

knows, the mason uses this instrument to verify his work, to see if the wall is straight and plumb. That is what the law does with respect to man's works, it puts them to the proof. It was, so to speak, the plumbline, and God's level, to show the imperfections and the sin of man, for "by the law is the knowledge of sin," and "the law entered that the offence might abound" (Rom. iii. 20; v. 20).

*A.*—But if that is the case it follows that there must be something defective in the law.

*B.*—Most certainly not! "The law is good if a man use it lawfully" (1 Tim. i. 8); but the question must be seriously asked, for what purpose God has given it. Now the scriptures prove, in a way altogether conclusive, that God has not given the law to man in order that he may build upon it a righteousness for himself, but in order to show that he has no righteousness; that, on the contrary, he is unrighteous. Seeking to use the law as a means to obtain life and righteousness, leads only to the finding out that "the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it; and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it." In the tenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle mentions three kinds of righteousness: "the righteousness of God," "the righteousness of the law," and what Paul calls, in speaking of Israel, "their own righteousness." He says of the Israelites that they had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge, for they went about to establish their own righteousness and had not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.