THE LAW OF CHRIST – Chapter 10

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM – With an Examination of DISPENSATIONALISM and the "Scofield Bible"

by Philip Mauro: 1928

The character of every Kingdom is expressed in its law. Next in importance to the person of the king, and in what we call a "limited monarchy" or "constitutional Kingdom" above the king himself, is the law. In every case the keeping of the law involves first of all the honor of the king, and after that the peace of his realm and the welfare of his subjects. If therefore, the Kingdom of God have no law, it would not be a kingdom. Where then are we, whom God has translated into the kingdom of His dear Son, to look for the law of that Kingdom? No inquiry could be of greater importance for those who are saved by grace.

Every revelation of God's will for man is law; and His will is always "good and acceptable and perfect." "His commandments are not grievous." That is true always and everywhere. Man does not so regard it, "because the mind of the flesh" "is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8: 7, marg).

Now the divine work of Redemption is, among other things, a process of recovering man from his natural state of lawlessness to a state of perfect submission to the will of God, which is a state of perfect happiness, unending bliss, joy unspeakable. It is a long process. In the course of its accomplishment God chose a particular people, all the offspring of a man conspicuous for "the obedience of faith," which is gospel obedience (Rom. 1:5; 16:26), and He gave them His law in systematized form (a thing He had never done

before, and has not done since; for “He hath not dealt so with any nation”). That gift of the law of God was a mark of special favor to that people; and the possession of it, notwithstanding their failure to keep it, or even to respect the Giver of it, has been nevertheless a source to them of unspeakable blessing.

This I feel constrained to insist upon and with all possible emphasis; for the reason that a special object of the dispensational teaching of the day apparently is to inspire in the people of God a feeling of aversion toward His law. Indeed the subject is sometimes presented in such a way as to give the impression that to be “under the law” is about the next thing to being in the lake of fire.

One of the purposes of man’s trial under the law was to make evident the hopeless corruption of his heart, and to convince him of the absolute necessity for a special work of God, whereby he might obtain the forgiveness of all his sins, and also gain a new life. That is what Jesus Christ came to accomplish by His sacrificial death and by His resurrection from the dead; and that is why “the fulness of the time” for God to send forth His Son came not until after the trial of man under the law of Moses had made evident the necessity therefor.

Hence the trial of man under the law was by no means a failure. On the contrary, it accomplished just what God purposed thereby; and it was a most necessary stage of the long process of man’s recovery from the dominion of sin. To be sure, it showed what a failure man himself is; and it made evident that because of the hopelessly corrupt state of his being he cannot obey a righteous and holy law, even though he recognizes it to be such (Rom. 7:12,14,15,16), and even though he understands that his prosperity now and his welfare in eternity depend upon it. Those individuals who learned this while they were under the law, realized that they must cease from all self-efforts at salvation, and must cast themselves

for that upon the mercy of God. All such, and the total number was doubtless great, discovered, as did David, the blessedness of the man whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered (Rom. 4: 6,7; Ps. 32:1,2).

Now, when the purpose of the law of Sinai was fulfilled, and the era of the old covenant was ended: when the fulness of the time was come, and God sent forth His Son to accomplish "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh,"—that is, to bring man back into a state of obedience — there was need to make changes in the law of God that it might be in keeping with the new order of things about to come into existence through the work of Jesus Christ as the Mediator of the New Covenant. For Christ came to establish a Kingdom, as a hundred texts declare; and the most important feature of a kingdom, next to the occupant of the throne, is its law. But manifestly the law of God as given to an earthly people, not regenerated as a whole (though there were many regenerated persons scattered through the mass of the nation) would not be suited to a people born of God, His own children, "begotten again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (I Pet. 1:3).

