**“Saving Faith” The Signs of the Times, 16, 19.**

E. J. Waggoner

“But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above); or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach: that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Romans 10:6-9. {SITI May 12, 1890, p. 155.62}

May we accept these words, especially the statement in the last verse, as literally true? Shall we not be in danger if we do? Is not something more than faith in Christ necessary to salvation? To the first of these questions we say, Yes, and to the last two we say, No, and refer to the Scriptures for corroboration. So plain a statement cannot be other than literally true and one that can be depended on by the trembling sinner. {SITI May 12, 1890, p. 155.63}

As an instance in proof, take the case of the jailer at Philippi. Paul and Silas, after having been inhumanly beaten, were placed in his care. Notwithstanding their lacerated backs and their manacled feet, they prayed and sang praises to God at midnight and suddenly an earthquake shook the prison, and all the doors were opened. It was not alone the natural fear produced by feeling the earth rock beneath him nor yet the dread of Roman justice if the prisoners in his charge should escape, that caused the jailer to tremble. But he felt in that earthquake shock a premonition of the great judgment, concerning which the apostles had preached; and, trembling under his load of guilt, he fell down before Paul and Silas, saying, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” Mark well the answer; for here was a soul in sorest extremity and what was sufficient for him must be the message to all lost ones. To the jailer’s anguished appeal, Paul replied, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” Acts 16:30, 31. This agrees exactly with the words which we quoted from Paul to the Romans. {SITI May 12, 1890, p. 155.64}

On one occasion the Jews said unto Jesus, “What shall we do that we might work the works of God?” Just the thing that we want to know. Mark the reply: “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” John 6:28, 29. Would that these words might be written in letters of gold and kept continually before the eyes of every struggling Christian. The seeming paradox is cleared up. Works are necessary, yet faith is all-sufficient, because faith does the work. Faith comprehends everything and without faith there is nothing. {SITI May 12, 1890, p. 155.65}

The trouble is that people in general have a faulty conception of faith. They imagine that it is mere assent and that it is only a passive thing to which active works must be added. But faith is active and it is not only the most substantial thing but the only real foundation. The law is the righteousness of God (Isaiah 51:6, 7), for which we are commanded to seek (Matthew 6:33), but it cannot be kept except by faith, for the only righteousness which will stand in the Judgment is “that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” Philippians 3:9. {SITI May 12, 1890, p. 155.66}

Read the words of Paul in Romans 3:31. “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law.” Making void the law of God by man is not abolishing it; for that is an impossibility. It is as fixed as the throne of God. No matter what men say of the law, nor how much they trample upon it and despise it, it remains the same. The only way that men can make void the law of God is to make it of none effect in their hearts by their disobedience. Thus in Numbers 30:15, a vow that has been broken is said to have been made void. So when the apostle says that we do not make void the law through faith, he means that faith and disobedience are incompatible. No matter how much the law-breaker professes faith, the fact that he is a law-breaker shows that he has no faith. But the possession of faith is shown by the establishment of the law in the heart, so that the man does not sin against God. Let no one decry faith as of little moment. {SITI May 12, 1890, p. 155.67}

But does not the apostle James say that faith alone cannot save a man and that faith without works is dead? Let us look at his words a moment. Too many have with honest intent perverted them to a dead legalism. He does say that faith without works is dead and this agrees most fully with what we have just quoted and written. For if faith without works is dead, the absence of works shows the absence of faith; for that which is dead has no existence. If a man has faith, works will necessarily appear and the man will not boast of either one, for by faith boasting is excluded. Romans 3:27. Boasting is done only by those who trust wholly in dead works or whose profession of faith is a hollow mockery. {SITI May 12, 1890, p. 155.68}

Then how about James 2:14, which says: “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith and have not works? Can faith save him?” The answer necessarily implied is, of course, that it cannot. Why not? Because he hasn’t it. What doth it profit if a man say he has faith, if by his wicked course he shows that he has none? Must we decry the power of faith simply because it does nothing for the man who makes a false profession of it? Paul speaks of some who profess that they know God but who deny Him by their works. Titus 1:16. The man to whom James refers is one of this class. The fact that he has no good works-no fruit of the Spirit-shows that he has no faith, despite his loud profession, and so of course faith cannot save him; for faith has no power to save a man who does not possess it. {SITI May 12, 1890, p. 155.69}

