**“Nature of the Law. (Concluded.)” The Signs of the Times, 17, 41.**

E. J. Waggoner

In our last number we considered Christ’s words, “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments,” and found that the law of God-the ten commandments spoken on Mount Sinai-are the commandments referred to. In harmony with this, we have the words of Christ through the beloved disciple: “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” Revelation 22:14. We now want to examine this law, in order to learn its character. {SITI October 12, 1891, p. 307.2}

First we quote the words of David: “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.” Psalm 19:7. A perfect law, if kept, will form a perfect character. If a man has a perfect character, he is a perfect man, and that is all that God requires of any of us, all that he can require of anyone. Paul also adds his testimony to that of David, and says that “the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.” Romans 7:12. And this also agrees with the words of Nehemiah, that the Lord, on Mount Sinai, gave “true laws [“laws of truth,’ margin], good statutes and commandments.” {SITI October 12, 1891, p. 307.3}

This idea of the perfection of the ten commandments is more fully expressed by David in Psalm 119:172: “My tongue shall speak of thy word; for all thy commandments are righteousness.” They are not simply good; they are righteousness itself. We remember that Moses said of these commandments, “they shall be in thine heart,” and that we should talk of them at all times. But it is as true of a man now as when Solomon wrote, that “as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.” Proverbs 23:7. Therefore if a man continually meditates upon a law that is perfect righteousness, he can be become righteous. {SITI October 12, 1891, p. 307.4}

David says that the commandments are righteousness; but the Lord, through the prophet Isaiah, gives us a still deeper insight into their perfection: “Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but my salvation shall be forever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.” Isaiah 51:6. {SITI October 12, 1891, p. 307.5}

If any reader fails to connect this verse to connect this verse with Psalm 119:172, and thus learn what the righteousness that shall not be abolished is, he can satisfy himself that it is the law of God by reading the next verse: “Hearken unto me ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law.” Isaiah 51:7. Now that we see that the commandments are God’s righteousness, it needs no argument to convince us that they cannot be abolished. Abolish the righteousness of God! It would be equivalent to abolishing God himself. The thing is an impossibility. {SITI October 12, 1891, p. 307.6}

It is not, however, to the fact that God’s law cannot be abolished that we wish to call your especial attention, but that it is God’s righteousness. God is all righteousness-perfection-and therefore the law must be a transcript of his character. God wanted man to be like himself, righteous, but how could poor, fallen man know what righteousness is? He must needs have a perfect guide to direct his actions. God could not associate with men, and thus teach them what is righteousness, for they could not stand even his voice, much less the sight of his person. So he wrote out a description of his character, in words suited to the comprehension of human beings, and committed it to us. Christ tells us that the ten commandments hang from the great principle of love, and God is love. By studying them and obeying them we become like them, or, what is the same thing, like God. We write this with all reverence. We would not be understood that any human being can approach the perfection of God in any particular; but God himself says, “Be ye holy, for I am holy;” and Christ says, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Matthew 5:48. We are to become sinless and pure, and even then God in his goodness will be infinitely above us. {SITI October 12, 1891, p. 307.7}

But someone may say, “I do not see anything about the ten commandments worthy to be called a transcript of God’s character. It seems like degrading God to say that they are his righteousness.” That simply shows that you have not meditated upon them sufficiently to become acquainted with them. Paul says that the law is spiritual, and spiritual things are only spiritually discerned. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him.” We see beauty only in that which we love; and Paul says that “the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Romans 8:7. But when the carnal mind has been subdued, and the man has yielded to the requirement of the law, he can exclaim with Paul, “I delight in the law of God after the inward man” (Romans 7:22); or with David, “O how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day” (Psalm 119:97). {SITI October 12, 1891, p. 307.8}

