

his creatures to lie weltering in flames, torment world without end. But so long as I can look upward, and see the bright sun in the firmament by day, and the moon and stars by night; so long as I can look out upon this beautiful world and see a Father's goodness walking in love and kindness; and so long as I can look upon a world of intelligences smiling and happy around me, and upon the history of the six thousand years, all crying aloud that God is good; so long will I cling to the bright hope, that my Father will deliver me from every sorrow; for that his grace is sufficient for any and every emergency; and so long will I hold the doctrine of endless torments to be, what it is pronounced by the united testimony of reason, nature, and experience, a figment of the vain imagination, destined like some fitful meteor to alarm the world for a time, and then vanish away, and—

"Like the vesicles fabric of a vision,  
Leave not a wreck behind."

**SALVATION BY FAITH.**

"For what if some did not believe, shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid; yea, let God be true, but every man a liar." Romans iii. 3.

The Doctrine of salvation by Jesus Christ, is worthy the solemn consideration of all men. It is this, that rendered a revelation necessary. It is this, that kindled the flame of transport in celestial bosoms, and raised that triumphant song, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will towards men." Salvation is the doctrine of the Bible, and ought ever to be the theme of the pulpit. Salvation is the oracle of heaven, around which all denominations assemble, receive their instructions, and believe according to the force of evidence.

Prefaced with these remarks, we will now proceed to state what we conceive to be the Law and Gospel,—point out the distinction between them, and defend the gospel doctrine of salvation by faith.

The law was a conditional covenant between God and man. It is perdicated on works. Under this covenant, if a man were strictly moral in his external deportment, if he lived up to its letter, he was considered righteous. This covenant was imperfect, because it could be kept externally without reaching the heart. They could exclaim, like a young man who came to Jesus, "All these things have I kept, from my youth up," and still lack that one great point, *charity*. Therefore, by the deeds of the law no flesh could be justified in the sight of God. The law, being temporary in its nature, had nothing to do with eternal things.

Paul says, "Sin is the transgression of the law."—"Where there is no law there is not the knowledge of sin." From this it appears, that sin, being a transgression of that law, which was given us for the regulation of our conduct in this life, can receive no punishment in the future world. If sin should be committed in the future state, then in the future state it would be punished. The same argument will apply to our obedience to the law, which can receive, for the same reason, no reward in that world. "No flesh shall be justified by the deeds of the law."—"Eternal life is the gift of God." If so, then it cannot be of works, lest any man should boast. God, being infinite in wisdom, could not

have failed to enact a law so perfect, and so exactly adapted to the nature of man, that obedience would render him a rich reward, and disobedience a condign punishment. The wise man says, that "the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the wicked, and the sinner."

We now turn to the spirit of the law, "To love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself, is the fulfilment of the law; and if we are not to be saved by the law, then our love to God and each other cannot save us; for that is the law. By what then are we to be saved? Answer: by the Gospel, which is God's love manifested to his creatures. The conclusion then is, that we are not to be saved by our love to God, but by God's love to us. This, I presume, no one will dispute. Here then we discern the difference between the law and the gospel.—God's love is the cause of salvation; human love is the effect. "Herein (says John) is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us." "We love him because he first loved us." How many did he love! Ho so loved the world, who were dead in trespasses and sins, that he freely delivered up his Son for us all,—he, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man. This is the gospel-love that God commendeth towards us, and the love that will finally save us.

Many persons contend that we must love God and do certain duties, or we cannot be saved. This is preaching ourselves. It is preaching the love of man as the cause of his salvation, instead of the love of God. And while thus preaching, they will perhaps, at the same time, tell the sinner that God is his enemy. But will the sinner's love make God his friend? will it cause his Creator to love him? No; right the reverse of this is the doctrine of Christ, "We love God because he first loved us." If we deny God's first love to the sinner, we then destroy the very cause by which alone the sinner can be made to love God. If we make men believe that God is their enemy and hates them, then we use all the means in our power to drive them from the bosom of their Father, and keep them in darkness and sin.

The sinner, in this situation, can never be made to serve God, only by being driven to it by terror, the same as some wretched slave is made to cower and submit in fear and dread to some revengeful tyrant. But this is not the service God requires.—He requires a service which is delightful, and in which his creature feels an abundant reward. We grant, that men, under the first covenant, were called upon to fear God. The reason of this appears obvious, when we reflect that God had covenanted to bestow certain blessings upon them, providing they would do their duty. If they failed, then he would execute the temporal judgments upon them, which the law points out, and threatens. Under this covenant men had just as much reason to fear, as they were liable to transgress it.

But when an angel announced the dawn of a better covenant, he said, "Fear not, for behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy." In this is nothing to be feared. All the fear lies in the first, and thunders out to every sinner, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the law to do them!" But John, speaking

in view of the second covenant, says, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." The first covenant is founded on works, and is conditional; but the second is founded on the immutable promise of God, and is unconditional. In the law, we are commanded to do according to the reasonableness of its requirements, but in the gospel we are exhorted to believe in view of evidence and fact. And as no man can believe, or disbelieve what he pleases, therefore conditions are excluded. What is the meaning of Gospel? It is good tidings of great joy. It is life and immortality brought to light at the appearing of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who has abolished death, by giving us the assurance of a resurrection from corruption to incorruption and glory. It is news. In view of news, what is the first thing necessary? Answer; belief. It is impossible to work news; therefore the gospel is not of works. In the law, the first requirement is to do; but in the gospel, the first requirement is to believe. The law-covenant is therefore temporary, fallible, and uncertain; but the gospel-covenant is eternal, infallible, and, in all things, well ordered and sure. The first rests on the obedience of the creature, but the second on the promises of Jehovah. Paul, therefore, calls it a better covenant, established upon better promises.

