

"SAVED BY GRACE?"

(Or is there something we must DO
to enter the Kingdom of God?)

Thousands of professing Christians and many large denominations insist there are *no works* required in order to receive salvation! Millions of people who profess Christ insist that the LAW is "done away"; that such things as the Sabbath, annual Sabbaths, clean and unclean meats, tithing are all unnecessary. They believe the Bible says "Jesus nailed the law to His cross," and claim that "under the 'NEW' Covenant" there is no obligation to keep any laws! Millions believe we are saved by *grace alone!* They insist there are *no works* of any kind involved in salvation.

Is this true? Will God save us if we do not *obey* Him? Put another way, will God *refuse salvation to us* if He finds us trying to keep His laws? Does it make God *angry with us* when He sees us trying to keep His Ten Commandments? Can keeping the Sabbath and holy days get you LOST?

by Garner Ted Armstrong

In this publication, you will see just what was "nailed to the 'cross,'" and you will be astonished at what your own Bible says!

Yet, judging from the angry rhetoric one hears over radio and television and reads in religious publications, you and I would be in *real trouble* with God if we were found trying to keep His laws! "That's *legalism!*" they say, when asked about keeping the Sabbath or feast days, observing God's dietary laws, or obeying the Ten Commandments.

Is God *angry* with us if we keep His laws? Will we lose out on His Kingdom if we dare trying to *obey* Him?

Tunnel Vision — or Dishonesty?

The favorite text quoted by thousands of ministers to do away with any *works* is, "For by *grace are ye saved through faith*; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of *works*, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8, 9). Invariably, they *stop* quoting with the word "boast," and *never go on to read the rest of the thought!*

On its face, this oft-quoted verse seems to tell us we need only have faith to be saved—that we certainly do not need any "works" to present before God. If this is so, then *why* did Paul, the writer of this letter to the church at Ephesus, continue to say *in the same passage*, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus *unto good works*, which God hath before ordained that *we should walk in them*"? (Ephesians 2:10).

If God has ordained that we should "walk in good works," meaning *live* a life of good works, which this verse plainly tells us, then isn't this a diametric contradiction only a few words apart in the Bible?

Not at all. God's Word does not contradict itself. It does not tell you one thing in one verse, and the exact opposite in the next. One need only understand *the meaning of the words used* in order to grasp the full meaning of the entire passage. One thing is obvious. If only a part of the phrase is quoted, ending with the word "boast," the person quoting the verse does not want his listeners or readers to hear or see the remainder, which says we are created in Christ, as newly-begotten "creatures in Christ," *unto good works!* Is there any *dishonesty* involved?

What is the Bible Definition of Grace?

Grace does not mean a *permanent condition* of a human being. "Living under grace" is a term often used by those who deny there are any *works* to be accomplished by Christians. But grace is a *quality of the character and nature of God*, not the state of being of a Christian. Grace means unmerited pardon. It means undeserved, unearned forgiveness! Because God is *gracious*, meaning merciful, He is willing to forgive us for our sins when we repent. A plain paraphrasing of the enigmatic verse in Ephesians 2:8 would be, "By God's loving, merciful graciousness and forgiveness, we are saved by *faith* in Jesus Christ, and even this faith is a *gift* from God, it is not something we can produce ourselves, lest we should boast and brag that we had saved ourselves! Nevertheless, we are created in Christ, as Christians, for the purpose of performing *good works*, which God has before ordained that we should live in them."

Here is what the dictionary says about grace: "*God's free and undeserved favor to and love for mankind; influence of God operating in man to improve and strengthen: but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*" (Romans 5:20).

Never forget the real meaning of the word "grace." Remember, it is not the life-long condition of a Christian—a "state of being" in which the Christian dwells, it is part of the quality of character of God! When we repent of *sin*, God is gracious and merciful to forgive us of our sins. Notice, "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered" (Romans 4:4-7).

We can never "work" to eradicate sin. Sin is only forgiven through the blood of Jesus Christ, not through anything we can accomplish. No amount of well-doing today can erase evil-doing yesterday. But when God "imputes righteousness without works" to us, He does so only through the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ; through *His* righteousness.

How greatly *blessed* we are, by God's loving and merciful *grace*, when He forgives and *covers* our sins! And what *is* sin? Sin is the breaking of God's Ten Commandments!

No human being can ever *earn* God's forgiveness. Remember, being forgiven is the very first step toward salvation. We know "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin," wrote Paul (Romans. 4:8). Neither you nor I could live one hundred lifetimes of one hundred years each, mightily striving to "be good," or "do good," and *earn* salvation! We could not keep God's Ten Commandments perfectly for one hundred such lifetimes of one hundred years each, and *earn* salvation!

Why is this so? Because salvation is the gracious *gift* of God. A gift is not something we *earn*, it is something freely given!

Human Nature; What it Really is

Each of us is imbued with human nature. Human nature is, by definition, a nature that is contrary to God. God says, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is *not subject to the law of God*, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Romans 8:7-9).

The word "carnal" merely means "fleshly." We are imbued with fleshly, earthy, carnal human nature, which is a collection of vanity, jealousy, lust, and greed. Notice that we are *by nature* "not subject to the *law of God*."

This is not God's desire. He wants us to be subject to His laws, which are there for our good. Yet, by our very nature, we tend to be antagonistic toward God's laws. This antagonism shows itself throughout much of nominal, professing Christianity. Millions of people in dozens of denominations and church organizations teach against God's law. How shocked they will be when they learn WHO WROTE the very law they hate!

The law of God points out what sin is. We could not know that it is wrong to covet, or lust, apart from God's law. Human societies have been able to determine that stealing is wrong; that murder is wrong. Even pagan societies have devised laws which are necessary to regulate a peaceful society. But no humanly devised law could ever conclude that it is against the law to lust or covet. Paul put it this way: "(For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the *doers of the law* shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

"Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another)" (Romans 2:14, 15). Many human societies legislate against many of the same proscriptions contained in the Ten Commandments, such as stealing and murder. Yet, they remain oblivious and antagonistic toward God's laws.

