



2 Cor. 3:18

Open Face

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The Two covenants

David Clayton



One of the important questions which faces us today is the question of what focus our work should take. As we seek to share truth, to minister to others, what aspect of God's truth should we regard as most critical? What particular element of the truth should we concentrate our energies upon?

Ellen White makes an interesting statement in the Paulson collection. On page 342 she says,

"The end is near. We have not a moment to lose. Light is to shine forth from God's people in clear, distinct rays, bringing Jesus before the churches and before the world. God will give additional light, and old truths will be recovered and replaced in the framework of truth; and wherever the laborers go they will triumph. As Christ's ambassadors, they are to search the Scriptures to seek for the truths that have been hidden beneath the rubbish of error, and every ray of light

received is to be communicated to others. One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up all others, Christ our Righteousness." - (Paulson Collection – 342)

This is a thought-provoking statement and one which should make us give careful thought to the question of where our emphasis should really be placed. The more I have come to understand the implications of the righteousness of Christ, the more clearly I have seen the truthfulness of this statement of Ellen white.

As we view the landscape of Seventh-day Adventism today (official and unofficial), we see many confusing ideas. Some are very emphatic that the thrust of our work must be to warn people of the impending Sunday laws, others feel that the real issue is that we need to keep the feast days, or call God by His Hebrew name, others that health reform holds the key to finishing God's work, others feel that the real issue is that the world needs to understand that God does not kill. We ourselves have placed great emphasis on the truth about God and insisted that understanding the truth of God's identity is critically important and is a major issue in the final message to be given to the world. Let us note that the message of Christ our Righteousness is to *"swallow up all others."* Those that are false will collapse and disappear in its light and those which are true will shine with a greater brilliance and will find their proper emphasis in the context of Christ our Righteousness.

NEW COVENANT MINISTERS

In 2 Corinthians 3:5,6, the apostle Paul

makes a statement which brings this issue into focus and very clearly explains what message, what ministry God has given us. He says,

... our sufficiency is of God; (6) Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; (covenant) not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. (2 Cor 3:5-6)

In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away. (Heb 8:13)

God has made us ministers of the New Testament, or of the new covenant (the word "covenant" is translated from the Greek word, "diatheke," and is translated as either "testament" or "covenant."). If God has made us ministers of the *New* covenant, then obviously we cannot be at the same time, ministers of the *old* covenant. This is what Paul is saying, and in the verses which follow he makes this very clear. He also explains the critical differences between both covenants.

Notice, he says that the letter kills (this is not what we must minister to people) but the spirit gives life (this is what we are to minister). What does he mean

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Open Face is dedicated to the promotion of the truths committed to the Advent movement, as believed and taught by the early Adventist pioneers. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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when he refers to “the letter?” What is this thing, associated with the Old Covenant which “kills?” Paul explains what he is referring to in the verse which follows.

But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: (8) How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? (2 Cor 3:7-8)

It seems difficult to misunderstand what Paul is speaking of here. He refers to something which was “written and engraven in stones.” When it was instituted Moses’ face shone with a glory which made it difficult for the people to look at his face. In Exodus 34:28-30 we find the passage to which Paul is referring. It says,

And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink

water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments. (29) And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses’ hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. (30) And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him. (Exo 34:28-30)

Here we are told very plainly that what was written on the tables of stone were the “words of the covenant, the ten commandments.” Which covenant was this? Of course it was the **Old Covenant**.

Let us look at a couple of other passages which make it plain that the center of the old covenant was the Ten Commandments.

And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. (13) And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone. (Deu 4:12-13)

Deuteronomy 5:1-22 also make it clear that the old covenant was based on the ten commandments.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COVENANTS

How can we understand what Paul was saying? Was he teaching that the ten commandments have been abolished? Was he saying that God’s law has been done away with because of the new covenant? Of course not! As we look back at 2 Cor. 3:6 we notice that Paul identifies the critical difference between both covenants. He says, “**not of the letter but of the spirit.**” This phrase holds the key to understanding the difference between

both covenants.

The term, “the letter,” has reference to what was written (in this case written on stone). Under the old covenant as well as under the new covenant, the great need of the people remained the same. **The goal was to obtain righteousness**, to find a way to escape from sin and the death which came with it. Under the old covenant the people sought to find righteousness by obeying the words (the letter) of the ten commandments. Through strict obedience they hoped to obtain God’s favour, to reach a place of holiness where God would be able to bless them and fulfill all His promises to them. It never happened. That system of seeking righteousness could never work, all it did was bring the people into condemnation. Paul refers to it as the “ministration of condemnation.” (2 Cor. 3:9)

Let us notice that the commandments themselves were flawless. Paul states that they are “holy and just and good (Rom. 7:12).” But as the means of making men righteous, as a way of producing godly behaviour they were hopeless. Paul says,

... if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. (Gal 3:21)

And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. (Rom 7:10)

Man needed righteousness. The commandments described and required righteousness. So what was the problem? Why did God have to abolish the old covenant, based on the law written on stone?

