**“Whose Law Is It?” The Signs of the Times, 7, 21.**

E. J. Waggoner

The following paragraph, which is going the rounds of the religious press, shows the careless manner in which most people handle the word of God:- {SITI June 2, 1881, p. 247.1}

“Moses with his decalogue, could never accomplish what has been achieved by Christ and his cross. The bonds of the old morality could, like green withes, be easily broken; but the ties of this morality are strong, just because they are tender.” {SITI June 2, 1881, p. 247.2}

It is evident that the writer of the above is trying to place Christ in antagonism to the ten commandments; but where in the Bible do we find any record of the decalogue of Moses? Moses did not originate the law, he did not speak it to the people, God called Moses into the mount, and there gave him the ceremonial law, and directions concerning the building of the sanctuary. But the decalogue was not intrusted to Moses to be transmitted to the people. Thus we read, “And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God;” Exodus 31:18; and in chapter 32:15, 16, we read, “And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables.” And still later, when Moses rehearsed the ten commandments to Israel, he said: “These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone.” Deuteronomy 5:22. {SITI June 2, 1881, p. 247.3}

When these first tables were broken, the Lord said to Moses: “Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first; and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest.” “And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.” Exodus 34:1, 28. {SITI June 2, 1881, p. 247.4}

This law thus spoken and written by God is always called his. “Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God.” Deuteronomy 11:26-28. “And they left all the commandments of the Lord their God.” “Also Judah kept not the commandments of the Lord their God.” 2 Kings 17:16, 19. David in his charge to Solomon, said: “Only the Lord give thee wisdom and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Israel, that thou mayest keep the law of the Lord thy God.” 1 Chronicles 22:12. See also Psalm 1:2; 19:7, 8; 119; Isaiah 5:24, and many other texts in which the commandments are distinctly called the law of God. {SITI June 2, 1881, p. 247.5}

There is a law that is sometime called Moses’ law, but it was distinct from the decalogue. It was the law of ceremonies which God gave to Moses while he was in the mount. Of this law it is said, “And Moses wrote this law,” and, “And it came to pass when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book,” etc. Deuteronomy 31:9, 24. But although Moses wrote this law for the use of the people, and it is sometimes termed his law, it is nowhere claimed that Moses had any further connection with it than as the mouthpiece of God. Thus in Leviticus 27:34, after this law had been rehearsed, the statement was made, “These are the commandments which the Lord commanded Moses for the children of Israel in Mount Sinai;” and in Nehemiah 9:13, 14, the distinction between the law of God and that of Moses is clearly made, while God is still represented as the author of both. “Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments; and madest known unto them thy holy Sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant.” {SITI June 2, 1881, p. 247.6}

The clearness of these statements leaves no room for mistake as to the authorship of the decalogue. It is easy to discern, however, whence such carelessness as the above arises. The same spirit which leads men to speak of the Sabbath of the Lord as the “old Jewish Sabbath,” leads them to speak of the law of which it is a part as the “decalogue of Moses.” The antipathy felt toward the Sabbath will naturally extend to the whole law, and instead of repudiating the fourth commandment merely, men will reject the whole law. The respect which men have for a law is in proportion to the respect felt for the maker of it. Cannot these religious teachers see that their efforts to diminish immorality and extend the gospel of Christ can meet with no real success while they thus “pervert the right ways of the Lord”? {SITI June 2, 1881, p. 247.7}

**“Precept and Practice” The Signs of the Times, 7, 22.**

E. J. Waggoner

An insuperable objection, in the minds of some against the Sabbath of the Lord, and a reason for the observance of Sunday, is the supposed example of the apostles. It is quite a commonly received opinion that the apostles were in the habit of meeting together for worship on the first day of the week, and of using the Sabbath as a secular day. Even a superficial reading of the New Testament by an unprejudiced person, would show the utter fallacy of any such supposition. If apostolic example were our only guide, the weight of evidence would be in favor of the Lord’s Sabbath, for we have accounts of many meetings held on the Sabbath, while we have the record of only one meeting on the first day of the week. But it is urged that the apostles met to preach on the Sabbath because then only could they gain access to the people in the synagogues. This again has hardly the shadow of a supposition to support it, for we read that on one occasion Paul and his companions, on a Sabbath day, “went out of the city by a river side where prayer was wont to be made,” and spoke to the people. Acts 16:13. {SITI June 9, 1881, p. 258.1}