This is but a brief presentation of this subject. Much more ought to be said, and many difficulties that arise in honest people’s minds ought to be met, and this will be done in due time. But the scripture cited should be sufficient to cause us to heed the exhortation to hold fast the profession of our faith, without wavering, “knowing that he is faithful that promised.” E. J. W. {SITI May 12, 1890, p. 155.70}

**“A Few Principles of Interpretation” The Signs of the Times, 16, 19.**

E. J. Waggoner

The SIGNS OF THE TIMES is an expository journal. The main object for which it was established was to present Scripture truth in the simplest and clearest manner possible. It will ever be our endeavor to make it meet this object. We here wish to lay down for our readers a few of the principles which we shall invariably follow in our interpretation, and which, if followed in a prayerful and candid spirit, cannot fail to lead a person to a proper understanding of the sacred word. {SITI May 19, 1890, p. 155.71}

1. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” 2 Timothy 3:16, 17. We accept this fully, and apply it to the entire Bible. The Bible does not simply contain the truth, but it is the truth, and the whole truth. Aside from the Bible there can be no moral or spiritual truth and light. And whatever disagrees with the Bible, whether it be in the realm of morals or of science, must be false. The principle here laid down must underlie all sound biblical exegesis. If this be not admitted, it can be of no use to try to study the Bible. {SITI May 19, 1890, p. 155.72}

2. The Bible is one connected, consistent, harmonious book. It is composed of many books, but these books form only one book. They are not independent one of another. This book was written by many different persons, yet it has only one author, and that is the Spirit of God. The different parts are inspired by the same Spirit, and have one purpose; there is a vital connection between them. They are characterized by oneness of thought. As Christ prayed that his disciples might be one, so that the world might know that the Father had sent him (John 17:21), so the perfect harmony between the various parts of the Bible is proof that it came from God. If we accept the Bible as the inspired word of God, we must expect to find it harmonious throughout, for God cannot deny himself. So whoever wishes to study the word of God with any degree of satisfaction, must first fix in his mind the fact that the Bible cannot contradict itself. {SITI May 19, 1890, p. 155.73}

As a corollary to this principle it might be stated that the Bible does not need to be “harmonized.” To attempt that is a thankless task, because the Bible is already harmonized. It is an instrument that was tuned by the Almighty himself, and every string vibrates in harmony with every other. All that the Bible student has to do is to study the harmony that already exists. If two texts seem to be contradictory, the student may rest assured that he does not understand one or the other, or perhaps either one. But when the position which he holds on one text is upheld by other texts bearing on the same point, and is not contradicted by any other text; that is, when a position taken in regard to any text is consistent with the entire Bible, that of itself is evidence that that position is correct; for the Bible could not agree with a false position. {SITI May 19, 1890, p. 155.74}

3. The Bible must interpret itself. By the Bible man may be “thoroughly furnished unto all good works;” hence it cannot need the addition of matter outside of itself. {SITI May 19, 1890, p. 155.75}

4. One part of the Bible cannot be fully understood when taken by itself, apart from its connection, or without reference to the remaining portion of the Bible. This might also be called a corollary to the second proposition laid down. If the Bible is one connected whole, then all the parts are necessary to the formation of that whole. There is a mutual dependence between all the parts, and therefore in considering one part, attention must be given to the other parts. True, we may not misunderstand one portion of the Bible even though we study it by itself; but it is certain that we cannot have a complete understanding of it until we study it with reference to an entire book of the Bible as it is of a single text. There is no book of the Bible upon which light is not thrown by every other book in the Bible. To say that any two books in the Bible have no connection, is almost equivalent to saying that the Bible is not all inspired by the same Spirit. {SITI May 19, 1890, p. 155.76}

