**“The Spirit as Guide” The Signs of the Times, 17, 9.**

E. J. Waggoner

When Christ told his disciples that he was about to go away, and that they could not follow him, their hearts were filled with sorrow and anxiety. They dreaded to face an unfriendly world alone. He had been their guide and instructor, and they had learned much from his teachings. They knew of no one who could fill his place. Peter had echoed the sentiments of all the disciples when, in answer to Christ’s inquiry if they also would go away, he said, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” They knew that no one else could do for them what Jesus had done; and the thought of being separated from him was a sad one. {SITI March 2, 1891, p. 58.3}

To comfort them, Christ gave them the assurance that he would come again and receive them unto himself, and that by this means they could again be with him. But even this promise was not sufficient, for there would still intervene a long period during which they would be left alone. How could they do without the presence and counsel of their Lord? {SITI March 2, 1891, p. 58.4}

Again Jesus meets the difficulty by promising that whatsoever they should ask in his name should be done for them; and he added, “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth.” John 14:16, 17. This Spirit was to be sent in his name, and was to take his place until his return. Said Christ, “I will not leave you comfortless [orphans]; I will come to you.” This coming does not refer to his personal, visible coming, when he will receive his people to himself, but to the Spirit who should come in his name. The Spirit was to be their guide, to prepare them for his coming at the last day. {SITI March 2, 1891, p. 58.5}

The offices of the Spirit are many; but there is a special one pointed out in this discourse of our Lord. Said he: “These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” John 14:25, 26. It is as a teacher that the Spirit is here brought to view. {SITI March 2, 1891, p. 58.6}

Many persons entertain very erroneous views as to the manner in which the Spirit operates. They imagine that it will teach them something which the Bible does not contain. When certain Bible truths are presented to them for their observance, they excuse themselves from all responsibility in the matter by saying that they are led by the Spirit of God, and do not feel it their duty to do that particular thing. They say the Spirit was given to guide into all truth; and, consequently, if it was necessary to obey that portion of the Scripture, it would have been brought to their notice. The fact that they do not feel impressed to obey is proof to their minds that there is no necessity for obedience. To such persons the Bible is of no account; they make its truth depend entirely upon their own feelings. And they actually charge God with the inconsistency of authorizing his Spirit to speak in contradiction of his revealed word. The fact that God cannot lie should convince anyone that his Spirit and his word must always be in harmony. {SITI March 2, 1891, p. 58.7}

Christ prayed for his disciples, “Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.” The psalmist David said, “Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth.” From these passages we learn that when Christ said, “When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth,” he meant that the Spirit would lead them into a proper understanding of that which had already been revealed. He plainly stated this when he said, “He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” Many things that Christ said were not understood at the time; but they were made plain by the Spirit, after Christ had ascended to heaven. And it is thus that the Spirit teaches us now; it leads those who are humble and teachable into a proper understanding of the written word of God. {SITI March 2, 1891, p. 58.8}

Paul gives testimony on this point which is not uncertain. In Ephesians 6:13-17, he describes the Christian’s armor. The following is the concluding portion: “Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, *which is the word of God.*” Christ said that when the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, should come, he would “reprove [convince] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” Paul says that “by the law is the knowledge of sin.” Both these passages are harmonized by the one quoted from Paul to the Ephesians. The Spirit does indeed convince of sin, but it is by impressing on the minds and hearts of men the claims of God’s word. The Bible is the sword, the instrument by which the Spirit pierces the heart and lays bare its wickedness. The Spirit is the active agent, but the word of God is that through which it works. In Isaiah we are told by what we are to try them: “To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8:20. It is the spirit of darkness that leads men to act contrary to the word of God. E. J. W. {SITI March 2, 1891, p. 66.1}

 **“Under the Law” The Signs of the Times, 17, 10.**

E. J. Waggoner

“But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.” Galatians 5:18. Antinomians very rarely quote this verse, doubtless because it is so very evident from the connection that the law is recognized as being in active existence. Let us give it our attention for a little while, that we may see what beautiful harmony there is in the Bible on the subject of the law. {SITI March 9, 1891, p. 66.2}

Since those who are led by the Spirit are *not* under the law, it follows that those who *are not* led by the Spirit *are* under the law. Again, the preceding verses read as follows: “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other.” Galatians 5:16, 17. These verses state in the plainest terms that the flesh and the Spirit are contrary to each other; but walking in the flesh and walking in the Spirit are directly opposite conditions. Then since those who are led by the Spirit are *not* under the law, and those who are not led by the Spirit *are* under the law, it follows that those who are under the law are those who are fulfilling the lusts of the flesh. {SITI March 9, 1891, p. 66.3}

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Galatians 5:19-21. {SITI March 9, 1891, p. 66.4}

The fruit of the Spirit is, of course, the very opposite, being “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” Verses 22, 23. Referring to these fruits of the Spirit, the apostle says: “Against such there is no law.” Verse 23. That is, those who are led by the Spirit, and who yield its fruits, are in harmony with the law; while the law is against the works of the flesh; and those who do the works of the flesh are condemned by the law, or are under it. Here we arrive at the same conclusion as in regard to Romans 6:14, that “under the law” simply represents a state of antagonism to, and violation of, the law; and of course no one could be in such a state if the law were not in full force. Now since all sinners are by the law condemned to death (Romans 3:19, 6:23), it follows again that “under the law” means condemned by the law-under the sentence of death. {SITI March 9, 1891, p. 66.5}

Turning backward, we find the expression “under the law” used twice in Galatians 4:4, 5: “But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made by a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” {SITI March 9, 1891, p. 66.6}

In the third verse the apostle says that when we were children we were “in bondage under the elements of the world.” *But* (that marks a change) God sent forth his Son to redeem “them that were under the law.” We would naturally expect the redemption to be from that under which we were in bondage, which was “the elements of the world.” In the fifth verse the redemption is said to be from “under the law,” thus showing that “in bondage under the elements of the world” and “under the law” are equivalent terms. {SITI March 9, 1891, p. 66.7}

Let us trace further this matter of bondage. In verse 9 Paul says to the Galatians: “But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?” Here it is implied that they were in danger of returning to a condition in which they had previously been. And what condition was that? Read verse 8: “Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.” That is, they were heathen. So being in bondage to the elements of the world,—the “weak and beggarly elements,”—is equivalent to being in a state of heathenism. Those who do not know God are termed heathen. But no man can know God without being a follower of Christ, as the Saviour said, “No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” John 14:6. In the strict Bible sense, therefore, all who are not in Christ are heathen. And therefore although Paul addressed his epistle to those who had been idolaters in the commonly-accepted sense, the argument is of universal application. {SITI March 9, 1891, p. 66.8}

We conclude, then, that the “elements of the world” are simply the various forms of sin. This is still further shown by Ephesians 2:1-3: “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked *according to the course of this world*, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation [manner of life] in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” Nothing but sin is meant by “the course of this world,” the “weak and beggarly elements,” and “the elements of the world.” And to be “in bondage under the elements of the world” is to be “under the law,” in a state of condemnation. {SITI March 9, 1891, p. 74.1}

Christ came in the fullness of time (see Mark 1:14, 15; Daniel 9:25) “to redeem them that are under the law.” But in order to do this, he himself had to be “made under the law.” This is in harmony with Hebrews 2:17, which says: “Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” The people whom Christ came to redeem were “under the law,” therefore he was made like them, “under the law.” “He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.” 2 Corinthians 5:21. E. J. W. {SITI March 9, 1891, p. 74.2}