**“Stumbling-blocks—Foundation Stones” The Signs of the Times, 20, 50.**

E. J. Waggoner

If you would only give up that idea of keeping Saturday, you might do so much more good. You preach Christ, and hold him up in an attractive manner before the people, and if you would be content with that, you might reach thousands where you now reach tens, but your preaching that the seventh day should be kept instead of Sunday, is a stumbling-block-a barrier to keep them away from Christ. {SITI October 22, 1894, p. 789.1}

Thus spoke a friend to the writer a few days ago. The speaker was sincere, and was not the first one to entertain such a thought. Others have said, and many more have thought, that the preaching of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is a barrier to prevent people from coming to Christ. “If it were not for that,” say they, “you might have multitudes join your ranks.” Let us examine the matter briefly. {SITI October 22, 1894, p. 789.2}

The fourth commandment, which enjoins the observance of the seventh day of the week,-the Sabbath of the Lord,-is one of the ten. The first and second forbid the worship of any false god and the making and worshiping of images. Would our friends say that they are stumbling-blocks in the way of people’s accepting the gospel?-Perhaps not, yet to many people they are such as truly as the Sabbath ever can be. {SITI October 22, 1894, p. 789.3}

A missionary goes to Africa. He finds the natives wholly given to idolatry. They have charms and *fetiches* by the thousand. He begins to preach the gospel, presenting Christ to the poor people, who are much attracted, when, lo, he begins to talk about the worship of images, the use of charms, etc.! This cools their ardor. One of the most intelligent comes to him and says: “Why do you not preach the way the Roman Catholic missionaries do? They simply present the gospel, and do not bother the people with the law. Our people are thoroughly settled in the worship of these idols. To give them up would cause much inconvenience and ridicule. The Catholic missionaries allow us to use them as aids to devotion, and if you would do the same, you might make thousands of converts; but as it is, you are simply presenting a barrier to keep people away from Christ. Your preaching of the law nullifies the good that your preaching of the gospel might do.” {SITI October 22, 1894, p. 789.4}

Would any man be at loss to know how to answer such a question? Could not every reader of the Bible point out the fact that the worship of the one true God, and him alone, is the very object of the gospel, and that to gain image-worshiping professors of Christianity would be a calamity? {SITI October 22, 1894, p. 789.5}

Take the eighth commandment. It says, “Thou shalt not steal.” Now there are quarters in nearly every large city where the people live almost entirely by preying upon others. Indeed, it appears to them that they are compelled to steal in order to live. People will not employ them because of their bad characters. Some of them would gladly reform, but they have a police record, and it is a sad fact that even many professed Christians have a strong aversion to a man who has been *addicted* to gross sin. Consequently the path of honesty seems to be closed up to these unfortunate people. {SITI October 22, 1894, p. 789.6}

Now a true missionary goes into the slums, and practices Christ. But someone says to him: “You are cutting off your own usefulness in these parts by telling the people that it is a sin to steal. Don’t you see that their ancestors for generations back have been thieves, and they were trained from infancy to steal, and if they should leave off stealing they could not live? Say nothing about the stealing, and you can raise up a vast congregation here, and do much good; but by making so much of the eighth commandment, you are keeping people away from Christ.” {SITI October 22, 1894, p. 789.7}

The fallacy of such talk need not be pointed out. But why are the first, second, and eighth commandments any better than the fourth? How is it that they are an essential part of the preaching of the gospel, if the fourth commandment be against it? {SITI October 22, 1894, p. 789.8}

In a very popular religious journal we have seen a correspondence carried on under the heading “The Bible a Barrier.” One of the writers says:— {SITI October 22, 1894, p. 789.9}

My trade has brought me into contact with a great many fellows of my own age in London and elsewhere, and nearly all must be ranked as agnostics, simply because of the narrowness of their teachers, who have tried to force them to look upon all the Bible as perfectly true, and as all equally inspired. {SITI October 22, 1894, p. 789.10}

So here we have another stumbling-block. How many thousands of people there are who are kept out of the church solely by the Bible! There is not the slightest doubt but that the whole world would be “converted” almost in a body if practical belief in the Bible were not made an essential part of conversion. But when would be the use of preaching which ignored the Bible? {SITI October 22, 1894, p. 789.11}

But this is not all. The apostle Paul found that Christ himself was a stumbling-block. He wrote, “We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.” 1 Corinthians 1:23. “Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient.” 1 Peter 2:6-8. {SITI October 22, 1894, p. 789.12}

It is even so to-day. “The offense of the cross” has not yet ceased. Christ is still a stumbling-block to many. Many will be kept out of heaven because they cannot get there without faith in Christ. If Christ were but left out, how many people would believe. Believe what?-Why, that they are about right as they are, and that they are safe in doing as they please. {SITI October 22, 1894, p. 789.13}

Notice that, although Christ is a stumbling-block, he is also “a sure foundation.” What some imagine to be a hindrance to them others find to be a support and a joy. Even so it is with the Bible and with all the commandments. For Christ is in the word, and the law is in Christ. The law of God was in his heart, and he kept all the commandments. Psalm 40:8; John 15:10. To the extent that people find any one of the ten commandments a stumbling-block, to that same extent do they find Christ a stumbling-block, for his life is nothing but the perfection of the law in action. {SITI October 22, 1894, p. 789.14}

It is the hardness of the human heart that causes people to “stumble at the law,” so that the stumbling-block is in reality the stubborn heart. It was this that caused the ancient Jews to fall. See Romans 9:31-33; Hebrews 3:12-19; 4:11. The one who finds a stumbling-block in the fourth commandment would find one in anything else that seems contrary to his inclination and convenience. Whoever will exercise “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21

* King James Version
* American Standard Version
* Webster’s Bible
* American King James Version
* Darby Bible
* World English Bible
* Young’s Literal Translation
* King James Bible With Strong's Dictionary
* King James Bible With Strong's Dictionary
* King James Bible With Strong's Dictionary
* King James Reference Version
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), thus keeping “the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12), will find the stumbling-blocks removed, and will be one of those who will “raise up the foundations of many generations.” Isaiah 58:12. {SITI October 22, 1894, p. 789.15}