



The Law
&
The Gospel

THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL

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It is the work of conversion and sanctification to reconcile men to God by bringing them into accord with the principles of His law. In the beginning, man was created in the image of God. He was in perfect harmony with the nature and the law of God; the principles of righteousness were written upon his heart. But sin alienated him from his Maker. He no longer reflected the divine image. His heart was at war with the principles of God's law.

"The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

Romans 8:7.

But

"God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son,"

[John 3:16]

that man might be reconciled to God. Through the merits of Christ he can be restored to harmony with his Maker. His heart must be renewed by divine grace; he must have a new life from above. This change is the new birth, without which, says Jesus,

"he cannot see the kingdom of God."

[John 3:3]

The first step in reconciliation to God is the conviction of sin.

"Sin is the transgression of the law."

"By the law is the knowledge of sin."

1 John 3:4; Romans 3:20.

In order to see his guilt, the sinner must test his character by God's great standard of righteousness. It is a mirror which shows the perfection of a righteous character and enables him to discern the defects in his own.

The law reveals to man his sins, but it provides no remedy. While it promises life to the obedient, it declares that death is the portion of the transgressor. The gospel of Christ alone can free him from the condemnation or the defilement of sin. He must exercise repentance toward God, whose law has been transgressed; and faith in Christ, his atoning sacrifice. Thus he obtains

"remission of sins that are past"

[Romans 3:25]

and becomes a partaker of the divine nature. He is a child of God, having received the spirit of adoption, whereby he cries:

"Abba, Father!"

[Romans 8:15]

Is he now free to transgress God's law? Says Paul:

*"Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid:
yea, we establish the law."*

"How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

Romans 3:31; 6:2

And John declares:

*"This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments:
and His commandments are not grievous."*

1 John 5:3

In the new birth the heart is brought into harmony with God, as it is brought into accord with His law. When this mighty change has taken place in the sinner, he has passed from death unto life, from sin unto holiness, from transgression and rebellion to obedience and loyalty. The old life of alienation from God has ended; the new life of reconciliation, of faith and love, has begun.

Then

*"the righteousness of the law" will "be fulfilled in us, who walk
not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."*

Romans 8:4.

And the language of the soul will be:

"O how love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day."

Psalm 119:97

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul."

Psalm 19:7

Without the law, men have no just conception of the purity and holiness of God or of their own guilt and uncleanness. They have no true conviction of sin and feel no need of repentance. Not seeing their lost condition as violators of God's law, they do not realize their need of the atoning blood of Christ. The hope of salvation is accepted without a radical change of heart or reformation of life. Thus superficial conversions abound, and multitudes are joined to the church who have never been united to Christ.

The desire for an easy religion that requires no striving, no self-denial, no divorce from the follies of the world, has made the doctrine of faith, and faith only, a popular doctrine; but what saith the word of God? Says the apostle James:

"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? . . . Wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? . . . Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."

James 2:14-24.

The testimony of the word of God is against this ensnaring doctrine of faith without works. It is not faith that claims the favor of Heaven without complying with the conditions upon which mercy is to be granted, it is presumption; for genuine faith has its foundation in the promises and provisions of the Scriptures.

Let none deceive themselves with the belief that they can become holy while willfully violating one of God's requirements. The commission of a known sin silences the witnessing voice of the Spirit and separates the soul from God.

"Sin is the transgression of the law."

[1 John 3:4]

And

"whosoever sinneth [transgresseth the law] hath not seen Him, neither known Him."

1 John 3:6

Though John in his epistles dwells so fully upon love, yet he does not hesitate to reveal the true character of that class who claim to be sanctified while living in transgression of the law of God.

"He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected."

1 John 2:4, 5

Here is the test of every man's profession. We cannot accord holiness to any man without bringing him to the measurement of God's only standard of holiness in heaven and in earth. If men feel no weight of the moral law, if they belittle and make light of God's precepts, if they break one of the least of these commandments, and teach men so, they shall be of no esteem in the sight of Heaven, and we may know that their claims are without foundation.

And the claim to be without sin is, in itself, evidence that he who makes this claim is far from holy. It is because he has no true conception of the infinite purity and holiness of God or of what they must become who shall be in harmony with His character; because he has no true conception of the purity and exalted loveliness of Jesus, and the malignity and evil of sin, that man can regard himself as holy. The greater the distance between himself and Christ, and the more inadequate his conceptions of the divine character and requirements, the more righteous he appears in his own eyes.



This little tract is an extract from the book, "The Great Controversy".

If you would like a free copy of "The Great Controversy" or maybe just this tract, please contact us via our website.

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