

# SELECTED WRITINGS: BOOK IV

The Law Hid In Christ



## *THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL*

I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH,  
AND THE LIFE  
JOHN 14:6

The Truth about God

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## Miraculous Powers

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"Mr. John Craig, a distinguished minister, and colleague of Knox, having gone to reside in Bologne, in a convent of the Dominicans, found a copy of Calvin's Institutions, which God made the means of his conversion to the reformed faith. He was seized as a heretic soon after, and carried to Rome, where he was condemned to be burnt; but on the evening preceding the day of execution, the reigning pontiff died, and, according to custom, the doors of all prisons were thrown open. All others were released; but heretics, after Miraculous Conversion of Justin Martyr permitted to go outside the walls, were reconducted to their cells. That night, however, a tumult was excited, and Craig and his companions escaped. They had entered a small inn at some distance from Rome, when they were overtaken by a party of soldiers, sent to apprehend them. On entering the house, the captain looked Craig steadfastly in the face, and asked him if he remembered having once relieved a poor wounded soldier in the neighborhood of Bologne; Craig had forgotten it. 'But, said the captain, 'I am the man; I shall requite your kindness; you are at liberty; your companions I must take with me; but for your sake I shall treat them with all possible lenity.' He gave him all the money he had, and Craig escaped. But his money soon failed him; yet God, who feedeth the ravens, did not. Lying at the side of a wood, full of gloomy apprehensions, a dog came running up to him with a purse in his teeth. Suspecting some evil, he attempted to drive the animal away, but in vain. He at length took the purse, and found in it a sum of money which carried him to Vienna.

## Bible Study

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We have seen that love is the fulfilling not the abolishing of the law. All the law is fulfilled in the Word, "**Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.**" "**Love is the fulfilling of the law.**" "**This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.**" To say that love is a substitute for the keeping of the law, is to say that love is a substitute for itself. Men may say that they do not see very much love in the commandments and that they do not seem to them to be the fulfilling of all love; but that tells nothing against the words of the Scriptures. It simply shows that they do not know the law of God, and that they are speaking evil of that which they know not. Let them but become acquainted with the

Lord, and they would find that **"His commandments are not grievous,"** but are the fullness of His own life of love.

The law is love; **"but if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."** That is to say, if ye do not observe the law of love, then destruction will be your lot. They who despise the riches of God's goodness and forbearance and love, which are all embodied in His law, whether they see it or not, are heaping up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath and perdition of ungodly men. They who reject God's law are simply working for their own destruction; and they who teach others to despise the law, are not only contributing to the destruction of those others, but are inviting those others to destroy them. When respect and love for God's law are weakened, then are the flood-gates of violence and crime opened. But there is a brighter side, with grander possibilities, and it is presented in

#### THE LESSON FOR THE WEEK

**"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil 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; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. 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, revellings, 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. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. ["They that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof." R.V.] If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." Gal. 5:16-26.**

#### THE FLESH OPPOSED TO THE SPIRIT

The flesh and the Spirit are in direct opposition. **"The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other."** There is no agreement whatever between the flesh and the Spirit. The

Spirit strives with men in the flesh, seeking to control the individual to the glory of God; but so long as the Spirit is not fully yielded to, there is no peace, but continual war and unrest. He who is not controlled by the Spirit of God, is controlled by the sins of human nature, and is therefore a slave; **"every one that committeth sin is the bond-servant of sin."** John 8:34. On the contrary, **"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."** 2 Cor. 3:17.

#### THE FLESH OPPOSED TO THE LAW

It is clear that there is no agreement between the flesh and the Spirit. What about the flesh and the law? Remembering that "carnal" means fleshly, read **Rom. 8: 7: "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."** So then the flesh and the law of God are in as direct opposition as are the flesh and the Spirit. Let us now read a little further, to see that this is not a three-cornered fight, but that the flesh is opposed to both the law and the Spirit, because both the law and the Spirit are one.

#### THE LAW AND THE SPIRIT IN UNISON

The story is really all told in **Rom. 8:1-8**, which we will read:-

**"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."**

Note especially the items in the foregoing: 1. The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in those who walk after the Spirit. 2. The flesh and the Spirit are in direct and deadly opposition, as already noted. 3. To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Why?-Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God. 4. Thus we

see that the opposition of the flesh to the Spirit is simply its opposition to the law of God. This follows as the natural consequence of the fact stated in **Rom. 7: 14: "The law is spiritual."**

#### THOSE LED BY THE SPIRIT KEEP THE LAW

Having seen that those who follow the Spirit fulfill the righteousness of the law, read verse 18 in our lesson. **"But if ye be led of the Spirit ye are not under the law."** That is to say, Those who fulfil the law, are not under the law. What a pity that there are so many who profess to be teachers of the Word, and who, more than all, make a special point of the baptism of the Spirit, who have so little spiritual discernment, and so little acquaintance with the Spirit of God, that they can use the words, "Ye are not under the law," as meaning that the law of God is not to be observed! The only reason why any are not under the law, is that they are keeping it through the Spirit. To reject the law of God is to reject the Spirit, for "the law is spiritual." Those who walk after the Spirit fulfill the law, and only such are not under the law.

#### JUSTIFIED THROUGH THE SPIRIT

Is it not clear that there is in this not the slightest ground for any one's thinking that men are justified by the works of the law, but the very opposite? *It is the work of the Spirit of God that brings justification. But the works of the Spirit are perfect righteousness, even the righteousness of the law. The Spirit is the living, personal representative of Christ. It is by the Spirit that Christ dwells in the heart. This makes a complete new life. The old life passes away, as the old man is crucified with Christ, so that the life that is now lived in the flesh is the life of Christ. The only life that appears is the perfect life of Christ.* The law has nothing against Him, since He has always done the will of the Father. There is therefore no condemnation to such a one. He is justified. Why?-Because no unrighteousness - no transgression of the law-is found in Him. *Then he continues to walk in the law, not by his own power, but through the power of the Spirit.* The justification is therefore all of God, and to Him alone is the glory. No man can boast, but he that glorifieth must glory in the Lord. Justification is not by the works of the law; but the very word "justification," which means made righteous, is an assurance that the law is not ignored, but that the perfection of it is so put into and upon the believer that no fault can be found in him.

## THE WORKS OF THE FLESH

**Verses 19-21** contain a partial list of the works of the flesh. The list given is only a sample of them, closing with the words, "**and such like.**" Note that they are the works of the flesh, that is, they are such things as are natural to mankind.

Compare this list with that given by the Lord, in **Mark 8:21-23**, as things that come from within, from the heart of man.

Compare both these with the list given in **Rom. 1:28-32**, as the things done by the heathen, who did not like to retain God in their knowledge. They are the things that are done by all who do not know the Lord.

Then compare these lists of sins with the list given by the apostle Paul in **2 Tim. 3:1-5**, of things that will be done in the last days by those who even have a form of godliness.

*How can it be possible that men professing to be Christians can be guilty of such horrible deeds? The answer is easy: it is because they reject the law of the Lord. Worst of all is the fact that they are guilty of all these things even while seeking the very highest profession of godliness, in that they profess to be led by the Spirit. But since they have so little knowledge of the Spirit that they imagine that the reception of the Spirit gives them liberty to cast off the law of God and trample it under foot, they are abandoned to all sorts of sins. It cannot be otherwise. They use their liberty as an occasion to the flesh, and while taking liberty, and promising other people liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption. **2 Peter 2: 19.** O, the pity and the awfulness of it!*

## THEY CANNOT BE HID

The works of the flesh are manifest. They cannot be hid. That which is in the heart must show itself in the life, no matter how much one may endeavor to conceal it. "**An evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil.**" **Luke 6: 45.** All the evil things that are named in **Gal. 5:19-21** are in every human heart by nature. No man is responsible for their being in his heart, for he is born with them. They form our inheritance from our ancestors, from Adam down. *But we are responsible if they are allowed to remain in the heart; for the Spirit of God will utterly remove them if allowed free access.*

But the righteousness of the Spirit is the righteousness of the law, and therefore whoever depreciates and rejects the law of God, or any part of it,

thereby rejects the Spirit, no matter what his profession may be. So although he may for a time succeed in concealing the existence of the wickedness of his heart, not only from the world, but even from himself, it is sure sooner or later to manifest itself. Then when the law of God shall have been so preached in the demonstration of the Spirit that all have heard its claims, and the multitude have rejected it, will the Spirit leave them to their own desires, and then will be experienced the "perilous times" spoken of by the apostle, for all the earth will be filled with violence, even as it was in the days that were before the flood.

