

THE LAW OF GOD.

Christians are in the habit of looking at "the law" as a great enemy. Why? Because it does not countenance the least sin. It says, "walk before me and be thou perfect." Is that not right – could a perfect God recognize or make a law in any way imperfect? Surely not. The reason men count the law their enemy is that all have sinned, and ever since the disobedience of Adam they have been in the condition known as "sinful flesh." Prior to sin's entrance, the law was Adam's friend, and justified him; but the condition of death obtained after sin had entered, and man in this fallen condition of death finds it utterly impossible to so live and act in harmony with his Maker, that God's perfect law would not condemn him. And since all are sinners, of course none but a defective law could recognize such persons as perfect. The law of God has condemned all, and every one who has reasoning faculties seems to recognize that he is not perfect.

God has always had a law; even before the giving of it at Mount Sinai. Since God always has been perfect, His laws always have been perfect and condemned and opposed even the slightest sin. Abel, Noah, Abraham and all the patriarchs recognized the fact that they were sinners when they made altars and sacrificed thereon, before attempting to hold communion. Thus they acknowledged themselves sinners and unable of themselves to approach God. How different from the way Adam and God walked and talked in the Garden! No sacrifices or offerings for sin were there needed, for Adam was justified, or recognized as right by God's law. Thus we see that what the patriarchs knew of God's law condemned them.

The giving of the full law from Sinai did not take away man's sin. No, it only showed it the more fully. Did the keeping of it ever justify any of them? No; "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be

justified [R410 : page 7] in His (God's) sight." Was the fault in the law, or in the people? "The law is holy," and God's commands "holy and just and good." (Rom. 7:12.) The imperfection was with mankind. Since, then, the law did not justify them, it must have condemned them, even as it had condemned the patriarchs. Not any more really (for there is only one penalty – death) but more loudly. They were no greater sinners than those of the Patriarchal Age who had not had the full law given them, but they were shown their condition as sinners more clearly. Why? That they might see their own fallen and imperfect condition and learn the exceeding sinfulness of SIN. (Rom. 7:13), and by this knowledge be prepared for the Redeemer.

We have seen that God always has had a perfect law which condemned every sin in every being, and how it was shown in different degrees to the patriarchs and Israel, yet that the effect was the same – condemnation – only more fully realized by those who saw the law most clearly. Now, how about the great heathen world? Surely a righteous law could not say: The heathen are RIGHTEOUS; unless they live in harmony with God. And if you thought they were living in harmony with God you would not send missionaries to them. No, they too, are condemned by God's law. And as Paul says: These that have not the law (the full written law as given to Israel) "show the work of the law written in their hearts," a spark of that principle of justice and knowledge of right and wrong which must have been an important part of the natural organization of the first perfect man, Adam; a spark merely, not quite extinguished by the degrading effects of sin.

What did this spark of conscience do for them? It sometimes justified, and sometimes condemned. But if their spark of conscience condemned them only ONCE during their lifetime, it showed that they were imperfect – sinners – hence subject to the sin penalty, death.

Now, "all unrighteousness is sin," and "sin is the transgression of the law," and "the wages of sin is death." So we see that the only voice of the law of God to any who hear it, is: You cannot live. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God": Therefore must "every mouth be stopped and all the world become guilty before God." (Rom. 3:9,19.)

There lay the whole human family dead and dying through sin, the law hanging up before them, they admit, is grand, "just" and "holy." They were told that "The man that doeth these things shall live." (Rom. 10:5, Gal. 3:12.) But O, they could not do them. Some tried hard, as Paul describes, Rom. 7:14-24. When with their minds they resolved to "do those things and live," they found sin in their members hindering and preventing. When the striving ones found they could not deliver **[R411 : page 7]** themselves from death, they exclaimed: "Wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Diaglott) or, from the sin and death which has gotten possession of me. When he so cries out, he has reached the place God wanted to bring him to, i.e., to realize that he can NEVER deliver himself from death and sin. But some one asks: If he dies does not the act of dying fill all the requirements of the law, and could he not, after thus dying, be raised up by God? No, you err in supposing that the act of dying is the penalty. Man has been dying ever since sin entered the world, but the penalty will not be entirely inflicted until all are dead. The penalty is, that sinners shall have life no longer; they forfeit their right to live.