Why is there such antagonism against God's laws? One would assume one would find hostility toward God's laws in non-Christian society; that the non-Christian and unbeliever would, of course, be antagonistic toward any rules and regulations in the Bible. But the *major source* of antagonism toward God's laws is in the very place one would expect to find the *opposite* view—that of humble, joyous *acceptance*! Instead, the vast majority of nominal "Christian" ministers evince an impatient, angry *hostility* toward God's laws!

Why? Which one of the laws of God is it which causes such passion? What is so *wrong* with the laws of God that they find no place in the liturgy and doctrines of professing Christian churches? Let's investigate each one, and see:

Which Commandments Do People Spurn?

Why all the hatred directed toward God's law? Does it make any sense? Do you believe God, who "is LOVE," and who knows all things; Who can foresee all things, wrote a law which He KNEW was a "bad law," and which He foreknew He would some day have to send His son to ABOLISH? Jesus said "I and my Father are one." Did Christ come to dismantle His Father's law? You will be ASTONISHED to learn WHO really wrote the Ten Commandments, and to see what your own Bible says about whether Christ came to demolish them!

Millions of people seem to HATE any mention of God's law! Why? What is it about laws against stealing, murder, lying, adultery, and dishonoring one's parents that is so bad? Let's see if we can single out just what it is about God's Ten Commandments that make people so angry.

It is not the *first* commandment people reject. "And God spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:2, 3). Nominal Christianity, Judaism and Islam are called the "three great monotheistic religions." As such, none of them reject the commandment to worship but the one true God. They differ enormously, of course, on just who, or what God is; the nature of God—but they are *monotheistic*, not polytheistic. Certainly, no Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran or Catholic believes in worshipping more than one God. There are no books written by Protestants, for example, which take issue with the first commandment, attempting to justify the worship of idols, or more than one God. They may disagree on the nature of God, but, regardless of how they state it, they all accept the concept of "one God."

It is not the *second* commandment people reject. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any

likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

"Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

"And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments (Exodus 20:4-6). Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, Episcopalians and dozens of other denominations reject idols. Of course, many would argue that statues, sculptures, pictures in stained glass, paintings, crucifixes, and St. Christophers dangling from rear-view mirrors are not truly "idols." A common explanation given by those who attend worship services where statuary is present is that they do not "worship" the statue, but that it merely *reminds* them of the one they worship, whether their concept of Christ, or the virgin Mary, or some other "saint."

However, none of the nominal Christian churches find the second commandment repugnant to them, or argue that they should bow down to an idol. They merely disagree on what constitutes "idolatry," not that it is wrong. There are no books written by the "mainstream" Protestant churches attempting to justify idolatry and the breaking of the second commandment.

It is not the *third* commandment they reject. "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Exodus 20:7). There are no books written by mainstream fundamentalist churches arguing that we may curse and swear; no church says we may take God's name in vain. However, most do not realize they are breaking this commandment by repeating the name of Jesus over and over again, or reciting the "Lord's prayer" repeatedly. Christ commanded us, "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

"But when ye pray, *use not vain repetitions*, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

"Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

"After this *manner* therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name" (Matthew 6:5-9). Yet, nearly all churches do the exact opposite of what Jesus Christ instructed! The famous "Lord's prayer" is not a prayer at all, but an *outline* for prayer. Christ was not praying when He delivered these words to His disciples. He was merely speaking to them; instructing them. How strange it is that the verses immediately preceding the so-called "Lord's Prayer" warn against "vain repetition," and yet the "Lord's Prayer" is *repeated endlessly* by hundreds of thousands each week!

Commonly, "taking the Lord's name in vain" is assumed to mean cursing and swearing; using God's name, or the name of Jesus Christ in oaths, or as by-words. None of the churches reject this commandment.

It is not the *fifth* commandment they reject: "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee" (Exodus 20:12). No church argues against the commandment to honor our parents; none of the monotheistic religions do so; not Islam, Judaism, or nominal Christianity. There are no books attempting to set aside this commandment.

It is not the *sixth* commandment they reject: "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13). Actually, the commandment reads, "Thou shalt do no murder," for the Hebrew word is *Ratsach*, (pronounced "raw-tsach")

which means *murder*, as distinct from killing. God commanded ancient Israel to exterminate their pagan, idolatrous, child-sacrificing Gentile neighbors; commanded them to carry out the death sentence on capital offenders, such as murderers. There are no books written to set aside the command against murder. Of course, there are many nominal Christians who are vehemently against the death penalty for murderers, no matter how brutal and heinous their crimes. Some people seem to feel they are *more righteous than God*, who clearly prescribed the death penalty for murder, and who will carry out such a penalty in the millennial reign of Christ.

It is not the *seventh* commandment they reject: "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14). As Paul wrote to the Romans, even pagan societies have written laws, and are a "law unto themselves" concerning these fundamental rules for a peaceful, regulated society. Most churches regard the breaking of the seventh commandment as sin; most are against divorce. The Roman Catholic Church is a case in point. In Arab countries, adultery is punishable by death. There are no books written by Protestant theologians who are angry with the seventh commandment. Of course, there are "gay churches," and some liberal churches ordain "gay" preachers or priests, and some condone "same-sex marriages" all of which are an abomination in God's sight, and in clear violation of God's perfect law. Yet, they do not single out the seventh commandment for their anger.

It is not the *eighth* commandment they reject: "Thou shalt not steal." No churches advocate stealing. There are no books written to set aside this commandment.

