting Him. Let us not dishonor Him any more by our doubts, but trust Him at all times.--Present Truth, January 1, 1903--Genesis 50:17-20

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 60

Suggestions for Quarterly Review

1. Give a brief Bible description of the character of Abraham.

2. What was the foundation of Abraham's righteousness?

3. Tell how Abraham's faith was tested.

4. What made this such a test of his faith?

5. How did Jacob come to leave his father's house?

6. Relate the dream which he had while on his journey.

7. What vow did he make?

8. Give proof that it is right for us to make such vows.

9. Where is this narrative recorded?

10. Relate the circumstances of Jacob's wrestling with the angel.

11. Who was the angel?

12. What was the cause of Jacob's importunity, and what did he receive?

13. For what purpose was this narrative recorded?

14. What led to Joseph's being sold into Egypt?

15. How did he suffer there, and what for?

16. What subsequent position did he occupy?

17. What was the real cause of Joseph's prosperity?

18. Show how God overruled the purposes of wicked men for good.

19. How did the Israelites come to settle in the land of Egypt?

20. After they became very numerous, what was done to them?

21. Tell how Moses was fitted for the work of delivering the people.

22. Relate the circumstances of his call to return to Egypt to deliver Israel.

23. What was God's special object in delivering His people?

Notes:

Faith was the foundation of Abraham's righteousness, as indeed it is of all righteousness. The apostle tells us that: "Without faith it is impossible to please God;" (Hebrews 11:6) but we know that God is pleased with righteousness, and with those who are righteous; therefore, without faith it is impossible to be righteous. And this is just what the Saviour meant when He said: "He that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit; for without me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

But these words of our Saviour suggest another thought, namely, that being merely justified for past transgressions is not enough; the man who is justified must, if he would retain his justification, abide in Christ by a living faith. This is aptly stated elsewhere by the same apostle who recorded the words of our Saviour just quoted. He says: "He that says he abides in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." (1 John 2:6)

There must be a growth, a development; the Christian must bring forth fruit. Paul tells us what some of these fruits are, (Galatians 5:22-23) and we are assured that: "He that lacks these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." (2 Peter 1:9)

The professed Christian who is not giving all diligence to add to his faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness,

brotherly kindness, and charity, (2 Peter 1:5-7) may well doubt the genuineness of his faith.

Bible faith is not simply a passive belief of the declarations and promises of God, but it is an active, living principle which permeates the whole being, rules the life, and incites its possessor to action. We know that Abraham's faith was of this character, for the Lord himself said to Isaac: "Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." (Genesis 26:5)

And the apostle James says: "Faith, if it has not works, is dead, being alone." (James 2:17)

In proof of this proposition the apostle cites the case of Abraham, thus: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Do you see how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" (James 2:21-22)

The apostle does not teach that works can by any means take the place of faith, but that real faith will work. Abraham obeyed God because he had faith; and in the very act of obedience his faith was strengthened. This is well explained by these words of the apostle John: "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then we have confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." (1 John 3:21-22)

It is thus that "by works was faith made perfect" in the case of "the father of the faithful." And it is thus that faith must be perfected in each one of our cases. Faith is implicit trust in, or confidence towards, God; but if our hearts condemn us, as they certainly will if we are living in sin, we cannot have this confidence, and consequently no true faith, but, like the devils, we also will believe only to tremble.--Signs of the Times, June 15, 1888--Genesis Overview.

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