

Commentary — From the Margins *An Infallible Text*

1.

When I first read the Bible, I sought to prove my newly acquired stepfather wrong about Sabbath observance. I was then twelve years old, a high school freshman at, actually, Willamina High, Willamina, Oregon, on the lee side of the Coast Range—for the first few months after Mom remarried, we lived at Grande Ronde, across the road from Long Bell’s pond. We didn’t return to Rose Lodge until later winter, after my stepfather purchased the old Adventist church up Slick Rock Creek Road. I was then finally back at Taft High, where I had started my freshman year and from which I graduated fifty years ago. And in attempting to prove my stepfather wrong, I found that if a person claimed to be a Christian, the person was morally obligated to walk in this world as Jesus walked, meaning the Christian was to live as a Judean, a Believer who kept the Commandments, with the Sabbath Commandment producing a test by which a Christian’s zeal for God was made evident ... I didn’t like what I found, but I quit objecting to church on Saturdays when I thought I ought to be out hunting or fishing for we needed the meat. I also understood that I would have to get rides home from football games; for neither Mom nor my stepfather would attend Friday night games. We lived seventeen miles from the high school, and while I usually could get a ride to Otis, I almost always had to walk the last four and a half miles.

What sort of price is a person willing to pay to keep the Sabbath, or to break the Sabbath? Ultimately, that is the question each of us must answer. Are we willing to pay for breaking the Commandments and not walking in this world as Jesus walked? No one will compel either Christian or non-Christian to keep the Commandments except for the inner self of the person, the soul or *psyche* that is humanly born in a spiritually lifeless state; hence Matthew’s Jesus said to the one who wanted to bury his father before following Him, *Permit the dead to bury the dead of themselves* (Matt 8:22)

When I first read the Bible, I didn’t think about whether the Bible was literally true. I assumed it was true, this assumption based on the reverence Christians of all denominations place on the book. I was interested in finding “proof” that Christians were not to keep the seventh day Sabbath, but were to worship on Sunday. After all, the entirety of Christianity except for the Seventh Day Adventists and a smattering of obscure sects wouldn’t have the day on which Christians worship Jesus wrong. That wasn’t logic, or even believable. However, the proof that I sought—proof that Sunday was the Sabbath—is not to be found in the New Testament. Rather, what will be found is that in the New Testament, the days of the week are reckoned from the Sabbath, with Sunday being called *one [after] the Sabbath* in the Gospels and in Acts ... if the Sabbath were not being

kept by Christians a quarter century after Calvary, a half century after Calvary, it would make no sense for Christian writers to use Hebrew or Aramaic accounting for the days of the week. Greeks and Romans didn't recognize the Sabbath except to make fun of it, especially the thirtieth Sabbath (for new moon observances); Greeks and Romans did count from it, using the Sabbath as the day of common reference. So the reality of Christians keeping the Commandments a half century after Calvary is embedded in the New Testament, but concealed by how Greek text is translated into English.

In the autumn of 1959, most of the time alone in a forty foot trailer my stepfather had purchased for additional bedroom space for three boys (my brothers and myself), I studied the arguments traditional Christendom made against keeping the Law: Christians are under the law of love that will have Christians loving God and loving brother as the Christian loves his or herself. But how is a Christian to love God? Is the Christian not to have any other God but the Lord? Is the Christian not to take God's name in vain? Is the Christian not to worship metal images of created things, or to practice any other form of idol worship? Christians stand united in their determination to have no other God but the Lord. Likewise, Christians stand united in opposition to taking God's name in vain. Christians are a little less united in not worshiping idols, with orthodox [catholic] believers directing their prayers to God through statuary, insisting that they do not pray to idols. And the next of the Ten Commandments is remembering the Sabbath day ...

