**“Reasons for Not Observing Saturday” The Signs of the Times, 10, 17.**

E. J. Waggoner

A member of one of our missionary societies has been in correspondence with his friends in the East concerning the Sabbath question. In reply to one of his letters, he received a long letter from his former pastor, a Disciple minister, in which the latter tried to reclaim the wandering member of his flock, by showing the absurdities of Sabbath observance. From this letter we were allowed to make a few extracts, embodying the principal part of the argument, which we herewith give for the benefit of all inquirers after truth. The letter indicated a sincere desire on the part of the writer to win the brother from supposed error, and we are therefore warranted in supposing that the best argument was given that could be found. We quote:- {SITI May 1, 1884, p. 265.1}

“‘The Sabbath,’ it is not claimed is a term ever applied in the New Testament, or for many years after [the time when it was written], to the first day of the week. Hence is not claimed by me or my brethren that ‘the Sabbath’ of the Sinaitic law was changed. Talking about changing the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day is very much like the talk about changing circumcision to baptism.” {SITI May 1, 1884, p. 265.2}

This is not a bad statement to start with. Now knowing that the first day of the week is nowhere in the New Testament called “the Sabbath,” that term being applied exclusively to the seventh day of the week, we call to mind these words of Christ: “But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day.” Matthew 24:20. Christ was speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred about forty years later. And what was to be the prayer of the disciples during these years? That they might not be obliged to violate the sanctity of the seventh-day Sabbath, and even to secure their own lives. If now the New Testament writers uniformly call the seventh day the Sabbath, “according to the commandment,” where shall we look for authority for first-day observance? Is not the one teaching such observance going contrary to the New Testament? and will he not thus, under the anathema of Paul in Galatians 1:8? Indeed it is absurd to talk of changing the Sabbath of the Lord’s appointments; but the papacy has *thought* himself able to do so (Daniel 7:25), and millions cheerfully acknowledge his claim. Again:- {SITI May 1, 1884, p. 265.3}

“Statute law may and does change, but principles never. The basis of *all the law* and *the prophets* is given by our Lord as *love to God and man..... Man has no authority to change either*, but with the change of dispensation, God has given different commands as expressive of submission to him.” {SITI May 1, 1884, p. 265.4}

We ask, What is that which contains the record of the change of dispensation? The answer will be, “The New Testament.” But our brother has admitted, as just quoted, that there was no change in “the Sabbath of the Mosaic law,” and that, in the New Testament, the term Sabbath” is not applied to any other day than the seventh. Statute law *may* change, but we are not absolved from allegiance to it until that change takes place. But the New Testament contains no record of a change; on the contrary, Christ said “It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.” Luke 16:17. Now since “this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments,” how can we have love to him if we violate one of them? No one can violate any portion of the law, and not violate the principle upon which is based. {SITI May 1, 1884, p. 265.5}

Again we quote:- {SITI May 1, 1884, p. 265.6}

“It is very easy to see that there is moral obligation to love, adore, and obey the Lord; and it is easy to understand that man’s physical, intellectual, and moral good calls for a cessation from worldly occupations for a time, that the mind may be given to contemplation and worship; but that the observance of the seventh day of the week is of necessary moral obligation is a different matter. It was made obligatory by *appointment*. There was, no doubt, good reasons for such command, two at least of which are given in Scripture. 1. The creation. 2. The deliverance from Egypt.” {SITI May 1, 1884, p. 265.7}

The above seems to us to be an exceedingly cool piece of criticism upon the Creator. Our friend is willing to allow that the Lord had reason for appointing the seventh day as the Sabbath, but does not think we are morally bound to keep it. Let us see. To start with, there are two points upon which we are agreed. 1. That the seventh-day Sabbath is of divine appointment. 2. That the New Testament always recognizes the seventh day, and no other, as the Sabbath. But our friend says that the Sabbath commandment is not of *moral* obligation. How does he know that? By what standard are we to judge of moral obligation? Is the human mind capable of deciding? Hardly. How does he know that to commit adultery is an immoral act? Not from his own consciousness, for thousands of men, as highly gifted by nature as he, have believed such an act to be consistent with the highest virtue, and even necessary in order to attain the highest good. Indeed it was openly advocated in practice by many of the ancient philosophers. The young were taught to lie if it seemed to be their advantage to do so. The sentiments may be found in the writings of classical authors: “When telling a lie will be profitable, let it be told.” “There is nothing decorous in truth, but when it is profitable.” These are the teachings of those who were esteemed virtuous, and who had no idea but that they were doing all that was required of them. {SITI May 1, 1884, p. 265.8}