The idea that the redeemed and regenerated people of Christ were not to be "subject to the law of God" is about as far from the truth of Scripture as is possible to get. For the main object of the course of God's dealings with mankind has been that He might have a people for His name, who would obey His law from the heart. This had been made evident by certain prophecies of the Old Testament, as for example, that of Jeremiah 31:31-34, where the new covenant was distinctly foretold; and where, concerning the people that were to be embraced by that covenant, God said, "I will put my law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts." The Epistle to the Hebrews declares that Jesus Christ is the Mediator of this new covenant (Heb. 8:6; 12:24); and that the "many sons" whom God is "bringing unto glory," through Jesus Christ, "the

captain of their salvation," who is "not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb. 2:10,11; 12:7-9), are the new covenant people, in whose hearts God purposed to write His law. These "many sons" constitute the Kingdom of God, according to the word, "Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved (shaken), let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and Godly fear" (Heb. 12:28, not referred to in the S. B.)

And likewise Isaiah, in one of his prophecies concerning this era of gospel blessing for "all nations," spoke of it as the time in which "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:2-4). That "law" which was to "go forth" into all the world was the law of Christ, and that "word" was the word of the gospel of Christ. And the time of the fulfilment of this and other like prophecies is clearly fixed in the New Testament Scriptures, as where Paul spoke concerning his gospel, and the preaching of the Jesus Christ, which "now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith" (Rom. 16:25,26).

Therefore there were two great parts to the work that lay before the Son of God when He came into the world: First, He was to deliver the "many sons" from the dominion of sin and death; and this He did when "through death He destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil" (Heb. 2:14); and second, He was to give the law of God to those whom He should bring into the family of God through the door of the new birth; and this He did in His several discourses to His disciples, and chiefly in the Sermon on the Mount. And, like as Moses and the prophets added from time to time to the main body of the law originally given at Sinai, so Christ and the apostles added special revelations of the will of God for His new covenant people to the main body of the law of the Kingdom delivered by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.

Remembering that Moses was a type of Christ, it is instructive to note how this two-part work of Christ was pre-figured by that of Moses. For he not only brought a people out from the dominion of Pharoah, crossing the Red Sea (typical of Christ's death and resurrection which makes a way for His people through the waters of death), but also delivered to them the law of God, which was to be for their life and welfare."THESE SAYINGS OF MINE"

Therefore, it is in the Sermon on the Mount (Mat. V, VI, VII) that we find the complete and formal statement of the Law of Christ, answering to the Law of Moses, given at Mount Sinai.

The contrast between the two mountains and between the attendant circumstances of these two givings of God's law to a people on earth, is wonderfully expressive of the difference between the two Covenants to which they respectively belong. At the one were awesome sights and sounds; the mountain burning with fire and quaking at the presence of God, the pealing of the trumpet long and loud, and above all that terrifying "Voice of words," which caused the people to shrink back in fright and to entreat that the word should not be spoken to them any more; "and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake." Whereas at the other mountain the same Divine Lawgiver, now in lowly human guise, sits quietly down, and the multitudes gather willingly to His feet to drink in His words; and they being thus voluntarily gathered around Him, then "He opened His mouth and taught them, saying—."FUNDAMENTALISM VS. MODERNISM

And are those "sayings," law? Undoubtedly they are. When was there ever any question as to that? But they are the law of the New Covenant, not that of the Old Covenant; nor yet are they the law of a reconstituted Jewish kingdom of a future dispensation, as the Scofield Bible declares. This is the matter in dispute, and it is a matter of capital importance. If the reader has any doubt as to the importance of the question in dispute, let him but recall what Christ Himself

said at the close of the incomparable discourse concerning the commandments which He twice designated “These Sayings of Mine.” “Everyone whosoever” (for so Mat. 7:24 reads in the original text) hears those sayings of His, and doeth them is likened unto a wise man who built his house on a rock; and everyone who hears them and does them not, is likened unto a foolish man, who built his house on the sand.

Thus, the question we are now considering has to do (we have Christ’s own word for it) with the foundation upon which a man builds his life structure. That is to say, it is fundamental; and hence it is (or should be) of the deepest interest to Fundamentalists. And not only so, but the “dispensational teaching” which classes these sayings of our Lord with the law of Sinai, and relegates them to a Jewish kingdom somewhere in the future, is modernism in the strictest sense, and of the most pernicious sort. Therefore what we are now discussing is of the greatest possible interest to all who profess and call themselves Fundamentalists.

