

# The Present Truth

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." St. John 17: 17

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## "THE FAITH OF JESUS" (Page 99)

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IN the matter of keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, it is not to be understood that the two can for a moment be separated. The commandments cannot be kept acceptably to God except by faith in Jesus Christ; and faith in Christ amounts to nothing—is dead—unless it is supported, made perfect, by good works, and these good works consist in keeping the commandments of God. Christ kept the commandments of God: "I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." John 15:10. By his obedience it is that many must be made righteous. For as by one man's [Adam's] disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one [Christ] shall many be made righteous." Rom. 5:19. But these are made righteous only by faith in him, thus having "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Rom. 3:22,23.

All have sinned, and "sin is the transgression of the law." As all have thus transgressed the law, this is why it is that none can attain to righteousness by the law. There is righteousness in the law of God; in fact the word says, "All thy commandments are righteousness," but there is no righteousness there *for the transgressor*. When any one has transgressed the law, then if righteousness ever comes to that person, it must come from some other source besides the law. And as all in the world have transgressed the law, to whomsoever, therefore, in all the world righteousness shall come, it must be from another source than from the law, and that source is Christ Jesus the Lord. This is the great argument of Rom. 3:19-31. "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and *all the world may become guilty before God*. Therefore *by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified* in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God *without the law is manifested*, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; *even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ* unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

Then the question comes in, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law." Notice, he had already said that, although this righteousness of God is without the law, and by faith in Christ, yet it is "*witnessed by the law* and the prophets." It is a righteousness that accords with the law; it is a righteousness to which the law can bear witness; it is a righteousness with which the law in its perfect righteousness can find no fault. And that is the righteousness of Christ which he wrought out for us by his perfect obedience to the commandments of God, and of which we become partakers by faith in him, for "by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." Thus we become the children of God by faith in Christ; by faith in him the righteousness of the law is met in us, and we do not make void, but we establish the law of God, by faith in Christ.

This is further shown by Rom. 8:3-10 : "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." What was it

that the law could not do? 1. The law was ordained to life (Rom. 7:10), but it could not give life because all had sinned—transgressed the law—and the wages of sin is death. 2. The law was ordained to justification (Rom. 2:13), but it will justify only the *doers of the law*, and of all the children of Adam there have been no doers of the law; all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. 3. The law was ordained to righteousness (Rom. 10:5), but it can count as righteous only the obedient, and all the world is guilty of disobedience before God. Therefore because of man's failure, because of his wrong doings, the law could not give him life, it could not justify him, it could not accept him as righteous. So far as man was concerned, the purpose of the law was entirely frustrated.

But mark, what the law could not do in that it was weak through the sinful flesh, God sent his Son to do in the likeness of sinful flesh. What the law could not do, Christ does. The law could not give life, because by transgression all had incurred its penalty of death; the law could not give justification, because by failure to do it all had brought themselves under its condemnation; the law could not give righteousness, because all had sinned. But instead of this death, Christ gives life; instead of this condemnation, Christ gives justification; instead of this sin, Christ gives righteousness. And for what? that henceforth the law might be despised by us? Nay, verily! But "that the righteousness of the law *might be fulfilled in us*, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but *to fulfil*," said the holy Son of God. And so "Christ is the end [purpose] of the law *for righteousness* to every one that believeth." Rom. 10:4. For of God, Christ Jesus "is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption ; that, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." 1 Cor. 1:30, 31.

Again, say the Scriptures, "The law is spiritual," and "The carnal mind [the natural mind, the minding of the flesh] is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Rom. 7:14; 8:7, 8. How then shall we please God? How shall we become subject to the law of God? The Saviour says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and we have just read in Romans that it is "sinful flesh," this is why they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But the Saviour says further, "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Therefore it is certain that except we be born of the Spirit we cannot please God, we cannot be subject to the law of God, which is spiritual, and demands spiritual service. This is precisely what the Saviour says, " Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

We know that some will say, that the kingdom of God here referred to is the kingdom of glory, and that the new birth, the birth of the Spirit, is not until the resurrection, and that then we enter the kingdom of God. But such a view is altogether, wrong. Except a man be born of the Spirit, he must still remain in the flesh, but the Scripture says, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God," and the man who does not please God will never see the kingdom of God, whether it be the kingdom of grace or of glory." Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The kingdom of God, the kingdom of grace, is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Rom. 14:17. Except a man be born again, he cannot see nor enter into the righteousness of God; he cannot see nor enter into 'the peace of God, which passeth all understanding; and except he be born of the Spirit of God, how can he see or enter into that "joy in the Holy Ghost"? Except a man be born again--born of the Spirit—before he dies, he will never see the resurrection unto life. This is shown in Rom. 8:11; "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." It is certain, therefore, that except the Spirit of Christ dwell in us, we cannot be raised from the dead to eternal life. But except his Spirit dwell in us, we are yet in the flesh. And if we are yet in the flesh, we cannot please God. And if we do not please God here, we can never see the kingdom of God, neither here nor hereafter.

Again: it is by birth that we are children of the first Adam; and if we shall ever be children of the second Adam, it must be by a new birth. The first Adam was natural, and we are his children by natural birth; the second Adam is spiritual, and if we become his children it must be by spiritual birth. The first Adam was of the earth, earthy, and we are his children by an earthly birth; the second Adam is the Lord from heaven, from above, and if we are to be his children it must be by a heavenly birth, a birth from above. For "as is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy." The earthy is "natural " of the flesh, "but the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God;" "because they are spiritually discerned," and "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Such is the birthright, and all the birthright that we receive from the first Adam. But "as is the heavenly such are they also that are heavenly." The heavenly is spiritual, he is "a life-giving Spirit," and the spiritual man receives the things of the Spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned ; he can please God because he is not in the flesh but in the Spirit, for the Spirit of God dwells in him; he is, and can be, subject to the law of God, because the carnal mind is destroyed and he has the mind of Christ, the heavenly. Such is the birthright of the second Adam, the one from above. And all the privileges, the blessings, and the joys of this birthright shall be ours if we be born from above. "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born from above." "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God." With the argument of this paragraph, please study 1 Cor. 15:45-48; John 3:3-8; 1 Cor. 3:11-16; Rom. 8:5-10.

Thus in briefest outline I have drawn a sketch of the faith of Jesus which must be kept, and by means of which alone the commandments of God can be kept. He who keeps this will live the life of the just, as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." Then can he say with the great apostle, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Gal. 2:20. And when his course is finished, he can say with both the great apostle and the beloved disciple, "I have fought a good fight [it is the fight of faith, 1 Tim. 6:12], . . . I have kept the faith." "And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." 2 Tim. 4:7; 1 John 5:4.

We thank God for the message which calls upon all men to "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."  
A. T. JONES.