Now how does our brother happen to be so much wiser than those philosophers, and that he knows such things to be sinful? Because the Lord has said, “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” and, “Thou shalt not bear false witness.” It is in just the same way that we know that it is a sin to violate the Sabbath. It is based on the unalterable facts of creation; and the commandment is placed with the other moral precepts. It may be said that moral principles are eternal, but that there was a time when even the reason for the Sabbath commandment did not exist. Very well; and there was also a time when no reason for the seventh commandment existed. Before man was created there was no necessity for such a commandment, and yet no one questions the fact that it is of moral obligation. But let it be remembered that the earth was created before man was, and that therefore the reason for the fourth commandment antedates that for the seventh. {SITI May 1, 1884, p. 265.9}

It is difficult to fitly characterize the idea that the seventh-day Sabbath is not of necessary moral obligation because “it was made obligatory by *appointment*.” That is, we are under no moral obligation to keep it, because the only authority for its observance is the word of God! But let us imagine a man with this idea brought before the bar of God at the last day. The Judge, who is also the law-maker, asks, “Why did you not keep the Sabbath? Did you not know that I had commanded its observance?” The reply comes, “Yes, Lord, I knew that, and publicly taught it, but I could find no reason for keeping the Sabbath, except the fact that you had made a commandment for its observance. I had no doubt but that you had a good reason for giving such a commandment; but since it rested solely on your authority, I did not feel under any obligation to keep it.” Certainly the best that could be done would be to punish the man for contempt. We have no desire to be harsh; and we do not believe that our brother feels any contempt for God’s authority; yet the above is just what his position amounts to. It is equivalent to saying that God is not the First Cause, but that there is a something called “moral principle” that is superior to him. {SITI May 1, 1884, p. 265.10}

There is indeed “no doubt” but that God had “good reason” for setting apart the seventh day, as a reading of the fourth commandment will show. Here it is: “Six days shalt thou labor and all thy works; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in yet thou shalt not do any work.... for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore [for which reason] the Lord bless the Sabbath day and hallowed it.” Exodus 20:9-11. This is the reason which the Lord gives for appointing the seventh day as the Sabbath. And we ask, Does not the same reason still exist? Is it not still a fact that the Lord created heaven and earth in six days? Is it not as true now as it ever was that he rested upon, blessed, and sanctified [set apart] the seventh day? Certainly. Then if the *reason* for the observance of the seventh day still exists, is it not claimed that the Lord would be *un*reasonable, that is, acting contrary to reason, if he did not still require that it should be kept? Who will dare charge the Lord with folly? {SITI May 1, 1884, p. 265.11}

As to the deliverance from Egypt we will simply state that Moses cites that to remind the Israelites of their special obligation to God. Simple gratitude demanded that they should obey the commandment of God. But the reason for the institution of the Sabbath is given in the fourth commandment, which was spoken many years before. To us this reason seems so cogent that we dare not enter into controversy with the Lord on the subject. {SITI May 1, 1884, p. 265.12}

Again, our friend says: “The apostles never commanded the observance of the Sabbath.” We agree, and going step farther and say that it would have made no difference if they had. The apostles were not law-givers; they had no authority to issue commands. “There is one Law-giver, who is able to save and to destroy.” James 4:12. And this Law-giver had issued a command for the observance of the Sabbath, thousands of years before the apostles were born, thus making it unnecessary for them to do so, even if they had been inclined to take matters into their own hands. The apostle Paul, speaking in behalf of his brethren in the ministry, said: “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though Christ did beseech you by us; for we pray you in Christ’s stead, be reconciled to God.” 2 Corinthians 5:20. As Christ’s ambassadors they followed his injunction to teach only what he had commanded them. Matthew 28:20. They, as well as we, owed allegiance to a sovereign power. It was left for the pope of Rome to usurp authority, and to issue laws of his own. {SITI May 1, 1884, p. 266.1}