It is not the *ninth* commandment they reject: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour" (Exodus 20:16). No church condones lying. The commandment is couched in terms which seem to imply testifying against one's neighbor in a deliberate attempt to defame, as in a legal matter. However, simple "gossip" breaks this commandment, and perhaps no one engages in vicious gossip and slander with more alacrity than some professing "Christians," who become self-righteous and judgmental. Nevertheless, no books have been written to justify lying, or falsely defaming one's neighbor.

It is not the *tenth* commandment they reject: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's" (Exodus 20:17). Though millions of nominal Christians, Jews, and followers of Islam may desperately covet material things, or covet the wealth of others, none of them vigorously attempt to set aside the tenth commandment. As Paul said, this commandment is not among those which have been instituted by pagan societies. They can determine that theft and murder are detrimental to society and legislate against them, but no society has determined that lusting and coveting in your mind are a sin.

It is the *law of God* that points out what sin is.

Paul wrote, "What shall we say then? is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but *by the law*: for I had not known lust, except the *law* had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Romans 7:7). Human nature could never determine that coveting is wrong. Actually, covetousness is the same thing as *idolatry*, for an idol can be anything that comes between us and God; anything we place *before* God: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, *which is idolatry*:"

"For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience" (Colossians 3:5, 6). Though some may not emphasize it, or spend a great deal of time railing against covetousness, none of the Protestant churches attempts to single out the tenth commandment for attack, or to argue against it.

Then WHICH of the Ten Commandments is it that makes them so angry? The one we omitted. The *fourth* commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

"Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

"But the *seventh day* is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

"For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:8-11). This commandment makes many people blind, raging, furious! Not that they mind "keeping Sunday", or even arguing "Well, I don't think it makes any difference — I think you ought to 'keep every day holy', or any 'one in seven.'" Human reason seems so good to so many. But we are not saved by our clever arguments, or human reason. Only God will save us, and only according to HIS word!

You live in a *Sunday observing world*. Since 325 AD, at the Council of Nicaea, when an apostate church ordered all Christians to cease from "Judaizing" by observing the seventh-day Sabbath, the observance of *Sunday*, the "Day of the sun," or *Solis Invictus*, has been in place.

When one is reared by one's parents or guardians in a *ready-made world*, one rarely questions the customs and practices of society. East Asian Indians are taught from childhood about the Hindu religion. Chinese are taught Buddhism. Arabs are brought up as believers in the Koran, and Islam. Only a very few, rare individuals ever think to carefully research and study out *why* they do the things they do. Christmas, Easter, Halloween; all are such a part of nominal Christian society that hardly anyone gives them a second thought.

So it is with Sunday. The fourth commandment clearly points out the *seventh day* of the week reminds us that God *created* this special day by resting from His creative works, and tells us we must "*remember the Sabbath day* to KEEP IT HOLY." It is *this* commandment which is hated by millions! Sabbath-keeping simply does not "fit" into a Sunday-keeping world. With centuries of tradition; huge cathedrals, basilicas, churches; with millions of members all in lock step on Sunday, the concept of Sabbath-keeping seems *strange*, even *cultic*, to millions.

Of course, the Jews continue to observe the Sabbath. Seventh-Day Adventists do. Seventh-Day Baptists do. Dozens of other Sabbatarian groups do. But to the large, Protestant "mainstream" churches, Sabbath-keeping seems strange indeed.

There are dozens of Bible proofs which plainly prove that God's Sabbath day was *never changed*; that it was *never* "nailed to the cross."

Never doubt for an instant that the *fourth commandment* is the actual target of those who would tell you God's laws are "done away"! It is the pivotal reason why there is such anger in the minds of so many professing Christian ministers directed toward "Sabbatarians." How could all these churches be *wrong*? they reason. In this book, however, we are dealing specifically with the question of *grace*, as opposed to *works*.

There are dozens of fine books available which document in detail how the Roman Catholic Church gradually imposed Sunday worship upon the nominal Christian world. Catholics will openly claim that Protestants have no scriptural basis for "keeping Sunday"; that they inherited the practice from Rome.

While many fundamentalist churches say the *Bible* is their sole guide, even if they disagree widely on what it says, the Roman Catholic Church cheerfully admits their authority for their doctrines and practices stems from *three* distinct sources: (1) The pope, when speaking *ex cathedra*, or from the so-called "holy see," which means he is infallible. (2) Church tradition, handed down from "the fathers." (3) The scriptures. The order in which these "authorities" are listed is advisable. Where there is any apparent conflict, the papal decrees and/or the "tradition of the fathers" takes precedence.

Missing Keys to Understanding Your Bible:

Biblical understanding does not come merely because one understands the English language, and knows how to read. Believe it or not Almighty God has said that a true understanding of His word is *not available* to everyone. Just because millions of people believe in Hinduism, no Methodist or Baptist believes they are right. The old argument, "the majority is always right," is utterly false. So is the excuse, "surely, all these churches can't be *wrong*?"

Many read the Bible, yet say they cannot understand it. Why? Because man has *rejected* God. Because carnal human nature is *enmity* against God and His laws (Romans 8:7). Notice the prophecy of Isaiah, "Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink.

"For the LORD hath poured out upon you the *spirit of deep sleep*, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.

"And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is *sealed*, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed:

"And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.

"Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the *precept of men*:

"Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.

"Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?"

"Surely your *turning of things upside down* shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?"

"Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest?"

"And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness" (Isaiah 29:9-18). This is referring to *spiritual* deafness and blindness.

Jesus Christ quoted from this prophecy. His disciples wondered *why* He continually spoke to the people in puzzles, called "parables." Some seem to believe He did so to *make His meaning clearer*. He did the exact opposite! Notice, "And the disciples came, and said unto Him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?"

"He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but *to them it is not given*.

"For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

"Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

"And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

"For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes *they have closed*; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should *understand* with their heart, and *should be converted, and I should heal them*.

"But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

"For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them" (Matthew 13:10-17).