"AND SUCH LIKE"

Read again that list of the works of the flesh. They are these: "**Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings.**" "**They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.**" One would naturally think not, for it is a bad list. Yet in reading them, one is apt to overlook some of the things named, and to dwell only on what seem to be the worst ones, as adultery, murder, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft.

Those are quite universally regarded as outbreaking sins. But notice the words, "and such like." That means that there are others in the same class, and moreover it means that all the things that are here named are identical in character. The Scripture tells us that hatred is murder. "**Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.**" **1 John 3:15.** Moreover, anger is also murder, as shown by the Savior in **Matt. 5: 21, 22.** Envy, which is so common, also contains murder in it.

But who regards emulation as so sinful? Isn't emulation encouraged everywhere? Are not children from their infancy taught to strive to surpass somebody else? Is not emulation fostered, not only by schools of all kinds, but also in the home, and in the church? So far from being regarded as sinful in the extreme, it is cultivated. And yet the Word of God assures us that it is of the same kind as adultery, fornication, murder, and drunkenness, and that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Is it not a fearful thing?

The love of self, the desire for the supremacy, is the source of all the other sins that are mentioned. Out of that have grown innumerable murders. And to



think that many mothers are unconsciously training up their children to just such things, even while striving to bring them up properly, by saying: "Now see if you cannot behave better than so-an-so." "See if you cannot learn to read or to play better than such an one." "See if you cannot keep your clothes looking as nice as that one." All such expressions, which are everyday words in thousands of households, are teaching emulation, and setting a false standard. The child is not taught to distinguish between the right and the wrong, and to love the right, but is simply trained to appear better than somebody else. That leads to deception, for all that is thought necessary is to present a better appearance than others, while the heart is corrupt. Those others may not be of very high character, and so the emulator is satisfied, even in this faulty exertion, with simply appearing better than someone who is himself very bad. Ah, the abominable works of the flesh are lurking where many least suspect them! The only remedy is the Spirit of God.

#### THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

When the Spirit is given control, the works of the flesh will no longer be manifested, because the Spirit drives them out of the heart. **"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."** There is no room for emulation there. **"Against such there is no law."** Why not? Simply because these things are the result of obedience to the law through the Spirit. It is impossible for the natural man to possess these good things. It is impossible for us of ourselves to love those who despise us, or to suffer long and be kind. It is not possible for us to rejoice when we are ill-treated, or even to rejoice when somebody else, moved by the spirit of emulation, surpasses us, and takes from us a prize which we coveted. But it is possible for the Spirit of God. What a blessed condition the one is in who possesses the fruit of the Spirit.

## The Faith of Jesus

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CHRIST kept the commandments of God: **"I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love."** John 15:10. By His obedience it is that many must be made righteous. **"For as by one man's [Adam's] disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one [Christ] shall many be made righteous."** Rom. 5:19. But these are made righteous only by faith in Him, thus having **"the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ**

**unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Rom. 3:22, 23.**

All have sinned; and **"sin is the transgression of the law."** As all have thus transgressed the law, none can attain to righteousness by the law. There is righteousness in the law of God; in fact, the Word says, **"All thy commandments are righteousness;"** but there is no righteousness there for the transgressor. If righteousness ever comes to one who has transgressed the law, it must come from some source besides the law. And as all, in all the world, have transgressed the law, to whomsoever, in all the world, righteousness shall come, it must be from another source than from the law, and that source is Christ Jesus the Lord.

This is the great argument **of Rom. 3:19-31: "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. . . . Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."**

Then the question comes in, **"Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law."** Notice, he has already said that although this righteousness of God is **"without the law," and by faith of Christ, yet it is "witnessed by the law and the prophets."** It is a righteousness that accords with the law; it is a righteousness to which the law can bear witness; it is a righteousness with which the law in its perfect righteousness can find no fault: it is indeed the very righteousness of the law itself; for it is the righteousness of God, and the law is only the law of God. It is the righteousness of God, which in Christ is wrought out for us by His perfect obedience to the commandments of God, and of which we become partakers by faith in Him; for **"by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."** Thus we become the children of God by faith in Christ. By faith in Him the righteousness of the law is met in us. And we do not make void, but we establish, the law of God, by faith in Christ. In other words, in Christ is found the keeping of the law of God.

This is shown again in **Gal. 2:17**: "**But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.**" To be found sinners, is to be found transgressors of the law; for "**sin is the transgression of the law.**" Then since the Lord has set His everlasting "God forbid" against any suggestion that Christ is the minister of the transgression of the law, it follows as certainly that Christ ministers the keeping of the law. The believer in Jesus finds in Christ the keeping of the commandments of God -- the law of God. Whosoever therefore professes to be justified by faith in Christ, and yet claims the "liberty" to disregard the law of God in a single point, is deceived. He is only claiming that Christ is the minister of sin, against which the Lord has set His everlasting "God forbid." Thus faith, justification by faith, establishes the law of God; because faith, the of Jesus Christ, is the only means there is by which the keeping of the commandments of God can ever be manifested in the life of anybody in the world.

This is yet further shown in **Rom. 8:3-10**: "**For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.**"

What was it that the law could not do?

1. The law was ordained to life (**Rom. 7:10**), but it could not minister life, because "**all had sinned,**" -- transgressed the law, -- and "**the wages of sin is death.**" And this being so, all that the law can possibly minister is death.
2. The law was ordained to justification (**Rom. 2: 13**), but it will justify only the doers of the law: but of all the children of Adam there have been no doers of the law: "**all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.**"
3. The law was ordained to righteousness (**Rom. 10:5**), but it can count as righteous only the obedient: and all the world is guilty of disobedience before God.

Therefore, because of man's failure, because of his wrong doings, the law could not minister to him life, it could not justify him, it could not accept him as righteous. So far as man was concerned, the purpose of the law was entirely frustrated.

But mark, **"What the law could not do, in that it was weak"** through the sinful flesh, God sent His Son to do, in the likeness of sinful flesh. What the law could not do, Christ does. The law could not minister life, because by transgression all had incurred its penalty of death; the law could not give justification, because by failure to do it, all had brought themselves under its condemnation; the law could not give righteousness, because all had sinned. But instead of this death, Christ gives life; instead of this condemnation, Christ gives justification; instead of this sin, Christ gives righteousness.

And for what? -- That henceforth the law might be despised by us? -- Nay, verily! But **"that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."**

**"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill,"** said the holy Son of God. And so **"Christ is the end [the object, the aim, the purpose] of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth."** Rom. 10:4. For of God, Christ Jesus **"is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."** 1 Cor. 1:30, 31.

**"The law is spiritual."** But **"the carnal mind [the natural mind, the minding of the flesh] is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh can not please God."** Rom. 7:14; 8:7, 8.

How then shall we please God? How shall we become come subject to the law of God? The Saviour says, **"That which is born of the flesh is flesh,"** and we have just read in Romans that **"they that are in the flesh can not please God."** But the Saviour says, further, **"That which is born of the Spirit is spirit."**

Therefore it is certain that except we are born of the Spirit, we can not please God; we can not be subject to the law of God, which is spiritual, and demands spiritual service. This, too, is precisely what the Saviour says: **"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God."**

We know that some will say that the kingdom of God here referred to is the kingdom of glory, and that the new birth, the birth of the Spirit, is not until the resurrection, and that then we enter the kingdom of God. But such a view is

altogether wrong. Except a man be born of the Spirit, he must still remain in the flesh. But the Scripture says, **"They that are in the flesh can not please God."** And the man who does not please God will never see the kingdom of God, whether it be the kingdom of grace or of glory.

**"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God."**

The kingdom of God, whether of grace or of glory, is **"righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."** Rom. 14:17. Except a man be born again, he can not see, nor enter into, the righteousness of God; he can not see, nor enter into, the peace of God, which passes all understanding; and except he be born of the Spirit of God, how can he see, or enter into, that "joy in the Holy Ghost"?