The above quotations are the chief reasons given in the letter for not observing the seventh day. It is but fitting that we should hear what the writer has to say for Sunday, which he terms the “Lord’s day.” Unfortunately his time expired before he could give his authority for that. What he says for it is contained in the following paragraph:- {SITI May 1, 1884, p. 266.2}

“Our reasons for observing the Lord’s day I have not time to give. I suggest, however, that the New Testament is not so much a book of precepts as of general principles. Even in those ordinances that are usually considered positive in their character, there is but little of the legislation or ritualistic.” {SITI May 1, 1884, p. 266.3}

It is enough. Why should he desire to say more? The New Testament is not a book of precepts, and therefore he keeps Sunday. Briefly summed up, his position is this: We need not keep the seventh day, because it is simply commanded by the Lord; and we ought to keep the first day, because there is no command for it whatever! Further comment is unnecessary. Reader, are you willing to rest your case upon so sandy a foundation as that? “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14. E. J. W. {SITI May 1, 1884, p. 266.4}

**“General Meeting in Oakland” The Signs of the Times, 10, 1. The Signs of the Times, 10, 18.**

E. J. Waggoner

We can say of this meeting, as of others that have been held in this State within the past two years, that it was one of the best we ever attended. Indeed, each successive meeting of this kind that we attend seems to us to be the very best. At this meeting there was quite a large attendance from abroad, San Francisco being well represented. On the last Sabbath of the meeting there were seventy-eight present from the church in that city. {SITI May 8, 1884, p. 280.1}

The entire membership of the Oakland Sabbath-school is 220, but there were more than 300 present the first Sabbath, and 360 pupils were in their places at the opening of the school on the second Sabbath. Notwithstanding this large increase, there was not the slightest confusion, which speaks well, not only of the discipline of the Oakland school, but of the other schools that were represented. The Sabbath congregations numbered between 400 and 400, filling our church building to its utmost capacity. God has blessed the labors of the missionary workers in Oakland, so that our regular congregations are larger than ever before, and additions are constantly being made to our membership. {SITI May 8, 1884, p. 280.2}

The interest of the meeting deepened from the beginning to the close. As usual, Bible-readings occupied a prominent place. There were eleven of these, covering the following subjects: Thanksgiving, Conversion, Duties of Church Members, Missionary work, Second Advent, Resurrection, Immortality, Sanctification, and Work of the Spirit. By these readings our people get a definite knowledge of the Bible, such as could be obtained in no other way. They cannot take the place of preaching, but, if rightly conducted, they can do work that preaching cannot. We regard it as a bad indication when a professed Seventh-day Adventist is not interested in Bible-reading. We must learn more of the Bible itself. {SITI May 8, 1884, p. 280.3}

There were eight sermons preached during the meeting. The principal burden of these was for a deeper and more intelligent consecration to God. The difference between true and false sanctification was clearly shown. This was very timely, for the so-called “holiness” movement, which teaches instantaneous sanctification, without any change of habit on the part of the individual, is rapidly gaining ground, and Oakland is the head-quarters of the delusion on this coast. In the discourses, and in the Bible-reading on Sanctification, it was shown that while we are justified freely by the grace of God as soon as we implicitly believe on Christ, the work of sanctification is a life work, a constant gaining of victories over sin, by the aid of the Spirit, and with the light from God’s word. This modern “holiness” movement is a deception of Satan, to cause men to be satisfied with themselves while trampling on God’s law. Thorough instruction concerning the law of God, and a close adherence thereto, is a sure safeguard against this delusion, and is at the same time the means by which we are to be truly sanctified. John 17:17. {SITI May 8, 1884, p. 280.4}