What shocking words! Jesus Christ clearly said He spoke to the masses in puzzles and conundrums *lest* they should understand; *lest* they should be converted; *lest* He should heal them! Yet, millions assume Jesus Christ tried valiantly to convert every person He saw; to heal all who came to Him; to teach everyone all He could about God's Word! He did no such thing. He thanked His Father that He had *revealed* His truth unto "babes," instead of the intellectually proud of this world (Luke 10:21).

But Christ said "Many are called and *few are chosen*" (Matthew 22:14).

Only a humble, contrite, sincere person with whom God is working; one who is being *called to repentance*, can clearly understand His word! He said so! He said, "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him..." (John 6:44). Because the natural state of human beings is *carnality*, which is hostility toward God's laws, the immediate tendency when encountering scriptures about obedience is to attempt to reason around them.

Many things are needed to understand God's truth. First, one must believe that God IS, and that the Bible is His inspired word to man. Next, one must approach the Word of God in a spirit of humble fear, trembling before it in awe. "Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?"

"For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: [YHVH, or, "the Eternal"] but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isaiah. 66:1, 2).

Few truly *tremble* before the sacred Word of God. Few are *afraid* to put their own interpretation into it; to scornfully reject some scriptures, and cling to others. The Bible plainly tells us that not every point of truth is found in any one place: "Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.

"For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; *here a little, and there a little*:

"For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.

"To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.

"But the Word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken" (Isaiah 28:9-13).

As Jesus Christ said, this is precisely *why* so many are *deceived* about so many doctrines and truths in God's Word. A glaring example is the verse quoted at the beginning of this book. Invariably, those who attempt to do away with God's law (because they hate the *fourth* commandment!) will stop quoting with the word "boast," when, if they quoted the entire passage, the meaning would become clear.

God inspired John to warn against attempting to put our own ideas into Scripture: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

"And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18, 19).

Are you one with whom God is working? Is your mind and your heart truly *open* to understand God's Word? If it is, you will be able to completely *understand* that God's loving, merciful *grace* which is extended to us when we repent *does not mean we may break God's Ten Commandments!*

When thoughts of tradition; of family and friends; thoughts like "Surely all these big churches—all these millions of people *can't be wrong?*" come into your mind, you will admit to yourself, "Yes, they can, and they usually *are!*"

There is no church which advocates sin. Yet, most do not teach their members what sin really is.

What is the Bible Definition of Sin?

With spirit of awe and Godly fear in mind, look at the *Bible definition* of sin and justification. There is only one scripture in the Bible which says, "SIN IS":

and then gives us the exact definition of sin. Notice, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is *the transgression of the law*" (1 John 3:4). That is what sin IS. It is the breaking of any one of God's Ten Commandments.

James wrote, "If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:

"But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet *offend in one point*, he is guilty of all.

"For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law" (James 2:8-11). To break any point of the Ten Commandments is the same as breaking all of them! This clearly means that Sabbath-breaking is exactly the same as murder in God's sight! Burn this down inside your mind, and never forget it: **SIN IS THE BREAKING OF GOD'S LAW!**

When we *repent*, what is it we must repent of? We must repent of sin! And what IS SIN? It is the breaking of God's laws; God's holy, righteous, perfect Ten Commandments! If only this simple truth were etched into the minds of millions of nominal Christians, they would see clearly that God's law is not done away!

When John the Baptist preached, he continually cried out, "*Repent ye*, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). Jesus Christ said, "*Repent*, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17). Repent of *what*? Repent of *sin*! And what IS sin?

On the Day of Pentecost, when thousands were stricken over Peter's powerful indictment of their blood guiltiness over Christ's death, they were "...pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

"Then Peter said unto them, *Repent*, and *be baptized* every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the *remission of sins*, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:37, 38).

Again, repent of *what*? Repent of *sin*. And what is sin? It is the breaking of any point of God's Ten Commandments. Remember, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), and "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

Those who attempt to "do away" with God's Ten Commandments (especially the *fourth* one) will *never* write or preach from the scriptures you see in this book—scriptures you will find are faithfully quoted exactly as you find them in your own Bible. They will avoid them like the plague, for they do not want their members hearing or reading scriptures which plainly tell them they must *keep God's Ten Commandments* once they have repented of having broken them.

Notice how Paul wanted to avoid any misunderstanding among the Roman converts about "grace." He did not want them to assume that, because we are under God's *grace*, we can revert right back to the life of *sin* from which we repented. He wrote, "What shall we say then? Shall we *continue in sin*, [breaking any one of the Ten Commandments] that *grace* may abound?"

"God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?"

"Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk [live] in newness of life" (Romans 6:1-4). We are to live a new and a different way of life; the way of God's Ten Commandments. David said, "O how *love* I thy law! It is my meditation all the day" (Psalms 119:97). David was a man after God's own heart, who will be the *king over all Israel* in the millennial reign of Christ (Jeremiah 30:9).

Now, you know what sin really IS. If you never forget this, and always apply it when you read about sin in the Bible, you will have a far greater understanding.

What is "Justification"?

Your dictionary says the word "justify" means: "To show to be just or right...to clear of blame or guilt; to vindicate." My dictionary even has a biblical meaning: "*Justification by faith*: freedom from the *penalty* of sin through faith in Christ" (The *World Book Encyclopedia Dictionary*). As I write, I have a feature on my word processor which *justifies* the margins on the page. That is, it forces all the letters at the beginning or the end (or both, if I desire) of a line to be exactly square; perpendicular. The word "rectified," or the expression "made right" means the same thing as "justified."

When we are *wrong*, we need to be "made *right*." When we are sinners, we need to be "*justified*." Justification means the *forgiveness of sins that are past*. It has to do with the removal, through God's *grace*, of our past sins!

When we repent of sin, which is the breaking of God's laws, God says He will forgive us. When He has forgiven us, we are then *justified*: made right, straightened out, rectified—forgiven!