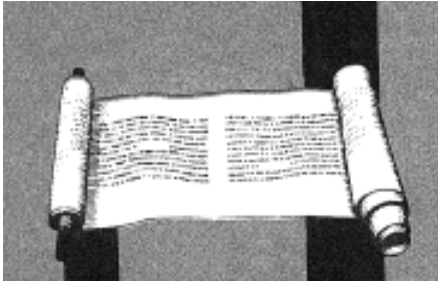
For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. (Rom 7:14)

The old covenant could never produce righteousness in man. There was a fundamental conflict between two of the parties involved which made it impossible for the goal of righteousness to be attained. The law did its duty

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SOME THOUGHTS ON THE MESSAGE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IN CHRIST

Ellen G. White



IMPORTANCE OF THE MESSAGE

The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. ***This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.*** {TM 91.2}

The message that was given to the people in these meetings presented in clear lines not alone the commandments of God—a part of the third angel's message—but the faith of Jesus, which comprehends more than is generally supposed. And it will be well for the third angel's message to be proclaimed in all its parts, for the people need every jot and tittle of it. If we proclaim the commandments of God and leave the other half scarcely

touched, the message is marred in our hands. {16MR 227.1}

Do not allow your minds to be diverted from the all-important theme of the righteousness of Christ by the study of theories. Do not imagine that the performance of ceremonies, the observance of outward forms, will make you an heir of heaven. We want to keep the mind steadfastly to the point for which we are working; for it is now the day of the Lord's preparation, and we should yield our hearts to God, that they may be softened and subdued by the Holy Spirit. {RH, April 5, 1892 par. 1}

ONE INTEREST

“The end is near. We have not a moment to lose. Light is to shine forth from God's people in clear, distinct rays, bringing Jesus before the churches and before the world. God will give additional light, ***and old truths will be recovered and replaced in the framework of truth;*** and wherever the laborers go they will triumph. As Christ's ambassadors, ***they are to search the Scriptures to seek for the truths that have been hidden beneath the rubbish of error,*** and every ray of light received is to be communicated to others. ***One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up all others, Christ our Righteousness.***” (Paulson Collection – 342)

CHRIST DOES IT ALL

Believe it because it is the truth, because God says it, and lay hold upon the meritorious blood of a crucified and risen Saviour. He is your only hope, He is your righteousness, your Substitute and Surety, your all in all. When you realize that, you can bring to Him only an offering of praise. But when you are not willing to come to Christ and acknowledge that ***He does it all, when you feel that you must first take a few steps, and come so far, and***

then God will meet you; that is just exactly like Cain's offering. He did not know Jesus, and he did not know that the blood of Jesus could cleanse his sins and make his offering acceptable to God. There are more Cains than one, with tainted offerings and polluted sacrifices and without the blood of Jesus. You are to come to Jesus Christ at every step. With the blood of Jesus and its cleansing power, offer your petitions to God and pray to Him in earnest, and study your Bibles as never before. {FW 76.3}

SIMPLY BELIEVE

And what is it to believe? It is to fully accept that Jesus Christ died as our sacrifice; that He became the curse for us, took our sins upon Himself, and imputed unto us His own righteousness. Therefore we claim this righteousness of Christ, we believe it, and it is our righteousness. He is our Saviour. He saves us because He said He would. Are we going to go into all the explanations as to how He can save us? Do we have the goodness in ourselves that will make us better and cleanse us from the spots and stains of sin, enabling us then to come to God? We simply cannot do it. {FW 70.2}

Genuine faith appropriates the righteousness of Christ, and the sinner is made an overcomer with Christ; for he is made a partaker of the divine nature, and thus divinity and humanity are combined. {1SM 363.3}

FEAR OF THE MESSAGE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH.

The teachers of the people have not themselves become acquainted by living experience with the Source of their dependence and their strength. And when the Lord raises up men and sends them with the very message for this

time to give to the people—a message which is not a new truth, but the very same that Paul taught, that Christ Himself taught—it is to them a strange doctrine. *They begin to caution the people— who are ready to die because they have not been strengthened with the lifting up of Christ before them— “Do not be too hasty. Better wait, and not take up with this matter until you know more about it.” And the ministers preach the same dry theories, when the people need fresh manna.* {3SM 186.1}

The character of Christ is an infinitely perfect character, and He must be lifted up, He must be brought prominently into view, for He is the power, the might, the sanctification and righteousness of all who believe in Him. *The men who have had a Pharisaical spirit, think if they hold to the good old theories, and have no part in the message sent of God to His people, they will be in a good and safe position.* So thought the Pharisees of old, and their example should warn ministers off that self-satisfied ground. {3SM 186.2}

