

# The Present Truth, Vol. 4 (1888)

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## "The Promise of His Coming" *The Present Truth* 4, 2.

E. J. Waggoner

That there was once upon this earth a man called Jesus of Nazareth, scarcely anyone will now deny. Whatever conflicting views different ones may hold concerning his nature and office, all agree on this one fact. That he was taken, "and by wicked hands crucified and slain," is quite generally conceded. All, however, are not aware that the admission of these facts is virtually an admission of the inspiration of the bible, but so it is. Those very things, which no human wisdom could foresee, were recorded by holy prophets hundreds of years before they occurred. This fact shows that those prophets were inspired, or, as Peter declares, they "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter 1:21.

But this much being true, we must admit further that that which they wrote of the mission of Jesus was also true. Paul sums it up in brief when he says that "to him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Acts 10:43. Christ is, then, as all Christians agree, the "only begotten Son of God;" he is "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world;" he is the divine Word that, having been with God in the beginning, was made flesh and dwelt upon the earth. John 1. The incidents of his life, his subjection to his parents, his baptism, his temptation in the wilderness, his wonderful teachings, his marvelous miracles showing at once his tenderness and his power, his betrayal and crucifixion, and finally his triumphant resurrection and ascension to Heaven,-these are familiar to hundreds of thousands.

Aside from his wonderful sacrifice, which demands the unending love of all creatures, the character of Jesus as a man was most lovable. His disciples who had been with him night and day for more than three years, had learned to love him devotedly, both for what he was and what he promised them. On him all their hopes centered. Their feelings were well expressed by Peter, who, when they were asked if they would leave Jesus, said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." We can imagine, then, to some extent, their grief when Jesus said to them: "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you." John 13:33. It was the blasting of all their hopes; their hearts were filled with anguish. Jesus, whom they loved, was to go away, and even though they should lay down their lives for him, he would not take them along.

But the compassionate Saviour would not leave his children in torturing suspense. Noticing their despondent looks, he said: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:1-3.

"Ye believe in God, believe also in me." What can these words mean, but that the words which he was about to utter were the words of God himself, true and unchangeable? Whatever this promise means, then, it will as surely be fulfilled as that God is a God of truth. We can rely upon it implicitly.

And now as to the meaning of the promise. How could it be made more clear? The gist of it is contained in these simple words: "I will come again." He was here then, a real being. The word "again," meaning "once more," implies a repetition of the same thing. That is, that he would come in the same form in which he then was,-glorified, of course, as we shall see,-but a real, tangible being,-Jesus of Nazareth. There is a great deal contained in the three verses which we have quoted, but at present we are concerned only with the simple fact that Christ has pledged his word to come again.

The time which Jesus spent on this earth, from his birth in Bethlehem until his ascension from the Mount of Olives, is known as the first advent, or coming) of Christ. There is no question but that he had been upon the earth many times before, but that was his first appearance in connection with the great plan of salvation. And so, although he has since been on earth continuously, by his representative, the Holy Spirit, his second coming must be limited to that one mentioned in the promise, "I will come *again*." This promise cannot be fulfilled by anything except by his personal presence in glory. It will be his second coming in connection with the great plan of salvation-this time to complete the work by taking his people to himself.

That we are not mistaken in saying that Christ in comforting his disciples, gave promise of a second coming, is proved by the words of Paul, in Heb. 9:27, 28: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." This places the matter beyond dispute.

This text also settles another much mooted question, that of a future probation. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgment." How long after death the Judgment takes place must be determined by other texts. The general truth is stated that men die but once, and that after that their future fate is determined by the Judgment. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." That is, since men have but one life,-or probation,-which ends with their death, so Christ was only once offered. His offering had reference only to men in this present life. If man was to have two or more probations, then it would be necessary for two or more offerings to be made in his behalf; but there was only one offering. At his advent, Christ was offered "to bear the sins of many." The Lord "laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isa. 53:6. "In his own body" he bore our sins on the tree. 1 Peter 2:24. In order to save us from sin, he was made to be sin (2 Cor. 5:21); the innocent One was counted as guilty in order that the guilty might be accounted innocent. The benefits of this sacrifice are now free to all who will accept it, while Jesus is pleading its merits before the Father. But when he comes "the second time," he will be "without sin;" he will then no longer act as substitute for sinners; no longer will he assume any responsibility in their behalf. The sins of the righteous will have been blotted out, and those of the

impenitent rolled back upon their own heads. There can then be no more probation for them unless Christ should again take upon himself their sins and make another sacrifice; for there is no salvation in any other. Acts 4:12. And since Christ makes but one offering, it follows that their sins remain upon them, to sink them into perdition.

In the texts already quoted, there is sufficient proof that the promised coming is not at the death of the saints, neither the conversion of sinners. He appears "to them that look for him;" to those who "love his appearing." And this coming is not death, for it is only the "second" coming; if death were that coming, then there would be many millions of comings, for not an instant of time passes in which men do not die. He said that he would come "again;" now we submit that this can with no propriety be applied to death, unless his first coming was death, and they were all dead when he was speaking, for "again" signifies repetition.

But we have an inspired comment on

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this point in the last chapter of John. Christ had just signified to Peter by what death he should glorify God, when that disciple, turning about, saw John following, and asked, "What shall this man do?" "Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me." Verse 22. Now if the coming of Christ is at the death of his saints, these words of Christ are equivalent to this: "If I will that he live until he dies, what is that to thee?" But such a substitution makes utter nonsense of the passage. Then when Christ spoke of his coming, he had no reference whatever to death. This will be still more evident as we consider texts that describe the manner of his coming.

E. J. WAGGONER.

**February 2, 1888**

**"Manner of Christ's Coming" *The Present Truth* 4, 3.**

E. J. Waggoner

Last week we gave two texts (John 14:1-3; Heb. 9:27, 28) which contain a direct promise of Christ's second coming. If the subject were mentioned nowhere else in the Bible, these two texts would be sufficient. They are unequivocal statements of a fact, and the promises of God are not yea and nay. All from those texts we concluded that the second coming of Christ must be as real and literal as his first. We shall now produce positive testimony to that effect. We would first, however, remind the reader that every text that speaks of the manner or object of Christ's coming, is additional proof of the fact that he will come again.

