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## The Law of the Spirit of Life

We have been studying the commandments, taking each in detail; and considering a little of its breadth. Now we want a little glimpse of the law as a whole. It must be a very brief one, for so comprehensive a subject.

There is much misunderstanding about the law. Men have made so many difficulties that do not exist. The difficulties are not in the Bible, but in us. It is not because the sun is not shining every day, that the blind man cannot see it; the defect is in his eyes. The Bible itself has no difficulties; there are in it some things hard to be understood, but it is only the unstable and unlearned who wrest them to their own destruction. It is not the sun's fault that its rays do not penetrate a piece of clay. When the veil of unbelief is removed, and our hearts lose their opacity, things that have seemed dark will be found to be bright light. A child can understand where philosophers stumble.

I once heard a man who had himself been but a year out of the gutter, conduct a mission service. He read a chapter of the Bible that is thought very difficult, and which I myself had in times past had some difficulty with. He made some comments as he read, and I never heard the chapter set forth more clearly and simply in my life. He did not know of any difficulty there, and he made none; he simply read the Word, and understood it, unconscious of the fact that theologians regarded it as a puzzle. It spoke to him, and he received it without any trouble.

The deep things of God are hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes. The one who has the simplicity of a child to receive and to learn, will find that the so-called difficulties have vanished.

When we read something about the law, many people say, "Oh, but that is the ceremonial law!" thinking thus to avoid the duty. They forget that such a term as "ceremonial law" is not to be found in the Bible.

"But does not the Bible speak of two laws?" It speaks of more than two; but in this study we shall speak of only two distinct laws, as easy to distinguish as daylight from midnight darkness,—**the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and the law of sin and death.**

In the third chapter of Romans the Apostle speaks of these two laws as **the law of works and the law of faith**, and sets forth the way of salvation. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." The law of works in bondage, "for as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." The law of faith is life, for there is "no condemnation to them

which are in Christ Jesus,” **for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ makes us free from the law of sin and death.**

### ***Letter and Spirit***

In the third chapter of second Corinthians these two laws are again set forth and contrasted. “The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.” If the ministration of death written and engraved in stone was glorious, how much more shall the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory, etc.

Here we have **the ministration of condemnation and death, and the ministration of righteousness and life.** But the two came at the same time, and were both revealed at Mount Sinai. The ministration of death was that which was written and engraved in stones; the ministration of life flowed from the lips and heart of Christ before the tables of stone were made.

What! the Ten Commandments death? Yes, “for when we were in the flesh the motions of sins which ware by the law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.” “The strength of sin is the law.” And yet at the same time the commandments of God are life and peace; “for we know that the law is spiritual,” and he in whom the law is in truth, has life and peace. “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”

A little study of the giving of the law will enable every soul to determine whether he is in the bondage of sin and death or in the freedom of the Spirit of life. God called Moses up into the mount, and said, “Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now therefore if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then shall ye be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine; and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.”

The point in this is that He brought them unto Himself. In the third chapter of first Peter we are told that “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” We are separated from God by our sins, and Christ suffered that He might bring us nigh to God. God was bringing the children at Israel to Himself; and Christ was the Leader who went before the armies of Israel in the pillar of fire, to accomplish this end. He is the Deliverer, and He it was who was carrying Israel and bringing them to God. They had seen how He was doing it; they had seen Christ set forth crucified among them.

This was God's promise: Ye shall be a kingdom of priests, if ye keep My covenant. Mark that God did not say, "If ye will perform My promise." He never expects anyone to perform His promises, but He fulfils them Himself. Our part is simply to keep, to accept and hold fast to them, and then as He fulfils them we get all the blessedness of it. His covenant is His promise. "If ye will keep My promise, keep the faith, I will do all this for you." By His exceedingly great and precious promises we are made partakers of the Divine nature, made kings and priests. God reminded them of what He had done: Ye have seen My way of working, now hold fast to My promise, and I will fulfil all My word to you.