But, traditional Christian apologists will argue, the Sabbath was changed by Jesus' resurrection from the dead ... how does the reality of the Wave Sheaf Offering (see Lev 23:9-14) being fulfilled through the First of the Firstfruits being resurrected from death and ascending to God the Father change the weekly Sabbath from the seventh day to the day-after-the-Sabbath? The Lord through Moses commanded Israel to remember and keep the Wave Sheaf Offering forever; so all of spiritual Israel would have been assembled together on the day of the Wave Sheaf Offering, with the resurrection of Jesus resolving the issue of whether Pharisees or Sadducees were correct concerning when the Wave Sheaf Offering should occur—

Pharisees held that the referenced Sabbath was the first high day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread; Sadducees held that the referenced Sabbath was the weekly Sabbath that fell within the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Thus, Pharisees and rabbinical Judaism today hold the Wave Sheaf Offering on the 16th day of Nissan, which places the Feast of Weeks [Pentecost] on a fixed calendar date. Sadducees in the 1st-Century and the Sabbatarian churches of God place the Wave Sheaf Offering on the day after the weekly Sabbath that falls within Unleavened Bread, with the day of the week for both the Wave Sheaf Offering and Pentecost always being the first day of the week, Sunday.

If under the New Covenant the Law, the Torah (Jer 31:33), is written on hearts and placed in minds so that all *know the Lord*; if receipt of the holy spirit results in the indwelling of Christ Jesus, then the born-of-spirit Christian will walk in this world as Jesus, an observant Jew, walked, meaning that this

Christian will keep the Sabbath Commandment, keeping the seventh day Sabbath as well as the annual high Sabbaths of God. It cannot be any other way. And that is a sticking point for most Christians who celebrate their lawlessness through alleged fidelity to *the law of love*.

If Christians willingly accept the validity of eight or nine of the Ten Commandments even though they insist that they are not under the Law—and they are not—why will these Christians transgress the Sabbath Commandment and believe that they faithfully worship God ... the Gentile claiming to be a Christian but who walks in this world as a Gentile either seriously grieves the indwelling Christ Jesus, or is simply not yet born of spirit, with the latter being true in most every case.

Again, the Sunday-worshipping, hog-eating Christian who insists the he or she is not under the Law truly isn't under the Law regardless of what Sabbatarian Christians believe, but this lawless Christian will nevertheless perish without the Law for transgressing the Commandments (see Rom 2:12–13), which doesn't seem fair when lawless Christians have repeatedly been told by their pastors that Christians are not under the Law. However, Paul clearly states it is the person who keeps the Law that shall be justified, despite whether the person is or isn't under the Law.

The *law of love* is the *work of the Law* (Rom 2:15) ... keeping the Commandments by faith; keeping the Commandments when the person is under no social or legal obligation to do so becomes the bodily or fleshly or outward manifestation of inner belief of God and love for God. This person “loves” God enough to go against the traditions of friends and family. This person “loves” God enough to rebel against the prince of this world and live out-of-sync with this world and its values. This person “loves” God enough to sacrifice the life he or she could have had in this world and to then take upon the person the *burden* of Christian discipleship.

The person under the Law—the natural Israelite—knows to keep the Sabbath and either will or won't keep it. The person under the Law knows to honor parents, not murder, steal, lie, commit adultery, covet, and this person either will or won't transgress the Commandments. But the Christian not under the Law has both natural law and civil law to cause this person to honor parents, not murder nor steal—and this Christian is under the sway of the Adversary, the present prince of this world, so this Christian is inherently rebellious and will want to push the limits of civil law as far as possible. I was such a person ... in the years between 1958 when Mom first moved us to Rose Lodge and 1963, we were allowed by law two salmon or two steelhead a day. My brother Ben and I would catch (if we could) two fish each, take them home, then return to fishing. We caught a lot of fish, and salmon was the staple of our diet for several years. Salmon and venison.

The person not under the Law is free to keep or not keep the Law, the person's choice made either consciously or unconsciously. If the person knows to do good and doesn't do this good, the person is a hypocrite. If a Christian knows he or she is to love God and if this person chooses to ignore God, doing what is right in the

Christian's mind, this Christian is a hypocrite of the sort that early 1st-Century CE Pharisees and Sadducees were. And Matthew's Jesus tells His disciples, *Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of the heavens* [plural] (Matt 5:20).