Then what? Does this mean we are then free to go out and do the very same things we just repented of? Of course not! However, when we have been forgiven, God expects us to live a life of *overcoming*!

Here is a most vital point concerning the "grace versus works" arguments of so many nominal Christians. Millions have become convinced that there is nothing they must *do* in order to be saved. Instead of understanding that salvation is as the result of God's loving *grace*, and that His grace forgives us from our past sins, they believe there is *no obedience* toward God required! Some have gone so far as to say once they have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior, they *cannot* sin!

How utterly ridiculous! Because one has believed Jesus Christ died for our sins; believed he or she should accept Him as Savior, does this mean that lying, cheating, stealing, or even *murder* are completely overlooked?

Never forget that repentance and the forgiveness of sins is but the *first step* in becoming a child of God! Why would Jesus Christ urge us to *overcome* if there is nothing further we must *do* once we have accepted Him as Savior?

He said, "And he that *overcometh*, and *keepeth my works* unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

"And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father" (Revelation 2:26, 27). Keeping Christ's works unto the end means holding fast to His teaching and His example. It means not only believing in the mighty works He accomplished here on earth, but continuing in His work during our entire Christian lifetime.

Over and over again, your Bible says we must live a life of struggling against sin; a life of striving to *overcome* sin.

Some of Christ's most important parables dealt with how we are to overcome. Christ showed that God judges each of us according to our own individual talents and abilities; that each of us is to be rewarded in His Kingdom according to what we do with what we have.

Notice, "He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

"And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

"But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, *We will not have this man to reign over us. [Note this carefully! They would not obey. They detested government!]*.

"And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

"Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

"And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, *have thou authority over ten cities.*

"And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

"And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

"And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:

"For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

"And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow:

"Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

"And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.

"(And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)

"For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

"But those mine enemies, which *would not that I should reign over them*, bring hither, and slay them before me" (Luke 19:12-27).

This is a profound parable. Clearly, Christ showed that the man who doubled his money with only five pounds (the King James English Bible uses the English "pound sterling" instead of dollars, or Hebrew coin) accomplished just as much as the man who doubled his money with ten pounds. The only difference was in their natural gifts; their natural several abilities.

The attitude of the enemies was one of *rebellion against laws*. They resented any *rulership* over them. Christ shows those who rebel against God as the RULER are to be *slain*.

Notice that each one of the servants was GIVEN a certain amount. Salvation is GIVEN of God through Christ's sacrifice. But once God has freely GIVEN us forgiveness and salvation because of His loving grace and mercy, He expects us to live a life of overcoming. The servants were each *given* a gift of money. They didn't earn it. But after receiving the free gift, they were expected to *produce*; to *use* the gift they had received.

The parable clearly shows that we are to "*Grow* in grace and knowledge"; that we are to *overcome* when we have been converted.

The parable of the "talents" is a similar example (Matthew 25:14-30).

In the famous "Sermon on the mount," Jesus Christ showed there is *struggle* and *difficulty* involved in overcoming. He clearly showed some would *seek* to enter in to His kingdom, and *would not be able*. His words are completely incompatible with the concept of "no works" following our repentance and baptism.

Christ said, "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 [meaning difficult, tortuous] is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and *few* there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13, 14). A little later in this passage, He said, "Not every one that saith

unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?"

"And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that *work* iniquity [lawlessness]" (Matthew 7:21-23).

These rebellious, lawless ones have *works*, whether they know it or not, but their works are "works of lawlessness," or rebellion toward God's laws, not the good works God wants to see in our lives.

Millions call Jesus Christ "Lord." They continually speak of how they "love the Lord," and become emotional about "praising the Lord." Jesus Christ asks of all these: "And *why call ye me 'Lord, Lord' and DO NOT THE THINGS WHICH I SAY?*" (Luke 6:46).

How do We PROVE We Have Faith?

Countless numbers of professing Christians believe they are saved by "faith." All their lives, they have heard the message, "Only *believe*." They have heard repeatedly that they must only "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved." They have heard almost *none* of the scriptures you have just read; almost *none* of the scriptures that show *obedience to God* must be coupled with our belief, or else our belief is *in vain*. By selective "proof texting," such as you saw at the beginning of this booklet, deceivers quote only *part* of a phrase, or carefully select certain verses to prove their point, while avoiding others.

Millions believe we are saved by "faith alone." They have heard, over and over again, "By grace are you saved through faith."

But what *is* faith?

"Faith is the substance [ground, or confidence] of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Even *faith* is a *gift* from God. It is not something we can stir up, or create within ourselves (Ephesians. 2:8). A few verses later, we read, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews. 11:6). The apostle James said there is a way to demonstrate our faith. He wrote, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and *have not works*? can faith save him?"

"If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

"And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?"

"Even so faith, if it hath not *works*, is *dead*, being alone.

"Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith *by my works*."

"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble [Satan the devil is a *believer*. He *knows* God exists. He has seen Him; He has tempted Jesus Christ *up close, in person!* Never forget, the devil "*believes!*"],

"But wilt thou know, O vain man, that *faith without works is dead?*"

"Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?"

"Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?"

"And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God.

"Ye see then how that by *works* a man is justified, and *not by faith only*.

"Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by *works*, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?"

"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:14-26). Can scripture be any plainer? There are *works* which must be accomplished; the kind of works Christ described. First, there is the *work* of God, of preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God to all the world as a witness. Then, there is the *work* of feeding the flock of God. Then, there is the *work of the church*, and the work of each individual Christian.

What kind of work? First, *love and obedience to God*. Second, *love toward fellow man*. James wrote, "If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:

"But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced *of the law* as transgressors.

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet *offend in one point*, he is guilty of all (James 2:8-10).