Dispensationalism must inevitably fall into ruin; for it is builded upon a foundation of sand. True, the structure thereof has been ingeniously contrived and cleverly put together. Moreover, excellent materials have gone into the building of it; and the time, labor and skill of able, learned and godly men have been lavished upon the erection and adornment thereof. But it is all for nought; for it is not founded upon the words of Christ. Indeed there never was a case in which the true foundation has been so ostentatiously set aside. For the builders of this elaborate and ornate structure of doctrine, which has excited the admiration of hundreds of thousands, have openly disparaged and rejected the very “sayings” of the Son of God given by Him to serve as the foundation of our life-edifice. Therefore, the downfall of dispensationalism is but a question of time; and my conviction is that the hour is near at hand when it will be said, “and great was the fall of it.””GOD HATH SPOKEN UNTO US”

Here is where we who are “the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:26) must go to find the fullest statement of what our Father in heaven has spoken specially to us, and which has the greater claim to our willing and affectionate obedience because spoken by the lips of His own Son. For “God . . . hath in these last days spoken UNTO US BY HIS SON” (Heb 1:1,2). And here is where we find our Lord’s commandments concerning which He said, “If ye love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15). And so it has always been held by the followers of Christ, real and nominal. Nor has it been even supposed before our times that there could be any other view of the matter. But now it is dogmatically taught, and without rebuke, in the very midst of the most orthodox groups of christians, in Bible schools and at Bible conferences, that “The Sermon on the Mount is law and not grace”; indeed that it is “law, and that raised to its highest, most deathful, and destructive potency.” Think of such expressions being applied to our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount!A BIT OF RECENT HISTORY

In the year 1918 I published a little book (“The Kingdom of Heaven: What is it?”) in which I pointed out that the Sermon on the Mount carries in its own text the clearest evidence that it is a message from God the Father to His own children; since again and again Christ speaks of “thy Father,” “your Father,” “your heavenly Father”; and He there teaches them how they shall act “that ye may be the children of your Father in heaven,” and to pray, saying, “Our Father, Who art in heaven.” And I pointed out that, in the notes of the Scofield Bible, the fact that Christ gives in His Sermon on the Mount the Father’s words to His own “children” – a fact which certainly is decisive of the issues we are discussing – is wholly ignored. Dr. Scofield felt called upon to take some notice of this: so he published shortly thereafter a magazine article under the caption “Is the Sermon on the Mount Law?” And so willing was I (as I still am) that both sides should be heard, that I published Dr. Scofield’s article in full with some comments of my own. The following is the first paragraph of

Dr. Scofield's article:

"For the first time in nearly two thousand years of study and discussion of revealed truth, the statement has recently been made that the Sermon on the Mount is not Law. The times are noisy with novelties of every description, and especially in the sphere of Bible truth. If this particular novelty stood alone, it might, more safely than any others, be left to break itself against the very phrasing of that great declaration."

Needless to say I had never stated or implied that "the Sermon on the Mount is not law. The question I had raised in my book above referred to was stated thus:

"The question is, to whom are those words (the Sermon on the Mount) spoken? Are they spoken directly to, and to be heeded by, the people of God of this dispensation? Or are they spoken to Jews of some past or future era, with possibly an indirect 'moral application' to us?"'

Yet, in replying to that book, the best that Dr. Scofield could do was to ignore the real question altogether, and to confine himself to the discussion of a question which never had been raised. And he proceeds to say that "the times are noisy with novelties of every description, and especially in the sphere of Bible truth," and to place the view he was supposedly answering in the category of those noisy novelties, thus completely reversing the actual situation, in which the "novelty" (whether "noisy" or otherwise) is beyond all dispute the view advanced by Dr. Scofield.

Thus the matter stands to-day as it stood then.NOT OF WORKS

To some the doctrine of Christ as given in the Sermon on the Mount, presents a difficulty in that it does not expressly declare that a man's salvation depends upon his faith, not upon his works; according as it was subsequently written by the apostle Paul, "For by grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of

works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8,9).

But there is no difficulty here; for the Sermon on the Mount was not spoken to explain how a man gets the new birth and enters into the Kingdom of God, but to teach those who had already entered into that Kingdom how to act as becometh those who are saved by grace through faith and have the knowledge of God the Father through the Son.