If Christians not under the Law pay no attention to Moses or to what Jesus said in the Gospels, where are these Christians to learn not to covet, not to materially compete with one another; not to take advantage of sexual opportunities, or seek to create such opportunities ... in fall 1959, there were 114 freshman in my class at Taft High. In June 1963, 57 seniors graduated, with most of those that didn't graduate having dropped out because of pregnancy, marrying to either support a young wife or giving birth to a child. The teenage promiscuity of the early 21st-Century was not yet culturally evident, but its seed was sown.

If Christians are not under the Law and do not know what the Law declares but nevertheless will be judged by the Law—and that is the case according to Paul's Gospel—are these Christians not severely handicapped spiritually, not knowing the standard to which they will be held? Indeed, they are. But from natural law these Christians should be able to deduce that sexual cohabitation is outside the bounds of righteousness and godliness. From natural law, a Christian should know that the things of this world remain in this world at the person's death, that the person takes nothing he or she accumulated from this world. Only a person's character goes with the person, if anything leaves the creation. And being a Christian requires that the person believe in a spiritual afterlife, with the quality of a person's character determining whether the person is with God or becomes a crispy critter in the lake of fire.

The Apostle Paul claimed that at one time all humanity knew God but rejected the Creator and instead worshiped the creation. If Christians are included in "all humanity," when did the person not under the Law know the expectations of the Law? Where does natural law parallel the Commandments closely enough that it can be positively stated that Christians, that all humanity know the expectations of God? It is not in "the work of the Law" being love for neighbor and brother? Does not natural law teach love for others, love that equals or exceeds love for self? Are the Commandments not the codification of love for God and love for brother and neighbor? Indeed, they are.

If a person does not claim to *know the Lord* but swears fidelity to another god, does this person love his or her god as the Israelite should love the Lord? Does this person mock the deity he or she worships? Does the Islamist, who truly doesn't *know the Lord* even though the Islamist acknowledges Jesus as a prophet, love Allah as the Christian is to love the Lord? Or does the Islamist actually display greater love for a deity that no longer exists than the Christian does for the Lord? And in that comparison, Christians come up short, with the first being last in the kingdom of the heavens.

Does a Muslim *jihadist* love his or her dead deity enough to truly die for this deity? Indeed. So why do Christians not love the Father and the Son enough to figuratively crucify their fleshly desires and begin to keep the Sabbath, which will cause them to miss one-day-only parking lot sales, some employment

opportunities, college football games? What is so important about working on the Sabbath or shopping on the Sabbath or even hunting on the Sabbath that would cause the Christian to trade his or her salvation for doing whatever it is that mocks God ... Sabbath observance represents the mental Promised Land that the children of Israel entered behind Joshua [in Greek, 'Iesou — Jesus] (see Heb 3:16–4:11), that the men of Israel numbered in the second year (except for Joshua and Caleb) refused to enter when entrance was possible (Num chap 14)?

When the Second Passover liberation of Christians occurs, almost without exception self-identified Christians will be like the men of Israel were that left Egypt following the first Passover liberation of an enslaved nation. All self-identified Christians will be filled with spirit so that they are liberated from indwelling sin and death; then in the reality that casts as its shadow Israel's rebellion against God in the wilderness of Paran, the vast majority of Christians—when they no longer have any indwelling sin—will rebel against God and commit blasphemy against the spirit through returning to their former lawless ways. And sadly, as Moses and Aaron, Joshua and Caleb could not prevent the men of Israel from rebelling against the Lord when the twelve spies returned, the two witnesses as types of Moses and Aaron will not be able to prevent greater Christendom from rebelling against the Father and Son when the lawless one, the man of perdition, is revealed 220 days after the Second Passover liberation of spiritual Israel. All the two witnesses can do is what Moses did, is what Caleb did; i.e., rebuke the unbelief of the people, unbelief that will have Christians return to worshiping the Father and the Son on Sunday, assuming that these Christian ever ceased polluting the Sabbath.