Jesus came to impart to the human soul the Holy Spirit, by which the love of God is shed abroad in the heart; but *it is impossible to endow men with the Holy Spirit, who are set in their ideas, whose doctrines are all stereotyped and unchangeable*, who are walking after the traditions and commandments of men, as were the Jews in the time of Christ. They were very punctilious in the observances of the church, very rigorous in following their forms, but they were destitute of vitality and religious devotion. They were represented by Christ as like the dry skins which were then used as bottles. The gospel of Christ could not be placed in their hearts; for there was no room to contain it. They could not be the new bottles into which He could pour His new wine. Christ was obliged to seek elsewhere than among the scribes and the Pharisees for bottles for His doctrine of truth and life. He must find men who were willing to have regeneration

of heart. He came to give to men new hearts. He said, “A new heart also will I give you.” But the self-righteous of that day and of this day feel no need of having a new heart. Jesus passed by the scribes and the Pharisees, for they felt no need of a Saviour. They were wedded to forms and ceremonies. . . . {1SM 386.2}

RESPONSE TO THE MESSAGE

Many have lost very much in that they have not opened the eyes of their understanding to discern the wondrous things in the law of God. On the one hand, religionists generally have divorced the law and the gospel, while we have, on the other hand, almost done the same from another standpoint. We have not held up before the people the righteousness of Christ and the full significance of His great plan of redemption. We have left out Christ and His matchless love, brought in theories and reasonings, and preached argumentative discourses. {FW 15.3}

No one has said that we shall find perfection in any man's investigations; but this I do know, that our churches are dying for the want of teaching on the subject of righteousness by faith in Christ, and on kindred truths.

No matter by whom light is sent, we should open our hearts to receive it with the meekness of Christ. But many do not do this. When a controverted point is presented, they pour in question after question, without admitting a point when it is well sustained. O, may we act as men who want light! May God give us His Holy Spirit day by day, and let the light of His countenance shine upon us, that we may be learners in the school of Christ. {GW 301.2}

The danger has been presented to me again and again of entertaining, as a people, false ideas of justification by faith. I have been shown for years that Satan would work in a special manner to confuse the mind on this point. The law of God has been largely dwelt upon and has been presented to congregations, almost as destitute of the knowl-

edge of Jesus Christ and His relation to the law as was the offering of Cain. I have been shown that many have been kept from the faith because of the mixed, confused ideas of salvation, because the ministers have worked in a wrong manner to reach hearts. The point that has been urged upon my mind for years is the imputed righteousness of Christ. I have wondered that this matter was not made the subject of discourses in our churches throughout the land, when the matter has been kept so constantly urged upon me, and I have made it the subject of nearly every discourse and talk that I have given to the people. {FW 18.1}

MORE OF CHRIST

And when you go from this place, Oh be so full of the message that it is like fire shut up in your bones, that you cannot hold your peace. It is true men will say, "You are too excited; you are making too much of this matter, and you do not think enough of the law; now, you must think more of the law; don't be all the time reaching for this righteousness of Christ, but build up the law."

Let the law take care of itself. We have been at work on the law until we get as dry as the hills of Gilboa, without dew or rain. Let us trust in the merits of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. May God help us that our eyes may be anointed with eyesalve, that we may see. God helping us, we will draw nigh to Him, and He says he will draw nigh to us. Do we believe? Will we come in God's appointed way? May the Lord help us and enlighten us, that we may go forth from this place as they went forth to proclaim the truth after the day of Pentecost; and there were souls converted; they could not resist the testimony. {1888 557.2}

REJECTION OF THE MESSAGE

There is to be in the churches a wonderful manifestation of the power of God, but it will not move upon those who have not humbled themselves be-

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Ye Have Done it Unto Me

Vlad Ardeias

I have been rejoicing in this wonderful truth of being in Christ, because in it I have received everything I ever needed and even much more! All of a sudden all of God's promises became true and real in my daily life. Verses like the following changed my life in a moment and transformed it into a real, genuine, living and continuous experience with and in our Lord Jesus Christ!

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." (Ephesians 1:3)

"For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." (2 Corinthians 1:20)

My life has been filled with happiness because of the assurance of being an heir of the Almighty! I am no longer one of Satan's trophies, but one of God's children, having all the riches of heaven, and much more than that, I realize that, through the new birth, I have become a part of the life of Christ, a part of His existence, a member of His own body! Day after day, as I was rejoicing in this wonderful truth, I suddenly became aware of something even greater!

One day I stood outside in our yard, and I was meditating on this wonderful truth and on the implications that go with it. I was indeed rejoicing in the peace of being in Christ when it struck me that if I was a part of Christ's life, then others are also a part of Christ! When this hit me, the entire world started to look different! The first person that I met was my dear wife, and as I looked at her the thoughts began to flow! I remembered the verses which say:

"And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." (1 Corinthians 12:26, 27)

"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." (Romans 12:4, 5)

How are we "members one of another"? Just like the members of the human body! If, for example, one of the fingers of my right hand scratches the left hand, that finger serves the need of the left hand and in doing this, it serves ME, and so it is ME, my very person that is relieved of the problem that I had!

"For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." (Ephesians 5:29-30)

How does the Lord nourish and cherish the church that is His body? By His members! He is using one member, a finger for example, to nourish another member, or even the entire body! This was exactly the case with the apostle Paul. The Head, that is Christ, used this member to bless the entire body of the church by the revelations which he received and through the letters which he wrote!