The early morning prayer-meetings, which were attended by Sister White, were seasons of refreshing. If the instruction given by the servant of God shall be remembered and put into practice, there will certainly be a marked growth in grace among those who heard. True Christian experience, and the nature of faith were set forth with a clearness not to be misunderstood.While we are sanctified through the truth, that is, by obeying it, we can do nothing to atone for past sins. Christ knew the work that he had to do, and understood the frailty and sinfulness of human nature, before he undertook our salvation. God does not repulse us because we are sinful, but for this very reason invites us to come to him, through Christ, for pardon. One of the greatest blessings that he can bestow on us is to show us our sins; and when we see them, instead of giving way to discouragment, we must believe that he does pardon, according to his promise. Isaiah 1:18, 19; 55:6, 7. Faith in God is so simple that many overlook it. We are to believe, not because of any change in our own feelings, but because of God’s promise. We are not to look at ourselves, but “unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.” {SITI May 8, 1884, p. 280.5}

The meetings of the Tract and Missionary Society, as it will be seen by the report, were full of encouragement to the workers. The meeting of the stockholders of the Publishing Association was especially interesting. The work has never been so prosperous as during the past year. There has been an increasing demand for our denominational literature, so that all the departments are crowded. It was the general feeling of the stockholders that more room is imperatively needed. We must provide, but simply for growth in the same proportion as in the past, but for a great increase. The work increases in geometrical ratio. The Lord has a great work for us to do in warning the world, and we must hold ourselves ready to follow at once wherever his providence opens the way. {SITI May 8, 1884, p. 280.6}

The special meetings of the ministers and other workers, for prayer and consultation, were seasons to be remembered. The Lord blessed abundantly in giving light on points that seemed dark. After earnest prayer and deliberation it was decided that Elder Ballou, and Brethren Rieck and Kinney should labor during the summer in Nevada. Brother and Sister McClure, and Brother Henry Scott have gone to their field in Humboldt County. Brother Brorsen also goes to that county to work among the Danes. Brother Ings goes to the coast of Oregon shortly, all the churches on the coast will have the benefit of Elder Loughborough’s labors. Brethren L. A. Scott and A. LaRue, after spending a few weeks in the San Francisco ship mission work, will go to the Sandwich Islands. Brethren Frank Lamb and Lucius Church have started for Siskiyou County. They go by private conveyance, canvassing and visiting along the road. Besides these, a good core of colporteurs and canvassers have started out into different parts of the field. We feel greatly encouraged in regard to the work on the coast. What increases our courage is the perfect harmony that prevails among the workers. The feeling of brotherly love seems to be deepening. We pray God’s blessing upon these dear brethren as they go forth. We believe that he will accompany them, and give force to their effort. {SITI May 8, 1884, p. 280.7}

The last Sabbath of the meeting was a good day for all present. Elder Loughborough gave a stirring discourse in the morning from Luke 12:35, 36. We doubt not that many made new resolves to sacrifice in the future for the cause of God, as never before. That must be the one object of our existence here. In the afternoon Sister White took up the same subject-that of consecration to God-and carried it forward, showing how completely we belong to God, and how we rob him by living for ourselves alone. At the close of her discourse, about a hundred came forward for prayer. A large portion of these had never made a profession, and some were backsliders. There was no excitement, but very deep feeling, and the presence of the Lord was iacknowledged by all. {SITI May 8, 1884, p. 280.8}

On Monday afternoon, April 28, the large congregation repaired to the Lake Merritt, where the ordinance of baptism was administered to thirty candidates. While the good meeting was the immediate cause of the forward move taken by many, the primary cause was the faithful work that has been done in the past by the missionary and Sabbath-school workers. The most of those who joined the Oakland Church, are members of the Sabbath-school. The teachers in the Sabbath-school should feel that their position is one of sacred responsibility. Although their field is not large, it is second in importance to none. The baptismal scene was very impressive. {SITI May 8, 1884, p. 281.1}

At the closing meeting on Tuesday morning, Bro. N. C. McClure and Bro. Wm. Ings were set apart, by prayer and the laying on of hands, to the work of the gospel ministry. The blessing of the Lord was present in rich measure, and all felt that the ordination service was a fitting close to a most excellent meeting. To be permitted to attend throughout the entire meeting was a rare privilege. Many, we are confident, will make more rapid advancement toward the kingdom, as a result. Will there be any who go backward? May God give us all strength and courage, and protect us from the snares of Satan. E. J. W. {SITI May 8, 1884, p. 281.2}