Except a man be born again -- born of the Spirit -- before he dies, he will never see the resurrection unto life. This is shown in **Rom. 8:11: "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."**

It is certain, therefore, that except the Spirit of Christ dwells in us, we can not be raised from the dead to life. But except His Spirit dwells in us, we are yet in the flesh. And if we are in the flesh, we can not please God. And if we do not please God, we can never see the kingdom of God, either here or hereafter.

Again: it is by birth that we are children of the first Adam; and if we shall ever be children of the last Adam, it must be by a new birth. The first Adam was natural, and we are his children by natural birth; the last Adam is spiritual, and if we become His children, it must be by spiritual birth. The first Adam was of the earth, earthy, and we are his children by an earthly birth; the last Adam is the Lord from heaven, from above; and if we are to be His children, it must be by a heavenly birth, a birth from above.

**"As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy."** The earthy is "natural" -- of the flesh. And **"the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God;" "because they are spiritually discerned,"** and **"they that are in the flesh can not please God."** Such is the birthright, and all the birthright, that we receive from the first Adam.

But, thank the Lord, **"as is the heavenly such are they also that are heavenly."** The heavenly is spiritual; He is **"a life-giving Spirit;"** and the spiritual man receives the things of the Spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned. He can please God because he is not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; for the Spirit of God dwells in him. He is, and can be, subject to the law of God, because the carnal mind is destroyed, and he has the mind of Christ, the heavenly.

Such is the birthright of the last Adam, the one from above. And all the privileges, the blessings, and the joys of this birthright are ours when we are born from above. **"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born from above."** **"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born from above, he can not see the kingdom of God."** With the argument of this paragraph, please study 1 Cor. 15:45-48; John 3:3-8; 1 Cor. 3:11-16; Rom. 8:5-10.

**"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." 2 Cor. 5:17.** As a new creature he lives a new life, a life of faith. **"The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."** But it is a faith that works; for without works faith is dead.

In Christ nothing avails but a new creation; he lives by faith; it is a faith that works, and the work is the keeping of the commandments of God. Thus saith the Scripture: --

1. **"In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." Gal. 6:15.**
2. **"In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." Gal. 5:6.**
3. **"Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God." 1 Cor. 7:19.**

Again: it is **"faith which worketh by love,"** that avails; and **"this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." 1 John 5:3.** And **"love is the fulfilling of the law." Rom. 13:10.** Therefore, in Christ Jesus the faith that avails is the faith that keeps the commandments of God, the faith that fulfills the law of God.

Once more: **"We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph.**

**2:10. "Created in Christ Jesus,"** is to be made a **"new creature"** in Christ Jesus. But we are created in Him "unto good works," and these good works are those which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

That is to say, God before ordained good works in which we should walk. But we have not walked in them. Now He creates us anew in Christ, so that we may walk in these good works in which before we failed to walk. These good works are the commandments, the law, of God. These commandments express the whole duty of man, but man has failed to do his duty; **"for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."** But now Christ is manifested to take away our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, **"that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."** 2 Cor. 5:21.

We are made new creatures in Him, that in Him and by Him we may perform acceptable service, and do the duty (keep the commandments of God), which before we failed to do, and which, out of Christ, all must ever fail to do. For He Himself said, **"Without me ye can do nothing."** This is according to that which we have before shown: **"What the law could not do," "God sending His own Son" did, "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."** Rom. 8:3, 4.

## Jesus, Our Strength

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There was something that the law could not do, and that God, sending His own Son, did. But why was it that the law could not do what it desired and what was required? It was weak through the flesh. The trouble was in the flesh. It was this that caused the law to fail of its purpose concerning man. Then God sent Christ to do what the law could not do. And the law having failed of its purpose because of the flesh and not because of any lack in itself, God must send Him to help the flesh and not to help the law. If the law had been in itself too weak to do what it was intended to do, then the thing for Him to have done to help the matter out would be to remedy the law. But the trouble was with the flesh, and therefore He must remedy the flesh.

It is true that the argument nowadays, springing up from that enmity that is against God and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, is that the law could not do what was intended and God sent His Son to weaken the law, so that the flesh could answer the demands of the law. But if I am weak

and you are strong and I need help, it does not help me any to make you as weak as I am; I am as weak and helpless as before. There is no help at all in all that. But when I am weak and you are strong and you can bring to me your strength that helps me. So the law was strong enough, but its purpose could not be accomplished through the weakness of the flesh. Therefore God, to supply the need, must bring strength to weak flesh. He sent Christ to supply the need and therefore Christ must so arrange it that strength may be brought to our flesh itself which we have today, that the purpose of the law may be met in our flesh. So it is written: "**God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh,**" in order "**that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.**"

## **“What shall I Do to Inherit Eternal Life?”**

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### Part One

**“And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor? And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.” Luke 10:25-34.**

The scribes and Pharisees trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. They looked with contempt upon the Samaritans, and Jesus related this parable to show them that it is the spirit of the man that makes him of value with God, and not his nation or profession. The priest and Levite had



passed by the man who was in need of their help, and had left him to die by the wayside; but the Samaritan had had compassion upon him, and had acted the part of a Christian neighbor to him. It would not have been best to present this lesson to the haughty priests except in a parable, yet in this parable Jesus made it evident that they had only a religion of ceremonies. They rested in outward observances of the law, but did not keep it in heart. The Scriptures declare that "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." In the gospel the great standard of righteousness is not presented in a dimmer light than in the Old Testament. Christ declared that not one jot or tittle of the law should pass until heaven and earth should pass. The divine Teacher held up the perfect standard of righteousness as the only thing by which to test human character. The law reveals to men the deformity of the heart, and the gospel enforces the law by presenting Christ in contrast to man.

In the parable of the good Samaritan, Jesus gave a picture of himself and his mission. Man had been deceived, bruised, robbed, and ruined by Satan, and left to perish; but Christ had compassion on our helpless condition. He left his glory to come to our rescue. He found us ready to die, and he undertook our case. He healed our wounds; he opened to us a refuge of safety, made complete provision for our needs at his own charges. He died to redeem us. We are to look to Christ's life, we are to see his Spirit and work that we may view our life and work in the light reflected from the life of Christ. We may see how far short we come of keeping the commandments of God, how far short we come of loving our neighbors as ourselves.

When the rich young ruler came to Christ, inquiring the way of salvation, Jesus told him to keep the commandments. The ruler answered that he had kept them from his youth up, but he who could penetrate into the secrets of the heart, showed him that he had failed. Jesus said to him: **"If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions."** Matthew 19:21-22.

Conviction of sin is the first step in conversion, and by the law is the knowledge of sin. When the sinner has a realization of his sin, he is in a condition to be drawn to Christ by the amazing love that has been shown for him on the cross

of Calvary. When he is humble and penitent, he does not look for pardon to the law which he has broken, but he looks to God, who has provided forgiveness and sanctification through his well-beloved Son. As he beholds the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world, he grows to love him, and by beholding he becomes changed into his image. The apostle wrote, **“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” 1 Corinthians 2:16.** The meek and holy Sufferer bore our sins, that the plan of salvation might be opened before men, that whosoever should believe on him might not perish, but have everlasting life.

All who see their own ignorance and sin, will have some appreciation of the great work of redemption, through which man is chosen as the object of God’s patience and loving-kindness. As man sees the sinfulness of his nature in the light of the law, he will realize his great need of a Savior. We all need to search the Scriptures, that we may become acquainted with the conditions of salvation, by which reconciliation may be brought about between man and God. Man must find the path that leads back to the Father’s house, and every step away from transgression is a step toward Paradise. Every step in repentance, contrition, obedience, and faith, is a step toward the Father. True faith in Christ will lead to obedience to the requirements of God.

## Part Two

There are many who say, “Believe, believe; all you have to do is to believe.” But faith must have foundation, and those who preach that all we must do is to believe, do not themselves know what constitutes true faith. They do not carefully search the Scriptures to know on what ground faith should rest. The advocating of faith, and the disparaging of the keeping of the commandments of God, is only another phase of the controversy originated by Satan in heaven. Indifference to the precepts of the law lowers the conception of what constitutes righteousness; and one who opposes the law at this time, places himself in a more perilous position than that in which Adam and Eve were when they disobeyed God’s commandments, for they afterward repented of their sin, and turned away from their allegiance to his enemy.