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." (Ephesians 4:11, 12)

According to this verse, the work of ministry is the work of edifying the body of Christ!

But most people will only willingly serve

a lovable person, and most Christians think that Christ is to be seen only in believers! When it comes to serving an alcoholic or another person who openly lives in sin, most often we think "He is unworthy!" but let us see what the Bible says about that:

"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:18, 19)

The Bible says that God reconciled the entire world unto himself, and he "hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation", and this work is exactly "the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ"! Paul goes on and says,

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." 2 Corinthians 5:20

He could not pray the ones that are reconciled to God, to be reconciled to God, so he is obviously speaking about the ones that are still "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1).

In Christ all humanity was saved. When He became flesh, one of us, he took all humanity into himself. In other words, humanity became his body and he saved each and every member of the human race! This is the reality! Satan has deceived the entire world into believing that they still have to DO something to be saved, but "we are ambassadors for Christ" to give to all the people the good news that they are already saved in Christ, and that they are a part of His body!

This wonderful truth was revealed to Peter in vision. It was because of it that Philip ran after the Ethiopian eu-

nuch. This was “the mystery of Christ” that was revealed to Paul: “That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel” (**Ephesians 3:6**). All humanity was redeemed in Christ, and now He is working to gather them all into himself.

Many people think that in the judgment each person will be confronted with the ten commandments and asked whether or not he kept them. Does this concept give us the true picture? Let us read some verses in which the Lord Jesus himself describes the judgment:

*“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.” (**Matthew 25:41-45**)*

Here the Lord says that people will be judged on the basis of the manner in which they related to Him! But is it possible to serve the Lord Himself today? This is the question many people are asking and this is the final question of the wicked! We know that the Lord is in heaven, which is true, so how can we, on earth serve him? John gives us the answer:

*“If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be.” (**John 12:26**)*

This is an astonishing reality: I can be where Christ is and serve him there!

This is what the Bible says! Then, where is he now? According to the verses in Matthew, he is now in some hospital, in a prison, he lies naked, hungry and thirsty at the edge of the city; he is right now in Africa, suffering from starvation and disease; he is next door to you, trembling maybe under the heavy load of condemnation for sin, or striving with sin and being almost ready to quit! There we see the Scripture teaches it: Christ is represented in each and every person in this world, and we have the great privilege to serve him by serving those whom He has redeemed by His blood! Yes, the people are not worthy of our service, it is true! But let us always remember how Paul saw the people around him:

“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto



*themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh...” (**2 Corinthians 5:14-16**)*

*“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.” (**Colossians 3:23, 24**)*

This is the way Christians see the world: “if one died for all, then were all dead. . . Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh.”

In Romania there lived a Jewish man, converted to Christianity who became a Lutheran pastor. His name was Richard Wurmbrand. He served the Lord to the best of his knowledge during the Nazi period as well as during the communist period and was put in prison for 14 years. Some time after he was released from prison, he was traveling by train and a person from that train recognized him and asked: “Pastor Wurmbrand, how many years did you spend in jail?” He answered: “14 years and during this period, I spent two years in solitary confinement.” Then the person replied: “You don’t know what suffering is, pastor!” Pastor Wurmbrand was a little bit upset when he heard that, and asked: “Why do you say this?” Then the man replied: “I haven’t spent a day in prison, but I have a daughter that has been locked in a jail for two years! THAT is suffering, sir! THAT is suffering!”

Many think of heaven as being some kind of Disney Land! In Romania we have a story of a Christian who, one day, asked God to show him heaven. So God sent an angel who took him on his wings and went to heaven. But on the way there, as they got closer and closer, the Christian heard more and more voices that were weeping and wailing under some great pain! He got scared and said to the angel: “I thought we were going to heaven!” “That is where we are going!” the angel replied! “Then what is all this terrifying noise?” Then the angel replied: “Didn’t you ever read, “*For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered? Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!*’?”

There is a truth to be learned from this story. Heaven will not be without pain as long as there is someone on this

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faithfully. From the two tables of stone it proclaimed righteousness and demanded obedience. But the words were only words carved into stone, only the lifeless letter and they fell upon the depraved hearts of carnal men with the demand for righteousness. Man wanted righteousness. He tried and tried to obey that holy law, that perfect law, but he was only carnal. In such a condition there was not even the slightest hope that he would ever obtain righteousness by obedience to the law. So the old covenant, based on the written law (the letter) could never meet the great need of humanity for righteousness, therefore, the system had to change.

So in Hebrews chapter 8:7, we are told that there was a fault with the first (the old) covenant and because of this, God had to introduce the second.

For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. (Heb 8:7)

Let us note that this covenant which is called the “new covenant” or the second covenant is actually the everlasting covenant. It is the covenant by which men have always been saved in all ages and Paul emphasizes this in Galatians 3:16,17. However, in God’s dealings with Israel as a nation, the covenant which was made with them at Sinai constituted the first covenant in terms of their experience as a people. So Paul says that there was a fault with the covenant and this is why it had to be changed. In Heb. 8:8,9 he tells us plainly what this fault was.