### ***Grasping a Shadow Instead of the Substance***

Three days after sending the Israelites this message, God spoke the law, in the midst of such grandeur as will never be seen in this earth again until Christ comes and shakes not the earth only, but also heaven. The people were terrified, and said, "Let not God speak with us, lest we die." Moses told them not to be afraid, and he himself drew near to the thick darkness; but the people stood afar off. When he came down from the mount, his face shone so that the people were afraid to come near him, and he had to put a veil over his face for their sakes. So instead of receiving the glory, they shut it out. Instead of receiving the ministration of life, they received the ministration of death. Instead of receiving the substance, they got the shadow. Instead of becoming a kingdom of priests, only one tribe received the priesthood, and they were not priests indeed, for they served only the shadow. **Instead of the real law of which the body is Christ, they got only "the form of righteousness and of the truth in the law."**

The boast of the Jews was the law; but the one who really knows the law will make his boast in God, for **Christ is the perfect law of liberty**. When the Apostle Peter says that we are a kingdom of priests, he says that when we come to Christ, the living Stone, we also become living stones, a house that grows into a holy temple. **Christ is the Living Stone, and those who do not receive Him indeed, get the law on dead tables of stone that can do nothing for them but fall upon them and kill them. They get only form and ceremony.**

### ***Drinking the Law from the Living Rock***

**A living picture was before the children of Israel when the law was spoken, so that they need not have got mere form instead of reality.** The people had been famishing for water, and when Moses at the command of God struck the rock, water had gushed from it, and was even then flowing in the dry places like a river. God "turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters." Ps. cxiv. 8. That solid rock

became water, and yet existed there as rock nevertheless. Such is the infinite variety of the forms of God's life.

Christ stood on the rock, and He is the Rock, the Living Stone. The law is in His heart, and He came to magnify and make it honorable. In Him "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." The Lord would have us know that the very mountain that burned with fire was pouring forth the word of life. The statutes and judgments were commanded in Horeb for the people, but the rock was there pouring out a stream of life for them. The mountain that it was death to touch, was sending forth rivers of life.

That mountain was the dwelling place of God for the time; it was His throne, and from the throne flows forth a pure river of water of life. Out of the throne also proceed thunders, lightnings, and voices. Rev. iv. 5. That same throne that burns with fire, and from which come thunders and lightnings, is the throne to which we are invited to come boldly.

### ***The Law from the Cross***

You say, "We would rather come to the cross of Christ, and Him crucified." But this is Christ crucified. Have you never read, that when Christ was crucified there was an earthquake, and darkness and terror? But at the same time the stream flowed from His wounded side to convey life. At Sinai you have the law as both life and death, and you take which you will. At Calvary you have the law slaying the sinner, but life flowing from Christ, to wash the sin away. So in the midst of the throne is the slain Lamb, and the river of life proceeds from Him. But He is the living stone, and the law which is the foundation of God's throne is written upon Him. In receiving Him we drink of the Rock.

If Israel had believed this they would have had the law only in Christ, the living Stone, which sends forth fountains of water. They drank of the Rock, and the Rock was Christ. They drank not merely from the Rock, but of it, and we likewise must drink of the living Stone, only not faithlessly, as they did.

### ***Water that is also Rock***

Water is an emblem of instability: "Unstable as water." "He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea." Yet rock, the emblem of strength, can by the power of God become water. In drinking the water, they drank of the Rock. The water which we think so unstable the Lord has made use of to establish the earth, "For He hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods." The water of life is a solid rock foundation. Christ walked on the water just as one can on the solid rock.

This is coming to realities, and not forms. We drink of the Rock, Christ Jesus, and thus in Him receive the life of the law, the living law of liberty. He is made a quickening Spirit, and gives the water of life freely to every one who believes in Him. Coming by faith to the Lord Jesus and receiving the Spirit into our hearts, we receive the solid rock of God's eternal truth. It is thus that we receive power to witness to the truth, for the throne in which is the slain Lamb from whom proceeds the river of life, has seven lamps of fire burning before it, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

Remember this, that while for forty years Israel drank of the water that flowed from the rock in Horeb, which was turned into water, the rock was not diminished. Christ gives His life in an ever-flowing stream, yet He always has as much and more to give.