In his first letter to the Thessalonians, the apostle Paul warns the brethren against indulging in hopeless sorrow for their dead friends, as though they were lost. He assures them, "by the word of the Lord," that those who live until the Lord comes will have no precedence over those who fall asleep in Jesus. We will not be with Christ in the sooner than they are. And then he proceeds to tell how this can be. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ

shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thess. 4:16, 17.

We shall have occasion to use this text again, and we pass it for the present. Turning to the first chapter of Acts, we read the account of Christ's ascension. In his gospel, Luke had previously written, "And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." Luke 24:50, 51. In Luke's second narrative we have this account: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Acts 1:9-11.

There is no mistaking these words. Christ was there in person. In bodily form, while in the act of blessing his disciples, he ascended to heaven. And the angels declared that "the same Jesus"- "the Lord himself," 1 Thess. 4:16-should come in exactly the same manner as he had left the earth. Now, as showing the perfect harmony of the Bible narrative, we quote right here the words of John: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." Rev. 1:7. The one who claims that the coming of Christ is death, or conversion, or anything else than a literal return to earth, squarely contradicts these plain texts.

Our Saviour foresaw that before his return many would be engaged in this very work. In order to draw the attention of man away from the real advent of Christ, as described in the Bible, Satan and his angels will transform themselves, not merely into angels of light, but into the appearance of Christ himself, and will "show great signs and wonders; insomuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Matt. 24:24. They will claim that Christ is already come, and will work miracles to support the claim. How, then, can we be sure that they are not the Christ; here is the sure guide: "Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth; behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matt. 24:26, 27. The reason why it will be impossible to deceive the elect, is because they will remember and implicitly believe the plain declarations of the Bible.

These texts prove not only that the coming of the Lord is a literal event, but that is yet future. Do you still say that it took place on the day of Pentecost? We answer that Paul's words in Heb. 9:28 were written many years after that time. None of the apostles had written a line at that time, and, since the resurrection of Christ, had engaged in no public work whatever. Is it claimed that the destruction of Jerusalem answers to the coming of the Lord, we remind you that the Book of revelation was written more than a score of years after Jerusalem was conquered by Titus; and in that book, besides the description already quoted (Rev. 1:7), almost the closing words are these: "And, behold, I come quickly; and

my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev. 22:12. "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly." Verse 20. These forbid the application of the promise to any event before the close of the first century.

Again, no event has ever yet occurred comparable to the coming of the Lord as described in the Bible. Peter, in answer to those who, professing to be able to see no signs of such an event, derisively ask, "Where is the promise of his coming?" Says: "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 Pet. 3:10.

The psalmist says: "For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight; that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Ps. 50:3-5.

The heavens have not departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; not yet as the glorious appearing of the Son of man in those opening heavens dazzled every eye as does the vivid lightning-flash. Not yet have "the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." Rev. 6:15, 16. The time is still future when the voice of the Archangel and the trump of God shall call the dead in Christ from their graves, and when the living righteous, with glad accord, shall unite in the exclamation: "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." Isa. 25:9.

That day will not pass and leave saints and sinners alike unconscious of its arrival. The Lord comes, not as an intercessor, but as a king, "without sin." There is thenceforward no more for mercy for sinners-they receive according to their deeds; no more trials for saints-he appears to them unto salvation. This being so, it is manifestly fool-hardy in any one to say, "We shall know more about it when it comes than we do not." Yes, we will; but those who put off their knowledge of it until it comes, will learn to their sorrow. While the signs that show that coming near are fulfilling all around us, let us search the Scriptures that we may be children of the light, and, having our lamps trimmed and burning, be able to hail our Lord with joy when he returns.

E. J. WAGGONER.

**February 16, 1888**

**"Object of Christ's Coming" *The Present Truth* 4, 4.**

E. J. Waggoner

We have now established to points beyond controversy. First, that Christ will come again (John 14:1-3; Heb. 9:28); and second, that his second coming will be as literal as the first (Acts 1:9-11; Rev. 1:7), the only point of difference being that it will be more glorious (Matt. 24:27; 25:31). We say that these points have been established beyond controversy, because we have read them directly from the Bible, in words so plain that a child could not misunderstand them. They need no interpretation to make them plainer.

But if the Lord is indeed coming again, it must be for some purpose; he must have some object in view. And if he was so particular to tell us of his coming, and to urge us to prepare for that great event, it must be that he has not left us in ignorance as to its object. We shall find that the Scriptures are very clear upon this point also.

The words of Christ himself demand our first attention. We have quoted the promise of Christ's coming found in John 14:1-3. That promise also contains the reason: "If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; *that where I am there ye may be also.*" He is coming, then, to take all his followers to himself. Those who mourned at the thought of having him apart from them, will then once more enjoy his presence.

Besides this, there is something else. Paul comforted the Thessalonian brethren in their tribulation with the thought that God himself could give them rest, and this rest he said they would receive "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, and flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Thess. 1:7, 8. With these two texts agree the words of Christ: "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." Matt. 16:27; and these: "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev. 22:12.

These texts show plainly enough the object of Christ's second coming. It is to take his people to themselves, and to take vengeance on the wicked. This latter part we will pass by for the present, and consider the promise to the disciples. From the words of Christ we would naturally conclude that there is no other way for his people to be with him except by his coming. "I will come again, and receive you unto myself, *that where I am, there ye may be also.*" The conjunction "that" denotes purpose, and is equivalent to "in order that." When we read, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, *that* whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16), we understand that belief in Christ is the only way by which we can avoid perishing. And so when we read the promise of Christ to his disciples, we understand that if Christ were not to come, his disciples could not be with him. Indeed, if it were otherwise, -if the disciples could be with Christ without his coming for them, -what force or comfort would there be in his promise? For the only words of comfort that he had for them were that he would come to take them to himself. Moreover, we cannot imagine Jesus making an unnecessary promise; but if the disciples could be with him without his coming, he, of course, knew it, and therefore made a promise which was entirely useless. From this text, then, we must conclude

that Christ's disciples are not yet with him, for his coming is still in the future. We call the reader's attention to other texts which confirm this conclusion.