Christ had previously explained to Nicodemus, a teacher of the Jews, that entrance into the Kingdom of God was only by the narrow way of the new birth –a thing possible to God alone – and that for man, the only condition of salvation was to believe in Him whom God had sent into the world, His Son (John 3: 5,14-18). And this vital truth is stated also in the Sermon on the Mount; for there we read:

> *"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life; and few there be that find it!' (Mat. 7: 12, 13).*

And this, in the Lord's wisdom, was deemed enough on that subject for the purpose of that discourse and for the permanent record of it that was to become a part of the New Testament Scriptures which were not written and collected for nearly a generation later. For, in order to be saved, a man needs not to understand the conditions of salvation, or to know anything about the new birth. The one condition he must fulfil is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. And these words on the Mount were spoken to "His disciples," those who "came unto Him," and who thus manifested their faith in Him; though doubtless there were among them some who were moved by motives other than faith, and to these the warning given in the above quoted words was needful.

The Sermon on the Mount therefore presupposes that the hearers

are already the people of God having entered the Kingdom of God in the only way it can be entered.

For here we have another point of resemblance between Moses, the mediator of the old covenant, and Jesus Christ, the mediator of the new, of whom Moses spoke when he said:

> *"The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him shall ye hearken, according unto all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb… saying, Let me not hear again the*

voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command thee." (Deut. 18:14-18).

Christ was a Prophet like unto Moses in that (among other points of resemblance) He spoke the words of God to a people whom God had set apart for Himself. And just as the law of Mount Sinai was given to, and intended to be obeyed by, a people whom God had delivered out of Egypt, from under the yoke of Pharaoh, and brought through the waters of the Red Sea; even so, the law of that other Mount is given for the obedience of a people delivered out of this present evil world, from under the yoke of its prince, and brought through the waters of death and judgment by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Sermon on the Mount was not spoken to the promiscuous multitudes on the plain below, the "sick people," those "taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy"; whom He healed; and because of which "there followed Him great multitudes of people from Galilee," and from other regions, some quite remote (Mat.

4:24,25). Those great multitudes saw His miracles and received temporal benefits; but they did not hear the Sermon on the Mount. To enjoy that unspeakable privilege they must have the heart of a disciple, and must undergo the exertion of climbing the mountain. For "Seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain: and when He was set His disciples came unto Him; and He opened His mouth, and taught them." And then proceeded from His gracious lips (Psa. 45:2) those matchless "words of grace," which God had promised through Moses when He said, "And I will put My words IN HIS MOUTH."

The Word of God records for our instruction the two great and wonderful occasions in the history of the world when men heard the Voice of God Himself uttering the commandments which they were to keep. What a marvelous contrast there is between those two occasions! I have already made a brief reference to that great contrast; but it is highly important that we note carefully the difference, and ascertain the reason therefor.

At Mount Sinai there were terrifying sights and sounds; for the mount was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the whole mount quaked greatly. There were, moreover, blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of the trumpet, which sounded long and waxed louder and louder. But hardest of all for them to bear was that "Voice of words," the Voice of the Lord which is powerful and full of majesty, which so filled them with terror that they entreated that the Word should not be spoken unto them any more. As it is written (Ex. 20:18,19):

> *"And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw, they removed and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die."*
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> *How different it was at the other mountain, concerning which it is written (Matt. 5:1):*

> *“And seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain: and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him”.*

Why did they come to Him now, and not remove and stand far off as when the same Lord gave commandments to an earthly people at Mount Sinai? Why did they climb that mountain and listen unterrified to His words? He was not working miracles on the mountain, nor dispensing loaves and fishes; but was giving commandments, even as at the other mountain; yet “His disciples came unto Him” and quietly listened while He brought them into known relations with the Father Who had sent Him for this very ministry.

There is much to be learned from this wonderful contrast; but we can only indicate briefly the leading points; and the most important is that, in these two contrasted scenes, we have the main differences between the two eras to which they respectively belong. In one we see man shrinking from the presence and the voice of God, and standing “afar off.” This is “Law.” In the other we have Immanuel, God the Saviour, come in the lowly guise of sinful flesh, associating Himself with sinners, in order to bring them into the closest and holiest relations with Himself. This is “GRACE,.”