For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: (9) Not according to the covenant that I made with their

fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. (Heb 8:8-9)

The fault was with the people. The old covenant contained a perfect law, one which was “holy, just and good.” But the people of whom it demanded righteousness were “carnal, sold under sin.” The system could not work because the law and the people were totally opposed to each other. Obedience was impossible under these conditions and so, God had to change the system.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: (Heb 8:10)

What was the difference between this new covenant and the old covenant? Well, in the old covenant God’s requirements were written on stone. In the new, they were written on the heart. In the old, there was only the letter of the law (the written words) in the new, there was the spirit of the law (the living reality of those words). In the old, righteousness was only described and demanded, in the new, righteousness was imparted by the spirit of God entering the heart of the believer.

You see, the ten commandments describe righteousness. They proclaim God’s will for all humanity in unmistakable words. But they cannot produce righteousness. **Righteousness is not obtained by practice or by the forming of habits.** It is a quality of nature, an aspect of life and can only be received by birth. Therefore the commandments do not offer a solution to man’s problem. As far as the sinner is concerned, carnal and “sold under sin,” the only purpose the law can serve is to make him know how utterly wretched and hopeless is his condition and to make him see how incapable he is of changing and improving

that condition. All it can do is condemn him for his sin, it cannot deliver him from his sin.

THE TRUE SOURCE

If we are to have true righteousness, then we must find the **source of righteousness**. We must find the place where righteousness is produced. The law can only describe righteousness, but what I need is to find the place where righteousness itself exists as a reality.

Let me make my point a little more plain. When Isaac Newton discovered gravity he wrote down his findings, and his words described the way gravity works. Even in schools today, students study those words and they refer to what Newton wrote as “Newton’s Law of Gravity.” Yet no one is foolish enough to believe that gravity itself exists in Newton’s words. They know that Newton’s words are only the “letter” and that if they want to find gravity itself they have to look somewhere else apart from those words. The words can help a person to understand gravity but not to experience it. This is the exact relationship which the ten commandments have to righteousness. They can describe righteousness but they can never produce it.

And so, the apostle Paul says,

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; (Rom 3:21)

So there, we see, there is a righteousness which exists “without the law,” that is, without the **letter** of the law. It is not contrary to the law, but it is independent of the law because the law cannot produce it. A person cannot obtain this righteousness by relating to the law because the law does not have it to give. There is a place where righteousness exists as a living reality. It is not dependent on the observance of the law. This place is, in Christ Jesus. (Rom. 3:22; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9). So a person may come to Christ who is the source of all righteousness, who is

Himself the living law, the living reality of all that the law describes, and there in Christ he may find as a free gift the perfect righteousness for which he has been searching. That which the law demanded, but could not give.

NATURAL RIGHTEOUSNESS

Consider this question; was the law made for God? Was it something put in place to keep God from doing wrong? Why does God do only good, is it because the commandments restrain Him from doing evil? What a ridiculous idea! God does not need the law to ensure that He does good. He is goodness itself, He is the living law. The commandments are only an expression of what He is. When a person has received Christ by faith, it is this very life of God which becomes his, through the holy spirit. He has become a partaker of the divine nature – that is, God’s nature has become his nature. Do you see why he no longer needs a relationship with the letter of the law? He now has the mind of Christ, the nature of God. Now he does what is right, not because the law demands it, but because Christ is living in him and the only life Christ can live is a holy life – one which is in perfect harmony with the law.

Suppose a man finds a photograph of a beautiful woman. He falls in love with what he sees and so every day he takes this picture wherever he goes. He talks to it, kisses it, embraces it and takes it to bed with him at night. How much satisfaction will he get? Not much, unless he is a madman. All he will do is only frustrate himself, because the picture is only a description. It is not the reality. To find true satisfaction he must find the real thing. The photograph has many limitations. It is a likeness of the reality but it is lacking many, many of the qualities of the original. Of course, the photograph may be helpful, it may assist the man in finding the person whom it portrays but that is the only good it can do. And so the Bible says of the law,

Wherefore the law was our

schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. (Gal 3:24)

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. (Rom 10:4)

WHY THEN GIVE THE LAW?

A question which arises as we consider all this, is the question, why then did God institute the system of law? Why did He ordain a ministration which could not produce righteousness? Again Paul gives us a clear and reasonable answer:

Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: (Rom 5:20)

Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. (Gal 3:19)

Man’s condition was hopeless. He was depraved and lost, but how could he know it? How could he be led to see himself as he really was so that he could seek a remedy? This was one purpose of the law. The law entered “that the offence might abound” – that “sin by the commandment might become exceedingly sinful (Romans 7:10).” As Paul says, “I had not known sin but by the law (Rom. 7:7).”