Paul exhorts us to set our affection on things above and says: "When Christ, who is our life, *shall appear, then* shall ye also appear with him in glory." Col. 3:4. Note the adverb "then." It specifies the time when the saints will appear in glory; it is when Christ appears.

The apostle Peter gives instructions to the elders of the churches, exhorting them to labor faithfully, and says for their encouragement: "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." 1 Pet. 5:4. The report is sure, but they are not expected before Christ comes.

Again he says: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last

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time." 1 Pet. 1:3-5. The saints are kept by the power of God unto salvation; but the salvation is not to be given until the last time. Or, as Peter expresses it still more plainly in the 13th verse of the same chapter: "Be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

In the third chapter of his second epistle to Timothy, the apostle Paul speaks of the prevailing degeneracy of the last days, and recommends the Bible as the only thing that will thoroughly furnish men to good works. He then continues: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick [living] and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." 2 Tim. 4:1, 2. Hear, then, we find with the judgment is to take place; in connection with the coming of Christ. But if the dead are not judged until Christ comes, it necessarily follows that they do not receive any reward until that time. And this is exactly what the Saviour said, as quoted from Matt. 16:27; Rev. 22:12.

The apostle continues his exhortation to Timothy, and says: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." 2 Tim. 4:7, 8. The Judge is to give crowns at that day, says Paul. At what day? Why, at the day when he judges the living and dead, "at his appearing and his kingdom." Peter told the elders that they should receive their crown at the appearing of the chief Shepherd, and Paul says that all who love his appearing shall receive their crowns at the same time.

Paul says, "*Henceforth* there is *laid up* for me a crown of righteousness." He had reached the close of his life, and was about to be "offered" as a sacrifice to the truth. He felt that his life-work had been faithfully done. Did he therefore expect to immediately enter upon his reward? No; he was sure of a crown, but he knew that it would not be given until the appearing of Christ.

We have seen that when Christ comes he will be accompanied by all the holy angels. Matt. 25:31. The work which the angels have to do is described in Matt. 24:31: "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." And this agrees with the words of the psalmist: "He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." Ps. 50:4, 5. By what means the saints are gathered to be with Christ, will be considered in another article.

E. J. WAGGONER.

**March 1, 1888**

**"The Resurrection" *The Present Truth* 4, 5.**

E. J. Waggoner

We have seen that the object of our Lord's second coming is to take his people to himself. And it has also been shown that Christ coming is not at the death of the saints, but that the only coming spoken of is a literal, personal coming in power and glory. From John 14:1-3 we draw the necessary conclusions that if he is coming (yet in the future) is for the express purpose of taking his people to himself, then none of his people can be with him until he comes. This fact is plainly stated by Paul in the eleventh of Hebrews. After having given a list "of the faithful ones of whom the world was not worthy,"-those who "through faith subdued kingdoms, brought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouth of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong" (verses 33, 34),-as well as those who "had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment," the apostle concludes thus: "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise; God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Verses 39, 40. This is an explicit statement that even the martyrs of old must wait for their reward until we who are alive receive ours.

And this is exactly what our Saviour said. As he was one day eating in the House of a Pharisee, he took occasion to give some instruction concerning hospitality. Said he: "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed *at the resurrection of the just.*" Luke 14:12-14.

There is to be but one reward given. Of those who looked for a return for their charities in this life, who gave alms to be seen of men, the Lord said, "They *have* their reward." Matt. 6:1, 2. The applause of men, or an equivalent for the gift, is all they need expect; but those who live lives of unselfishness shall receive an everlasting recompense "at the resurrection of the just." The words of Christ,

"Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12), show that the resurrection, when the reward is given, is at the coming of Christ. And so again we have found that the righteous receive no reward till Jesus comes.

The proposition, already approved, is sustained by many other plain declarations of Scripture. Let us once more refer to Paul's words to the Thessalonians: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thess. 4:16, 17.

Nothing can be plainer than this; the apostle has carefully guarded against any possibility of mistake. It is "the Lord himself" who comes. He comes, not secretly, but with "a shout," and "with the trump of God," whose reverberations shake the earth. That mighty blast awakens the millions of sleeping saints,-those who have died in faith, not having received the promise,-and they rise. This is the first thing accomplished. Then the living ones,-those who "remain until the coming of the Lord,"-are caught up "together with them" (those who have just been raised from the dead) in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. This work of gathering the saints together is performed by the angels at the bidding of Christ see Matt. 24:30, 31.

"And so," the apostle says, "shall we ever be with the Lord." The word "so" means "in this manner," "by this means." How is it, then, that we go to be with the Lord? By the resurrection of the dead, and the translation of the living. There is no other way brought to view in the Bible, by which we can be with the Lord.

The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is not a product of the New Testament alone. When Abraham was called upon to offer up Isaac, he obeyed, "accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead." Heb. 11:19. When Job was suffering not only physical torture, but the anguish of being deserted and despised by all his friends and acquaintances, his faith in the coming of the Lord and the resurrection of the dead still sustained him. From his lips came this sublime utterance: "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."

Isaiah, in prophetic vision looking down the ages and beholding the troubles of the church, utters these consoling words: "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in

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dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." Isa. 26:19. Hosea, favoured with a similar view, speaks as in Christ's stead, and says of the people of God: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death; O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction." Hos. 13:14.

We have space in this article for only one more quotation. The prophet David, putting himself in the place of the church, and considering the persecution which it must endure "from men of the world, which have their portion in this life,"

anticipates the words of Paul in the eleventh of Hebrews, and says: "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." Psa. 17:15. When will the saints be in the likeness of Christ? The beloved disciple says: "We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." John 3:2. David, therefore, it did not look for satisfaction until the Lord's coming; but if he could have gone to heaven at death, that certainly would have satisfied him.