The better acquainted we become with God’s law, the greater it appears to us. David thought much on the law, and he said, “I have seen an end of all perfection; but thy commandment is exceeding broad.” Psalm 119:96. It is so broad that it covers every act that any rational creature can perform, and every thought that the mind of man can conceive. For Bible proof of this we read: “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Hebrews 4:12. There is no sin either of word, deed, or thought which the law of God will not search out and condemn. How necessary, then, that we make it our constant study! As we do not wish to cherish sin, and thus fail of eternal life, we must understand in all cases just what sin is; and to this end let us never cease to pray, with the Psalmist, “Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.” E. J. W. {SITI October 12, 1891, p. 307.9}

**“Perpetuity of the Law” The Signs of the Times, 17, 42.**

E. J. Waggoner

It is impossible to discuss one branch of this great subject of the law without touching more or less upon every other branch. So in considering the nature of the law and its relation to the gospel, we have necessarily shown that it must endure forever. We shall now take up this branch more in detail. {SITI October 19, 1891, p. 307.10}

The law of God is the righteousness of God. It may not be amiss to review the proof on this point. David, in these words, bears witness to the fact that the commandments are themselves righteousness: “My tongue shall speak of thy word; for all thy commandments are righteousness.” Psalm 119:172. Since there is no righteousness but that of God, the commandments must be his righteousness; but we have still more direct evidence. The prophet Isaiah thus contrasts the things of earth with the righteousness of God: “Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but my salvation shall be forever; and my righteousness shall not be abolished.” Isaiah 51:6. In the next verse he proceeds to tell what this righteousness is: “Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law.” Because the law is the righteousness of God, it enables those who are instructed in it to “give judgment upon good or evil.” {SITI October 19, 1891, p. 307.11}

The text says, “My righteousness shall not be abolished.” Since there can be no question but that “righteousness” is here used with reference to the law of God, we may properly substitute “law” for “righteousness,” thus: “The earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but my salvation shall be forever, and my law shall not be abolished.” This gives the exact meaning, and is no more positive than we shall find stated elsewhere. {SITI October 19, 1891, p. 307.12}

God is from everlasting to everlasting. Psalm 90:2. As he cannot exist separate from his nature, or, in other words, separate from himself, and the law is the transcript of his nature, it necessarily follows that the law exists from everlasting to everlasting. And since created beings, who are all subjects of God’s government, cannot obey an abstract principle, but must have that principle clearly defined, we know that at least from the time that God created intelligent beings as subjects of his government, the law must have existed in written form, or must have been expressed in definite language. And from the beginning of his creation to everlasting ages, it must continue so to exist. {SITI October 19, 1891, p. 307.13}

This is exactly what we are taught by the words of Christ in the sermon on the mount. Said he: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill [to ratify, establish, or teach]. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Matthew 5:17, 18. Here two things are mentioned, the law and the prophets. Christ did not come to destroy either one. He came in fulfillment of prophecy, and also to teach the law, which he did in the sermon on the mount. He did not, however, fulfill all the prophecy; for some of it reaches far beyond his first advent. For instance, in Psalm 89:20-29 we read the following prophecy concerning the kingdom of David, over which Christ, as the Son of David, is to rule:— {SITI October 19, 1891, p. 307.14}

“I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him; with whom my hand shall be established; mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him; and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.” {SITI October 19, 1891, p. 307.15}

In verses 35-37 we read further:— {SITI October 19, 1891, p. 307.16}

“Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.” {SITI October 19, 1891, p. 307.17}

Here is a prophecy that will be in process of fulfillment as long as the sun and moon endure, even to all the days of heaven. Now the words of Christ are that “one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law till all be fulfilled.” Till all what be fulfilled? Evidently till all the prophets be fulfilled, for he is speaking of the prophets, in connection with the law. Then, in view of the prophecy that we just read, we know that not the slightest change can be made in the law so long as Christ reigns on the throne of David; and that will be throughout eternity. E. J. W. {SITI October 19, 1891, p. 307.18}