2.

The strongest argument against Christians observing the Sabbath concerns textual believability, textual inerrancy, textual infallibility: Jews never claimed Scripture could be read “literally,” which is why the so-called *oral Torah* was taught generation after generation; which is why the Talmud exists. And if the Old Testament supports no claim of textual inerrancy, then questions about New Testament inerrancy are ones that must be addressed; for Christians, collectively, refuse to accept Moses as the one who lays out the laws of God. Christians collectively contend that what Jesus said supersedes Moses. Thus, questions about Moses are, for all of Christendom, moot. But are such questions truly of no consequence to Christians who will, under the New Covenant, have the Torah written on hearts (see Jer 31:33, in its original language) ...

The Ten Commandments as spoken by the Lord, the God of Abraham, to Moses and overheard by all of Israel encamped around the base of Mount Sinai were inscribed by the finger of the Lord on two tablets of stone that Moses broke when he cast these tablets to the ground upon hearing the revelry of rebelling Israel: the people of Israel broke the covenant ratified by blood that was made between the people and the Lord —

Moses came and told the people all the words of [YHWH] and all the rules. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All

the words that [YHWH] has spoken we will do." And Moses wrote down all the words of [YHWH]. He rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to [YHWH]. And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that [YHWH] has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant that [YHWH] has made with you in accordance with all these words." (Ex 24:3–8)

The people of Israel were not able to do what *all the people* had promised for even forty days. And the question is introduced, if the name of the Lord is today and was in the 1st-Century CE too sacred to be pronounced, what sound was uttered in lieu of assigning vowels to the Tetragrammaton YHWH and pronouncing the Tetragrammaton? For the Tetragrammaton, like other linguistic determinatives, can only be read silently; so what exactly did the people of Israel say when they said, *All that YHWH has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient*. They certainly didn't utter what is recorded; so the text was preserved as it was generationally inscribed when read silently, not as it would have been read aloud.

The necessity of assigning vowels to consonant clusters in Semitic languages precludes texts written in these language from making valid claims of inerrancy for even the autographs once the author is no longer present to read the text he [or she] created: the same consonant cluster forms the root of too many possible word variants. The reader has to know how the text is supposed to be read before the reader can "read" the text by assigning appropriate vowels to the consonant clusters. Thus, any claim for inerrancy of either a Hebrew or Arabic text is nonsensical ... the Old Testament needs the *oral Torah* for the Old Testament to say what Judaism claims it says. Likewise, the Old Testament needs the New Testament for it to say what Sabbatarian Christians claim it says; for what Sabbatarian Christians declare its prophecies to proclaim.

For Sabbatarian Christians, Moses [the *son* of Pharaoh] must be read through understanding what it was that Jesus [the *Son* of God] said to His disciples, with Jesus recording none of His own words and with no disciple recording Jesus' words until decades later ... it is easy and seemingly intellectually satisfying for an endtime disciple to claim that Matthew, being a tax collector (a bean counter), faithfully took notes of what Jesus said when, but this intellectual island sinks when a disciple realizes that Matthew as a disciple was not even called by Jesus until after Jesus, in Matthew's Gospel, delivered His famous Sermon on the Mount; thus, the disciple identified in Matthew's Gospel as "Matthew the tax collector" wasn't present when Jesus spoke His most important theological

address prior to when He entered Jerusalem as the selected Passover Lamb of God.

Matthew's Gospel is a *vehicle* that can be driven by endtime disciples to where the *Parakletos*, the spirit of truth, can teach the disciple truly born of spirit what the disciple needs to know to worship God in spirit and in truth.