The following comments on Psa. 17:15, by Dr. Barnes, will be read with interest:-

"'I shall be satisfied.' while *they* are satisfied with this world, I shall be satisfied only when I awake in the likeness of my God. Nothing can meet the wants of my nature; nothing can satisfy the aspirations of my soul, until that occurs. 'When I awake.' This is language which would be employed only by one who believed in the resurrection of the dead, and who was accustomed to speak of death as a sleep—a calm repose in the hope of a waking to a new life. . . . The obvious interpretation of the passage, therefore, so far as its sense can be determined from the connection, is to refer it to the awaking in the morning of the resurrection; and there is nothing in the language itself, or in the known sentiments of the psalmist, to forbid this interpretation. . . . 'With thy likeness.' Or, *in* thy likeness; that is, resembling thee. . . . I regard this passage, therefore, as one of the incidental proofs scattered through the Old Testament, which showed that the sacred writers under that dispensation believed in the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead; that their language was often based on the knowledge and belief of that doctrine, even when they did not expressly affirm it, and that in times of trouble, and under the consciousness of sin, they sought their highest consolation, as the people of God do now, from the hope and the expectation that the righteous dead will rise again, and that in a world free from trouble, from sin, and from death, they would live for ever in the presence of God, and find their supreme happiness in being made wholly like him."

E. J. WAGGONER.

**March 15, 1888**

**"The Resurrection" *The Present Truth* 4, 6.**

E. J. Waggoner

In the preceding articles concerning the coming of the Lord, we have learned that he will certainly come, that his coming will be manifest to all, that it is for the purpose of receiving all his disciples to themselves, and that this is accomplished by the resurrection of the dead and the translation of the living. One or two more texts on the subject of that resurrection will be sufficient.

When Job was suffering the deepest affliction, and at the point of death, he asked: "If a man die, will he live again?" This was a very pertinent question for a man in his situation. Notice the form of the question: Not, "Shall he *continue* to live?" but, "Shall he live *again*?" This expression shows clearly that Job made a plain distinction between life and death. "Again" signifies "another time," and

indicates that an interval of time has elapsed since the same thing occurred or existed before. Job anticipated a time in which there would be no life, in which he would not exist, and he asked whether life would ever be restored. But he asked the question only to answer it, for he immediately added: "If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee; thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands." Job 14:14, 15.

Now we may ask, When will the Lord call and be answered by those who are dead? Christ himself furnishes the answer: "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5:26-29. And David says that it is at his coming that the Lord calls to his people. Psa. 50:3, 4.

Isaiah said, in prophetic vision, saw the end of the world, and the coming of the Lord. Speaking of the triumph of the righteous, he said: "He the Lord will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it." Isa. 25:8. If the Lord hath spoken it, it must be done. Paul tells how and when it will be done: "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." 1 Cor. 15:51, 52.

Here, then, is the "change" of which Job spoke, It is a change from death to life, from mortal to immortal. And in what state did Job expect to be until this change should come? In death, for it was that of which he was speaking. The apostle also says that the dead as well as the living are to be changed. And here we find death called a sleep. We shall not all *sleep*, but both dead and living shall be changed. "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, *then* shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." 1 Cor. 15:53, 54. Death is not swallowed up in victory till Christ comes. The saints do not shout, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" until the voice of the Son of God calls them forth from their tombs. And what does this prove? That death and the grave have for a time triumphed, and held them captives. If it were not so, if the saints had passed at death immediately to a state of the eternal bliss, they would not be obliged to wait until the coming of the Lord to shout their victory. They could once voice their contempt for its weakness; or, more consistently, they could ascribe to it thanksgiving and praise for having liberated them from the toils of earth, and assured them into the joys of heaven.

Now we ask, What is the necessity for a resurrection of the dead? If the faithful of past ages are now "safe in the arms of Jesus," as is so often taught and sung, what more can they need? Of what benefit to them will a resurrection be? None at all. The Bible doctrine of the resurrection is directly

opposed to the theory that men are taken to heaven at death. The Bible writers rested their entire hope in a resurrection; and this proves that they had no idea of the possibility (since they must die) of being with Christ in any other way.

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Paul said that he counted all things loss for Christ, and for him gave up everything, and was willing to know the "fellowship of his sufferings," and be "made conformable unto his death." And what for? "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Phil. 3:11. Why did he esteem it so all-important to attain unto the resurrection of the dead? Let him answer: "If after the manner of man I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it to me, if the dead rise not?" 1 Cor. 15:32. He had no hope in anything else. Let him once be convinced that the dead would not rise, and all incentive to action would have been taken away from one of the most tireless and zealous men that ever lived. Surely, then, the resurrection is a doctrine of no small importance.

In order to try to harmonize the doctrine of a final resurrection with the theory that the spirits of the good are taken to heaven immediately upon the death of the body, it is claimed that they do not receive the fulness of their reward until the resurrection. But this theory is overthrown by Paul's words: "What advantageth it me, if the dead rise not?" Is it nothing to be in the presence of God and Christ and the angels? Is it nothing to be exempt from pain, and free from the assaults of Satan? Certainly to gain such a state, even if it were not the fullness of joy, is worth a great deal of effort. Paul's words show that he had no knowledge of any benefit that would accrue to the dead except through the resurrection. And if he taught man to place all their hopes in the coming of the Lord and the resurrection, who shall dare to teach otherwise? If he did not know the exact truth in regard to the matter, to whom has a later revelation been made? So true are all the words of Paul that even an angel from heaven would bring a curse upon himself if he should teach anything different. Gal. 1:8.