But the law also served another purpose. It was “added because of transgressions.” As sin abounded and the innate wickedness of men’s hearts produced all kinds of atrocities, there was the need for man to be placed under some kind of discipline and restraint. Even among those who were called God’s people there was the need of a system which would restrain the natural tendencies of the carnal heart. This is why God placed Israel “under the law.” He put them under a system of government where the law ruled. This was not God’s final plan, it was only a stop-gap. Such a plan could never pro-

duce true righteousness, but there was need to put a restraint on man’s naturally wicked behaviour and so, the law was “added because of transgressions till the seed should come (Gal. 3:19)

Notice, this system was only to last “till the seed should come.” After that faith is come we are no longer under a schoolmaster (Gal. 3:25).”

MINISTERS OF CHRIST

So what we have seen very clearly is that we are not ministers of the old covenant. The commandments as they were written on stone (the letter) cannot be the focus of our work. We are made “able ministers of the new covenant,” not of the letter but the spirit.

“Now the Lord is that spirit ... (2 Cor. 3:17).” Christ Himself is the reality of the new covenant. He Himself is the living reality of the law. All that the commandments described, He is the reality of it. Now we are ministers not of dead words, written on lifeless stone, but of the living reality to which those words only pointed. Christ is to be the center, the focus of our ministry. Christ is to be all, and in all (Col. 3:11).

THE LAW ESTABLISHED

What then is the relevance of the ten commandments? Now that they have led us to Christ are they abolished? We know that the “ministration,” or the system of government based on the ten commandments has been abolished (2 Cor. 3:11,13) but does this mean that the ten commandments themselves have been abolished? Absolutely not!

Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law. (Rom 3:31)

When God gave the commandments to Israel He had two purposes in mind. Firstly, He wanted to make them aware of their true condition, to make them see how deeply integrated sin was into their nature (Rom. 7:10; 5:20) so that they would seek a remedy (Gal. 3:24). Secondly He wanted to put some restraint upon their naturally sinful

behaviour to prevent them from becoming totally depraved in their way of life (Gal. 3:19). Did God give them an artificial standard of righteousness to convince them of sin and to show them how He desired that they should live? Did God say, "this is the way of righteousness," although what He gave them was not a true description of righteousness? Of course not! The ten commandments as they were written on stone did not express all the deeper meanings of God's law. Jesus showed us that they go much deeper than the words actually say (Matt. 5:20-28), but they were a genuine and true description of righteousness nevertheless. They may have been limited in their expression of the truth, but they were absolute truth nevertheless. Note the words of Paul:

Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, (10) For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for

menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; (1 Tim 1:9-10)

Paul does not teach that the law is abolished. There is a class of people who still very much need the law. They are the lawless, the disobedient etc. They still need the rule of law to prevent the open manifestation of gross sin and to make them aware of their true condition. They have not yet come to Christ so they still need the schoolmaster. But the law is not made for a "righteous man." Why not? Because having received Christ's righteousness (the only righteousness there is), the righteous man is by nature in harmony with the law. He has obtained the righteousness which is the goal of the law and he obtained it without the law (Rom. 3:21) The law did its work when it led him to Christ, but now, his relationship is no longer with the law, but with Christ. Nevertheless, everything which the law demanded is present in Christ, who is the living law, and the man who truly has obtained the righteousness of Christ, will, in Christ, walk in perfect harmony with the law (Rom. 8:4; Rom.

3:31; 1 John 2:6).

This is not difficult to see. God did not say to the sinner, "here are the ten commandments. They show you how you must behave." But then, after the sinner has found Christ He tells him, "now you no longer are required to behave in the same way." What! This would mean that when a man is a sinner, God holds up a certain standard of behaviour before him and tells him that if he does not obey it, he is guilty, but then as soon as the person becomes a Christian, then what was wrong for the sinner is no longer wrong for the Christian. But this is foolishness. If God said something was wrong when I was a sinner, then it is still wrong when I am a saint. The difference is, I was, as a sinner, trying to obey the rules but my nature was opposed to the work. Now I am in Christ, His nature is my nature. My whole life is an expression of Christ. I don't need the rules to demand that I live righteously. In Him, it is my normal way of life.



AN ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED REALITY

For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: (2 Cor 5:14)

Christ died for all men (Rom. 5:8). What did His death for all accomplish? It put all to death, because, we judge thus that if one died for all, all died. The apostle Paul refuses to limit the gospel to the realm of theory or legal questions. He accepts the implications of Christ's death as a practical, real experience which literally affects the lives of all men. We "judge thus," he says. Are we to believe what is not true? Certainly not. We judge thus, only because it is true. (Rom. 6:11)

But the question is, why are not all men dead (to self) if all died? It is because the experience of death is in one person. It is not in men outside of Christ. Christ did not provide death and life as benefits disconnected from Himself. He died, He lives. Life and death are in Him and nowhere else. Only in Him may

they be experienced. Any man who is in Christ is a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17), but only in Christ.

The Lord laid the sin of all the world upon Christ (Isa. 53:6), Why then do we still find sin dominating the experience of even Christians? As a result of this fact, our deliverance from sin has been seen by many as mainly a legal issue where Christ took the **penalty** of our sins, but leaves us to struggle still against the **power** of those sins. We believe in a legal deliverance but not a practical deliverance. Did He truly take our sins, or did He take only the penalty for them?