Hebrew, being a partially inscribed language, requires readers of Hebraic texts to maintain person-to-person contact throughout the generations—and those scribes who preserved the Book of the Covenant once this book was lost then found in the dilapidated temple built by Solomon (found in the days of King Josiah), scribes that gave to their ancient forefathers a voice uttering words that were in reality never uttered as recorded for the name of the Lord was never vocalized, wrote mostly while being a captive people in Babylon. They wrote in the form of Hebrew used at the time, a form that no longer included linguistic determinatives. And they wrote an account of Moses that could be supported by the ancient scrolls, adding personification to literary figures by permitting dead people to speak words that might have been said or even should have been said in the particular situation.

Between Josiah's reign and when a remnant of Judah returned from Babylon, the Book of the Covenant was rewritten in a differing form of Hebrew than was in use in the days of the Judges centuries earlier. Hebrew grammar had changed. The purpose for inscribing texts had changed since the days of the Judges: no longer did inscribed texts seek to mimic actual utterance, with what was uttered being proclamations or imperial decrees or business transactions. Inscribed texts could now tell stories that were never told orally. Inscribed texts were their own form of narrative. They were no longer dependent upon utterance preceding them; they no longer existed as the solidification of sound, of utterance. An inscribed text could be composed before an event occurred; thus, the written prophecies of Jeremiah that the king burned could precede the prophesied event.

Note the difference between Book of Exodus and the Book of Deuteronomy concerning the Law and the annual high Sabbaths: in Exodus, the narrative looks backwards while in Deuteronomy, the narrative recounts the past but looks forward to when the children of Israel would rebel against the Lord. In Exodus, Israel's rebellion at Sinai and in the wilderness of Paran came as a surprise to Moses, but in Deuteronomy, Moses prophesies about the children of Israel's rebellion once Israel crosses into the Promised Land.

There was, however, very little prophesying until late in the era of the kings; for the inscribed language itself didn't permit recording not-uttered declarations or events that didn't happen. Inscription still followed and did not precede action, a characteristic of Hebrew that no longer existed when Canticles was composed, with Canticles being a three part drama similar to early Greek drama.

When the language in use limits a people, not permitting a people to do what other peoples are doing, the language undergoes changes or the language is abandoned for it no longer serves the needs of the people ... Hebrew in the era of the kings and Hebrew in Babylon underwent changes.

Because Hebrew as an inscribed language doesn't convey its full complement of oral sounds made by speakers, Hebraic poetry wasn't based on the sound of words but upon the meaning of words, with the meaning causing the reader to supply the appropriate sound to the inscribed consonant cluster. Thus, the repetition of a thought as in *thought-couplets* became a necessary aspect of Hebraic poetics, an aspect the King David exploited by having the first presentation of an concept being physical or of darkness and having the second presentation of the same concept being spiritual or of light. This form of inscription could then be used to more faithfully convey what was and what would be, thereby making prophesying in Hebrew a form of silent communication for what the Hebrew auditor heard was linguistic reinforcement of the initial concept ... as the United States military in WWII used Navaho soldiers speaking their oral language to one another in lieu of an inscribed code, Old Testament thought-couplet composition permits the Lord to speak indirectly through the ancient prophets of Israel to endtime Christian disciples without either modern Judaism or orthodox Christendom being able to "hear" the prophecy.

Once ancient Israel separated inscription from events and began to use inscribed Hebrew to address future happenings, the way was open for someone like the prophet Daniel to receive visions of what would happen at the end of the age, when the spiritual king of Babylon [that old dragon, Satan the devil] would be toppled. But the separation of inscription from events also permitted putting speech into the mouths of long dead individuals.

The preceding is not a bold claim but the literary reality every writer faces when presenting a narrative to an audience: how much of the story should be told by the historic figures that actually lived the story? Having a long-dead person speak significant passages that could have been spoken by the person makes for better storytelling even if the person inscribing the story has to put his or her own words into the mouth of the historic figure. Thus, an art that must be mastered by writers is that of presenting dialogue in many voices, not just the voice of the writer, an art that the writer of the Book of Acts did not master before writing this Sophist novel.