In view of the testimony that has been quoted to show that the resurrection takes place at the coming of the Lord, it is hardly worth while to notice the position that it is at death; that the rising of the soul or spirit from the body is the resurrection. This theory makes the saints be with the Lord at death, and thus makes death to be the coming of the Lord, which we have seen is a false and absurd position. There were some in Paul's day who taught that the resurrection was past, and he said that they had erred concerning the truth, and were overthrowing the faith of some. 2 Tim. 2:18. Nothing could more surely overthrow faith than such teaching, for who that accepted it could have any belief in the promises of a future second coming of Christ? It is as impossible to harmonize the theory of the past resurrection, or a resurrection at death, with the doctrine of the second coming of Christ, as to mix oil with water.

In closing, we will call attention to Rev. 22:4-6. John says: "I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God. . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Ah," says one, "that is what I believe; the souls of the martyrs went at once to live with Christ." Let us see; these are not all the dead that John saw. He continues: "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first

resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power." Now notice: "The rest of the dead lived not *again* until the thousand years were finished." Then the dead that John first saw were living *again*. And if living again, this must be the second life, which is separated from the first by an interval called death. Then death and life are not the same. And this "living again," after an interval, is called a resurrection. Then what is the resurrection? It is the "living again" of those who have been dead, and not the continued existence of something that has never died. Those who do not have part in the first resurrection, do not "live again" until the thousand years are finished. Then they have a resurrection. Now allowing that "the rest of the dead" died at the very beginning of the thousand years, and we have their death and their resurrection separated by a period of a thousand years. That does not look like a resurrection at death.

E. J. WAGGONER.

**April 19, 1888**

**"Immortality" *The Present Truth* 4, 8.**

E. J. Waggoner

In all investigation of Bible doctrines it must be borne in mind that the Bible was written by inspiration of God, and must, therefore, be perfectly consistent with itself. If we find passages which seemed to conflict, we must conclude that we do not fully understand them. Besides this, we must always interpret those parts that are obscure and indefinite by those that are definite and plain. This is but reasonable. If we have a friend whom we know to be perfectly honest, and two expressions of his that seem contradictory are reported to us, we do not condemn him until he has had an opportunity to explain. We expect that when we learn all that he said, we will find that the two statements agree. Neither would we take a statement definitely and emphatically expressed, and offset it by words from which, taken by themselves, we might infer something directly the opposite. It is thus fairly that we must deal with the Bible. We are not at liberty to draw, from any passage, an *inference* that is opposed to the plain declarations of the Word.

Now we have brought forward texts of Scripture that have no double meaning, which proved that God's people are rewarded only at the coming of Christ and the resurrection, and that all men are dependent on Christ for eternal life. There are no doubt other texts from which the reader gathers that men are essentially immortal; these will be considered in due time, but in the meantime we ask the reader to let the plain statements that we quote have their full weight.

In our last we quoted Christ's words: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life." John 3:36. This is a plain statement that those who do not believe in Christ will not live eternally. The question now arises, In what sense do those who believed on Christ have eternal life now? Let us read the answer: "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and *this life is in his Son.*" 1 John 5:11. Now turn and read the introduction to Paul second letter to Timothy: "Paul, an apostle

of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to *the promise of life* which is in Christ Jesus." Here we have the answer complete. Eternal life is ours by promise, if we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom alone it may be obtained. But if a young man possesses the writings of which show that he is heir to a certain estate, he will speak of the estate as his, even though he is not in possession of it, and has no voice in its control.

When many of Christ's disciples became offended and left him, he turned to the twelve and asked, "Will ye also go away?" "Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." John 6:66-68. The twelve believed as Christ had said, that "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life." If this be not true, what a chance for retort the unbelieving Jews had when Christ said to them: "And ye will not come to me, and that ye might have life." John 5:40. They might have said, "We have no need to come to you for life, for we are immortal by nature." And is not this a logical position for those to take who believe that the essential part of man, the real man, can never die? We may not openly repudiate Christ as did the Jews, yet if we say that we already have that which he came to bestow, do we not thereby signify our independence of him? The only inducement that he holds out for our accepting him is that he can give us life. Now if we proudly insist that we have life, do we not treat his offer with contempt, and so dishonour him? So long as we insist that we are not depended on him for eternal life, our professions to accept him have a good deal the error of patronizing condescension.

Let us have some more plain declarations. In 1 Tim. 6:12 Paul charges Timothy to "faith, lay hold on the eternal life." A man cannot "lay hold" of something that he already has hold of. And how should he "lay hold" on eternal life? By exercising faith words in John 3:16, 36. The apostle then charges Timothy to "keep this commandment without spot, and blemish, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; which in his times he shall show who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see." Verses 13-16. This language was referred to God the Father, for although Christ in revelation is called King of kings and Lord of lords," it is he in this instance who is going to make known the "blessed and only potentate;" and further, the one here spoken of is one "whom no man hath seen, neither can see;" but Christ has been seen many times.

But to the main point of the statement. It is that God only hath immortality. So long as the Bible remains, this text will be a standing rebuke to those who claim immortality as theirs by right. That is an attribute of God alone. "But," says one, "is not Christ immortal? and do we not read of the angels that they cannot die?" Yes; and we turn to John 5:26 and read Christ's words: "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." Christ, then, being the only begotten Son of God, partakes of his attributes, and has life in himself. That is, he is able to impart life to others. The text in Timothy does not shut off any one from obtaining immortality, but if it is obtained it must be as a gift from God. It is in this way that the angels are immortal. Turn now to Rom. 2:5-7. There Paul states that God will render "to every man according to his deeds." "To

them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, [he will render] eternal life." "Immortality" means the condition in which one cannot die, and "eternal life" means unending existence; the terms, therefore, are synonymous, and the verse is equivalent to the statement that God will render immortality to those who seek for it. Two points are here made: 1. In order to gain eternal life we must *seek* for it. Then those who do not seek for it will never receive it. 2. The only proper way to seek for immortality is by "patient continuance in well-doing." Then those who do not do well, will not obtain eternal life, even though they may desire it.

Again: In 2 Tim. 1:9, 10, Paul says that the purpose and grace of God, which was given us in Christ Jesus, "is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." Here then we learn the place in which we are to seek for immortality. It is in the gospel. Whoever looks for it in any other place will fail to find it.

