

Love Is the Fulfillment of the Law

Sabbath Afternoon, March 22

In setting aside the law of God, men know not what they are doing. God's law is the transcript of His character. It embodies the principles of His kingdom. He who refuses to accept these principles is placing himself outside the channel where God's blessings flow.

The glorious possibilities set before Israel could be realized only through obedience to God's commandments. The same elevation of character, the same fulness of blessing—blessing on mind and soul and body, blessing on house and field, blessing for this life and for the life to come—is possible for us only through obedience.

In the spiritual as in the natural world, obedience to the laws of God is the condition of fruit bearing. And when men teach the people to disregard God's commandments, they are preventing them from bearing fruit to His glory. They are guilty of withholding from the Lord the fruits of His vineyard. —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 305.

The great God has a law by which to govern His kingdom, and those who trample upon that law will one day find that they are amenable to its statutes. The remedy for transgression is not to be found in declaring that the law is abolished. To abolish the law would be to dishonor it, and to cast contempt upon the Lawgiver. The only escape for the transgressor of law is found in the Lord Jesus Christ; for through the grace and atonement of the only-begotten Son of God, the sinner may be saved and the law vindicated. —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 331.

The same divine mind that is working upon the things of nature is speaking to the hearts of men and creating an inexpressible craving for something they have not. The things of the world cannot satisfy their longing. The Spirit of God is pleading with them to seek for those things that alone can give peace and rest—the grace of Christ, the joy of holiness. Through influences seen and unseen, our Saviour is constantly at work to attract the minds of men from the unsatisfying pleasures of sin to the infinite blessings that may be theirs in Him. To all these souls, who are vainly seeking to drink from the broken cisterns of this world, the divine message is addressed, "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17.

You who in heart long for something better than this world can give, recognize this longing as the voice of God to your soul. Ask Him to give you repentance, to reveal Christ to you in His infinite love, in His perfect purity. In the Saviour's life the principles of God's law—love to God and man—were perfectly exemplified. Benevolence, unselfish love, was the life of His soul. It is as we behold Him, as the light from our Saviour falls upon us, that we see the sinfulness of our own hearts. —*Steps to Christ*, p. 28.

Sunday, March 23

The Law of Love

The law of Jehovah dating back to creation, was comprised in the two great principles, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." These two great principles embrace the first four commandments, showing the duty of man to God, and the last six, showing the duty of man to his fellowman. The principles were more explicitly stated to man after the fall, and worded to meet the case of fallen intelligences. This was necessary in consequence of the minds of men being blinded by transgression. —Ellen G. White Comments, in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1104.

The lawyer approached Jesus with a direct question, "Which is the first commandment of all?" The answer of Christ is direct and forcible: "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment." The second is like the first, said Christ; for it flows out of it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 607.

The first four of the Ten Commandments are summed up in the one great precept, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." The last six are included in the other, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Both these commandments are an expression of the principle of love. The first cannot be kept and the second broken, nor can the second be kept while the first is broken. When God has His rightful place on the throne of the heart, the right place will be given to our neighbor. We shall love him as ourselves. And only as we love God supremely is it possible to love our neighbor impartially.

And since all the commandments are summed up in love to God and man, it follows that not one precept can be broken without violating this principle. Thus Christ taught His hearers that the law of God is not so many separate precepts, some of which are of great importance, while others are of small importance and may with impunity be ignored. Our Lord presents the first four and the last six commandments as a divine whole, and teaches that love to God will be shown by obedience to all His commandments. —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 607.

Monday, March 24

The Law Is Holy and Righteous and Good

In His teachings, Christ showed how far-reaching are the principles of the law spoken from Sinai. He made a living application of that law whose principles remain forever the great standard of righteousness—the standard by which all shall be judged in that great day when the judgment shall sit, and the books shall be opened. He came to fulfill all righteousness, and, as the head of humanity, to show man that he can do the same work, meeting every specification of the requirements of God. Through the measure of His grace furnished to the human agent, not one need miss heaven. . . .

When the Spirit of God reveals to man the full meaning of the law, a change takes place in his heart. The faithful portrayal of his true state by the prophet Nathan made David acquainted with his own sins, and aided him in putting them away. He accepted the counsel meekly, and humbled himself before God. “The law of the Lord,” he said, “is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart” [Psalm 19:7, 8]. —*Selected Messages, book 1, pp. 211, 212.*

Sin did not kill the law, but it did kill the carnal mind in Paul. . . . “Was that then which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful” (Romans 7:13). “Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good” (Romans 7:12). . . .

There is no safety nor repose nor justification in transgression of the law. Man cannot hope to stand innocent before God, and at peace with Him through the merits of Christ, while he continues in sin. He must cease to transgress, and become loyal and true. As the sinner looks into the great moral looking glass, he sees his defects of character. He sees himself just as he is, spotted, defiled, and condemned. But he knows that the law cannot in any way remove the guilt or pardon the transgressor. He must go farther than this.

The law is but the schoolmaster to bring him to Christ. He must look to his sin-bearing Saviour. And as Christ is revealed to him upon the cross of Calvary, dying beneath the weight of the sins of the whole world, the Holy Spirit shows him the attitude of God to all who repent of their transgressions. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). —*Selected Messages, book 1, p. 213.*

Tuesday, March 25

Law and Grace

The Lord saw our fallen condition; He saw our need of grace, and because He loved our souls, He has given us grace and peace. Grace means favor to one who is undeserving, to one who is lost. The fact that we are sinners, instead of shutting us away from the mercy and love of God, makes the exercise of His love to us a positive necessity in order that we may be saved. Christ says, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain" (John 15:16). —*Selected Messages, book 1, p. 347.*

By His spotless life, His obedience, His death on the cross of Calvary, Christ interceded for the lost race. And now not as a mere petitioner does the Captain of our salvation intercede for us, but as a conqueror claiming His victory. His offering is complete, and as our intercessor He executes His self-appointed work, holding before God the censer containing His own spotless merits and the prayers, confessions, and thanksgiving of His people. . . .