After Satan brought sin into the world, he tempted man to set himself in rebellion against the authority of God. He inspired him with hatred against God because of the results that followed sin. He suggested that God was arbitrary,

destitute of mercy and benevolence, because the penalty of the law fell upon the transgressor. When fallen man views God in this light, he casts aside his authority as a moral governor. God has a right to enforce the penalty of the law upon transgressors, for law without a penalty would be without force. God's law is the foundation of all law and government. The fact that Christ suffered the penalty of the law for all transgressors, is an unanswerable argument as to its immutable character, and it will justly condemn those who have sought to make it void. When the curse fell upon the beloved Son of God, who became sin for us, the Father made it manifest that the unrepenting transgressor of his law would have to suffer its full penalty. The word of God declares, **"The soul that sinneth, it shall die."** The law of God was upheld and vindicated by the Son of God. The death of Christ, as an expiatory sacrifice, opens a way whereby the sinner may be pardoned, and turn from the path of transgression into the path of truth and righteousness, while at the same time it vindicates the honor and unchangeableness of the law. In the plan of salvation, justice and mercy clasp hands together.

The sinner will find no saving quality in law; he must look to the surety and substitute, for it is the blood of Christ that cleanseth from all sin. The repenting prodigal is taken into fellowship with God, and he becomes one with Christ, as Christ is one with the Father. The obedient children of God recognize the law as a divine law, the sacrifice on Calvary as a divine sacrifice, and the Holy Spirit as their divine sanctifier. All the claims of the law are met in Jesus. In him we have a perfect foundation for our faith. The Son of God did not die that man might always remain a transgressor; for Christ is not a minister of sin. He died that by that act man might no longer remain a rebel against God's law. He died to point men to the way of faith and obedience that they might see to the end of that which is abolished. When sinners have a view of the plan of salvation, there is no more disposition to cavil concerning the law; for the way of truth and light is open to their understanding. They see that **"whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law."** In the light of the law the sinner is convicted as was Paul.

Christ revealed himself to Paul in a flood of glory, and he was struck down helpless before him. He asked, **"Who art thou, Lord?"** and the Lord answered, **"I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest."** Paul then inquired, **"What will thou have me to do?"** When Christ is revealed to the soul, the sinner's relation to

the law is made plain. There must be repentance toward God for the transgression of his law, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ as the sinner's substitute. The convicted sinner sees his bruised, demoralized condition, feels his need of a physician, sees Christ as his only hope, and lays hold of him by faith. He is deeply conscious of his sin and ruin, and seeks the divine remedy in the world's Redeemer.

### Part Three

Man is prone to forget God, even while claiming to be his servant. When Jesus stood up in the synagogue at Nazareth, announcing himself to be the Messiah, the people thought they loved him. They were glad to hear the tidings he brought them as he read the words of the prophet Isaiah concerning himself, saying: **"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."** Isaiah 61:1,2. Divine light flashed upon their darkened minds, and their hearts were stirred to adoration. But when Christ showed them that they were no more in favor with heaven than were the Gentiles, who had had less light and fewer privileges, but who had walked in all the light they had, and improved all the opportunities they had been given, they dragged him from the synagogue, and sought to hurl him from the brow of the hill.

The multitudes who had been fed by Christ in the desert place imagined that they loved Jesus; but when he reproved them, charging them with caring more for the bread which perisheth than for the bread of life, they were angry, and many turned away from him. The rich young ruler came to Jesus, calling him master. He had listened to his wonderful words, he had seen his wonderful works; but when Christ showed him that he loved his riches more than his neighbor, he went away sorrowful, clinging to his idols. Simon thought he loved Jesus, but when he found that a poor, sorrowful, repentant woman was esteemed more highly than himself, the shallowness of his love was proved.

Many will see beautiful characteristics in Christ, and will admire them; but that love which embraces his entire character, will never dwell in a heart filled with self-righteousness, will never dwell in a heart that does not realize and abhor its own sinfulness. Not to hate ourselves in sin, is not to love Jesus. Not to see

our own deformity, is not to see the beauty of Christ; for it is when the heart is fully aroused to its own state of degradation that Jesus will be appreciated. The more humble our views of self, the more exalted will be our views of Christ, and the more clearly we shall discern the sacred, spotless character of our Redeemer.

There are many who say, "We are holy, we are sinless." By their words they give the impression that they think themselves as good as Jesus, and some have even dared to assert that they were Christ; but even to entertain such thoughts as these is blasphemy. Not to see the marked contrast between ourselves and Jesus is not to know ourselves, and to be ignorant of our Lord.

Jesus died to save his people from their sins, and redemption in Christ means to cease the transgression of the law of God, and to be free from every sin; no heart that is stirred with enmity against the law of God, is in harmony with Christ, who suffered on Calvary, to vindicate and exalt the law before the universe.

Those who make bold assumptions of holiness give proof in this that they do not see themselves in the light of the law; they are not spiritually enlightened, and they do not loathe every species of selfishness and pride. From their sin-stained lips fall the contradictory utterances: "I am holy, I am sinless. Jesus teaches me that if I keep the law I am fallen from grace. The law is a yoke of bondage." The Lord says, "**Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.**" **Rev. 22:14.** We should study the word of God carefully, that we may come to right decisions, and act accordingly; for then we shall obey the word and be in harmony with God's holy law.

While we are to be in harmony with God's law, we are not saved by the works of the law, yet we cannot be saved without obedience. The law is the standard by which character is measured. But we cannot possibly keep the commandments of God without the regenerating grace of Christ. Jesus alone can cleanse us from all sin. He does not save us by law, neither will he save us in disobedience to law.

Our love to Christ will be in proportion to the depth of our conviction of sin, and by the law is the knowledge of sin. But as we see ourselves, let us look

away to Jesus, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity. By faith take hold of the merits of Christ, and the soul cleansing blood will be applied. The more clearly we see the evils and perils to which we have been exposed, the more grateful shall we be for deliverance through Christ. The gospel of Christ does not give men license to break the law; for it was through transgression that the flood-gates of woe were opened upon our world. Today sin is the same malignant thing that it was in the time of Adam. The gospel does not promise the favor of God to anyone who in impenitence breaks his law. The depravity of the human heart, the guilt of transgression, the ruin of sin, are all made plain by the cross where Christ has made for us a way of escape.

Self-righteousness is the danger of this age; it separates the soul from Christ. Those who trust to their own righteousness cannot understand how salvation comes through Christ. They call sin righteousness, and righteousness sin. They have no appreciation of the evil of transgression, no understanding of the terror of the law; for they do not respect God's moral standard. The reason there are so many spurious conversions in these days, is that there is so low an appreciation of the law of God. Instead of God's standard of righteousness, men have erected a standard of their own by which to measure character. They see through a glass darkly, and present false ideas of sanctification to the people, thus encouraging egotism, pride, and self-righteousness. The doctrine of sanctification advocated by many is full of deception, because it is flattering to the natural heart; but the kindest thing that can be preached to the sinner is the truth of the binding claims of the law of God. Faith and works must go hand in hand; for faith without works is dead, being alone. The prophet declares a truth by which we may test all doctrine. He says, **"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. Although error abounds in the world, there is no reason why men need remain in deception. The truth is plain, and when it is contrasted with error, its character may be discerned. All the subjects of God's grace may understand what is required of them. By faith we may conform our lives to the standard of righteousness, because we can appropriate to ourselves the righteousness of Christ. In the word of God the honest seeker for truth will find the rule for genuine sanctification. The apostle says: **"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after**

the flesh, but after the Spirit.... For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally-minded is death; but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." Rom. 8:1-9.

## The Law in Christ or the Relation between the Law and the Gospel

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### Part One

All that man has lost through sin has been restored **"through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."** **"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy [undo] the works of the devil."** 1 John 3:8. All this is accomplished for us, **"not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour."** Titus 3:5, 6.

And yet God does not make His plan of salvation effective for any individual without his co-operation. God has honoured man by bestowing upon him reasoning powers and the freedom of choice, and while man can by no means save himself, yet it is not God's plan to save him contrary to his will. He says to him: **"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."** Isa. 1:18. **"He that will [willeth or chooseth] let him take of the water of life freely."** Rev. 22:17.

