**“Blind Guides” The Signs of the Times, 7, 34.**

E. J. Waggoner

The ancient Pharisees were very punctilious about following the traditions of the Elders in regard to external cleanness. So fearful were they of defilement that every time they came into the house they washed their hands, fearing that they might accidentally have touched some unclean thing while without. Many of their duties had to be performed by others who were not so fearful of becoming ceremonially unclean. At the same time, however, they were teaching and practicing those things which could proceed only from a heart defiled with sin. So long as their sin remained concealed, they were complacent. {SITI September 8, 1881, p. 403.1}

Our Saviour very justly characterizes these Pharisees as “blind leaders of the blind.” Like a blind man, they stumbled over the very obstacle they seemed anxious to avoid. Of course those who depended on them for instructions, must necessarily be in the same condition. {SITI September 8, 1881, p. 403.2}

But the race of “blind guides” did not cease with Pharisees. There are those to-day, who are blindly rushing into that which they profess to condemn. The following item from an article in the *Christian Herald* seems to be a case in point. The writer is relating an incident by which his life was saved when in great danger:- {SITI September 8, 1881, p. 403.3}

“I cannot now tell what it was, but then I did not doubt it was from God. Might it not have been the spirit of my mother who then was dead, sainted guardian of my youth, permitted to act as guardian angel of her son, then near a death of despair? God knows; but I then did not doubt, and plucked up hope.” {SITI September 8, 1881, p. 403.4}

Another religious paper contains the following similar paragraph:- {SITI September 8, 1881, p. 403.5}

“Whatever others may say; or however they may try to account for such a remark at such a time, and under such circumstances, I have not the shadow of a doubt but that the spirit of that dear girl saw the spirit of the father, who had been dead for some years, and recognized it; and there is not philosophy enough in the world to convince me to the contrary.” {SITI September 8, 1881, p. 403.6}

In almost any religious journal similar passages may be found. At the same time they denounce Spiritualism, and express no sympathy with it whatever. They do not realize that the immortality of the soul, and the possibility of communion between the living and the dead, constitute all there is to Spiritualism proper. The immortality which characterizes many of its devotees, is only a natural out-growth of their disbelief of the Bible-the foundation of morality-and is not upheld by most Spiritualist papers. Once admit the theory of the unconditional immortality of the soul, and Spiritualism follows as a natural sequence. So-called orthodox ministers have no ground whatever on which to attack Spiritualism. We once heard a minister denounce Spiritualism in no measured terms, and in the same hour he tried to console the mourners by telling them that the spirit of their dead friend would hover near them and minister to them. It is difficult to see why such teachers do not justly merit the appellation, “blind guides,” and how they, with those who blindly follow them, can escape the natural result,-“They shall both fall into the ditch.” {SITI September 8, 1881, p. 403.7}

**“Which Day?” The Signs of the Times, 7, 35.**

E. J. Waggoner

“The question of obedience, and the observance of the Sabbath is a real question with us, far more than whether we should keep the first, third, or seventh day of the week as the Sabbath.” {SITI September 15, 1881, p. 415.1}

Such are the closing words of a recent article on the Sabbath question. It has been said that words are used to conceal ideas, and it must be the case in the above instance; for if the writer had any idea in his mind, he most effectually concealed it. A great amount of study on the paragraph has failed to show the logical connection of its two parts. {SITI September 15, 1881, p. 415.2}

“The question of obedience, and the observance of the Sabbath is the real question.” That is plain enough. It is correct too. Just such a statement as any one might make, who earnestly desires to obey God. What next? We will therefore consult the word of God, to see how the Sabbath should be kept? We should expect that, but we are disappointed. “Obedience and the observance of the Sabbath is the question with us, far more than whether we should keep the first, third, or seventh day of the week is the Sabbath.” If he had said, “The observance of *a* Sabbath is the real question with us,” there would be nothing inconsistent in what follows. Since “Sabbath” simply means “rest.” *A* Sabbath may be kept on the first or the third day of the week. But he says “the observance of *the* Sabbath,” and the only Sabbath the Bible recognizes is the seventh day. See Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 16:4, 5, 19-30; 20:8-11; Luke 23:54-56; 24:1. {SITI September 15, 1881, p. 415.3}