One single thing stands in the way of our experiencing the reality of this truth: Do we believe in Christ? Do we believe in what God has done in His Son?

But is faith really so critical? Can the work of Christ, already accomplished

for all men, fail to be an effective reality simply because men will not believe it? Does the efficacy of God's work for man depend so much on man's response? This is exactly what the Scriptures tell us in many places. Because of unbelief men have failed to benefit from an already finished work. They refuse to believe what is true, and therefore for them, the truth is no better than fiction.

On God's part, everything is finished. It is over. We are already reconciled to Him (2 Cor. 5:18). Nothing stands in the way of our being accepted by God. Our sins no longer exist as far as He is concerned. Pure grace has cancelled the debt and provided life. But we still need to be reconciled to God by accepting His reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:20). Every barrier has already been removed, yet if we do not believe, these obstacles still remain in our minds and effectively keep us away from God and all these blessings. (John 3:18)

The Meaning of The Cross

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. (Gal 6:14)

In this verse Paul speaks of his determination to glory in nothing but the cross of Christ. But what does he mean when he speaks of the cross? What is he speaking of? Is it the wooden instrument? Is it the historical fact of Christ's death? What is he referring to?

We see that Paul's glorying in the cross was as a result of what the cross had done for him.

- (a) It had crucified the world unto him
- (b) It had crucified him unto the world.

What does this mean? Crucifixion signifies **death** – nothing else. What Paul was saying was that by means of the cross his relationship with the world was one of death. As far as the appeal of the world was concerned it did not exist and as far as his response to the world was concerned it did not exist. What was it that had accomplished this? It was the cross of Christ.

The cross signified not just death, but voluntary death. Death to self-will, death to sin, death to Adam's life, death to all this life and this world offers. But how did the cross, the instrument which killed Christ, accomplish this for Paul (and for me)? Notice it was not discipline or obedience which had delivered Paul from the world, it was the cross.

The simple, but wonderful truth is that the cross which killed Christ delivered Paul because it **killed** him also! It was the means by which Christ put him to death, thereby delivering him from the world, from sin and from himself.

The cross sets us free, not simply because Christ died there for us, but because **we died there in Christ!** The power of the cross is the power of deliverance from our past, from the world,

from ourselves and all we have been. However, this power is only available, only a reality when we have become one with Christ, when we have entered into His life, thereby partaking of His very existence.



THE PROBLEM

The problem is, the cross has become (like everything else) a symbol of what Christ did 2000 years ago, an experience which was on my behalf, which motivates and challenges me, but which has no actual effect on my own personal experience (apart from my response to the challenge).

This is not how Paul related to the cross. The cross of Christ in His experience was an actual thing; an event which had put him to death. It was not he who endeavored to die, it was the cross which had accomplished his death. This became his reality, he was crucified with Christ and received this crucifixion when he believed in Christ.

The whole problem with Christianity is that we are trying to do again what Christ has already done. We see the Christian life as a challenge rather than a finished reality. We perceive our duty as one of work and effort rather than trust and rest. Conversion means we begin a work rather than accept a finished one. The focus is all upon us and

what we must do rather than upon Christ and what He has done, life is a struggle rather than a victory.

Paul gloried in the cross not because it challenged him, but because it delivered him. Of course, such a deliverance could only be because he believed in Christ – that is, he believed that He and Christ had become one, participants in the same existence so that all which Christ had accomplished had become his reality.

He lived the life of Christ. In Him, Christ lived again on earth. All that Christ was, he was, all that Christ had accomplished he had accomplished. So he partook of and lived a life in which self had been crucified and the power of the world destroyed. So he gloried in the cross for it was there that his deliverance had been accomplished.

Christians have become accustomed to regarding the emblems of Christianity as just that – mere emblems and symbols (baptism, communion, the new birth – even prayer!). They have not gone beyond the symbols to the reality. For them these symbols have been just rituals to stimulate and motivate. They have not BELIEVED in the realities of which these symbols are only illustrations.

In his writings Paul dwells prominently on two things:

- (a) The cross of Christ
- (b) The resurrection of Christ.

Both these things are critical in the life of the believer. The cross delivers me from the dominion of sin, while the resurrection transports me into the life, power and realities of Christ's present existence – a life lived wholly unto God.

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. (7) For he that is dead is freed from sin. (Rom 6:6-7)

Paul says that our old man is crucified. What is this "old man?" In the simplest sense this refers to the person I used to be before I became a Christian. This person has been put to death, has come to an end. Has ceased to be a factor in my existence.

Notice the emphasis; this old man has been put to death not by Him, but **with Him**. Again, the emphasis is on the event which occurred 2000 years ago. This might have been stated, "I have entered into His crucifixion." He was crucified 2000 years ago but I have just now accepted Him. How could I be crucified **with** Him? This is true, only because it is His crucifixion which I have received. It is His death which has become effective in me through the holy spirit which has baptized me into His existence. (1 Cor. 12:13; 2 Cor. 4:10,11).