All the mainstream churches believe in accomplishing "good works." They conduct missionary efforts, build hospitals, shelters, and homes for the elderly and homeless. They conduct food and clothing drives for the poor. All this is admirable. However, they do not believe that last line of James' statement, nor do they believe most of the scriptures you have been reading! The *fourth commandment* is the one they reject.

But the Word of God says if we break even *one point* of God's Ten Commandments, we are guilty of all of them. Clearly, God is telling us He holds Sabbath-breaking on the same level as idolatry or murder!

***Jesus Christ Said We Must "Overcome."
Does That Mean We have Something to DO?***

Again and again, Christ tells us we must *overcome* in order to inherit eternal life. Overcoming requires *effort*. It requires *work*, not just "belief" or "faith" with no *proof* of our faith, which James clearly urged.

Notice how Christ said it was those who *overcame sin in the flesh* who would be saved. "To him that *overcometh* will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Revelation 2:7). "To him that *overcometh* will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (Revelation 2:17). "And he that *overcometh* and keepeth my *works* unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

"And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father" (Revelation 2:26). There are no "nations" up in heaven. The Kingdom of God will rule **HERE**, on this earth (Isaiah 2; Isaiah 11; Micah 4; Revelation 5:10; Revelation 19; Revelation 20:4).

There are three major forces we must overcome. We cannot overcome any one of the three without the indwelling presence of God's Holy Spirit, which is only given to them that *obey* God (Acts 5:32).

The first major force is Satan, who is the present evil world ruler (2 Corinthians 4:4); the "prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2), and is pictured as a "roaring lion, walking about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). Satan has *deceived* all nations from the very beginning (Revelation 12:9). Remember, a *deceived* person can be a very nice person; one who is honest, sincere, hard-working; the kind of a person you might like for a neighbor.

Being deceived connotes *honesty and sincerity* by definition. If we *know* we are deceived, then we are not deceived! One of the most difficult things for a human being to do is to admit he or she has been *wrong*. It goes against ego; against vanity; against our self esteem. Yet, no matter how sincere; how trusting and believing we might have been, it is very possible we have been *deceived* by Satan and his ready-made world.

The second major force is *this evil world* around us; *society*, with its manifold danger, frustrations and temptations. You live in a time when mankind possesses several different methods by which *all life* could be exterminated; an age of nuclear proliferation, the population explosion, spreading, pandemic disease, malnutrition and starvation; an age of brutal despotism and suppression of human rights. You live in the age of total trash in entertainment and in literature. The forces at work around us from radio, television, magazines, books, and from society itself are at work to destroy character, destroy the home and family, corrupt our youth, and can cause us to *lose out* on God's Kingdom! Parents know they must carefully monitor what their children watch on television; that most of what is provided for children *should never* be put into any child's mind.

The third major force is our *own human nature* which is filled with physical, carnal pulls. Because we are fleshly, material beings, we tend toward material things. Paul wrote, "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

"So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God (Romans 8:4-7). Because we are fleshly; because we are physical creatures with physical senses, we tend to "mind the things of the flesh" far more than to mind "the things of the Spirit."

Does anyone believe for an instant that it does not require effort, concentration, determination, struggle—**WORK**, to overcome these three great forces?

It does not require "works" to BE SAVED! But once God has *saved* us from certain destruction in Gehenna fire through His loving *grace*, He requires us to *quit sinning!* Talk to any former smoker who finally managed to quit, and ask him or her if it required **EFFORT**; a **STRUGGLE**; **WORK**, to quit! Talk to any former alcoholic, and ask the same question! God **FORGIVES** sin, and, once He has graciously forgiven us, He tells us we must *strive* with all that is in us, and with the help of His Holy Spirit, not to live any further in sin. That means He requires us to live a life of *overcoming*. Paul wrote extensively about grace, justification, and the struggle to *overcome* the great trials in this life. Speaking of material things in contrast to the great prize of the resurrection, and co-rulership with Christ, He said, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, [material things; physical possessions] and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

"And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

"That I may know Him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death;

"If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

"Brethren, *I count not myself to have apprehended*: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

"*I press* toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:8-14). Read that again! Notice that Paul, unlike some who have been deceived by false teachers, did *not* "count himself to have apprehended," or to have already achieved the Kingdom of God, but he "followed after" the great prize of God's Kingdom! He *pressed* toward the mark, like a long-distance runner who sees the finish point ahead, and who puts on a burst of speed to win the race!

What are all these scriptures doing in the Bible if one may be saved merely by belief, and profession of Christ?

Christ was asked about whether the many or the few would be saved: "Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And He said unto them,

"*Strive* [this connotes a *struggle* — hard work!] to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and *shall not be able*.

"When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:

"Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

"But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

"There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the Kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

"And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

"And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last" (Luke 13:23-30). Jesus Christ told His disciples to STRIVE to enter into the strait [narrow, difficult] gate that leads to life, and plainly said MANY WILL SEEK to enter in, and SHALL NOT BE ABLE! This is *your Savior* who said this, not any man, or human teacher!

Notice what Jesus Christ told a young man he must DO to be saved: "And, behold, one came and said unto him, good Master, what good thing shall I *do*, that I may have eternal life?

"And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, *keep the commandments*.

"He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness,

"Honour thy father and thy mother: and, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

"The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?

"Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

"But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of heaven.

"And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

"When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?" (Matthew 19:16-26). Plainly, Christ said, if we will enter into eternal life, we must *keep the Ten Commandments!* God is not "required" to *repeat* all ten in meticulous detail each time He mentions His law! Some argue that because Christ *did not repeat all ten* He is only saying that *some* of them are still in force and effect. Yet, the man *knew* Christ was referring to the Ten Commandments, for they are the *only laws* which contain the words Christ quoted! After referring to the Ten Commandments, Christ then *summarized* the last six. The man knew exactly which commandments it was to which Jesus Christ referred, and his response proves it.