But it may well be said on either side, that *mere example* without any precept is not sufficient ground upon which to base faith and practice. To this we heartily agree, and would that our first-day friends would ever abide by it, for precept for Sunday observance is even less than supposed example. {SITI June 9, 1881, p. 258.2}

But again, our friends say that even though there may be no law in the New Testament for Sunday keeping, there is none for the Sabbath, and, therefore, Christians may do as they please. “If Christ and his apostles,” say they, “had designed that people under the new dispensation should keep the Sabbath, they would have made formal declaration of some law to that effect.” The fact that the law was not thus formally re-enacted is claimed as proof that it was intended to be ignored. Let us see if this be reasonable. Ninety-two years ago the United States’ Constitution, the fundamental law of the land, was ratified. Officers were chosen who administered in the affairs of State under that Constitution. Since that time there have been nineteen different dispensations, and not once has the Constitution been re-enacted. No one has seemed to think it necessary to do so. An act which in the days of Washington would have been treasonable, would be punished as such to-day, and by the same authority now as then. Now if the Constitution of the United States holds good through nineteen dispensations, surely the law of God must remain valid through two. Indeed, a moment’s reflection would convince any one that a law must be in full force until it is formally annulled. And since in the case of the law of God, as in the Constitution, no repeal of the law had been made known, a re-enactment would have been labor thrown away. {SITI June 9, 1881, p. 258.3}

But some one, following out the illustration, will say that although our legislators do not, at every session or new administration, re-enact the Constitution, they have to affirm their allegiance to it. True, and we shall find exactly the same thing in regard to the law of God in the Christian dispensation. At the very outset we find Christ stating his position in regard to it: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.” Matthew 5:17. Then with divine authority he states that whosoever should break one of these commandments, and should teach men so, should be counted of no esteem in the kingdom of God. Christ’s teaching was ever in accordance with this declaration. See Matthew 19:17; 22:36-40; Psalm 40:7, 8; Isaiah 42:21. {SITI June 9, 1881, p. 259.1}

We come now to the apostles, and we shall see that they likewise acknowledged their allegiance to the law. Paul was the most prominent among them, and being the “apostle to the gentiles,” he certainly would consider himself exempt from its observance if any of them could. Hear him declare his faith before Felix: “But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.” Acts 24:14. {SITI June 9, 1881, p. 259.2}

We have here the expressed belief of Christ and Paul. Now who dare say that their practice was different from their teaching? Did not Christ live out his own precepts? It was said of him (Psalm 40:8) that he came to do the will of God, and that God’s law was “within his heart.” Was Paul a hypocrite? No one would dare make such an assertion, and yet those who claim that he desecrated the Sabbath, virtually call him a hypocrite professing one thing and doing another. When Paul said that he *believed “all things* which were written in the law,” we cannot have the slightest doubt but that he *practiced* all things contained in the law, the Sabbath with the rest. {SITI June 9, 1881, p. 259.3}

This testimony is not ambiguous. It is clear and explicit. None need fail through ignorance. As a last stand, does any one plead force of habit, old associations, inconvenience, or the ridicule of friends? Christ says “What is that to thee? follow thou me.” “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” {SITI June 9, 1881, p. 259.4}

**“When Does the Sabbath Commence?” The Signs of the Times, 7, 25.**

E. J. Waggoner

This has been a puzzling question to very many. They cannot understand why Sabbath-keepers should commence their rest at the setting of the sun, while other people regard the day as commencing at midnight. Some have thought that it was all arbitrary distinction, more for the purpose of peculiarity than anything else; but a little reference to the Scriptures will suffice to clear the subject of all doubts. {SITI June 30, 1881, p. 295.1}