 **“The Spirit as a Guide” The Signs of the Times, 17, 43.**

E. J. Waggoner

When Christ told his disciples that he was about to go away and that they could not follow him, their hearts were filled with sorrow and anxiety. They dreaded to face an unfriendly world alone. He had been their guide and instructor, and they had learned much from his teachings. They knew of no one who could fill his place. Peter had echoed the sentiments of all the disciples when, in answer to Christ’s inquiry if they also would go away, he said, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” They knew that no one else could do for them what Jesus had done; and the thought of being separated from him was a sad one. {SITI October 26, 1891, p. 307.19}

To comfort them, Christ gave them the assurance that he would come again, and receive them unto himself, and that by this means they could again be with him. But even this promise was not sufficient, for there would still intervene a long period during which they would be left alone. How could they do without the presence and counsel of their Lord? {SITI October 26, 1891, p. 307.20}

Again Jesus meets the difficulty by promising that whatsoever they should ask in his name should be done for them; and he added, “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth.” John 14:16, 17. This Spirit was to be sent in his name, and was to take his place until his return. Said Christ, “I will not leave you comfortless [orphans]; I will come to you.” This coming does not refer to his personal, visible coming, when he will receive his people to himself, but to the Spirit which should come in his name. The Spirit was to be their guide, to prepare them for his coming at the last day. {SITI October 26, 1891, p. 307.21}

The offices of the Spirit are many; but there is a special one pointed out in this discourse of our lord. Said he: “These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you, but the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” John 14:25, 26. It is as a teacher that the Spirit is here brought to view. {SITI October 26, 1891, p. 307.22}

Many persons entertain very erroneous views as to the manner in which the Spirit operates. They imagine that it will teach them something which the Bible does not contain. When certain Bible truths are presented to them for their observance, they excuse themselves from all responsibility in the matter by saying that they are led by the Spirit of God, and do not feel it their duty to do that particular thing. They say the Spirit was given to guide into all truth; and, consequently, if it was necessary to obey that portion of the Scripture, it would have been brought to their notice. The fact that they do not feel impressed to obey, is proof to their minds that there is no necessity for obedience. To such persons the Bible is of no account; they make its truth depend entirely upon their own feelings. And they actually charge God with the inconsistency of authorizing his Spirit to speak in contradiction of his revealed word. The fact that God cannot lie should convince anyone that his Spirit and his word must always be in harmony. {SITI October 26, 1891, p. 307.23}

Christ prayed for his disciples, “Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.” The Psalmist David said, “Thy righteousness, is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth.” From these passages we learn that when Christ said, “When he the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth,” he meant that the Spirit would lead them into a proper understanding of that which had already been revealed. He plainly stated this when he said, “He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” Many things that Christ said were not understood at the time; but they were made plain by the Spirit after Christ had ascended to heaven. And it is thus that the Spirit teaches us now; it leads those who are humble and teachable into a proper understanding of the written word of God. {SITI October 26, 1891, p. 307.24}

Paul gives testimony on this point which is not uncertain. In Ephesians 6:13-17 he describes the Christian’s armor. The following is the concluding portion: “Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, *which is the word of God*.” Christ said that when the Comforter, the Holy Spirit should come, he would “reprove [convince] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” Paul says that “by the law is the knowledge of sin.” Both these passages are harmonized by the one quoted from Paul to the Ephesians. The Spirit does indeed convince of sin, but it is by impressing on the minds and hearts of men the claims of God’s word. The Bible is the sword, the instrument by which the Spirit pierces the heart, and lays bare its wickedness. The Spirit is the active agent, but the word of God is that through which it works. The two always act in unison. {SITI October 26, 1891, p. 307.25}

We should look with suspicion upon any spirit that counsels opposition to the word of God. John tells us that there are many spirits, and that we are to try them. In Isaiah we are told by what we are to try them: “To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8:20. It is the spirit of darkness that leads me to act contrary to the word of God. E. J. W. {SITI October 26, 1891, p. 340.1}