In the beginning **"God created man in His own image," "in the likeness of God made He him."** But this image has been marred and well nigh obliterated by sin. Yet **"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"**

**(John 3:16)**, that thus through Him, **"who is the image of the invisible God,"** man might be **"created in Christ Jesus unto good works"** (Eph. 2:10), and restored to the image of God, by being **"conformed to the image of His Son."** **Rom. 8:29.** The wondrous provisions of God's grace whereby **"He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus"** (Rom. 3:26) have nothing less than this in view, that **"as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."** 1 Cor. 15:49.

The agency employed by God to bring about this result is called "the gospel," which is defined to be **"the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."** Rom. 1:16. It is **"the gospel of your salvation," "the gospel of the grace of God," "the gospel of peace,"** the same gospel which was **"preached before ... unto Abraham"** (Gal. 3:8), and afterwards to the children of Israel, **"for unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them."** Heb. 4:2. This gospel of Christ is God's divine power to save believers, **"for therein is the righteousness of God revealed."** Rom. 1:17. The righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel; and for that reason the gospel "is the power of God unto salvation." It is salvation from sin and restoration to a life of righteousness which are needed, and this experience is provided for us through the incarnation, the death, and the resurrection of Christ, who **"was made in the likeness of men,"** and **"who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."** Rom. 4:25. But this is the gospel; for we read: **"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel ... by which also ye are saved.... For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."** 1 Cor. 15:1-4.

The efficacy of the gospel is also presented in these words: **"For Christ sent me not to baptise, but to preach the gospel; not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."** 1 Cor. 1:17, 18. The gospel is the power of God to every one that believeth. A discourse concerning the cross is, to those who are saved, the power of God, because the cross of Christ—Christ the crucified Saviour dying for sin—is the central thought of the gospel. So also we read again: **"But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks**



**foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." 1 Cor. 1:23, 24.**

From these scriptures it is evident that the efficacy of the gospel, its power to salvation, is found in the fact that it is **"God's joyful message ... concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,"** who is **"The Lord our Righteousness."** Jer. 23:6. Thus it appears that the gospel becomes the power of God unto salvation because of the righteousness which is revealed in it, and that this righteousness is found only in Christ, and is inseparable from Him. This is **"the hope of the gospel ... which is Christ in you the hope of glory: whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."** **"And ye are complete in Him."**

## Part Two

Wrong views concerning our relation to God's plan of salvation for us have arisen from failing to comprehend the fulness of the character of God. While it is true that **"He delighteth in mercy"** and **"taketh pleasure ... in those that hope in His mercy,"** it is also true that He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil," and that He will "execute judgment and justice in the earth." God requires that His own character, as revealed in Christ, should be the standard of character for His children. **"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."** Matt. 5:48. **"But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation."** 1 Peter 1:15.

And abundant provision has been made in Christ that the expectation of God for man may be fully met. For He **"hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places [or things] in Christ,"** and **"hath chosen us in Him ... that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,"** and **"hath made us accepted in the beloved."** Eph. 1:3, 4, 6. But all this is for a definite purpose. It is that we **"being made free from sin and become servants to God "** (Rom. 6:22) should be found **"righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."** Luke 1:6. **"Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."** Matt. 1:21. But there is no provision made to save people in their sins.

In order that man may intelligently cooperate with God in His purpose to restore His image in him, God has made a revelation to man of His own

character as the standard of perfection, and the test of righteousness. Since God designs to renew His likeness in us, we may know what He is by what He requires of us. The holiness, the righteousness, and the goodness of God are set forth in His law, which is declared to be **"holy, just [righteous] and good," and the perfection which He requires of us will be revealed in a life which is in harmony with "that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."** Rom. 12:2.

**Because "a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 2:16), and because we "are not under the law but under grace" (Rom. 6:14),** some have fallen into the error of supposing that Christians have nothing whatever to do with the law of God. It is therefore well worth our while to consider the purposes served by the law, and the relation between the law and the gospel.

In order that it may be true of us that **"the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7),** we must **"confess our sins" (1 John 1:9),** and we must be made aware of sin before we can confess it. This brings out the first purpose of the law, for by the law is the knowledge of sin **(Rom. 3:20), and "I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."** Rom. 7:7. The way in which the law reveals sin appears from the fact that **"all unrighteousness is sin" (1 John 5:17),** and that the law reveals unrighteousness by defining righteousness. The law, being a transcript of the righteous character of God, is used by the Holy Spirit to **"reprove the world of sin" (John 16:8),** by showing men that they are **"wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:17)** when their own characters are placed in contrast with the purity and holiness of God. When we thus see God we exclaim with Isaiah, **"Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips" (Isa. 6:5),** and with Job we say, **"I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." Job 42:6.** All this is made plain in the Scripture. **"Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and upright are Thy judgments. Thy testimonies that Thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful!" "My tongue shall speak of Thy word; for all Thy commandments are righteousness." Ps. 119:137, 138, 172.**

But while the law thus makes known sin to us by setting forth the righteous character of God, and being itself righteousness, it is yet utterly unable to confer that righteousness upon us. **"I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if**

righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." Gal. 2:21. "For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." Gal. 3:21, 22. Here is where the work of Christ avails for us, and the very object of that work is that the righteousness defined by the law, and revealed in the gospel, may be fulfilled in us. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. 8:3, 4. "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Cor. 5:21.

### Part Three

The righteousness of the law was fulfilled by Christ, who did "not come to destroy, but to fulfil" the law, and who by a life of perfect obedience to the Father's will, wherein He "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," was "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." 1 Cor. 1:30. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 5:19-21.

The work accomplished by Christ in behalf of man is more than to pay the penalty for a broken law; it includes the bringing of man into harmony with that law. He "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus 2:14. For this it became necessary not only that righteousness should be imputed to us, but imparted to us; not only that Christ should live for us, but that He should live in us; not only that we should be "justified by faith" (Rom. 5:1), but that we should be "sanctified by faith." Acts 26:18. So "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory [His character], the glory [the character] as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth."

**John 1:14.** Angels could convey messages for God, and could do deeds for God, but only the Son of God could reveal the righteousness of God by being God.

In His life among men Christ became the righteousness which was defined in the law. **"The law was given by Moses but grace and truth [grace and the reality] came by Jesus Christ." John 1:17.** In the law, considered merely as a code, we have only the form of truth, but Christ is the Truth. **"Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest His will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which has the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law." Rom. 2:17-20.** The law gives the form, but Christ is the reality. Christ had the law in His heart, and so His life was the law in living characters. This was set forth in the prophecy concerning His work centuries before He was **"made of a woman": "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." Ps. 40:8.**

In His teaching Christ interpreted the spiritual character of the law, showing that to hate was to commit murder, to think impurely was to commit adultery, to covet was to be an idolater, and His life was so completely in harmony with the sacred precepts as interpreted by Him that He could challenge those who were constantly seeking something against Him with the inquiry, **"Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" John 8:46.**

And He **"who did no sin" (1 Peter 2:22)** wrought out this life of perfect righteousness not for Himself but for us, that the image of God might be again revealed in our lives. The law was within the heart of Christ, and He came to do the will of God, in order that the same law might be written in our hearts, and that we might be restored to the blessedness of doing God's will; that the form might become the reality in us. This is accomplished for each individual by his acceptance of the work of Christ for him through faith in the word of God, by opening the door of his heart to Christ, that He may become the very life of his life, so that he may be **"saved by His life." Rom. 5:10.** This is righteousness by faith. This is being **"found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Phil. 3: 9.**

Thus we see that the law first gives knowledge of sin. It sets up a perfect standard of righteousness, and so defines the righteousness required; but it cannot confer that righteousness. It does not make one a sinner; it simply reveals the fact that he is a sinner. It cannot give righteousness; it simply shows the need of righteousness. But God, who requires the righteousness of the law in our characters, has made provision that this righteousness shall be brought to us in Christ, who is the center of the gospel. The standard of character which is defined by the law is presented to us in Christ in the gospel. So we read: **"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory [the character] of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness; that He might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."** Rom. 3:21-26. By the law sin is revealed; in the gospel righteousness is revealed. By the law the disease is made known; in the gospel of Christ the cure is found. This is the first step in the relation between the law and the gospel.

