**“Sound Speech from a Baptist” The Signs of the Times, 16, 16.**

E. J. Waggoner

On the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th of April, a “Bible-Readers’ Conference” was held in the First Baptist Church in Oakland, which was conducted by the Rev. Drs. W. H. Pendleton, A. J. Frost, and Daniel Read. The subject for consideration the afternoon of the first day was “The Lord’s Day,” by the Rev. Daniel Read, L.L.D., of Los Angeles. After presenting his arguments to show that Sunday is the Lord’s day, and should be kept holy, to the satisfaction of the most of his audience, opportunity was given for questions, when the subject of the propriety of civil Sunday laws was introduced, and an hour was spent in discussing it. The doctor showed himself to be master of the subject, answering every one of the numerous questions without a moment’s hesitation, and in the best possible manner. Following are the principal points brought out. {SITI April 21, 1890, p. 155.46}

In answer to the first question, he stated that the State had no right to enact Sunday laws, and that the church has no business to ask for such legislation. “Not even to stop the saloons?”-“No; we have no right to ask that saloons be closed because the first day of the week is the Lord’s day. Saloons should be closed every day.” {SITI April 21, 1890, p. 155.47}

A member then asked if railroad employés should not be protected from being compelled to labor on Sunday. The doctor’s reply was that they needed no protection. Nobody forces them to labor, and nobody can compel them to labor if they don’t want to. The railroad simply presents the alternative of working on Sunday or quitting. In this country nobody is forced to work for another if he doesn’t want to. To the statement that the loss of a position in consequence of refusal to work on Sunday, would present to some the alternative of starving, he said: “Let them starve, then; Christians have died, and even starved to death, for their religion; and we are no better than they. A religion that is not worth suffering inconvenience for is not worth anything. We have no right to compel other people to come to our ideas, in order that we may not suffer inconvenience.” He called attention to the fact that the church made its greatest advancement, and was the purest in doctrine and practice, when the laws instead of favoring it were all against it. {SITI April 21, 1890, p. 155.48}

The doctor said further that, so far as society is concerned, a man has as much right to work on Sunday as on any other day of the week. He believed that every body ought to keep the first day of the week holy; but if his conscience doesn’t lead him to rest on that day, nobody has any right to compel him to rest. God takes no delight in force. Rest without religion is worth nothing, and there is no religion in Sunday rest that does not spring from conscientious conviction. Moreover, he said, enforced idleness leads to crime, since Satan will always find mischief for idle hands. Therefore, to compel men to rest on Sunday, when they have no religious conviction in the matter, is to increase wickedness, and this is the reason why there are more cases in the police courts on Monday mornings than on other meetings. {SITI April 21, 1890, p. 155.49}

In line with this thought, the doctor added that for the church to ask aid from the civil law is to reject God. Just to the extent that the church asks the State to enforce religion it separates itself from God. “As Baptists,” said the doctor, “we cannot afford to go back on all Baptist principle and tradition.” To the statement that Christian people are in the majority in this country, and to the question if they should not see that laws are passed in harmony with the Bible, he replied: “Certainly; but, unfortunately, the Bible gives no sanction to force. It nowhere gives the State authority to legislate in matters of religion.” {SITI April 21, 1890, p. 155.50}

The question of protection to Sunday worship was then introduced, and the doctor stated that it should certainly be protected from disturbance, but just to the extent that the Seventh-day Adventists and the Jews were protected in their worship on Saturday. “We have no right,” he said, “to ask for any more protection than others.” He said that if a band was playing near a church on Sunday, they should be compelled to stop, and that likewise a force of carpenters at work on a building near a Seventh-day Adventist house of worship, should stop work during the time of service. {SITI April 21, 1890, p. 155.51}

Someone then raised the query: “Suppose that there are but a handful of Adventists worshiping in their church on Saturday, and there are very many carpenters at work on the house close by, who should be protected, the majority or the minority?” The reply was that it is not a question of numbers, but of right. If there is only one man, and he a Chinaman, he is entitled to protection. {SITI April 21, 1890, p. 155.52}