E. J. WAGGONER.

*(Concluded in our next.)*

**May 17, 1888**

**"Immortality" *The Present Truth* 4, 10.**

E. J. Waggoner

*(Concluded.)*

Having learned how immortality may be obtained, we have only one thing to consider, and that is when it will be bestowed; when believers in Christ will come into possession of their promised inheritance. This is definitely settled by Paul in the fifteenth of 1 Corinthians, in a text which we have before quoted. We begin with verse 50: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." This statement might raise a query in the minds of some, so Paul adds: "Behold, I show you [that is, make known to you] a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." Verses 51, 52. This, then, explains how we may get into the kingdom of God, even though flesh and blood cannot inherit it. "We shall be *changed*." And when does this change take place? "At the last trump." And what will the be change be? "For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must *put on* immortality." Verses 52, 53.

"This *mortal* must put on immortality." The Bible writers never speak of man as being anything else than mortal. "Shall mortal man be more just than God?" Job 4:17. How could they speak otherwise, since God only has immortality? The contrast is sharply drawn in Rom. 1:23. Paul speaks of the heathen, who had "changed the glory of the uncorrupted God into an image like to corruptible man." God is immortal, incorruptible; man is mortal, corruptible. But we are to be *changed*, and then we shall be like him, immortal.

"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." 1 Cor. 15:54. And this occurs, as the preceding verses show at the coming of the Lord.

We have not quoted, besides several texts that speak of "the eternal life," every text in the Bible that contains the word "immortality." Let us see what we have found: 1. God alone has immortality. This, of course, applies to Christ, who, as the Son of God, partakes of his nature, and who is entitled to be called God. 2. If man would have immortality, he must seek for it. 3. The only proper way to seek for it is by a patient continuance in well-doing. 4. Man can find immortality only in the Gospel, for it is there that it is brought to light. 5. It belongs to every one who believes in Christ, but only by promise. This life is now in Christ, and whoever has Christ, as the eternal life, because he is in possession of that which will bring it to him. 6. This promise of life will be fulfilled, and a man's search for immortality will be crowned with success, when "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." Then those who have fought the good fight of faith will be crowned as victors with "a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

E. J. WAGGONER.

**July 5, 1888**

**"The True Israel" *The Present Truth* 4, 13.**

E. J. Waggoner

The throne of David is the only throne promised to Christ; therefore the dominion, the receiving of which is described in Dan. 7:13, 14, must be the kingdom of Israel. It was declared that his everlasting dominion should be over the house of Jacob, yet the prophet, after telling of the destruction of earthly monarchies, says: "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." Dan. 7:27. Therefore it must be that all the saints of God will constitute the people of Israel, over whom Christ shall reign. This truth has been referred to before, but now more extended positive Scripture proof is in order.

1. The promise is: "To him that overcometh 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." Rev. 3:21. Now the word "Israel" signifies, "a prince of God," or "one who prevails." It was given to Jacob after he had wrestled all night with the angel, and had gained the victory. The Lord said to him: "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." Gen. 32:28. Therefore an overcomer is an Israelite; and the promise is that to these who are Israelites; and the promise is that those who are Israelites Christ will grant to sit with him on his throne.

2. The natural descendants of Abraham were never considered as the true Israel, and heirs according to the promise, unless they were, like him, righteous. When Christ told the Jews that if they believed in him they should know the truth and the truth should make them free, they replied, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man." John 8:33. But Jesus showed them that they were in a worse bondage than any human slavery, namely, the bondage of sin (verse 34); and to their repeated statements that they were the children of Abraham, he replied: "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham." "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." Verses 39, 40, 44.

In like manner, also, John the Baptist told the wicked Pharisees and Sadducees not to flatter themselves that they were the children of Abraham, because God was able of the very stones to raise up children unto Abraham (Matt. 3:7-9), plainly implying that sooner than fulfill the promise to such unworthy descendants as they were, God would raise up children unto Abraham, out of the stones. That this was not a new idea, is evident from the fact that even in the wilderness, from the very time that the promise was renewed to the Jews, at the exode, the stubborn Jew who refused to humble himself before God, and confess his sin, on the day of atonement, was cut off from among his people (Lev. 23:28, 29), while a stranger was at any time permitted to identify himself with Israel by circumcision.

Circumcision was the mark of Jewish citizenship. The man who was circumcised was known to be an Israelite; yet, as has been stated, this rite was administered to foreigners, after which they were considered the same as those that were born of Jewish parents, thus showing that the natural descendants of Abraham did not comprise all Israel. More than this, we have evidence to show that the Lord never regarded the outward mark of circumcision, whether in the person of a native Jew, or a foreigner, as evidence that that individual was really an heir of Abraham. In Rom. 4:8-11 we learn what circumcision implied:-

"Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also."

Abraham received circumcision as a sign that he had obtained "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ." Circumcision was, therefore, a sign of righteousness. If a person was circumcised, but was not righteous, he was no more a child of Abraham than any other man; and whoever was righteous, like Abraham, was really his child. So Abraham was the father of all that believed, whether circumcised or uncircumcised. That outward circumcision did not make an Israelite, unless a man was righteous, is plainly declared by Paul in Rom. 2:25-29:-

"For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

This was true, not simply when the apostle wrote, but from the beginning of the history of the Jewish nation. When the Lord gave laws to his people, from Mount Sinai, he said that if they disobeyed him he would bring desolation upon their land, and they should perish among the heathen; but,-

"If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; and that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity; then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land." Lev. 26:40-42.

And so it was in the days of Moses, as well as in the days of Christ, that "an Israelite indeed," was one in whom was "no guile." John 1:47.