#### Part Four

After we have come to Christ and are justified by faith, without the deeds of the law (**Rom. 3: 28**), after we have become **"the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus"** (**Gal. 3:26**), having received Him who is righteousness and the living law, what then is our relation to the law? This will perhaps best appear by considering the results of genuine faith in Christ.

To believe on Christ is to receive Christ; not to assent to a creed, but to accept a life; not to strive for the maintenance of certain outward forms, but to become **"partakers of the divine nature."** **2 Peter 1:4**. Creeds and forms cannot save people from their sins. Terrible is the catalogue of the sins of those **"having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."** **2 Tim. 3:1-5**. A new life must be imparted before man can **"live unto God."** **"Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God."** John 3:3. **"For neither**

**is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." Gal. 6:15, R.V.** This experience depends upon the faith which each one exercises for himself, and **"it is of faith, that it might be by grace." Rom. 4:16.** To all who sincerely pray the prayer, **"Create in me a clean heart," (Ps. 51:10),** the reply comes, **"Believe ye that I am able to do this? ... According to your faith be it unto you." Matt. 9:28, 29.** **"And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4); but faith for victory is the "faith which worketh by love." Gal. 5: 6.**

**"Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." Rom. 3:31.** "This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our Christ made present with all His glorious power by faith;" but this is the Christ in whose heart is the law of God; who said of Himself, **"I have kept my Father's commandments" (John 15:10);** who was and is the law of God in life, so that when the prayer, **"that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (Eph. 3:17),** is answered, the law in Christ is **"written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." 2 Cor. 3:3.** And thus do we establish the law.

"Where there is not only belief in God's word, but a submission of the will to Him-where the heart is yielded to Him, the affections fixed upon Him, there is faith, faith that works by love and purifies the soul. Through this faith the heart is renewed in the image of God. And the heart that in its unrenewed state is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, now delights in its holy precepts." **"God is love." 1 John 4:8.** His law is an expression of His love, and Christ is that law of love expressed in life; so when we receive Christ into our hearts, then love, the fruit of the Spirit, is received into our hearts, and **"when the principle of love is implanted in the heart, ... the new covenant promise is fulfilled, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them" (Heb. 8:10)** for **"love is the fulfilling of the law." Rom. 13:10.** And thus do we **"establish the law"** by faith.

But after the law is thus by faith established in the heart by abiding in Christ, and having Him, who is the living law, abide in us, then the fruit of such a union with Christ will appear in the life. **"He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit" (John 15:5),** and thus are we **"filled with the fruits of righteousness." Phil. 1:11.** And now the law, which revealed sin but

could not confer righteousness, witnesses to the character of the righteousness which we have received through faith in Christ. **"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets." Rom. 3:21.** The law reveals sin by defining righteousness, by showing us the character of God. The gospel reveals righteousness. **"Therein is the righteousness of God revealed." Rom.1:17.** We receive this righteousness as the free gift of God in receiving Jesus Christ. The law cannot give us what we need. It urges us to Christ, where we receive what it demands but cannot bestow. Then we return to the same law, and it bears witness to the fact that the righteousness we have received in Christ Jesus is the very righteousness which it demands but cannot impart.

This was God's plan for those who would believe in Christ. **"God offered them in His Son the perfect righteousness of the law."** If they would open their hearts fully to receive Christ, then the very life of God, His love, would dwell in them, transforming them into His own image; and thus through God's free gift they would possess the righteousness which the law requires.

## Part Five

The words "abolish," "take away," "destroy," and "change" have been so persistently connected with the law by some public teachers that there exists in the minds of many people the honest conviction that all which is expressed by these words was done to the law by Christ. It is true that He came to "abolish" something, and to "take away" something, and to "destroy" something, and to "change" something; but it is important that we should know just what it was that He abolished, and what it was that He took away, and what it was that He destroyed, and what it was that He intended to change by His work in behalf of man. This we can easily learn from the Scriptures.

### WHAT WAS ABOLISHED

It is said of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, that **He "hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." 2 Tim. 1:10.** Death is the result of sin. **"Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." James 1:15.** But **"sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:4.** Christ, therefore, came to abolish that which is the result of being out of harmony with the law, and He did it, not by abolishing the law, but by bringing us into harmony with the law.

## WHAT WAS TAKEN AWAY

We read that Christ "**was manifested to take away our sins.**" **1 John 3:5.** He is the sin-bearer, "**who His own self carried up our sins in His body to the tree, that we having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness.**" **1 Peter 2:24.** Sin is lawlessness, and Christ was manifested to take away, not the law, but lawlessness.

## WHAT HE CAME TO DESTROY

The attitude of Christ toward the law is set forth in the prophecy which says: "**He will magnify the law and make it honourable.**" **Isa. 42:21.** In His Sermon on the Mount, which is itself but the interpretation of the principles contained in the words spoken from Mount Sinai, Christ said: "**Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am, not come to destroy, but to fulfil.**" **Matt. 5:17.** He "came to explain the relation of the law of God to man, and to illustrate its precepts by His own example of obedience." (Desire of Ages p. 308). But we are taught that "**for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.**" **1 John 3:8.** The works of the devil are those which are contrary to God's law. "**The devil sinneth from the beginning,**" and in every case "**sin is the transgression of the law.**"

Furthermore, Christ came to destroy the devil himself. Satan had introduced into this world rebellion against God and His law, and Christ's mission and work were to put an end to that rebellion and the instigator of it. In order to do that, He took our flesh, "**that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil.**" **Heb. 2:14.**

## WHAT HE CAME TO CHANGE

It is a blessed thing to know that a change was wrought by Christ in giving Himself for man. There was certainly need that a change should be made. Men were far from righteousness, "**being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them**" (**Eph. 4:18**), "**having no hope and without God in the world.**" **Eph. 2:12.** "**But God, who is rich in mercy, ... hath quickened us together with Christ, ... and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.**" **Eph. 2:4-6.** And thus "**we all ... are changed into the same image from glory to glory.**" **2 Cor. 3:18.** But more even than a change of character has been provided for us, for "**we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be**



**fashioned like unto His glorious body." Phil. 3:20, 21. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." 1 Cor. 15:51, 52.** Glorious change! A renewed character and a renewed body! This is the fullness of the salvation provided for us in Jesus Christ.

It thus becomes evident from the teaching of the Scriptures that Christ came to abolish not the law, but death; to take away, not the law, but our sins; to destroy, not the law, but the devil and his works; to change, not the law, but us. He did all this **"by the sacrifice of Himself." Heb. 9:26.** If the law could have been changed or abolished, Christ need not have died.

#### SIN TRANSIENT; THE LAW ETERNAL

In different ways God teaches that sin is transient, while the law is eternal. While Jesus was teaching on one occasion "the scribes and Pharisees brought unto Him a woman taken in adultery," and asked what should be done in such a case, not because they desired to be instructed, but "tempting Him, that they might have to accuse Him." After her accusers had made their charge, **"Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground." John 8:3, 6.**

"Although doing this without apparent design, Jesus was tracing on the ground, in legible characters, the particular sins of which the woman's accusers were guilty". Thus Jesus wrote the record of sins in the sand. How easily could this record be obliterated! A gust of wind or a dash of water, and it is gone! But God wrote His law with His finger upon tables of stone,-an unchangeable and imperishable record of His own character. This same law He writes in the heart of the believer, there to remain to all eternity; for **"he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." 1 John 2:17.** Sin, and death the result of sin, may be taken away; for **"the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7),** and **"death is swallowed up in victory, (1 Cor. 15:54),** but **"all Thy commandments are righteousness" and "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness." Ps.119:172, 142. "Hearken unto Me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is My law;" "My salvation shall be forever, and My righteousness shall not be abolished." Isa. 51:7, 6. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea, and forever." Heb. 13:8.**

The very charge made against God by Satan was that His plan of government was defective, and His law imperfect, and the whole controversy between

Christ and Satan has been waged over this point: Shall God's rule be acknowledged and His law respected in this world, or shall the rebellion succeed, and the kingdom of Satan be established here? Is it not clear, therefore, that everyone who today takes the position that God's law has been changed or abolished is really putting himself on the side of the **"god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4)** and in opposition to **"the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"? Eph.1:3**. But God will show to the satisfaction of the universe, even in the very face of Satan's work, that His law is perfect and His government just. **"Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest." Rev. 15:4.**

Part Six

#### A STANDARD NEEDED

But if God's law has been changed or abolished, there is no longer any standard by which to test the character of the righteousness which men claim to have received by faith. Each one is then at liberty to erect his own standard to suit his own inclinations. Such teaching as this is now bearing its legitimate fruit in the world. God's holy law is not brought to bear upon the consciences of men to convince of sin, as in former days; hence the need of the Saviour is not felt to the same degree; and without a standard with which to test their professed righteousness, the counterfeit passes for the genuine, and religion is reproached. It is universally acknowledged that there is need of having a standard in all the transactions between man and man, and so we have the standard of weight, the standard of measure, etc. Without these standards there would be the utmost confusion in the business world. Moreover, these standards must not be variable. A variable standard is no standard at all. But is man wiser than God? "Were men free to depart from the Lord's requirements, and set up a standard of duty for themselves, there would be a variety of standards to suit different minds, and the government would be taken out of the Lord's hands. The law of self would be erected, the will of man would be supreme, and the high and holy will of God-His purpose of love toward His creatures-would be dishonoured, disrespected."