Again, *what are all these scriptures doing in the Bible* if salvation consists ONLY of "believing," and does not require *obedience to God?*

Does "Being Under Grace" Mean We Can IGNORE God's Laws?

The entire argument about "grace versus works" is absolutely shattered when we understand all the foregoing; what *grace* truly IS; how and when we receive it; what justification IS; HOW we are "justified," and what sin IS.

Because we have *sinned*, the law has claimed our life. The penalty for sin is *death* (Romans. 6:23). But Christ *died in our place*. If we truly BELIEVE this, and accept Jesus Christ as our wonderful, loving, gracious, merciful Savior, He will turn to His father in heaven, and intercede for us! We can be *forgiven* for our sins!

But forgiveness of past sins does not mean we now have *license* to go right back into the *same way of life!* No, we are to live in a *new* and a *different* way of life! As you read through these wonderful scriptures, never forget the MEANING of the terms. Remember, SIN IS THE TRANSGRESSION OF GOD'S LAW. Grace is God's loving mercy; His gracious forgiveness!

Suppose an embezzler is discovered by his employer. The employer confronts the embezzler, and tells him he is going to report him to the police. However, after listening to the man's heartbroken confession; hearing that he was desperate, that he is terribly sorry he stole from his boss, the employer decides to *forgive* him. Can any amount of honest work on the part of the former embezzler erase the fact that he stole money?

Now, he is forgiven! Is he now *free to continue to embezzle money?* Of course not! Since he has been forgiven for stealing, his employer now expects that he will *never steal again!* The embezzler has discovered that his boss is a gracious man, and is now living under his boss' graceful pardon—under "grace!" But because his boss was gracious and forgiving does not mean the man is now free to steal all he can!

So it is with God's law. When we repent of breaking it; when we are under God's wonderful *grace*, He expects us to begin keeping His laws.

We are *justified* by the death of Jesus Christ, but, believe it or not, we are not saved by His death! No, we are forgiven of SIN by His death; by His shed blood, but we are saved by His LIFE! If Christ's death saves us, then why did He need to be resurrected? He was resurrected to become our living High Priest, making intercession for us daily before God's throne!

Notice this carefully, "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

"Much more then, being now *justified* by His blood, we *shall be saved* from wrath through Him.

"For if, when we were enemies, we were *reconciled* [the same thing as "justification"] to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, *we shall be saved by his life*" (Romans 5:8-10). Millions of professing Christians are completely unaware of this vitally important scripture! They have heard all their lives that "Christ died to save sinners," which is true on its face, but they have not been taught the difference between justification and salvation!

How many sermons have you heard preached about what Jesus Christ is doing TODAY?

Why was He resurrected nearly 2,000 years ago, and what has He been doing ever since? Let God's Word answer: "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

"For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:14-16). We need not confess to any man, or any human priest! We need only confess our sins and faults, our shortcomings and mistakes directly to Jesus Christ! As John said, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

***What is The "Handwriting of Ordinances"
that is AGAINST us?
Is it The Ten Commandments?***

With all the foregoing firmly in mind, let us now investigate some of the "proof texts" which are most commonly used to convince people God's law is "done away." Millions have heard the expression "Christ nailed the law to His cross."

On its face, such an expression is utterly ridiculous! Jesus Christ was the One nailed to the stake. Because of the insistent teaching that God's law is done away, many have the picture in their mind of Jesus Christ with the law of God in His hand, *nailing it to His cross*, like a person might nail an announcement, or a political poster, to a telephone pole.

This is nonsense. Christ died because we have *sinned*. And what IS sin? Never forget the Bible definition! You know that God's Word plainly defines sin as the breaking of God's Ten Commandments!

Now, turn to the 2nd chapter of Colossians, and study it carefully. Paul is writing to *Gentiles*; people who had been brought up in utter paganism. They were polytheistic, believing in Greek mythologies, and pagan "mysteries." Diana of the Ephesians, Asklepios and Theus, Mars and Venus, Mercury and Horus—the so-called

"gods" were myriad, and utterly licentious.

When these early Christians became converted, zealous "converted" Jews, many of whom were anxious to impose the "laws of Moses," including such things as circumcision and required fasts, attempted to influence these Gentiles. Their "Talmud" contained hundreds of restrictions, "do's and don'ts," which reached into every aspect of daily life. How to dress, hair styles, hair length, facial hair, fastings, methods of washing and bathing, abstinence from certain things; a myriad of restrictions which made life a constant ritual.

The greatest controversy in the first decades of the true church in the first century was the "Jew-Gentile" controversy; an attempt on the part of enthusiastic, zealous Jews [who may have been well-intentioned, but simply wrong], to "convert" Gentile Christians to *Judaism*.

The apostles struggled against this influence continually. Paul's letters are laden with references to it, for he was the "apostle to the Gentiles," and constantly encountered attempts by "Judaizers" to divert Christians from belief in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice to the observance of *rituals*.

There were several forces at work. On the one hand, there were the stoics. These Greek philosophers believed in asceticism; abstemiousness, deprivation, rejection of materialism. Then there were the Greek philosophies concerning the nature of God and the purpose of human life. Always, there was the Jewish influence, urging circumcision, prescribed fasts, abstinence, meticulous restrictions of every kind.

Notice how Paul attempted to combat the influences which were affecting the Gentile Christians in Colossae: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him [live according to His example]:

"Rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

"Beware lest any man spoil you through *philosophy* and vain deceit, after the tradition of *men*, after the *rudiments of the world*, and not after Christ.

"For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

"And ye are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power:

"In whom also ye are circumcised with the *circumcision made without hands*, in putting off the body of the *sins of the flesh* by the circumcision of Christ" (Colossians 2:6-11). Notice that *circumcision* was being urged upon these early Gentile Christians. Paul knew that circumcision was only a physical type of conversion. Notice Jeremiah 4:4, "Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins *of your heart*, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings." Study Acts 15, where this issue had become such a problem that it resulted in the first major conference of the apostles and elders in Jerusalem, who had to rule that circumcision was no longer necessary. But that ruling (Acts 15:1, 19-21) did not cause the problem to go away. For decades, Jewish converts insisted that Gentiles should be circumcised.