And yet, our friend seems to have the idea that the Sabbath may be kept on any day of the week. It is as if he had said: “Patriotism, and the celebration of our independence anniversary, is the real question with us, more than whether we should observe the first, third, or fourth day of July.” {SITI September 15, 1881, p. 415.4}

The amount of fog that hangs around questions of Bible truth and religious duty is perplexing to the seeker for truth, and would be truly wonderful did we not remember that just such a state of things has been predicted. Paul said that in the latter days men would not endure “sound doctrines,” it would “turn away their ears from the truth and be turned unto fables.” Our Lord himself said to his disciples, “If they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also,” plainly intimating that the manner in which his teaching was received would be an index of the manner in which the truth would be received in subsequent times. When we consider the skepticism, the blind, and reasoning disbelief, and the cavils that opposed Christ’s teachings even when accompanied by the most wonderful miracles, we cannot wonder that so few nowadays receive “the love of the truth that they might be saved.” The “god of this world” has blinded the minds of men in all ages, and will continue to do so until the end. And it is a fact that the same reason that hindered so many from believing on Christ eighteen hundred years ago, still operates to keep men from observing the Sabbath, viz., self-interest,-the immediate result upon themselves, and their own convenience. {SITI September 15, 1881, p. 415.5}

These considerations are very weighty. It does not take much argument to persuade a man that a certain course is right, if his inclination is in that direction. And so the idea obtains to a greater or lesser extent, that it doesn’t make so much difference what a man does if he is only sincere. Thus men get the idea that the *rest* is the all-important point in the fourth commandment, regardless of when that rest is taken. In other words the principle or spirit of the law is to be kept, and not the letter. This course of proceeding may be illustrated as follows: A farmer tells his son that he wishes him on the next day to go to a certain village five miles to the east, in order to buy some necessary articles. On the following day John mounts his horse, and deliberately rides off to a town five miles to the west, and there makes his purchases. His father calls him to account for his disobedience. He replies that although he did not strictly obey the letter of his instructions, he did obey the spirit-the essential part. He claims that the principle contained in his instructions was to get the articles, and that although the place where he should get them was definitely specified, yet this was not necessary to obedience to the requirement. Anyone can see that the boy disobeyed his father, by going west when he was told to go east, yet many who would so decide, claim that men may go as far as possible in the opposite direction from the requirement of the fourth commandment, and still be obedient. {SITI September 15, 1881, p. 416.1}

A good illustration of how strict God is in his requirements is found in the case of Nadab and Abihu recorded in Leviticus 10:1, 2. God had specified the fire that should be used in the services of the Sanctuary. Certain fire was set apart for this use and called holy. None other was to be used. Nadab and Abihu could not perceive the difference between the fire that was holy and that that was unsanctified, and came before the Lord with strange fire. For this rash act they were instantly slain. They might have reasoned thus: “The spirit of the Lord’s requirement is that fire should be used. It makes no difference what fire we use if we only do it in the right manner. There is no difference in the fire.” Precisely the same language is used now in regard to the Sabbath. But God showed his displeasure, and taught the people that he was particular to have them “put difference between the holy and unholy, and between the unclean and clean.” Is it possible that God is less particular now than he was then? Several hundred years later than that event that we find him using similar language to the above, and in regard to the Sabbath, speaking by the mouth of the prophet Ezekiel, he says: “Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy thing; they *have put no difference between the holy and profane*, neither have they showed difference between the unclean and the clean, and *have hid their eyes from my Sabbaths*, and I am profaned among them..... Therefore I have poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath; their own way have I recompensed upon their own heads, saith the Lord.” Ezekiel 22:26-31. God testifies of himself thus: “I change not,” therefore we are not justified in assuming that he will look with any degree of favor upon any deviation from the letter of his requirements. Indeed, if we consider carefully the context of the above passage, we shall find that while the words were addressed to the Jews, and were applicable to them, they have a special application to these last days. The words of Christ were addressed to his disciples and the Jews who were with him, but they apply to all men even to the close of time. So it is with the words of the prophet. But men were careless of their duty to God in the days when they saw visible manifestations of his displeasure, and it is to be expected that they will be so still, when his judgments are reserved. “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.” Nevertheless the long-delayed punishment will surely come. {SITI September 15, 1881, p. 416.2}