As long as the words assigned to a speaker do not contradict the reality of history, the storyteller "tells" no lie even if the storyteller has added to the received narrative ... three commands exist against textual additions to a particular book in the Bible:

You [the children of Israel] shall not add to the word that I [Moses] command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of [YHWH] your God that I command you. (Deut 4:2)

Everything that I [Moses] command you [Israel], you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it. (Deut 12:32)

I [John] warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, (Rev 22:18)

Adam added to the words that the Lord God spoke to him about not eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil so that when the serpent asked Eve what God had said, Eve said they were not even to *touch* the Tree of Knowledge (cf. Gen 2:16–17; 3:2–3). And adding to the words the Lord spoke will usually produce the sort of unbelief found in Eve; for words that are not directly from God, Father and Son, are not necessarily true even when they seem correct according to human intellect ...

If a Christian chooses not to keep the Commandments as the reasonable expectation for entrance into the household of God, the Christian will “anchor” his or her claim to ungodliness in Paul’s epistle to the Galatians:

We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified. (Gal 2:15–16)

And,

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain--if indeed it was in vain? Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith—just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”? Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith. (Gal 3:14)

Yet the Apostle Paul also wrote,

For God shows no partiality. For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but ***the doers of the law who will be justified***. ... For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey

the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law. For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God. (Rom 2:11–13, 25–29 double emphasis added)

A Christian is not under the Law and therefore cannot be justified by the Law but justified by faith *that will cause the Christian to voluntarily keep the Commandments when the Christian has no social or legal obligation to do so.*

In John's Gospel, John's Jesus says,

Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in Him who sent me. And whoever sees me sees Him who sent me. I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word [*'o logos*] that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. For I have not spoken on my own authority, but *the Father who sent me has Himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak.* And I know that His commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me. (John 12:44–50 emphasis added)

The commandment that the Father gave to Jesus concerning what to speak represents eternal life, not the Commandments that Moses received ... if the word [*'o logos*] Jesus as the Word [*'o Logos* — from John 1:1] of God spoke forms the judge of Christians, with the Father having given all judgment of His sons to Christ Jesus (John 5:22) who in turn doesn't judge sons of God but has left a standard in this world by which Christians will be judged [a convoluted declaration that is true], then truly, Christians are not under the Law but under the word [*'o logos*] Jesus left with His disciples, a word that is eternal life.

And what command did Jesus leave with His disciples?

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and

burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.

If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. ***This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.*** You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. (John 15:1–15 double emphasis added)

If Jesus as the Logos of God the Father left the logos of Himself with His disciples as their judge, then the standard by which every disciple will be judged is in place and has been in place since Calvary: disciples will be judged by whether they have love for one another as Jesus had love for them, with the man Jesus as the unique Son of the Logos of God, who was God [*Theos*] and was with *the God* [*ton Theon*] in primacy [*arche*] and who created all things physical (John 1:1, 3) having given up eternal life to enter His creation where He could not escape death but was, from entering, doomed to die physically. The Logos of God willingly died for Israel, the firstborn son of the God of Abraham (Ex 4:22) ...

Will disciples of Christ Jesus die physically for other disciples? Perhaps the better question is, are Christians willing to lose their salvation—die spiritually—for other disciples?

The latter question addresses the so-called *Anne Frank issue*: if in the future, you as a traditional Christian were concealing a Sabbatarian from civil authorities attempting to purge *legalism* from this world and these civil authorities knocked at your door and asked if there were Sabbatarians in your house, would you, knowing that these authorities could probe your house for heat-signatures of concealed persons, honestly answer, *Yes there are*, or would you lie to these authorities, saying, *No there aren't*, realizing that you could be condemning yourself to physical death as well as to the second death for lying?

What sort of love do you have for other disciples of Christ Jesus? The sort of love that causes you to protect yourself and your own salvation when times get truly difficult? Or the sort of love that Jesus had, a willingness to sacrifice everything for others; a willingness to place everything at risk?