But when will the law of God release the sinner from the bondage of death? Never; if he could not obey the law while partially dead, he certainly cannot when completely so. Ever since the "fall" from perfect manhood through sin, man has been in a dying condition, sometimes spoken of as already dead (see Matt. 8:22). And none but a perfect man could keep a perfect law. But, says one, did not God

send his Son into the world to show us how we could work our way up to spiritual life – appearing among us on the lowest round of the ladder, did He not point out to us the way; he being thus "our forerunner?"

This view in many respects is held by a great many, mostly "Unitarians" and "Universalists" and like many other views has a mixture of truth in it; but as a whole is far from being "the truth" on this subject. Jesus did indeed "lay aside the glory which he had with the Father, before the world;" He did appear to "set us an example that we should follow in his footsteps" and to be "our forerunner," but more, he is also our "Redeemer" from the curse of the Law. The curse of the law upon us as sinners is death. How did he redeem us from death? To redeem is to purchase back. He therefore is said to have "bought us with his own precious blood." Blood represents life – "The life of the flesh is in the blood" (Lev. 17:11), therefore shed blood represents death or sacrificed life. "He gave his life;" "He shed his blood;" "He tasted death;" all have the same meaning. But how could his life purchase or redeem or buy ours? He as a man, a perfect man, kept the perfect law; and was therefore uncondemned by it. Therefore the same law which was the sinners' enemy condemning us to death, was his friend and guaranteed life to him. But was he not born into the world under condemnation of death, as much as any other son of Adam? No, he was a direct creation of God – "made in the likeness of sinful flesh," but "in him was no sin." If he had done sin or been born a sinner, his life would have been forfeited as was ours.

If born under condemnation as other human beings he would have been as much a sinner as we, and as such would have been obliged to die for himself and consequently would have nothing to give as a ransom for our life. But he was perfect, kept the law, had a right to perfect human life forever; "But for the joy set before him,"

by the promise of the Father to raise him from the dead a spiritual body, he renounced the natural, human life, and gave it for our ransom.

But when he arose from death, was not that a taking back of the price? Yes, if he had taken back the same life which he had laid down; but he did not take back the human; he was quickened by the Spirit – "made a quickening Spirit," raised a "spiritual body." There is a natural, human body and there is a spiritual body.

Thus "by his precious (valuable) blood" (life), we were "redeemed from the curse of the law" – death. To what kind of life were we redeemed? The same which man had before death (the curse) came; the same kind that Jesus gave for us, i.e., human life. But we are promised spiritual life, and that we shall be made like unto Christ's glorious body? Yes; it is a part of God's offer to us (during the Gospel age), that if we die to earthly and fleshly – natural – life, we may be reckoned as "members of his body," and partake of the same kind of life as our Head. If we leave our Father's house (the human) we may become espoused to the Lord of glory as His Bride. In this arrangement, we are reckoned as being justified to the perfect natural life first, else we could not give our lives. Being justified to life, Jesus says to us, you can either have this natural life, or, if you will renounce this natural, as I did, and become dead to the world, you shall have instead, the spiritual life and body. "If we be dead with Christ, we shall live with him." Rom. 6:4-8. "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him." 2 Tim. 2:11. "Ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings." 1 Pet. 4:13. "Joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Rom. 8:17.

And it is because God thus waits until the elect number, the bride, the body, the Church, has "filled up the measure of the afflictions of Christ, which are behind," that the "restitution of all things," purchased for the world by the blood of Christ, is delayed and

yet future. The Head suffered and died over eighteen hundred years ago; but all of the suffering and death of the body are not yet completed. Not noticing this, has caused wonder on the part of almost all, that the benefits and results of the ransom have not sooner come. (See typical sacrifices, in the Tabernacle Tract.)

But would it be right for God to reckon the one righteous life given, as a full payment for the lives of the millions of sinners who have died? Does not the price – one, for a billion or more – seem like a short payment?

This is a reasonable question, and we will allow Paul to give it a reasonable answer. He is a logical reasoner, as well as an inspired Apostle, and argues that, as God had seen proper to condemn all men to death on account of Adam's disobedience, so he had a right to reckon the second Adam a representative man, and justify to life all the race, in return for the sacrifice of this one perfect life. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. "Therefore as by the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation," (condemned to suffer the penalty of sin, death,))"even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification to life." Remember that none now enjoy life; our condition is a dying one. "Dying thou shalt die" was the penalty pronounced on Adam.