Perhaps some one may feel disposed to ask, whether faith is all that is necessary? We reply, that it is the cause which produces its effect. Paul answers this question, thus; "We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law." Here let the question be asked, How do we establish the law by faith? Answer; "Faith will have its perfect work." But what is that perfect work, which faith produces? Answer; Faith works love in the soul; and if we love God we will keep his commandments. And faith, love, and keeping the commandments are the three exercises, that form the Christian character. Faith is the foundation; works are not. We cannot begin to build on works. Instead of being the first, they are the last Christian grace.—They are the visible effects of an inward, living faith.

Faith, and faith only, is the seed rooted and grounded in the truth, and, to use a Bible figure, it becometh a tree, and produces all the fruits of the spirit,—love, joy, meekness, temperance, long-suffering, forbearance. This is what the apostle calls "the righteousness of faith," in contradistinction to "the righteousness of the law," produced by fear. Paul compares faith to a good olive tree. The Jews, through unbelief, were broken off, and thou (the Gentile) standest by faith." Jesus says, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove." Here, in parable, faith is represented as removing mountains of sin. He further says, "Thy faith hath made thee whole"; not thy works. Paul exclaims, "Faith works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world." John says, "And this is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith."

It is a certain fact, that none of these salutary effects are ascribed to human works. The apostles in no instance say, that works purify the heart, or overcome the world,—or that this is the victory, even your works.—The whole is ascribed to faith; because, that is the living tree on which the good fruits grow. Works are, in Scripture, called fruits. "By their fruits ye shall know them"; that is by their works. "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit." To carry out this figure, we would remark, that the fruit can have no existence till the tree is first produced. Therefore, in a gospel sense, no good works, acceptable to God, can be produced without a true and living faith. The apostle declares, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." The gospel being good

tidings, or news, are you satisfied that faith is the first thing necessary? I presume all denominations will assent to the fact, that faith is the first religious exercise of the creature. We shall then obey the command of the apostle, and "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints."

But, asks the readers, what matter is it which is first in order, whether love, faith, or works? I reply, that it is a matter of vast importance; and without understanding this fact, we cannot come to the knowledge of the truth, even though we should be ever learning. If these three Christian graces, faith, love, and works, are preached in a confused, and mixed manner, we cannot arrive at a true understanding of a gospel salvation, neither can we tell the difference between law and gospel. The law is of works, and the gospel is of faith. And no man can fulfil the spirit of the law without faith in the gospel. When the sinner exercises faith in the love and goodness of God in freely giving him eternal life, which infinitely transcends all other blessings, that moment faith works love in his heart, and causes him to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. He then loves God because God first loved him. And when the sinner loves God, he is passed from death unto life, and that love is the fulfilment of the law.

We are now led to see the consistency of faith being the first step. It is the very cause that produces love to God; and love induces us to keep the commandments. "Faith works by love," and "I ye love me," says Jesus, "ye will keep my commandments."

We will introduce an example, which will plainly show the distinction between the law and the gospel, and in what manner they affect the sinner. Suppose a king to sentence six of his subjects to imprisonment during life, and to command them to spend their days in hard labor. They are put in confinement, refuse to obey his commands, refuse to labor, and, in the midst of their miseries, curse his name. They are now in disobedience under the condemnation of the law.

The king says to his only son, I love those subjects, and I covenant with you to set them free in three years. The son says, Father, I delight to do thy will. Let me go and reveal to them the glad tidings of this covenant promise. The king answers, My son, in the fulness of time I will send you. Let them remain, one year, under the law. But, says the son, they are now transgressing your law, and need instruction. The king replies, I will send my servant to enforce that law. Let him go and inform the prisoners, that I am angry with them for their conduct; and if they will obey my commands, and labor faithfully, they shall have excellent food and good clothing as a reward. But if they will not comply, they shall be chained, and kept on bread and water, as a punishment for their disobedience.

The servant goes and delivers to them this message. Three of those subjects, for fear of the punishment and in hope of the reward, obeyed the king, and outwardly respect his commands, but perhaps have little or no love for him. [Here we see the righteousness of the law, which is not acceptable to God.] They accordingly receive, day by day, the promised reward. But the other three prisoners despise these conditions and refuse to obey. They are chained, fed on bread and water, and meet their deserts.

Here, then, are six prisoners laboring under the law, and groaning in bondage, with no hopes of deliverance. The law knows of no deliverance, no redemption. It simply serves as a schoolmaster, to teach them the difference between right and wrong.—to teach them the will of the king, and thus prepare them to receive a better covenant, which is to be received to them by the king's son. But under the covenant they now are, they have no motives to prompt them to obedience, but the fear of punishment and the hope of reward. In our next, this will be fully illustrated.