### ***Take Heed How You Hear***

So you can take the law as moral or ceremonial, just as you will. Someone said to me, **“You do not in your teaching make any distinction between the law and the Gospel.”** **Certainly not. The Gospel is the life of God's living law, which is perfect, converting the soul.** That was the only thing that God ever really gave to His people. But it depends on how we hear and how we see, whether we get life or death from it. There is nothing good that may not at the same time be ceremonial and formal, as well as spiritual; but not to the same person.

**If we receive the law in Christ, every one of the commandments is a promise of God, that cleanses from sin.** If we put a veil before our eyes we got nothing but death. Often we see how real the blood, the life, of Christ is, remembering that the Spirit and the water and the blood agree in one, it is easy to drink in the righteousness of God. If our hearts are cleansed so that we can see the stream of blood flowing, we can fill ourselves with His righteousness.

The woman who was dying from the loss of blood, came near to Christ, and established a connection with Him; she got into touch with Him, connected with the main stream, and so the blood of Christ, the water of life, flowed through her. We may have the pipes properly located in our houses, but if there is no connection with the main we get nothing. The woman's life supply was nearly exhausted, and she came where all fulness dwells and made the connection by her faith, and received that which she lacked. Christ is the means of connection between heaven and earth.

“Oh,” you say, “if we had only lived in those days, and seen these wonderful miracles! What advantages the people then had, that we do not have.”

Not a bit of it. The blood is the life, and we have blood in our arteries and veins at this moment. Will that stay there uncorrupted day after day and year after year forever?— No; the whole body is undergoing change continually. Every moment, even every thought, destroys some of the matter of our bodies. The blood undergoes the most rapid change, and quick destruction. It is completely changed every few days. New blood must continually be supplied.

You can readily prove for yourselves that your blood does not continue. If you should eat nothing for a week, would you have as much blood as now? No; you would become weak and would show by the pallor of your cheeks that there was a lack of blood and nourishment. We live because we get fresh blood every day. There is a stream of blood flowing from the throne of God through every soul that lives, whether he knows it or not. The blood is constantly being used up, and continually being renewed.

“Oh, then, we make blood!” No; God gives it to us in the air, light, and food, and it flows into us, and supplies our lack, and quickens us. Our bodies are supplied with life blood directly from the heart of Christ.

The reality of the cleansing accomplished by His blood is seen every day. Let the circulation stop, and there is poisoning and death. There must be continual circulation through us; and so the stream of life from God is flowing through us, and we are only little portions of the channel of life.

This shows us the reality of the blood of Christ that cleanses from all sin by putting His own life of righteousness in us. He declares His righteousness for the sending away of sin. And so as God sends forth His life of righteousness, the blood of Christ, the stream flowing from the Rock, the living Stone, in which is the living law,—the law that gives life,—we receive the righteousness of the law as our daily life.

But even though it be coming into us, if we say we have not faith, we get only the form, which is death. How easy for us, if we would only believe it, to have the righteousness of God! Just as really as we can expand our lungs and have a draught of fresh air, just as we are refreshed from head to foot by a draught of water, so we can have the spiritual life come into us without any visible medium, and find ourselves refreshed.

Today the Spirit of Christ is hovering over the face of all creation, to put life into it. We should stop and think, God is here, and He puts life into me. In the morning we can think of Him who has been keeping the stream of life flowing through us all the night. Thus we may escape the corruption that is in the world through lust.

**The curse is simply the wrong side of a blessing.** The pillar that separated the Israelites from the Egyptians was light to Israel and darkness to the Egyptians; it was life to some and death to others. So the law is life or death to us, according to our relation to it. If we transgress it,—go contrary to it,—it will cut us in pieces, grind us to powder and sweep us away; but if we walk in it, it will be in us a well of water refreshing us day by day, and springing up into everlasting life.

The Present Truth 17, 33 (August 15, 1901)