“He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.” {SITI September 15, 1881, p. 416.3}

**“A Definite Sabbath” The Signs of the Times, 7, 36.**

E. J. Waggoner

In the article concerning the Sabbath, which was noticed last week, in which the ground was taken that it is of no particular importance which day of the week is observed as the Sabbath, the following passage occurs: “Doubtless all would prefer the regular hebdomadal successor of the original, if there was no doubt as to which was the original.” Although the theory that the Sabbath has been lost is by no means a new one, it is sometimes interesting to note the reasons which different ones give for their expressed belief that it has been lost. {SITI September 22, 1881, p. 427.1}

The writer starts out with the statement that “under the Mosaic dispensation, our Saturday, the seventh day of the week, was observed as the Sabbath day.” He goes on further to say that there is no doubt that “the Sabbath was ordained and observed, together with the law of marriage, in Paradise, and that both these statutes survived the fall, and were observed by the sons of God.” {SITI September 22, 1881, p. 427.2}

Having admitted these facts it would not seem that there could be much doubt as to the identity of the Sabbath, for the Mosaic dispensation brings us down to the time of Christ. If the seventh day was observed in Paradise, was kept by the patriarchs, and was the recognized Sabbath under all the Mosaic dispensation, all the time that has been lost must be in the Christian era, the possibility of which will be duly considered. {SITI September 22, 1881, p. 427.3}

But our friend is evidently bound to be in doubt as to which was the original seventh day, although he has stated facts which clearly prove that there can be no doubt. He says:- {SITI September 22, 1881, p. 427.4}

“After the flood Noah may have begun a series of Sabbaths quite irrespective of the regular day according to the customs before the flood, for we find him upon his coming out of the ark, sacrificing to God. It is not likely that he moved out of the ark upon the then ordained Sabbath, but it is probable that he observed every seventh day after this worship-day-the eventful day of beginning life anew upon the earth-as his Sabbath to the Lord.” {SITI September 22, 1881, p. 427.5}

This is at best only a feeble supposition that the day was lost; but since there are many with whom a supposition against the Sabbath is of more force than a command in favor of it, we will see if this one has any foundation. The fact that Noah sacrificed to God, shows that he was in communication with him, and is therefore evidence that he did not forget God’s commandments. Can we suppose that the man who, in the wicked generation before the flood walked with God, should forget him immediately after his miraculous deliverance? Our friend has admitted that the seventh day was the God-ordained Sabbath in Paradise, and through the Mosaic dispensation. And the wise man says: “He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.” Proverbs 28:9. The fact, therefore, that God accepted Noah’s sacrifice, proves conclusively that in no respect had Noah willfully neglected to keep God’s law. {SITI September 22, 1881, p. 427.6}

The mistake which our friend makes is in supposing that sacrifices were offered only on the Sabbath, or on the day which was observed as such. In the 29th chapter of Exodus, where the directions are given for consecrating the priests and the altar, we read the following: “And thou shalt offer *every day* a bullock for a sin offering for atonement.” Verse 36. Again in the 38th verse: “Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day *continually*.” Again in Leviticus 4, we read the directions for sin offerings. When a person had committed a sin through ignorance, “if his sin, which he hath sinned, come to his knowledge, then he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats,” etc. Thus we see that although special provision was made for sacrifices on the Sabbath, sacrifices were not limited to that day. {SITI September 22, 1881, p. 427.7}

But to make assurance doubly sure, our friend has the Sabbath changed once more, at the time of the exodus from Egypt. Referring to the supposition that Noah lost the day, he says:- {SITI September 22, 1881, p. 427.8}

“Though this is not surely known, yet it is true, and well known, that the Jewish Sabbath was fixed upon the day before the rest-day of the patriarchs and the gentile nations; and that it was so fixed, not because it was, or was not, the regular seventh day from the original Sabbath, but simply to commemorate the redemption of Israel from Egypt.” {SITI September 22, 1881, p. 427.9}

It would have been more satisfactory if he had given his authority for the statement that the Sabbath was changed at that time. To be sure he cites another individual who says the same thing, but how either of them found it out remains a mystery. The Bible gives no hint of it. On the contrary, when the law was given on Sinai, only a short time after the Israelites left Egypt, they were plainly told that the Sabbath which they were to remember was the one which was sanctified in Eden. That should be allowed to settle all controversy. {SITI September 22, 1881, p. 427.10}