4. Terms used in one place in the Bible, with a certain signification, must have the same meaning attached to them in every other place where they occur, provided the same subject is under consideration. If this be not true, then we have no certain means of knowing what the Bible teaches. Let us apply this principle. In the eighth chapter of Daniel we find a symbolic prophecy in which certain days are mentioned. Now to say that these days mean literal days of twenty-four hours each, would make nonsense of the prophecy, for we should have several great kingdoms covering a period of only a little more than six years. But in Ezekiel 4:3-6 we find another prophecy, also symbolic, in which a day is expressly declared to stand for a year. So we conclude that in every prophecy where a day is used as a symbol, it signifies a year. {SITI May 19, 1890, p. 155.77}

In like manner we find horns used as a symbol in the seventh and eighth chapters of Daniel, in both of which chapters they are plainly declared to symbolize kingdoms. Therefore we justly conclude that wherever in the Bible a horn is used as a symbol, it represents a kingdom or a nation. {SITI May 19, 1890, p. 155.78}

Let the reader study these principles well, and get them fixed in his mind, and they will help him out of many a difficulty in his study of the Bible. {SITI May 19, 1890, p. 155.79}

**“Things We Should Know” The Signs of the Times, 16, 20.**

E. J. Waggoner

As finite beings, our knowledge is necessarily limited. There are many things that it is impossible for us to know. In fact, that which we know is a very small amount in comparison with that which we do not know; and much of that which we think we know is only conjecture. People sometimes think they know a great deal about nature, but such ones only think so because of their ignorance of the vastness of God’s works. So Isaac Newton, after a lifetime of contemplation of the works of nature, and investigation of physical phenomena, said that he was like a child playing with pebbles on the shore of the ocean, while the vast expanse was still before him unexplored. And when we come to things supernatural, our knowledge is still more limited. We can know nothing of them, except they are revealed in God’s word. It is idle for us to conjecture concerning the size of the throne of God, the height of the tree of life, the width of the streets of the New Jerusalem, or of the river of water of life. These things have not been revealed to us, and hence it is not necessary that we should know them. {SITI May 26, 1890, p. 155.80}

But there are some things which are very plainly made known, and these things it is our duty to know. If we remain ignorant of them, it is a sin. Let us consider some of the things that we may and should know without any mixture of doubt. {SITI May 26, 1890, p. 155.81}

In Deuteronomy 4:30 Moses says: “Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath; there is none else.” {SITI May 26, 1890, p. 155.82}

This may be called the first element of knowledge, because whoever says, “There is no God,” is a fool. Psalm 14:1. A man may be ignorant of a great many things and yet not be a fool; but one who is ignorant of things existing around him, who is unconscious of the existence of the sun, the air, the works of creation, and who looks upon all with indifferent eye,-such an one we say is a fool. But that is virtually the condition one must be in if he denies the existence of God, for God is known by his works. Says the psalmist, “For all the gods of the nations are idols; but the Lord made the heavens.” Psalm 96:5. Again, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork.” Psalm 19:1. {SITI May 26, 1890, p. 155.83}

A knowledge of God is inseparably connected with a knowledge of his creative power. The psalmist says again: “Know ye that the Lord he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.” Psalm 100:3. This is shown still farther by the fact that the heathen lost their knowledge of God through failure to recognize his creative power. Thus Paul says that the heathen who know nothing of God are without excuse, because ever since the creation of the world the eternal power and godhead of God may be seen from the things that are made. And then he says that darkness came upon them “because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful.” What would it be to glorify him as God? Evidently to properly recognize him as Creator, for it is that which distinguishes him as the one true God. Thus the psalmist, after declaring the power of God above all gods, says, “Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name.” Psalm 96:8. {SITI May 26, 1890, p. 155.84}

But if we acknowledge God as Creator, and consider it in our heart, to what will that lead? It will lead to the perfect doing of his will. Obedience is due only to superiors by inferiors. It is a principle of law that one who is dependent on another is in duty bound to obey the will of that other just to the extent that he is dependent on him. Man is dependent upon God for *everything*,-“In him we live, and move, and have our being,”-and therefore he is in duty bound to yield obedience to the will of God in every particular. And if a man recognize this supremacy of God, and his own dependence, he will do the will of God. That obedience to God is a necessary consequence of a recognition of his supremacy, or, rather, is the only way in which his supremacy can be recognized, is shown by the following verses, one of which has already been quoted:- {SITI May 26, 1890, p. 155.85}

“Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath; there is none else. Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments.” Deuteronomy 4:39, 40. {SITI May 26, 1890, p. 155.86}