Furthermore we see the character of the era of grace in the fact that the disciples’ coming to Him was voluntary. It was their own heart that prompted them to ascend that mountain and listen to His Words. The Lord met the needs of “the multitudes” on the low levels of the plain; but those only who were drawn to His own Person up to the mountain-top, received of His words. To those who respond to the gospel He gives “rest” from the burden and penalty of sin; and to them He also says: “Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me”; but He does not force His yoke upon any, nor compel even His own people to learn of Him. It is pure grace.

As we think on these things and meditate upon the great work

of grace which has been going on for nineteen centuries with so little outward show, we can see with the mind's eye the "many children" newly born into the Kingdom of heaven hastening, in response to a heaven-sent impulse, up the mountain, away from the distracting sights and sounds of the earth, to that quiet place where Christ's own voice may be heard speaking the words His Father gave Him to speak (John 7:16; 17:8). But a strange thing has come to pass in our days. Heretofore those who were recognized and trusted as leaders among God's people did all they could to encourage the young believers to take Christ's yoke, and to submit to His commandments, assuring them, in the words of the apostle John, that "His commandments are not grievous." But now, alas that such a thing should be! There are men of learning and ability, esteemed widely as sound and safe expositors of Scripture, who make it their business to hinder those of the household of faith who would go up the mountain where Christ's own words are to be heard; and who tell them in the most positive terms that those words are not for God's children at all, but for some "Jewish disciples" of another era. And who, after having represented the law of God as a thing to be feared and shunned, declared that the Sermon on the Mount is "Law raised to its highest, most deathful and destructive potency"!

In time past the obstacles in the way of one who would press up the mountain in order to be in the presence of his Lord and to receive "the doctrine of Christ" from His own lips, were such as might appeal to the natural heart. The world spread its attractions before the eye, and the flesh raised itself up against the exertion required for the ascent. But now the case is far more serious; for we find men of the strictest orthodoxy who have posted themselves in the way in order to intercept any of the children whom they may find heading for that Mount of nine times "Blessed" ones; and we hear these teachers saying in the most authoritative tones that the mountain and the words of Him Who there speaks from heaven belong not to this dispensation of grace at all; that it is

“legal ground”‘ that the Father’s words are ‘Jewish,” being the “principle” of a far-off earthly kingdom; and that the early Christians who “grounded themselves” on those words were a “dangerous sect”! What a shame! What a deep dishonor to the throne of God! And what a cruel wrong to unsuspecting babes in Christ, who are thus turned away from the words given to them as “the Rock” whereon to build a life-structure that will endure! Brethren, let us pray for these men, that God will indeed give them repentance unto the acknowledging of the truth; and also that Christ’s “little ones” may be rescued from this new danger. Well did the apostle say that in the last days “perilous times” should come.

The Lord Jesus Christ, as First-born over the entire family of God, shares everything He has with the beloved children. And among the choicest of those family possessions are the Father’s “commandments.” Speaking of these He said: “I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love” (John 15:10); and again, “That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do” (John. 14:31). By these, and by many other Scriptures, we learn that the Kingdom of heaven calls upon those who are in it to keep the commandments of God willingly, and through love alone. But, according to this new teaching, the doing of the Father’s commandments is “legality.” If therefore our hearts respond at all to the grace of God manifested to us in bringing us into His household on the footing of children, then we shall not be looking for excuses to justify ourselves in not keeping His commandments, but on the contrary we shall be rather eager to keep them; we shall count it a privilege to have them; they will be our joy, our treasure, our chief delight; and the law of His mouth will be better to us than thousands of gold and silver.

Let me here mention another fact which proves conclusively that the Sermon on the Mount belongs, and exclusively, to this present era of grace. For that message is manifestly for those

people of God who find themselves in conditions which exist in this present era and none other. An attentive reader of these chapters (Matthew V., VI., VII.) cannot fail to see that the circumstances of those addressed are precisely what God's children have to face in this age; and that it is simply an impossibility to fit the discourse into the conditions that will exist on earth after the second coming of Christ.