Christ is able to save to the uttermost all who come to Him in faith. He will cleanse them from all defilement if they will let Him. But if they cling to their sins, they cannot possibly be saved; for Christ's righteousness covers no sin unrepented of. God has declared that those who receive Christ as their Redeemer, accepting Him as the One who takes away all sin, will receive pardon for their transgressions. —*Ellen G. White Comments, in The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7, pp. 930, 931.*

There are two errors against which the children of God—particularly those who have just come to trust in His grace—especially need to guard. The first . . . is that of looking to their own works, trusting to anything they can do, to bring themselves into harmony with God. He who is trying to become holy by his own works in keeping the law, is attempting an impossibility. All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin. It is the grace of Christ alone, through faith, that can make us holy.

The opposite and no less dangerous error is that belief in Christ releases men from keeping the law of God; that since by faith alone we become partakers of the grace of Christ, our works have nothing to do with our redemption.

But notice here that obedience is not a mere outward compliance, but the service of love. . . . When the principle of love is implanted in the heart, when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new-covenant promise is fulfilled, "I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them." Hebrews 10:16. And if the law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life? Obedience—the service and allegiance of love—is the true sign of discipleship. . . . Instead of releasing man from obedience, it is faith, and faith only, that makes us partakers of the grace of Christ, which enables us to render obedience. —*Steps to Christ, pp. 59, 60.*

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When the law of God is written in the heart it will be exhibited in a pure and holy life. The commandments of God are no dead letter. They are spirit and life, bringing the imaginations and even the thoughts into subjection to the will of Christ. The heart in which they are written will be kept with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. All who love Jesus and keep the commandments will seek to avoid the very appearance of evil; not because they are constrained thus to do, but because they are copying a pure model, and feel averse to everything contrary to the law written in their hearts. They will not feel self-sufficient, but their trust will be in God, who alone is able to keep them from sin and impurity. The atmosphere surrounding them is pure; they will not corrupt their own souls or the souls of others. It is their pleasure to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before God. —*This Day With God*, p. 146.

[The Sabbath] points to [Christ] as both the Creator and the Sanctifier. . . . For, speaking of Israel, He said, "I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them,"—make them holy. Ezekiel 20:12. Then the Sabbath is a sign of Christ's power to make us holy. And it is given to all whom Christ makes holy. . . .

To all who receive the Sabbath as a sign of Christ's creative and redeeming power, it will be a delight. Seeing Christ in it, they delight themselves in Him. The Sabbath points them to the works of creation as an evidence of His mighty power in redemption. While it calls to mind the lost peace of Eden, it tells of peace restored through the Saviour. And every object in nature repeats His invitation, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28. —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 288, 289.

The sin which is indulged to the greatest extent, and which separates us from God and produces so many contagious spiritual disorders, is selfishness. There can be no returning to the Lord except by self-denial. Of ourselves we can do nothing; but, through God strengthening us, we can live to do good to others, and in this way shun the evil of selfishness. We need not go to heathen lands to manifest our desire to devote all to God in a useful, unselfish life. We should do this in the home circle, in the church, among those with whom we associate and with whom we do business. Right in the common walks of life is where self is to be denied and kept in subordination. . . . We should forget self in the desire to do good to others. —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 132.

Thursday, March 27

Above All, Love One Another

Our mission is the same as that which was announced by Christ, at the beginning of His ministry, to be His mission. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me," He said, "because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Luke 4:18, 19.

We are to carry forward the work placed in our hands by the Master. He says: "If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday: and the Lord shall guide thee continually." . . . "The poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land." Isaiah 58:10, 11; Deuteronomy 15:11. —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 134.

We should study to copy the Pattern, that the Spirit that dwelt in Christ may dwell in us. The Saviour was not found among the exalted and honorable of the world. He did not spend His time among those who were seeking their ease and pleasure. He went about doing good. His work was to help those who needed help, to save the lost and perishing, to lift up the bowed down, to break the yoke of oppression from those who were in bondage, to heal the afflicted, and to speak words of sympathy and consolation to the distressed and sorrowing. We are required to copy this pattern. Let us be up and doing, seeking to bless the needy and comfort the distressed. The more we partake of the spirit of Christ, the more we shall see to do for our fellow men. We shall be filled with a love for perishing souls, and shall find our delight in following the footsteps of the Majesty of heaven. —*Our High Calling*, p. 180.

Do you in your words, in your spirit, in your actions, resemble Christ? If in word and spirit you represent the character of Christ, then you are Christians; for to be a Christian is to be Christlike. The tongue will testify of the principles that characterize the life; it is the sure test of what power controls the heart. We may judge our own spirit and principles by the words that proceed from our lips. The tongue is always to be under the control of the Holy Spirit. . . .

. . . Do you believe on the Son of God as your personal Saviour? Then if you believe with all your heart, God dwells in the soul, and the soul in God. You represent Jesus. . . . Just in proportion as the human agent is a partaker of the divine nature, he will be in sympathy with Christ. Jesus says, "A new commandment I give unto you [That ye tolerate one another? No], That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." — "What Doth the Lord Require," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, May 26, 1896.

Friday, March 28

For Further Reading

That I May Know Him, "God's Law in the Heart," p. 299;

In Heavenly Places, "A Relationship of Interdependence," p. 287.