In Rom. 11 the apostle very forcibly illustrates the way in which the promises to Israel could be fulfilled, even though all the literal descendants of Jacob should forfeit their right to the inheritance. In the first and second verses he declares that God has not cast away his people. This might lead us to suppose that literal Israel are yet the chosen people of God, if he did not say in verse 5 that those that remain are "according to the election of grace." Then he represents Israel by an olive tree. Some of the branches have been cut off, and the Gentiles, a wild olive tree, have been grafted in. This grafting is contrary to nature, for the grafts partake of the root and fatness of the tame olive tree into which they are grafted, and bear the same kind of fruit. He warns those who are thus grafted in not to boast, since they stand only by faith, and that as the natural branches were broken off because of unbelief, so they may likewise be removed. The Jews, the natural branches, may become part of the tree, but if they do, it will not be as original branches, but as spiritual grafts. Thus the people of Israel are only a spiritual people,-those who are Christ's,-"and so all Israel shall be saved."

E. J. WAGGONER.

**July 19, 1888**

**"Salvation Present and Future" *The Present Truth* 4, 14.**

E. J. Waggoner

There are some scriptural expressions that have been so misused by ignorant and fanatical persons that they have almost fallen into disrepute among sober-minded people. One of these terms is the word "saved," as applied to an

individual in this present life. In a certain class of revivals it is very common to hear persons who have been wrought up to the proper pitch of excitement, testify that they are saved. The more that can be induced to rise and say with greater or less vehemence, "I am saved," or who in response to the question, will hold up their hands to that effect, the greater the list of "converts" the revivalist has to report. Now we earnestly deprecate any such methods as this; yet simply because the term "saved" is abused, we ought not to reject it, any more than we would refuse to believe in present conversion, because the term is used by many people who have not the slightest idea of its meaning.

The word "saved" is frequently used in the Bible in a sense similar to that of "conversion." Paul says: "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." 1 Cor. 1:18. Here it is used in the present tense, and has no reference to future salvation. Again he says: "Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." 2 Tim. 1:8, 9.

To the same intent the word is used in Titus 3:4-6:-

"But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward men appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour."

Other texts might be quoted, but these are sufficient. They show that when one has been forgiven for all his past transgressions,-when the burden of sin that clung to him as a body of death, has been removed,-and a new heart has been given him,-a heart loving righteousness and hating iniquity,-it is proper to say that he is saved. The trouble arises from confounding that salvation with eternal salvation. There is a salvation which is wholly future, as is evident from the following texts:-

"And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Matt. 24:12, 13. Here we learn that those who are converted-saved-must endure to the end if they would be saved.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." 1 Pet. 1:3-5. Here again we learn that at "the last time" a salvation is to be brought to those who, having a hope in God through the resurrection of Jesus, endure, through the grace of God, to the end. There is a possibility that this present salvation may not be lasting, that those who have "tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come" (Heb. 6:5, 6), may fall away; but the salvation "to be revealed at the last time" cannot be lost, as is seen by the following text:-

"But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with *an everlasting* salvation; ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end." Isa. 45:17. From this we learn of a salvation that is to be everlasting, that will be shared by Israel-all who overcome. This is the salvation that is to be revealed at the last time.

Now, what connection have the two? Simply this, the first is a preparation for the second. One is salvation in the kingdom of grace, and the other is salvation in the kingdom of glory. Paul, in writing to the Colossians, prays that they might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing,-

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son, in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Col. 1:12-14.

Here is present salvation, and translation into a kingdom; yet it is not until Christ comes "the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28), sitting upon the throne of his glory, accompanied by all his holy angels, that he says to the righteous: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matt. 25:34. Now, of those who have been delivered from the powers of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's grace, "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," only those will have an entrance ministered unto them "abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," who heed the exhortation, "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10, 11), so that they do not fall.

The kingdom of grace receives subjects to be fitted for the kingdom of glory. It saves men from the guilt and the love of sin, clothing them with the divine nature, so that when the Lord shall come in his glory, they may be clothed upon with immortality, which will then be the only thing lacking. But none will share this glory who indulge in vain boasting, or who imagine that a work just begun for them is already done. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

E. J. WAGGONER.

**August 16, 1888**

**"One Probation Enough" *The Present Truth* 4, 16.**

E. J. Waggoner

"Let favour be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord." Isa. 26:10. This text is of itself sufficient to show the folly of the claims that after death there will be another probation for those who have not accepted Christ in this life. Of course the text does not mean that the grace of God is entirely in vain, and that no wicked persons will turn from their wicked ways, for Paul says that the grace of God does bring salvation (Titus 2:11); and if it were not for the grace of God, as manifested in the gift of his Son, it would be impossible for anybody to repent. But it does mean that those who will not repent

in consequence of the ordinary manifestations of God's favour, would only be hardened still more by greater manifestations of it.

The case of Pharaoh is right to the point. In the first place he had the same call that is extended to all the world: "Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." This call is to all the world, and included Pharaoh. It cannot be said that he had no chance, for the chosen people of God were right in his own land.

Then Moses came to him with a message direct from the Lord, saying "Let my people go." And in order that he might know from whom the message came, miracles were wrought, showing the power of God. Here he had additional opportunity to acknowledge God, but he refused.

Then God's judgments began to come, and when the agents of Satan, the magicians, could no longer counterfeit these wonders, the proud king was constrained to beg for the favour of God, whom he had despised. His request was granted, and the frogs were removed: "But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them." Ex. 8:15.

Again the power of God was manifested in judgments, and again the king sent for the servants of the Lord, and begged that the plague of flies might be removed. "And Moses went out from Pharaoh, and entreated the Lord. And the Lord did according to the word of Moses; and he removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; there remained not one. And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go." Ex. 8:30-32.

Still closer and closer came the judgments, so that it was absolutely impossible for anyone to doubt the power and majesty of God. The cattle were destroyed, terrible boils broke out upon man and beast, and finally a fearful storm of thunder, hail, and fire, was sent, which destroyed everything in its path. "And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Entreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer." Ex. 9:27, 28. "And Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread abroad his hands unto the Lord: and the thunders and hail ceased, and the rain was not poured upon the earth. And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children of Israel go; as the Lord had spoken by Moses." Verses 33-35.

