

The Southern **PRESBYTERIAN** *Journal*

VOL. XVIII NO. 10

JULY 8, 1959

\$3.00 A YEAR

Let Freedom Ring . . .

—◆◆◆—
“Righteousness Exalteth a Nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.” PROV. 14:34.

—◆◆◆—
“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” II CHRON. 7:14.

our former allegiance, and dependence upon God? Then we can be assured of victory. Until then we can only be assured of defeat.

First, of course, we must realize that we are under Satan's rule, else we will not feel any need for a change. Second, we must recognize our inability to overcome our enemy by our own strength. And, third, we must make our declaration — our public confession before men that we are sinners, in need of a redeemer, and accept the Lord Jesus as our Saviour. He is waiting. Why not make this your personal declaration day?

—R. LeC.

How I Love Thy Law

Psalms 119:97

Both the nineteenth and the one hundred and nineteenth psalms celebrate the praise of God's law. In the fortieth psalm, some of which is quoted of Christ in Hebrews, the Psalmist delights to do God's will, "Yea Thy law is within my heart." The great psalm of gratitude for God's mercies, is sung by those who keep His covenant and remember His precepts to do them, even as the angels do His commandments, harkening unto the voice of His word Psalm 103. According to both Jeremiah and the Epistle to the Hebrews, in the new covenant God makes Himself our God and us His people, He forgives our sins and writes His laws upon our hearts and minds.

The Apostle Paul commends the law as holy, and the commandment as holy and just and good, Rom. 7:12; and calls on children to obey the fifth commandment that it may be well with them on the earth, Eph. 6:1. Our Lord said that He came not to destroy the law but to fulfill it, that whosoever shall break one of the least of these commandments and teach men so shall be called least in the Kingdom, Matt. 5:7-20. In His farewell discourse, He tenderly reminded the disciples, If ye love ME, ye will keep MY commandments, John 14:15. In the Old Testament, Abraham has, at times, been singled out as the man of faith not of law. Of course, Abraham is the great example of faith, but in Gen. 26:5 God summarizes his life by declaring that Abraham has obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws.

On the other hand there are numerous passages which show us that we are not saved by law-keeping. CHRIST IS THE END OF THE LAW FOR JUSTIFYING RIGHTEOUSNESS TO EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES. But just as Ephesians, after emphasizing that we are saved by grace, not by works, concludes by reminding us THAT WE WERE CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS UNTO GOOD WORKS WHICH GOD BEFORE ORDAINED THAT WE SHOULD WALK IN THEM; even so we are not saved by law keeping but we are saved unto the obedience of faith which leads us to obey the will of our loving heavenly Father — whose will is expressed, at least in part, in the law of God. This needs some careful thinking, but loving God with all our minds invites

mental perspiration. And that not least on the difficulty of correlating the free offer of the Gospel to sinners, with the faithful observance of our Lord's teaching basing marriage on creation and thus making it indissoluble.

Dr. Thornwell once said that Christ is always crucified between two thieves, neonomianism (legalism) which steals from the Saviour the glory of justifying His people and anti-nomians which robs Him of the glory of sanctifying them. Old "Rabbi" John Duncan of Scotland warned us that the root of every heresy is anti-nomianism — the setting up of our minds or our wills instead of God's. Machen has put it:

The Gospel does not abrogate the law of God, but it makes men love it with all their hearts. For Calvin, "The state of a Christian under the law of grace consists not in unbounded license, uncontrolled by any law, but in being engrafted into Christ by Whose grace they are delivered from the curse of the law, and by Whose Spirit they have the law inscribed on their hearts, *Institutes* II viii. 57.

In Luther's great exposition of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, his commentary on Galatians, the father of the Reformation points out that there are two ways of keeping or trying to keep the law of God. One is the way of the legalist and the other the way of the believer. The legalist comes to the law merely as a set of external prescriptions and having met these external requirements boasts of having done as much or more than God required. Thus he fancies that he has merited eternal life.

On the other hand, the believer comes to God in Christ first as the grace-giver and then later learns that the grace-giver is also the lawgiver. Having learned to love the Father as the grace-giver, he still loves God as the law-giver. And loving God, he sings "How love I THY law." As he moved from God the grace-giver, to God the law-giver, so he moves from God the Father to the law, as His loving will. Then the law is no longer a series of arid propositions, but it is an expression of the love and the heart of the Father. He tries to do the will of His loving Father, even as Jesus successfully did this will. But the believer knows that all of his own obedience to this loving will of the Father is imperfect and far short of what it ought to be. Accordingly, he never boasts of having kept it perfectly. He ever trusts in Christ's having kept it for him. And yet the effort of the believer to do the will of the gracious heavenly Father is a nearer keeping of the true intent of the commandments of God than is the proud and boastful law-keeping of the legalist. As the last book in the Bible tells us, the saints are those who keep the commandments of God and hold the faith or the testimony of Jesus, Rev. 12:17; 14:12.

—W. C. R.

PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE

*Sustained by a Heritage
of Christian Ideals*

Marshall W. Brown, President — Clinton, N. C.