#### OFFICE OF THE LAW

The office of the law in making known sin, and in witnessing to the

righteousness obtained through faith in Christ may be illustrated by the way in which a mirror is used. A man may learn by looking into it that his face is smirched with smut. The mirror did not put the smut there, neither can it take it away. It simply reveals its presence. Some other means must be used to remove the dirt; but when this is done, the same mirror testifies that his face is clean. But suppose the man should destroy or throw away the mirror because it revealed the presence of the dirt, and yet, not fully satisfied with this course, should endeavour to make himself clean, what will now satisfy him of the success of his efforts? He may feel better because he has made some effort to be clean; but at the same time he may have done only an incomplete work, or he may have made matters worse. So we are defiled by sin. The law reveals that fact, yet cannot cleanse; but there is **"a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13:1)**, in which we may wash and be clean. The law testifies to the character of the work wrought for us by **"Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood."** Rev. 1:5. But if the law is variable or has been abolished, we are left in uncertainty. Then self-righteousness may pass for righteousness because one feels satisfied in trying to meet the standard which he himself has set up.

#### THE PLEDGE OF AN IMMUTABLE LAW

The fact that the law of God is not done away, is the pledge of our security in heaven. **"So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty."** James 2:12. That law is the standard in the judgment. Harmony with the law of God is the condition of the entrance into the kingdom. Everyone who applies for admission is tested by it. The law is a transcript of God's character. Everyone must meet this standard in its perfection, and those who do not reach it are shut out of the kingdom. We cannot meet the standard except as we receive Christ; but when we have received Christ, we know we have that which will meet the test. If anyone could be admitted to the kingdom who was out of harmony with God's law, sin would be transferred into the world to come. The very fact that the law of God is neither changed nor abolished is our safety in the eternal kingdom, the pledge that **"affliction shall not rise up the second time."**

## Part Seven

### THE LAW OUT OF CHRIST AND THE LAW IN CHRIST

Observe the difference between the law of God as a rigid code and the same law coming to us in Christ. A command which out of Christ is a rigid code, in Christ becomes a living promise. The law, out of Christ, simply a rigid code, says, "Thou shalt," and "thou shalt not." But that same law in Christ becomes a living promise. **"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises." 2 Pet. 1:4.** "In every command or injunction that God gives, there is a promise, the most positive, underlying the commandment." (Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings. p 76). When we read: **"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth,"** that is clearly a promise. When we read in the law: **"Thou shalt not kill,"** we read it out of Christ simply as a command, or we may know it in Christ as a living promise. That is, He in His life promises each one, **"Thou shalt not kill."** I cannot of myself help hating, which is breaking the sixth commandment. I am trying not to do it, and yet I do it. I turn about, and find that that same command in Christ, written by the Spirit of the living God on the fleshy tables of the heart, has brightened into a promise, and it says, **"I have a promise to make to you. You have received Me; you shall not kill."**

Outside of Christ, as a code, the law says, **"Thou shalt not steal;"** but I cannot help it. Then I turn about, and find that that law in Christ has brightened into a promise, and it reads to me, "You are the one that has been stealing. I have a promise to make to you. You shall not steal."

The law reveals sin by defining righteousness, and then drives us to Christ, who is the center of the gospel. There the righteousness of the law is revealed.

### COMPLETE OBEDIENCE

Partial obedience is a very thorny path; full obedience is the easy yoke promised us. When we tell the Lord that we will keep all His commandments, He immediately takes possession of us, and says we shall. We do not abolish the law through faith; on the contrary, "it is faith, and faith only, that makes us partakers of the grace of Christ, which enables us to render obedience." But this is accomplished, not by commanding the believer, "Thou shalt," but by shedding abroad in his heart the love of God which gives him the blessed assurance of "Thou wilt." Not, thou must fulfil the law, else thou canst not live;

but, because thou art now living in "the Living One," thou wilt fulfil the law. This is righteousness by faith. This is the gospel.

The same standard of righteousness has been set before man in all ages. In olden time the instruction was: "**Fear God and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.**" **Eccl. 12:13.** And the death of Christ did not make any change in this teaching; for "**circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God**" (**1 Cor. 7:19**), and "**this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous.**" **1 John 5:3.** Furthermore, the provision has been the same in all ages for meeting this standard of righteousness. The Lord said of old, through the prophet: "**A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them.**" **Ezek. 36:26, 27.** The same ground of hope for success in the Christian life is held out to us in the inspired prayer of the great apostle: "**Now the God of peace, ... make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ.**" **Heb. 13:20, 21.**

#### A SUMMARY

We are now prepared to summarize the results of our study upon the relation between the law and the gospel. We have found that the law reveals sin by defining the standard of righteousness, and that in the gospel the righteousness required by the law is revealed. We have found that the gospel is the gospel of Christ, and that the righteousness which is revealed in it is the righteousness wrought out for us by Christ through a life of perfect obedience to the law of God. Thus the gospel is God's provision not merely for fulfilling the requirements of the law for us in Christ, but also for fulfilling the requirements of the same law in us through Christ, and this is accomplished by receiving Christ, the very embodiment of the law, into our hearts by faith, so that "**it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me.**" **Gal. 2:20.**

The fruit of such a union with Christ is seen in a life which is in harmony with that same law which was the inspiration of His life, and the law which at first revealed sin now bears witness to the genuine character of that righteousness

**"which is by faith of Jesus Christ."** And thus what the law could not do in that it was weak through our flesh, has been done for us by putting that same law into the flesh in Christ, and through Him into our flesh, **"that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."** Rom. 8:4.

This brings us to the conclusion that THE GOSPEL IS SIMPLY THE LAW IN CHRIST, and therefore an attempt to abolish the law is an attempt to abolish Christ and the gospel, and an attempt to change the law is in attempt to change the character of Christ and to thwart the purpose of the gospel. A heart filled with love to Christ and the spirit of truth will seek no such results, but will thankfully say: **"Abundant peace have they who love Thy law; and it is no stumbling block to them."** Ps. 119:165.

## The Righteousness of God

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In the sermon on the mount Christ said, **"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment; but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."** Matt. 5:21, 22. And again, **"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery, but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."** Verses 27, 28.

This does not mean that the commandments, **"Thou shalt not kill,"** and **"Thou shalt not commit adultery"** are imperfect or that God now requires a greater degree of morality from Christians than He did from His people who were called Jews. He requires the same from all men in all ages. The Saviour simply explained these commandments and showed their spirituality. To the unspoken charge of the Pharisees that He was ignoring and undermining the moral law, He replied by saying that He came for the purpose of establishing the law and that it could not be abolished, and then He expounded the true meaning of the law in a way that convicted them of ignoring and disobeying it.