Now, if you today as a disciple believe that you are a person who would willingly place everything at risk, you need to understand that you already have if you honestly read Scripture; for it is here where claims for textual infallibility become important, with salvation resting on a single commandment that has nothing *per se* to do with the Sabbath and everything to do with hearing and believing those things that Jesus spoke:

You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Not that the testimony that I receive is from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved. He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me. And the Father who sent me has Himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, His form you have never seen, and you do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom He has sent. You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. I do not receive glory from people. But I know that you do not have the love of God within you. I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him. How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? *Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me.* But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words? (John 5:33–47 emphasis added)

If those who are under the Law (Sadducees & Pharisees) do not believe Moses, who wrote of Jesus, how can those who are not under the Law believe Moses except by faith that will have a Gentile walk in this world as Jesus walked? But why should the Gentile who doesn't acknowledge Christ Jesus as the person's Lord walk as Jesus walked? And there is the question that plagues greater Christendom.

In the fall of 1959, I read Scripture to see if it was true that Christians are obligated to keep the Sabbath. Of course I read mostly the King James Version, but I also read the Mofatt translation as well as J.B. Phillips' translation of the New Testament. And every version held the same truth: Christians are obliged to walk in this world as Jesus walked. Jesus kept the Sabbath; Christians are to keep the Sabbath. I wasn't then interested in being a Christian so, though conceding that my Seventh Day Adventist stepfather was correct about Sabbath observance, I went my way, not really ever questioning the truth of Scripture or the issue of Scripture being the infallible word of God. But since being drafted into the Body of Christ in 1972, then drafted a second time to *reread prophecy* in 2002, issues of textual inerrancy have become of concern: how can both Matthew's Gospel and John's Gospel be true in just one example scene:

Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat

on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you." So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And **they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him.** Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me." (Matt 28:1–10 double emphasis added)

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Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples went back to their homes. But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "**Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'**"

Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"—and that he had said these things to her. (John 20:1–18 double emphasis added)

In Mark's Gospel, three women go to the tomb, see that Jesus has risen, but tell no one because they are afraid (Mark 16:8 — the earlier, older ending of Mark's Gospel).

Two of my daughters took their undergraduate degrees in Chemistry at University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), classes of 1992 and 1995. While they were at UAF, the Chemistry faculty was divided over whether the concept of valance electrons should continue to be taught in first year Chemistry courses, for the concept was false but perhaps the best way for new Chemistry students to learn how to balance equations ... the concept of valance electrons in orbital shells served as a *vehicle* that could be driven to where the beginning student needed to go in understanding the formation of chemical compounds. Once there, the *vehicle* was abandoned and the student moved on, realizing that electrons formed a *fog* around an atom's nucleus—and that is how both Mark's Gospel and Matthew's Gospel function. Both are *vehicles* that get the newly born son of God to where the son of God needs to be for the *Parakletos* to teach this son of God *Truth*.

It will take more faith than most Christians have and certainly much more than the vast majority of Sabbatarian Christians have for endtime Believers, endtime disciples of Christ Jesus to think of Matthew's Gospel being a *vehicle* analogous to the concept of valance electrons. Sabbatarians just won't go there. Evangelicals won't go there. I don'y know anyone who will go there, except for the Elect—and even then they will be initially troubled by the concept.

As Christians, we want the Bible to be true; we want to receive the *Truth* through the word of God, not from the spirit of truth that Jesus promised to send to His disciples:

If you love me [Jesus], you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the spirit of truth, [that] the world cannot receive, because it neither sees [it] nor knows [it]. You know [it], for [it] dwells with you and will be in you. (John 14:15–17)

The *Parakletos*, the spirit of truth, is of the Father but is not the breath of the Father [*pneuma Theou*] that gives life to the previously dead inner self; thus, already born of spirit sons-of-God receive the *truth* directly from the Father and not from Holy Writ, with receipt of the *truth* causing maturing sons-of-God to be able to read the Bible in ways others simply cannot. Sobeit.

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