"So many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death." (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27)

Notice that it is the **body of sin** which has been destroyed That is, the part of me which causes me to sin, the part of me which is helpless, enslaved, sold to sin. Here referred to as the "body" (also in Rom. 7:24) but evidently referring to the "carnal mind." (Rom. 8:7,8).

The main reason why people sin is not because of sinful flesh, (biological factors) but because of sinful mind (spiritual factors). Let us remember that Lucifer and the fallen angels, as well as Adam and Eve, all sinned while in **sinless** flesh. This was also true of millions of angels who followed in the steps of Lucifer. On the other hand, Jesus lived without sin in sinful flesh, that is, in a body which was suffering from the effects of many generations of degeneracy.

It is obvious that the real root of sin is not my sin-affected body, but rather my sin (self) centered mind. It is also evident that there is only one aspect of my person which needs to die in order that sin may be overcome. This aspect

is not my physical flesh or body, but rather my self-centered mind.

Paul uses a very strong word in speaking of what happens when we have been baptized into Christ. He says this results in our being crucified with him so that the body of sin might be **destroyed** This word "destroyed," is from the Greek word "Katargeo" and means to do away, abolish, cease. Paul chooses extreme, uncompromising words to describe what happens to the sinful part after we have come into Christ. It is dead, crucified. Here he says it is destroyed. Why choose such words? What message does he wish to convey to his readers? Why does he not say the body of sin is **weakened, crippled, subdued**? What is his reason?

His intent is that his readers should understand that in Christ, sin has come to a complete end. There is no longer any rationale for sin. Something which has been destroyed no longer exists and this, according to Paul, is what has happened to the "body of sin" (the sinful mind). It no longer exists. Why is it that the experience of so many Christians contradicts this plain truth taught by Paul? It is because they have not accepted their death in Christ, they have not "reckoned" it to be so (Rom. 6:11), they have not believed.

Paul says this experience is so that **"henceforth,"** this might be our experience. That is, from this point forward. Here we find no contemplation of, or allowance for, a life of constantly falling under sin's power, of being frequently defeated. Here we see finality, an end and a beginning. From this point onwards, sin ends, righteousness begins. Why is this so? What has accomplished this revolution? It is the crucifixion, the death, the destruction of the old man, the body of sin.

If this change were achieved by the **subduing** or the **restraining** of the body of sin, then there would be the option of periodic sin and the necessity of a constant struggle to refrain from sin. But since this change is achieved by death, crucifixion, destruc-

tion, there is no room, no allowance for sin to creep in (although we need to remember Galatians 2:17,18).

The whole purpose of this crucifixion, the whole point of the death of the body of sin is that we should not serve sin, that we should be freed from sin, that sin should have no dominion over us. If, therefore, sin continues to be a part of our experience then it is evident that the gospel has failed, or rather, that we have not truly believed the gospel.



SOME THOUGHTS ON THE MESSAGE

Continued from page 4

fore the Lord, and opened the door of the heart by confession and repentance. ***In the manifestation of that power which lightens the earth with the glory of God, they will see only something which in their blindness they think dangerous, something which will arouse their fears, and they will brace themselves to resist it.*** Because the Lord does not work according to their ideas and expectations, they will oppose the work. "Why," they say, "should not we know the Spirit of God, when we have been in the work so many years?"--Because they did not respond to the warnings, the entreaties of the messages of God, but persistently said, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Talent, long experience, will not make men channels of light, unless they place themselves under the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and are called, and chosen, and prepared by the endowment of the Holy Spirit..... {RH, December 23, 1890 par. 18}

The third angel's message will not be comprehended, the light which will lighten the earth with its glory will be called a false light, by those who refuse to walk in its advancing

Continued on next page ➡

glory. The work that might have been done, will be left undone by the rejecters of truth, because of their unbelief. We entreat of you who oppose the light of truth, to stand out of the way of God's people. Let Heaven-sent light shine forth upon them in clear and steady rays. God holds you to whom this light has come, responsible for the use you make of it. Those who will not hear will be held responsible; for the truth has been brought within their reach, but they despised their opportunities and privileges. ***Messages bearing the divine credentials have been sent to God's people; the glory, the majesty, the righteousness of Christ,***

full of goodness and truth, have been presented; the fullness of the Godhead in Jesus Christ has been set forth among us with beauty and loveliness, to charm all whose hearts were not closed with prejudice. We know that God has wrought among us. We have seen souls turn from sin to righteousness. We have seen faith revived in the hearts of the contrite ones. Shall we be like the lepers that were cleansed who went on their way, and only one returned to give glory to God? Let us rather tell of his goodness, and praise God with heart, with pen, and with voice. {RH, May 27, 1890 par. 6}

YE HAVE DONE IT UNTO ME

Continued from Page 6

earth who is suffering from sin. Christ will Himself suffer as long as those whom He gave life to, continue to live outside of this life and under the dominion of sin. This is why the greatest joy that I have found in the experience of being in Christ is the joy and the privilege of comforting my Lord's heart by comforting his children, in his body! Do you know of any greater joy? This is why I am telling you with the apostle:

“Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Acts 20:35)

May you always experience this wonderful joy in the Lord!

Open Face

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