**“Los Angeles Camp-Meeting” The Signs of the Times, 10, 20.**

E. J. Waggoner

By the time this report issues from the press, this meeting, now two-thirds over, will be closed. Of course we cannot yet speak of results, yet we can make a good estimate of what will be accomplished. {SITI May 22, 1884, p. 313.1}

The meeting was appointed in rather an unfavorable time for a full attendance of our people. This county has had three or four times its usual amount of rain the past season, and, as a consequence, farmers have been delayed in putting in their crops. The ground is just now in suitable condition for cultivation, and the people think that if this time is not improved they will raise no crops this year. The attendance of our own people is, therefore, very small. We regret this very much, for those in this part of the State have never before been permitted to meet with others of the same faith in camp-meeting. We cannot but think that if they had had this privilege, and could know the importance of such gatherings, or they can receive instruction concerning the dangers and duties of our time, there would have been a large attendance. Satan knows the importance of these meetings, and will throw hindrances in our way. He is an arch-deceiver, and can magnify a mole-hill into a mountain when it stands between us and duty. Very often it happens that things that seem to be in the natural order of events, perhaps ordered by Providence, have been gotten out by Satan for the express purpose of depriving us of a blessing. We need to be careful not to be deceived. {SITI May 22, 1884, p. 313.2}

But notwithstanding the meager attendance of our own people, the meeting has been in many respects a success. We have not attended a camp-meeting in California where there was so large and regular an outside attendance. God has seemed to give us a favor with the people, and a good impression is being made. The daily papers, of which there are four in the city, have been very kind in giving us favorable notices, reporting our meetings, etc. There has not been a word of adverse criticism. The order of the ground is commended, and surprise expressed at the size of the camp which to us seems so small. {SITI May 22, 1884, p. 313.3}

We believe that it is in the order of God’s providence that this meeting is held. Its effect will be to give character and permanence to the work in this section. There is no better field for labor in the State than Los Angeles; it is indeed a missionary field, and it will now be easier to reach the people than ever before. As we see the abundant opening, we feel constrained to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers. Would that all our brethren in the State might awaken to the necessity of the time, and be preparing to fill the openings which God is preparing for us. Our College should be more than filled, and it should be so relieved from financial embarrassment that it can provide accommodation for all who may desire to attend. We often pray for the spread of the message, as though there were some failure on the part of the Lord, and he must begin to work, when the fact is that he is away ahead of us, and is waiting for us to get faith enough to walk out where he leads. God is more anxious for the salvation of souls than we are. Let us all pray the Lord to send forth laborers, and then have a hand in answering our own prayers. {SITI May 22, 1884, p. 313.4}

The burden of this meeting has been to entrust the little company present in the practical duties, to give them a familiarity with the workings of the cause, and to awaken living faith and the promises of God. The timely testimony of Sister White has been well received. If it shall be heeded the Lord will work wonderfully for his people in this part of the field. Brethren pray for the work here. E. J. W. *Los Angeles. May 15*. {SITI May 22, 1884, p. 313.5}

**“Southern California Camp-Meeting” The Signs of the Times, 10, 21.**

E. J. Waggoner

There is not much concerning this meeting, to be added to our report of last week. The time was fully occupied with meetings, as is customary at our camp-meetings. The days were devoted to Bible-readings and instruction concerning our important work. Each evening there was a sermon, which was listened to by a large number not of our faith. The interest was good until the close. As an immediate result of this meeting, twenty-two signed the covenant to keep all the “commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus,” and eleven presented themselves as candidates for baptism. {SITI May 29, 1884, p. 336.1}

The little company at Los Angeles were very much encouraged, and feel determined to take hold of the work with new energy. As proof of this, an old debt which had hung over their missionary Society was lifted, and their club of SIGNS was increased from ten to fifty copies, and the money all pledged. When our people all learn the power of little sums when combined, and adopt the Bible plan of systematically laying aside certain sums, as God has prospered them, we shall see the work increase beyond all our expectations. {SITI May 29, 1884, p. 336.2}

Elders Healey, Israel, and Briggs, together with a large corp of canvassers and colporteurs, remain in Los Angeles to carry forward the work, and take advantage of the good impression that has already been made. May the Lord prosper them in all their efforts. E. J. W. {SITI May 29, 1884, p. 336.3}