Here we have a perfect illustration of the truth spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "Let favour be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness." The more favour was showed to Pharaoh, the more hardened he became. It was not until a plague was sent from which there could be no respite, that he relented long enough to let the people go as the Lord had commanded; and even then, when there seemed to be a prospect of no more judgments, he hardened his heart and rushed forth to his own destruction.

Thus it would be with the wicked if God should grant them a second probation. In this life they have had a chance to see the power of God manifested in both mercy and judgment. Sometimes they have trembled at the near approach of danger, but have hardened their hearts as soon as the danger was past. By and by the Lord will be "revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire." 2 Thess. 1:7, 8. "A fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him." Ps. 50:3. Then "the lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." Isa. 2:11. Everyone will then be willing to confess "that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Now what would be the result if after all this God should grant the wicked another probation? Both revelation and experience show that they would be worse than they ever were before. To give them another probation, would be worse than casting pearls before swine. The reason for this is, that God never cuts off any sinner while his heart is tender, and when his heart has ceased to be tender, nothing but terrible judgments can make any impression upon him, and the only impression they can make is that of cowardly fear.

It is true that many of the advocates of a second probation claim that it will be granted only to those who in this life have "not had a fair chance." That this is a direct charge against the justice of God, will be shown at another time; it is sufficient here to remind the reader that a "second probation" necessarily implies a first, and a probation is a trying, a testing. Therefore to say that any will have a second probation, is to admit that they have been tried once and found wanting. In other words, they have "had a fair chance," and having refused it, they would count any additional favour an evidence of weakness on the part of God, and would deride him for it.

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**"The Deep Things of God" *The Present Truth* 4, 19.**

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When a man has gazed into the starry heavens through a telescope, he has an idea of depth that he never had before. Let him, for instance, point his telescope toward some portion of the Milky Way, where to the naked eye only a faint haze is visible, and he will see not only countless multitudes of stars, but will be impressed with the fact that there is an infinite depth beyond, which the strongest telescope cannot fathom.

Suppose now that as the enthusiastic astronomer is dilating upon the wonders of the starry worlds, someone should say to him, "Oh! you see more in the heavens than is really there; those little shining specks are not so important as you think they are, but you have been

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gazing at them so intently for so long a time that everything is magnified to your vision." Almost any intelligent person would tell such an one that it is impossible

to overestimate the extent and wonders of the heavens; that the telescope magnifies nothing, but simply helps us to get an approximate idea of the actual size of the heavenly bodies; and that it is just as impossible for any man to comprehend the vastness of the universe as it is for him to comprehend God.

This train of thought was suggested by one who, after a conversation upon the law of God, said: "You have been studying the subject so long that, to you, everything is magnified. It is always the case that when one thinks on a certain subject a great deal, little things assume an importance which they do not actually possess." Is this true? Can a person look into the perfect law of liberty so intently that some portions of it will assume undue proportions? Many who would agree with us in our statement concerning the heavens, will agree with our friend in his statement concerning the law; but it can be shown that the human mind can no more fathom the depths of the divine law, than it can compass the bounds of the universe.

If the law were of human origin it could be fathomed, for what one finite mind has evolved, another finite mind can comprehend. But who can know the Almighty to perfection? And the law of God is the righteous will of God. It is a transcript of his own character. This fact alone should convince anyone that there is no danger of overestimating any portion of it.

Things of human origin may often be comprehended at a glance, and then if one spends time poring over them, minor points assume undue importance. But the Scriptures, which are a commentary on the law, must be searched in order to be understood. One may imagine that his casual glance has enabled him to grasp all that is contained in a passage, and it may seem to him that there is little in it; but Paul says: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. 2:14. And he says: "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." Verse 10.

These deep things of God are revealed only to those who have Christ, for in him "are *hid* all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Col. 2:3. The psalmist David did not think there was any danger of thinking upon the law so much as to unduly exalt any portion of it, for he said: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." Ps. 1:1, 2. And of himself he said "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day."

"God is love;" all men who profess to know God, make much of this fact. His love is infinite, because he *is love*, and he is infinite. But no man can understand any more of the love of God than he does of the law of God, for the love of God runs parallel with his law. The love of God is just as extensive as his law, and no more so. Just consider: His law is a law of love, and we read that it was in love that he gave it to men. Deut. 33:2, 3. He desires that all men should have life; but they cannot have life unless they are like him; for only those who are like God can dwell in his presence, and soon the glory of the Lord is to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Then those who are not like God will be destroyed. But

no man can see God, so as to know what it is to be like him, and so God has given us his law,-the transcript of his character,-that we, by conforming to it, may be like him, and so have life. Thus the law was ordained to life. The angels who have never sinned, but who "do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word," have life for that reason.

But as for men, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" and "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Why did Christ die? He himself answers: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. "Sin is the transgression of the law," and "the wages of sin is death." Hence we know that all men were doomed to death, because they had trampled upon the law of life, and God in his great love for them gave his only begotten Son, in order that they might, through faith in him, escape that awful fate. We say that this was infinite love; that in that one gift God gave all that Heaven had to bestow; and that the infinite power of God himself could do no more for guilty man than he has done. But would God take steps that were unnecessary? To give up his own Son was a sacrifice that a finite mind can never understand; would he have made that sacrifice if man could have been redeemed by any easier way? No, indeed; the love of God was no greater than was necessary to satisfy the righteous demands of his broken law. But that love was infinite; therefore the law itself is infinite. The love of God in Christ helps us to understand the law; the law of God, carefully studied, helps us to understand the love of God. Both work together.

The danger with men is that they will take too narrow and too shallow views of the law, and not that they will get too exalted ideas of its breadth and depth. Christ came to earth to "magnify the law, and make it honorable." He did not make it larger than it was before, but exhibited it in his life, so that its hidden beauties might stand out prominent. He was the living embodiment of the law. He who studies the character of Christ, with a longing desire and an earnest purpose to emulate it, is studying the deep things of God,-the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,-that are hidden in him. As we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we learn that the greatest things in the law are those things which to the natural mind appear trivial, or which do not appear at all; and with the psalmist we cry to the Lord, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." E. J. WAGGONER.