The same thing is still further seen by the fact that ignorance of divine truth springs directly from disobedience. Paul says that strong delusion shall come upon men to that they shall believe a lie, for the reason that they receive not the love of the truth. 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12. And again he warns the people to watch lest they be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Hebrews 3:13. {SITI May 26, 1890, p. 155.87}

It will not be denied that a knowledge of God is of the utmost importance, and that it is a primary duty; and since we can retain our knowledge of God only by doing his will, how important it is that we keep his commandments. In obeying any precept of God we recognize his authority, and increase our knowledge of him; but there is one duty the performance of which leads especially to the knowledge of God. In Exodus 31:13, 17, we read these words of the Lord:- {SITI May 26, 1890, p. 155.88}

“Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.” “It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.” {SITI May 26, 1890, p. 155.89}

Here the reason is given why the keeping of the Sabbath leads to a more perfect knowledge of God. The Sabbath commemorates the completed creation. The Sabbath is given for this very purpose. It can be properly kept only when we consider the wonderful power and goodness of God. In the ninety-second psalm, which is for the Sabbath-day, the psalmist speaks of the necessity of praise to God, and says: “For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work; I will triumph in the works of thy hands.” Verse 4. {SITI May 26, 1890, p. 155.90}

The same thing that is stated in Exodus is repeated by the Lord through the prophet Ezekiel: “Moreover also I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them.” “And hallow my Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God.” Ezekiel 20:12, 20. In these words the Lord expressly declares that the Sabbath is the only means that he has given whereby men may preserve a knowledge of him. And as when we read the command, “Know ye that the Lord he is God,” it is equivalent to a command to keep the Sabbath. {SITI May 26, 1890, p. 155.91}

“The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.” This is the day which commemorates creation. No other day calls attention to the power of God. Changing the day of rest is the first step toward complete loss of knowledge of God. When we read that the heathen became what they are because “when they knew God they glorified him not as God,” and remember that the glory of God is his creative power, and that keeping the Sabbath is the means by which we recognize that power, we do not see how the conclusion can be avoided that the first step toward the degradation revealed in Romans 1:23-31 was the refusal to keep the Sabbath which God had sanctified. {SITI May 26, 1890, p. 155.92}

The “man of sin” became such by thinking to change the times and the laws of God. The attempted change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week is the boast of the Catholic Church. To this she points as the badge of her authority. And this fact marks the Papacy as essentially heathen. Thus: By the act of changing the Sabbath it claimed the place and authority of God. Paul says of the Papacy: “Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” 2 Thessalonians 2:4. One power can usurp the place of another only by changing, or attempting to change, its laws. But if the Papacy puts itself in the place of God, showing itself to be God, it must necessarily ignore the existence of the only true God; and thus it is that by changing the Sabbath the Papacy becomes essentially heathen. It matters not that the Papacy makes great pretensions to godliness. Profession counts for nothing unless the action corresponds. Paul says of certain ones. “They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him.” Titus 1:16. {SITI May 26, 1890, p. 155.93}

It is the rejection of the truth that is going to land the mass of the people of the last days in the worst kind of infidelity. See 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12. The Sabbath of Jehovah was, so far as we have any record, the first truth revealed to man (see Genesis 2:1-3), and it is the primary and most essential truth, since it pre-eminently teaches the existence and power of God. It is this truth which the Papacy has sought to overthrow, thus putting itself in the place of God; it is against this truth that Satan, the arch-enemy of God, exerts all his hellish arts, that he may lure men from allegiance to God; and it is the rejection of this truth which will make men an easy prey to Satan’s strong delusion, and bring them under the wrath of God. {SITI May 26, 1890, p. 155.94}

Let us then keep the Sabbath of the Lord in spirit and in truth. Let us not substitute a way of our own choosing, thus exalting ourselves to the place of God. If by the faith of Christ we earnestly strive to keep the commandments of God, we shall “follow on to know the Lord;” and in the earth made new, where all shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest, we shall be permitted every Sabbath (Isaiah 66:23) to see God and to worship before his throne, acknowledging his goodness and power, in that he hath made all things new. {SITI May 26, 1890, p. 155.95}