The Lord tells those to whom this Sermon is given that they are "the light of the world," and that they are to let their light shine; which is just what the apostles wrote later to the church (Eph. 5:8; Phil. 2:15; Jam. 1:17; 1 Pet. 2:9). In the age to come the Lord Himself will be the Light of the world, which will be filled with His glory. In the Sermon on the Mount He further says that His people will be persecuted and reviled for His Name's sake; that they are to submit to evil, to turn the other cheek when smitten; that they are to be reviled and hated and exposed to false prophets. Those conditions prevail during this age of His rejection and absence; but will be wholly abolished when He comes again.

Furthermore, a large and important section of the Sermon is devoted to the subject of care and anxiety regarding the necessities of this life—food and clothing. It is in this present age of the Lord's absence, and in none other, that His people have to undergo trials of faith in regard to these needful things, and find themselves exposed to anxious care for the morrow. It is manifestly impossible to fit the sixth chapter of Matthew into any age but this; and we have yet to see the first attempt to do so. This is pre-eminently and conspicuously the age in which the god of riches, the mammon of unrighteousness, competes with God Himself for the love and confidence of His people. Indeed, if we had only the words "lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" to enlighten us, we would be able to see clearly that the Sermon on the Mount is not "Jewish," but for a heavenly people. The idea that these

commandments of Christ are intended for a Kingdom of Jewish prosperity and world-supremacy for which the carnally minded Jews were (and are) looking, and which, according to "dispensational teaching," is to follow this gospel age, is not only contrary to the Word of God, but is grotesquely absurd.DOING THE WILL OF GOD FROM THE HEART

But we have disgressed from our subject; so we come back to the great truth that salvation is by grace alone through faith. And let it be noted that this is true not in this era only, but in every other as well. But God demands that the faith shall be real; and the proof of real faith is obedience, loyal loving submission to the revealed will of God. Therefore, that the members of the church at Corinth were saved was manifested by their "professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ" (2 Cor. 9:13). And therefore the doctrine of Christ contained in Matthew VII, while it affirms the foundation truth that salvation is only by faith in Himself, puts the strongest emphasis upon the fact that true faith manifests itself as such, and also builds for its possessor an enduring structure, in the doing of the will of God as revealed in those "sayings" of His Son.

If the "obedience of Christ" is never seen in one who professes the faith of Christ, it is proof that there has never been a work of God in his heart. For when the disciples came to Jesus asking, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a little child unto Him, and setting him before them as an object lesson, He said: "Verily, I say unto you, Except ye be converted" (a work of God) "and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Mat. 18:1-3).BY THEIR FRUITS

Furthermore, in the verses of the Sermon on the Mount immediately following those in which Christ speaks of entering in at the strait gate, He uses another illustration which serves to make His meaning clearer. In those verses (Mat. 7:15-20), He points out that fruit is the product of life (and

hence the evidence of it); and that the character of the fruit depends entirely upon the character of the tree. This goes to the very root of the matter. It declares in the strongest way that a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. It is an impossibility. What then? Seeing that every man is utterly corrupt, how can anyone bring forth the fruits of good deeds? The Lord Himself has given the answer, saying, “Make the tree good, and his fruit good” (Mat. 12:33); and the context shows (v. 35) that he is speaking of the heart of man. In other words, one must be born again, and receive the Holy Spirit, ere he can produce the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 3:26; 4:6; 5:22,23).

We find then that the doctrine of Christ, as given in the concluding portion of the Sermon on the Mount. so far from being in conflict with the truth of the gospel, sets forth that truth in the clearest light. The gospel demands obedience: and it is preached for the express purpose of producing obedience among all nations, even “the obedience of faith” (Rom. 1:5: 6:17; 15:18; 16:19,26). Indeed “eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord” is to be the portion of all who “obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Th. 1:7-9).

Hence the first question of one who has been saved by grace is that which Saul of Tarsus asked: “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” One who sincerely asks this question has been already saved by grace through faith; and such a one will find a full, though concise, answer to his question in the Sermon on the Mount. And to “these sayings” he will go, not to gain salvation by the keeping of them; but, knowing that his salvation is already secured by the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit, making him a child of God, he will go to them in order that, in the doing of them, he may let his light so shine before men that they may see his good works and glorify his Father who is in heaven.