

**April 23, 1903**

**"The Editor's Private Corner. How to Keep the Sabbath" *The Present Truth* 19, 17.**

E. J. Waggoner

"I take PRESENT TRUTH every week, and I admire many of the truths and sentiments contained therein, and until last Saturday, through the teaching of PRESENT TRUTH and other reading matter, I had observed the seventh day as a rest day, and tried to keep the Sabbath, for something like nine months. Thinking the matter up recently, and through reading Farrar's 'Life of Christ,' I have been brought to face the teaching of Christ on the Sabbath in a light I had not seen before. Will you point out the truth as it appears to you in Matt. xii. 1-13? From this account, and also that given by Luke and also by Mark, I am led to believe that works of necessity and mercy, when in accordance with Christ's supreme authority 'to do good,' to save life, are lawful, and that by doing such we keep the Sabbath. What do you think?"

Is it only "*many* of the truths" contained in PRESENT TRUTH that you admire? Do you mean to say that there are some truths that you do not regard? Are you "partial in the law"? Do you not know that all truth is one, and that whoever deliberately rejects one truth, rejects all truth? For if any man thinks that his allegiance to some truth will warrant him in disregarding some other, let him know that, on the contrary, his disregard of even one truth shows that he cares only for his own way, and has no respect whatever for truth; that he accepts what he professes to accept, not because it is truth, but because it suits his convenience to do so. I do not think that it is so with you, but that you did not state exactly what you meant.

You have surely not been a very close reader of PRESENT TRUTH, if it has just dawned on you that works of necessity and mercy are lawful on the Sabbath day, and have not long since learned that they are an essential part of Sabbath keeping. There is no day in the week when the requirement to "love mercy" is suspended. And certainly everything that is in harmony with "Christ's supreme authority" is right and necessary.

If you read the Scriptures carefully, you will notice that many of Christ's most striking miracles were wrought on the Sabbath day. They were not all acute cases either, as when Peter's wife's mother had fever, and was healed on the Sabbath; the most of them were cases of long standing, and the healing could without doubt have been deferred till another day, without serious detriment to the afflicted one. Why then did Jesus perform the miracles on that day?-Plainly in order to teach the people who saw and heard, and us as well, what the Sabbath means.

God does not set people tasks just to show His authority over them, or to gratify His fancy. Whatever God commands men to do is for their benefit, and not for His. God does not have slaves working for Him, but He has children whose welfare constitutes His pleasure. Most people imagine that religion, Christianity, is a "system" that God has devised to try men,-a sort of exercise that He has

invented because it pleased Him to make the way to heaven as hard as possible. So the Sabbath is too often regarded as a hardship to be endured if one would get enough good "marks" to entitle him to enter heaven. But "the Sabbath was made for man." It is a rest, not a work; a delight, not a hardship. It is the memorial of God's wonderful works, by which we triumph over our enemies.

"By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth." "For He spake, and it was." And "in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." The Sabbath, therefore, is given us, to remind us of the power of God's Word,-"the word of life." Christ healed on the Sabbath day, to show that the Word which in the beginning created all things, is the Word by which we live,-that it is our life. As we rest from our own work on the seventh day, even though it threatens the loss of all our possessions, and even our friends, we signify our knowledge and acceptance of the Word that upholds the universe, and on which we can securely rest. It reminds us that

"That hand which bears creation up,  
Shall guard His children well."

"God is love;" His life is love; so as we rest in His Word of life, His love is shed abroad in our hearts, and it must necessarily work the same in us as in Him; that is, in good works. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before prepared, that we should walk in them." Eph. ii. 10. You will see that this does not mean that we are saved *by* our good works, but that we are saved *to* good works-the works which God Himself has done. "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not by works, lest any man should boast." Our faith saves us *to* the works which God Himself has done,-the works which were finished from the foundation of the world; and thus it is that "we which have believed do enter into rest"-into Sabbath keeping.

Do you not see that the healing of men's bodily infirmities on the Sabbath day is an exhibition of the working of the Word that creates, and that upholds all things? Well, that being accepted, the next thing that will naturally occur to the thinking mind is that the Word also cleanses from sin, since His works "are verity and judgment, and are done in truth and uprightness." The Word that gives life gives perfect life; the Word that heals diseases also forgives iniquities; and so the healing of disease on the Sabbath day should, more than on any other day, reveal the loving kindness of our God.

God works constantly, but by His Word-the Word by which He healed the sick. Such work pertains to the Sabbath day. But you will at once see that this work does not bring any personal gain to God. It is all gratuitous. It is done at great sacrifice, solely for the benefit of others. Thus we are guarded against deceiving ourselves with the thought that certain work which we very much desire to see accomplished, and from which we shall derive some direct or indirect gain, is a

work of necessity. If any work can by any possibility benefit us-if we can possibly derive any gain from it,-it is not a work of necessity. It is not a work of mercy, but

of selfishness, even though it be lawful in itself, if performed on some secular day. But any work that has in it no possible element of selfishness, and from which we cannot in the remotest manner, or to the least degree, derive any personal gain, but which is wholly for the benefit of others, is lawful on the Sabbath day. In doing such work with a glad, cheerful heart, we show ourselves true children of Him who bears the burdens of mankind because He cares for them, and loves them.