He showed that even a look or a thought may be a violation of the law and that it is indeed a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In this Christ did not reveal a new truth but only brought to light and unfolded an old one. The law meant just as much when He proclaimed it from Sinai as when He expounded it on the mountain in Judea. When, in tones that shook the earth, He said, "Thou shalt not kill," He meant, "**Thou shalt not cherish anger in the heart; thou shalt not indulge in envy, nor strife, nor anything which is in the remotest degree akin to murder.**" All this and much more is contained in the words, "Thou shalt not kill." And this was taught by the inspired words of the Old Testament, for Solomon showed that the law deals with things unseen as well as things seen, when he wrote:

**"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." Eccl. 12:13, 14.** The argument is this: The judgment passes upon every secret thing; the law of God is the standard in the judgment--it determines the quality of every act, whether good or evil; therefore, the law of God forbids evil in thought as well as in deed. So the conclusion of the whole matter is that the commandments of God contain the whole duty of man.

Take the first commandment, "**Thou shalt have no other gods before me.**" The apostle tells us of some "**whose god is their belly.**" **Phil. 3:19.** But gluttony and intemperance are self-murder, and so we find that the first commandment runs through to the sixth. This is not all, however, for he also tells us that covetousness is idolatry. **Col. 3:5.** The tenth commandment cannot be violated without violating the first and second. In other words, the tenth commandment coincides with the first, and we find that the Decalogue is a circle having a circumference as great as the universe and containing within it the moral duty of every creature. In short, it is the measure of the righteousness of God, who inhabits eternity.

This being the case, the correctness of the statement that "**the doers of the law shall be justified,**" is obvious. To justify means to make righteous or to show one to be righteous. Now it is evident that perfect obedience to a perfectly righteous law would constitute one a righteous person. It was God's

design that such obedience should be rendered to the law by all His creatures, and in this way the law was ordained unto life. **Rom. 7:10.**

But for one to be judged "a doer of the law" it would be necessary that he had kept the law in its fullest measure every moment of his life. If he had come short of this, he could not be said to have done the law. He could not be a doer of the law if he had done it only in part. It is a sad fact, therefore, that there are in all the human race no doers of the law, for both Jews and Gentiles **are "all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."** **Rom. 3:9-12.** The law speaks to all who are within its sphere, and in all the world there is not one who can open his mouth to clear himself from the charge of sin which it brings against him. Every mouth is stopped and all the world stands guilty before God (verse 19), **"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (verse 23).**

Therefore, although **"the doers of the law shall be justified,"** it is just as evident that **"by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin."** **Verse 20.** The law, being "holy, and just, and good," cannot justify a sinner. In other words, a just law cannot declare that the one who violates it is innocent. A law that would justify a wicked man would be a wicked law. The law should not be reviled because it cannot justify sinners. On the contrary, it should be extolled on that account. The fact that the law will not declare sinners to be righteous--that it will not say that men have kept it when they have violated it--is in itself sufficient evidence that it is good. Men applaud an incorruptible earthly judge, one who cannot be bribed and who will not declare a guilty man innocent. Surely, they ought to magnify the law of God, which will not bear false witness. It is the perfection of righteousness and therefore it is forced to declare the sad fact that not one of Adam's race has fulfilled its requirements.

Moreover, the fact that to do the law is simply man's duty shows that when he has come short in single particular he can never make it up. The requirements of each precept of the law are so broad--the whole law is so spiritual-- that an angel could render no more than simple obedience. Yea, more, the law is the righteousness of God--a transcript of His character--and since His character



cannot be different from what it is, it follows that even God Himself cannot be better than the measure of goodness demanded by His law. He cannot be better than He is and the law declares what He is. What hope, then, that one who has failed, in even one precept, can add enough extra goodness to make up the full measure? He who attempts to do that sets before himself the impossible task of being better than God requires, yea, even better than God Himself.

But it is not simply in one particular that men have failed. They have come short in every particular. **"They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."** Not only so, but it is impossible for fallen man, with his weakened power, to do even a single act that is up to the perfect standard. This proposition needs no further proof than a restatement of the fact that the law is the measure of God's righteousness. Surely there are none so presumptuous as to claim that any act of their lives has been or could be as good as if done by the Lord Himself. Everyone must say with the Psalmist, **"My goodness extendeth not to Thee."** **Ps. 16:2.**

This fact is contained in direct statements of Scripture. Christ, who "needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man" (John 2:25), said, **"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evil things come from within and defile the man."** Mark 7:21-23. In other words, it is easier to do wrong than it is to do right, and the things which a person naturally does are evil. Evil dwells within, and is a part of the being. Therefore, the apostle says, **"The carnal [fleshly, natural] mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."** Rom. 8:7, 8. And again, **"The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."** Gal. 5:17. Since evil is a part of man's very nature, being inherited by each individual from a long line of sinful ancestors, it is very evident that whatever righteousness springs from him must be only like **"filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6)**, compared with the spotless robe of the righteousness of God.

The impossibility of good deeds proceeding from a sinful heart is thus forcibly illustrated by the Saviour, "**For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble-bush gather they grapes. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil; for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.**" Luke 6:44, 45. That is to say, a man cannot do good until he first becomes good. Therefore, deeds done by a sinful person have no effect whatever to make him righteous, but, on the contrary, coming from an evil heart, they are evil and so add to the sum of his sinfulness. Only evil can come from an evil heart, and multiplied evil cannot make one good deed; therefore, it is useless for an evil person to think to become righteous by his own efforts. He must first be made righteous before he can do the good that is required of him and which he wants to do.

The case, then, stands thus: 1) the law of God is perfect righteousness, and perfect conformity to it is demanded of everyone who shall enter the kingdom of heaven. 2) But the law has not a particle of righteousness to bestow upon any man, for all are sinners and are unable to comply with its requirements. No matter how diligently nor how zealously a man works, nothing that he can do will meet the full measure of the law's demands. It is too high for him to attain to; he cannot obtain righteousness by the law. "**By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified [made righteous] in His sight.**" What a deplorable condition! We must have the righteousness of the law or we cannot enter heaven, and yet the law has no righteousness for one of us. It will not yield to our most persistent and energetic efforts the smallest portion of that holiness without which no man can see the Lord.

Who, then, can be saved? Can there, then, be such a thing as a righteous person? Yes, for the Bible often speaks of them. It speaks of Lot as "**that righteous man.**" It says, "**Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings**" (Isa. 3:10), thus indicating that there will be righteous persons to receive the reward, and it plainly declares that there will be a righteous nation at the last, saying, "**In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation**

**which keepeth the truth may enter in." Isa. 26:1,2.** David says, **"Thy law is the truth." Ps. 119:142.** It is not only truth, but it is the sum of all truth; consequently, the nation that keeps the truth will be a nation that keeps the law of God. Such will be doers of His will, and they shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. **Matt. 7:21.**

## Dear Reader

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I hope you have enjoyed this lesson as much as I have. It is clearer than ever why the world hates Jesus [and them who follow Him]. They hate Him because in Jesus was the law and they hate the law because it shows them their sin. To love Jesus is to love the law and that means to surrender sin to Him. However, instead of loving the one sent to save them, they **"despised and rejected"** Him because they love their sin.

All they who choose to remain in bondage to the **"the law of sin and death"** will become jealous of them who partake of **"the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus"** that makes them free. Jesus tells us hatred is murder, and if hatred is not constrained, murder is the natural outcome. They "professing to be Christians can be guilty of such horrible deeds" (page 7) as well just by rejecting the law of God; and if not restrained murder will be the natural outcome.

We see this in the story of Cain and Abel. Cain rejected Jesus by refusing to give a blood offering which pointed to His death on the cross. He became jealous and hateful toward his brother and killed him. When we reject Jesus who constrains us with His love to not sin, lawlessness is the natural outcome.

When Cain rejected the Lord he said to God, "I do not need a Savior because I have no sin." We are told **"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."** **1 John 1:8.** Is not Jesus the truth? John 14:6. Without Jesus dwelling in man he is left to his carnal nature to rule over him. The carnal mind is enmity against God which means it hates God. If we hate God who is the source of all love, we cannot love those around us.

Dear reader, in times ahead as the law of God is trampled upon, whether in thought or deed, it will become much more important that we humble ourselves so others can see the heart of Jesus in us and desire Him.

## Promises to Live By

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Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. Matthew 5:17

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.  
Colossians 2:9

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: Romans 8:3

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. Psalms 19:7

He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination. Proverbs 28:9

Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. Psalms 119:18

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. 1 John 5:3

He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 1 John 2:4

Fear God and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. Eccl. 12:13.

## Contact

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