But right here we notice a curious inconsistency in the statements of our friend. He says that the Sabbath which God gave to the Jews, was fixed upon the day before the Sabbath which the patriarchs kept. The Jews, as all know, have adhered to the observance of that day until the present time. It was the seventh day of the week, the day before the day which is observed by Catholics and the majority of Protestants. He has stated that the Sabbath ordained in Paradise, and kept throughout the Mosaic dispensation, was the seventh day of the week (our Saturday), a fact which we fully believe. Now if this be true, how could the Jews keep the day previous to this, and also keep the seventh day? Were there two seventh days in close succession? There is something very curious about the Sunday. Notwithstanding the numerous changes which are alleged to have been made, and the great amount of time which we hear has been lost beyond the possibility of recovery, this wonderful day preserves the identity, and ever comes to the front as the true Sabbath beyond a doubt. Its vitality is marvelous. {SITI September 22, 1881, p. 427.11}

Besides the cases already noticed, it is claimed that the Sabbath was lost at the time of the Babylonish captivity. But when we remember that this calamity was brought upon the Jews as a direct punishment for their violation of the Sabbath, and that in consequence of this terrible lesson, they observed the Sabbath with unusual strictness from that time until the time of Christ, any one can readily see that such a thing as a loss of the Sabbath was impossible. {SITI September 22, 1881, p. 427.12}

To complete the evidence that the Sabbath observed by the Jews, and by some Christians, is the original seventh day which God sanctified at Creation, we have only to consider the period of time since Christ’s ministry on earth. At that time the Jews were keeping the day for they violation of which they had been severely punished. It certainly was the Sabbath, or there would have been no justice in their punishment. Christ himself recognized it, and kept it. Matthew 24:20; Luke 4:16. Even allowing that the day had been lost centuries before, there cannot be the shadow of a doubt that the original Sabbath was known and kept at this time. Since then, the Jews, who have constantly adhered to the observance of the same day, have been scattered among all nations, but there is a remarkable unanimity among them as to which day is the seventh day. If the Sabbath had been lost, there would be a disagreement among them. Again, all Catholics and Protestants agree with the Jews in their reckoning, for they unite in the observance of the first day, the day following the seventh day, and urge as one reason for doing so that our Lord rose from the dead on that day. This shows that they do not believe that any time has been lost. They would not commemorate Christ’s resurrection on that day, if they did not believe that he rose on that identical day. {SITI September 22, 1881, p. 427.13}

We have now examined the indefinite theory of an indefinite Sabbath, very briefly, it is true, but still to greater length than its real merits deserve. It remains only to notice in what position those persons place themselves, who argue that the Sabbath of God’s appointment has been lost. God rested upon and blessed the seventh day in the beginning, and sanctified it, and he commanded Adam, and through him, all his posterity, to keep it holy. Genesis 2:2, 3. He afterwards repeated the commandment on Mt. Sinai, and by his prophets frequently enjoined it upon all people. The law of which this commandment is a part, is declared to be the standard by which God judges men; those who keep it shall have eternal life, and those who violate it will have death everlasting. Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14; James 2:12; Matthew 19:16, 17; Isaiah 48:18; Deuteronomy 7:9-15; Romans 6:23; Revelation 22:14. Moreover, he has stated that he changes not. Malachi 3:6, and has repeatedly stated in his word that these commandments by which men are to be judged, are to endure forever. Psalm 119:89, 142, 144, 152, 169; Isaiah 40:8; 51:6-8; Matthew 5:17-19. Now those who allow that there is even a *possibility* of enlightened people losing the Sabbath, thus making it impossible for them to keep the law, impeach God’s justice. They virtually say that God will punish men for violating his commandments when he has put it out of their power to keep them. {SITI September 22, 1881, p. 427.14}

It is very easy for a person to convince himself that he has a good excuse for disobeying God’s law, but we have no reason to suppose that God will accept man’s opinion as the standard of the Judgment. The very fact that people offer excuses for not keeping the Sabbath is no proof that in their hearts they believe that the Sabbath law is still binding. If it were not, there would be no need of an excuse. {SITI September 22, 1881, p. 428.1}