The condition of perfect life as it was enjoyed before death came, is what all men are justified to, by the obedience of "Jesus Christ who, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man."

"For as in Adam (or by Adam's sin) all die," so "in Christ (or by Christ's obedience, etc.) shall all be made alive." As the first Adam's bride was a party to the sin, so we see the second Adam's bride is made a party with her Lord in the removing of the curse. Oh glorious plan, of our all wise and loving Father, and the exceeding riches of his grace toward us, in Christ Jesus.

But says one, I thought that Jesus had nullified, set aside and destroyed the law; and that therefore mankind could approach God. Oh no, that was a great mistake. Would it not be strange indeed if the Father made a law, which we have seen was "just" and "holy," and in fact the only one he could give because perfect and holy himself, would it seem proper even to think of Jesus as setting aside and destroying that "just" and "holy" law or in any way making a league with sin or sinners? No, no. He came to do the Father's will and the law is the record of that will. Jesus kept it himself and taught the true meaning of it to be higher than the letter, and that to be "angry with a brother without a cause" was to violate the command "Thou shalt not kill." No, says Paul: "Christ magnified the law (made it larger and more minute) and made it honorable," showed in fact that, that law could not be set aside or broken. He showed too, by keeping it perfectly himself, that God's law was just, and not beyond a perfect man's ability.

But we read, "Christ is the end of the law." What can that mean? The trouble is you have not quoted the connections. The text reads: "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom. 10:4.) To whom is he this? To believers. How? Righteously, not by breaking it, but by righteously fulfilling its requirements, and we in him are just before the law. Because we in Him are reckoned dead to the world and alive toward God through Him – our new life, another similar text reads: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are IN Christ Jesus." Why are those in Christ not condemned? Because, since coming into Him by faith they have received of His spirit, and with Him can say, "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." (Ps. 11:8.) They are then alive spiritually though yet living in the dead body of sinful flesh which they are supposed to, and which by the holy spirit given they are enabled to "crucify." These walk not after the flesh, but

after the spirit, and to all so walking in Christ, there is no condemnation from the law.

And in the glorious millennial age, when all shall know God from least to greatest, when, "the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth;" – "the times of restitution" – there will be the same "holy and just" law, and under the "Royal Priesthood" after the order of Melchisedec (the order of an endless life) poor fallen humanity will be helped back again, to that perfect condition from whence Adam fell; a condition in harmony with God's law, and therefore in harmony with God.

But will they receive no punishment for misdeeds of the present life? They will **[R412 : page 7]** receive punishment, "stripes" in proportion as they had light and lived contrary to it. As our Master explained, "It shall be more tolerable for Sodom," in the day of judgment (in the age of trial) than for the Jews to whom He spoke, because the Sodomites had sinned against less light. (Matt. 11:24.) There will be many or few "stripes," in proportion to the amount of light they have had, and the use made of it.

There will be rewards given to some during that age also; "for whosoever shall give to one of these little ones (of the little flock) a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, shall in no wise lose his reward." (Matt. 10:42.) And when the King shall sit "on the throne of his glory" (during the Millennial age), some will be rewarded for having ministered to the members of his body. "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these" (in the throne) "ye did it unto me." Matt. 25:40.

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WHEN we announce, as a part of God's plan of salvation, now due to be understood, that the Sodomites (Ezek. 16:48-63) and all men who have never yet come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4) are

to be saved out of Adamic-death, brought to life again by reason of Jesus' ransom; and that they may then be made acquainted with the truth and have an opportunity by obedience to that knowledge, to reach perfection as men, and live forever, it seems as strange to those who hear it, as did the announcement of the apostles in the end of the Jewish age, that from that time God would call and accept of Gentiles as his spiritual sons – Gentiles who but shortly before, had been treated as strangers and aliens and children of wrath.

This shows the importance of our apprehending dispensational truths, and ever searching God's Word for the ever increasing light on "the path of the just."

As in the Jewish age, so it is in the end of this Gospel age of which it was a shadow or type. It was not until the ending of the Jewish age that God sent light upon the Gospel age and its broader work. Thus it is now also; not until the very closing hours of the Gospel age does light shine out clear and strong upon the now dawning Millennial age and its work for mankind in general.