In the first place we have evidence that the first day of time began in the evening. That is, the dark portion of the day preceded the light portion. “The evening and the morning were the first day.” Genesis 1:5. That this was necessarily the case, may be seen from the order of events in the creation. Time, as distinguished from eternity, commenced with the first creative act of God. The first act was the bringing of the earth into existence. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Genesis 1:1. That this occupied but a brief space of time, and not a long extended period, is proved by the context, also by Psalm 33:6, 9: “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. For he spake, and it was done, he commanded, and it stood fast.” But at that time there was no light, nothing but intense darkness, for we read that “darkness was upon the face of the deep.” The next act was to create light. “And God said, Let there be light, and there was light” (Genesis 1:3). God then ordained that darkness and light should henceforth succeed each other in continuous round, and a period of darkness and one of light, called respectively night and day, should constitute one entire day. This completed the first day’s work. The first day commenced with darkness, and ended as darkness began once more to overspread the earth. As though to establish beyond question the fact that this was to be the order of all days, it is stated of the first six days that the “evening and the morning” constituted the day. But if the first six days commenced with the evening, and ended with the following evening, it is evident that every succeeding day, the Sabbath with the rest, must begin and end in the same manner. This is further verified by Leviticus 23:32, where the Lord says, “From even to even shall ye celebrate your Sabbath.” {SITI June 30, 1881, p. 295.2}

Having settled the fact that the day begins and ends at evening, the only thing necessary to an understanding of the main question is to find when the evening commences. This is easily settled by the following passage: “But at the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover *at even at the going down of the sun*.” Deuteronomy 16:9. “And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree *till eventide;* and, *as soon as the sun was down*, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcass down from the tree.” Joshua 8:20. Also, Joshua 10:26, 27: “Joshua smote them, and slew them, and hanged them on five trees; and they were hanging upon the trees *until the evening*. And it came to pass at the *time of the going down of the sun*, that Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees.” These texts plainly show that the evening and the setting of the sun are identical. In the New Testament we have additional testimony. In the first chapter of Mark we have an account of the events of one Sabbath in the life of Christ. First he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and taught. Verse 21. Here he found a man with an unclean spirit, whom he healed. Verses 20-31. The rest of the people, however, dared not ask him to heal their sick during the hours of the Sabbath, but waited till its close. We read in verse 31, “And at *even, when the sun did set*, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils.” Thus we see that the people unanimously regarded sunset as the close of the Sabbath, and, of course, of its commencement. This was the divinely appointed order. {SITI June 30, 1881, p. 295.3}

The question then arises, How does it happen that people nowadays commence and end the day at midnight? The answer is this: When men became idolaters, and did not like to retain God in their knowledge (Romans 1:28), they soon lost all knowledge of the institutions and commandments of God, so that their forms of worship and daily life differed entirely from those of God’s people. Each nation had gods of its own, and customs peculiar to itself. The Persians and Assyrians worshiped the sun, and commenced the day at sunrise. That the Jews, during their captivity, did not lose their reckoning, and conform to that of the Babylonians, is proved by the passage in Mark already quoted. The Romans, for some reason, selected midnight as the time for the beginning and ending of their day. The barbarous tribes that conquered Rome, accepted her customs, and transmitted them to their descendants. Thus the Roman method of commencing the day has become the settled custom in Europe and America. Since it is an established custom, it is necessary, in order to be understood, to conform to the usage in speaking with others, also in business, since the custom is fixed by law. But in the observance of the Sabbath, God’s order is unchangeable. Those who accept the Sunday festival, which is a man-made institution emanating from Rome, may be allowed to keep it in such a manner as man decrees; but those who keep God’s rest-day-the memorial of his creative power-will take the day just as God gave it, and not offer a substitute by patching a portion of two days together. {SITI June 30, 1881, p. 295.4}