**“Principles and Precepts” Bible Echo and Signs of the Times 5, 2.**

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The word “law” is derived from the same root as the words “lie” and “lay,” and primarily has the same meaning. “A law is that which is laid, set, or fixed, like statute, constitution, from Lat. *Statuere.”-Webster*. And in harmony with this, the same authority gives as the first definition of the word “law,” “a rule of order or conduct established by authority.” It is a favorite saying with those who would make void the law of God while professing allegiance to his word, that the ten commandments are good, but that they are adapted only to fallen beings, and hence cannot bind angels nor redeemed saints, nor even people in this world who have been converted. Let us see how such a theory agrees with the definition of law. {BEST January 15, 1890, p. 25.1}

We will suppose that the angels are free from law, and that redeemed saints are to have a like freedom. In that case there would be nothing “laid down” for their guidance-no rule or order of conduct established by authority. In fact, there would be no authority, and each one would act independently of all the others. There would then exist in Heaven the same thing that would exist on earth if there were no law, namely, anarchy; for that means “without rule.” But “God is not the author of confusion,” and therefore such a state of things cannot exist in heaven, and if not in heaven, then of course not among the saints still on earth. The case may be stated thus: 1. When there is no law there is anarchy and confusion; there can be nothing else. 2. Confusion cannot exist among God’s people, whether in Heaven or on earth. 3. Therefore, the people of God are always and everywhere subject to his law. {BEST January 15, 1890, p. 25.2}

Seeing that it will not do to claim that any beings are absolutely free from law, the enemies of the truth have invented a specious theory, with which, unfortunately, many firm believers in the law of God have been captivated. It is this: “The law,” they say, “as it exists in the ten commandments, is adapted only to fallen beings. These commandments hang on the two great principles of love to God and love to man, and it was these principles alone that existed before the fall, and these alone will be the law for the redeemed.” And some there are who claim that these *principles* are all the law there is now for Christians. {BEST January 15, 1890, p. 25.3}

It is utterly impossible for anyone to be guided by an abstract principle. Certain principles may have a controlling influence on our lives, but they must be embodied in definite precepts. As an illustration, we will relate a portion of a conversation which we once had with a gentleman who claimed that Christians have nothing to do with the ten commandments. The question was asked him, Is there, then, nothing for Christians to do? *Answer*-“Yes, they must love the Lord.” Very good, but how are they to show that they love the Lord? *Answer*-“By doing what he tells them to do.” Well, what is it that contains specific statements of what the Lord requires us to do to show our love for him? *Answer*-“Young man, I am older than you are.” The reader will wonder, as we did, what bearing this had on the subject. It showed that the man saw that the only possible *answer* was, “The law of God,” an answer which would not agree with his theory, hence he chose to give none. But the illustration serves to show that principles, to be obeyed, must be embodied in precept. {BEST January 15, 1890, p. 25.4}

Says the beloved disciple: “This is the love of God, that we keep is commandments.” 1 John 5:3. So when we read that the first great commandment is, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” (Matthew 22:37), we know that it means nothing more nor less than that it is our first and highest duty to keep, both in letter and in spirit, all those commandments which define our duty to God. In no other way can we show that we love him. {BEST January 15, 1890, p. 26.1}

It will be seen by a very little consideration, that to put a man on the earth with nothing but a general command to love God, and at the same time to expect him to do nothing displeasing to God, would be to assume that the man had infinite wisdom. For God is infinite; and if a man, without being told, finds out what God requires, it can only be because he can comprehend infinity. But this is an impossibility. “Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?”-No indeed. Then since, as we have conclusively proved, there must be a law for all creatures, and since this law must be definitely expressed, and since, moreover, the whole duty of man is to love God above all things, and his neighbor as himself, we are shut up to the conclusion that the ten commandments always have been and always will be the rule of life for all created intelligences. In direct support of this, Solomon says, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.” Ecclesiastes 12:13. {BEST January 15, 1890, p. 26.2}