A lady then arose and made a pathetic plea for the closing of saloons on Sunday, in order to protect the boys on their only idle day. Said she: “Are we to be obliged to send the boys out as lambs among wolves, to be devoured? Shall not we close the saloons on this day, and thus protect the boys?” The doctor’s reply was, “I would go a great deal farther than the sister would, and close the saloons on every day.” That, of course, answered the question perfectly, but he did not let the matter rest there. He said that as to sending the boys out as lambs in the midst of wolves, that is just what the Saviour did: “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.” But we could have this assurance, that the great Shepherd never forsakes the sheep. The doctor thought that the protection of the great Shepherd was better for the lambs than that of the law. {SITI April 21, 1890, p. 155.53}

As to protection to the boys, he further said that parents had that in their own hands. Teach the boys that whisky and narcotics are poisons; show them the evil of their use; ground them thoroughly in moral principle, and the Sunday saloon will not affect them. {SITI April 21, 1890, p. 155.54}

In the above we have given in general only the substance of what was said. No point has been overstated; on the contrary, the positions were taken much more strongly than we have put them. It would be impossible, even with a verbatim report, to give an adequate idea of the force with which the doctor met every argument in favor of Sunday laws. We wish that every Baptist in the land could have been present; and we hope that in the coming campaign in California, in which it is designed to make the Sunday-law question play a prominent part, every Baptist, and every church member of every other denomination, could listen to Doctor Read’s masterly arraignment of Sunday laws. We believe that if they could, many would be convinced that loyalty to true Christian principle calls not for Sunday laws, but for earnest protest against any such device to destroy spiritually and to foster crime. E. J. W. {SITI April 21, 1890, p. 155.55}

 **“The Fresno Camp-meeting” The Signs of the Times, 16, 17.**

E. J. Waggoner

If the first camp-meeting of the season in California is an indication of what the remaining camp-meetings of the season will be, we are sure that it will be a good year for the cause in this State. The attendance exceeded that of any other camp-meeting in that part of the State. The number of tents on the ground was seventy. But the success of the meeting was not due to the number present, but to the Spirit of God, whose presence all felt and acknowledged. {SITI April 28, 1890, p. 155.56}

The preaching was mainly directed to the imparting of instruction in church duties, the responsibilities of church members, their relation one to another, etc., and to unfolding the simple principles of the gospel. By the grace of God these efforts were so successful that many were led to rejoice in increased light and courage. {SITI April 28, 1890, p. 155.57}

Sister White was present the last five days of the meeting, and her testimony was greatly blessed. Her oft-repeated assurance that “the Lord can do more for us in a minute than we can do for ourselves in a life-time,” was not without effect, and those who had been endeavoring to help themselves out of trouble, were moved to yield themselves to the Lord. {SITI April 28, 1890, p. 155.58}

A special effort was made in the line of practical Sabbath-school instruction. This was appreciated, and many teachers will take hold of their work with more intelligent zeal than ever before. Much attention was also given to the canvassing work, and the cooking class was well attended. {SITI April 28, 1890, p. 155.59}

During the meeting, and at its close, the expression, “This is the best meeting I ever attended,” was very frequently heard. It was not because of any great enthusiasm, or because feeling ran high, but because the Spirit of the Lord directed the minds of preachers and teachers, to bring forth from the word just those things that were needed at the time. The promise of Christ concerning the Spirit, “He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you,” was verified. {SITI April 28, 1890, p. 155.60}

The cause in Central California certainly stands in a better condition to-day than before the meeting. The people are prepared to take hold of the work more intelligently than ever before; and if they continue in the things which they have learned and have been assured of, eternal victory will certainly be theirs. To God be the praise for the victories gained by the truth in Fresno, and may all the people thank him and take courage. E. J. W. {SITI April 28, 1890, p. 155.61}