Next, Paul warned them to beware that no *man* deceived them through *philosophy* and "vain deceits." Clearly, he was warning against false teachers, who would *deceive* these people into accepting vain, but attractive philosophical concepts which appealed to human vanity.

Then, he said they should avoid *human tradition*; traditions of the *world*, and beware of the "rudiments of the world." The word "rudimentary" means "elementary," or "base." Can you think of any "elementary" or "base" teachings in this world today?

You have only to study into the superstitions of stone-age tribes in the Amazon, or, for that matter, into the superstitions of many pagan religions and some so-called "Christian" religions to find "base" or "elementary" practices. There are hundreds of taboos, restrictions, and requirements practiced by hundreds of religions.

It was no different then. Have you heard of the penalties for spilling salt, or breaking a mirror? Have you ever been told you should not walk under a ladder, allow a black cat to walk across your path, or step on a crack in the sidewalk? Have you ever been told a woman who gazes at a snake will have a snake-shaped birthmark on her baby?

These seemingly harmless superstitions, alive and well in a modern, space-age society, are only a small sampling of the "rudiments of the world" that dominated every aspect of life during the first century. For people who had grown up surrounded by a belief in dozens of pagan gods; taboos, bacchanalian orgies, superstitions regarding "lucky" and "unlucky" days; prayers to the sun and the moon, it was easy for them to be led into the belief that they should live their lives by observing a myriad of taboos and proscriptions. Can you think of any religions in which a number of "taboos" are present — in which certain duties, such as making signs with one's hands, facing a certain way, marching around a rock, dressing in a certain way, etc., are prevalent?

Judaizers attempted to enforce the entire "book of the Law," upon newly converted Gentile Christians, including circumcision. For pagans, who were entirely familiar with "cuttings in the flesh," such as tattooing, pierced ears, noses, lips and tongues; who were familiar with the custom of self-flagellation in religious rituals, the rite of circumcision was not difficult to accept.

There was another custom which weighed heavily on the minds of newly-converted Gentile Christians. They lived in a society where the killing of animals rarely occurred without some sort of sacrificial ritual to a pagan god. Therefore, the meats for sale in the flea markets and central squares, called "the shambles," were invariably meats from animals killed in pagan sacrifice. To people who were now divesting themselves of their pagan past, the meat was abhorrent; tainted.

To those more mature in the truth, the idol was absolutely nothing; dead, lifeless stone or wood, with no power whatsoever to taint or affect the meat in any way. Yet, so deeply ingrained were the previous superstitions of some, they could not bring themselves to eat the meat.

Such were the circumstances found by the apostle Paul among the Gentiles who enthusiastically accepted the gospel of Jesus Christ, and wanted to begin living according to God's Word. Following his rejoinder about philosophy and vain deceits; about the "rudiments of the world," Paul reminded them about the issue of circumcision, and showed how *baptism* was a rite which pictured the *death, burial and resurrection of Christ*, as well as the symbolic death of the "old person," who had been living in sin. Coming up out of the waters of baptism was like being "risen with Christ," to live in a new way of life. Paul wrote, "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

"And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power:

"In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

"Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead.

"And you, being dead in your sins [because sin is the transgression of the law, and the wages of sin is death: 1 John 3:4; Romans 6:23] and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses" (Colossians 2:9-13).

Then, Paul explained how the myriad do's and don'ts of the Talmud; the vast number of restrictions and taboos which had been *added* to the law of Moses, were not incumbent upon them.

He wrote, "Blotting out the *handwriting of ordinances* that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross;

"And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Colossians 2:14, 15). *Never* are the Ten Commandments referred to as the "*handwriting of ordinances*." Never are God's Ten Commandments said to be "against" us, or "contrary to us." Always, they are referred to as *holy, righteous, just, and good* (Romans 7:12). God's laws, received by Moses, were so *holy* that Moses' face *shone so brightly* when he returned from the Mountain of Sinai they had to place a veil over his face. "And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh: and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had spoken with him in mount Sinai.

"And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face.

"But when Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he took the veil off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded.

"And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with Him (Exodus 34:32-35). God's law was *never* referred to as "ordinances" which were "against" us. Notice, "Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it.

"Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.

"For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon Him for?

"And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?

"Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons" (Deuteronomy 4:5-9).

Later in the passage in Colossians 2, you will see a more detailed description of what Paul refers to when he describes the "handwriting of ordinances" which was "against" us.

Figuratively, Paul says Jesus Christ "nailed to His cross" [the Greek word is "stauros" which means "stake"] the "handwriting of ordinances."

Notice how Paul then encourages the Colossians not to let any *man* judge them or condemn them concerning various choices in life, such as meats sacrificed to idols, or kinds of drink, or the manner in which they observed God's Holy Days or His Sabbath day: "Let no *man* therefore judge you [this says nothing about God judging, or condemning] in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days:

"Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ" (Colossians 2:16,17).

The margin says "because of your eating and drinking." Again, notice carefully the *context* of these verses.

Paul knew some of the people were judging and condemning other people because they did not abstain from meats offered to idols, or because they enjoyed eating and drinking on the Sabbath or the Holy Days. Paul says not to let any *man* judge them or condemn them.

Man-made "taboos" were being observed by some in Colossae. Paul called these superstitious taboos "rudiments of the world," and said they were "ordinances," which were entirely *man-made*. They were not of God, and no reference whatsoever is made to the Ten Commandments of God, which Paul continually reinforced, as you have seen.

The holy days *foreshadow* things to come, as well as looking back. While the Sabbath day *looks back* at Creation, it also foreshadows the coming millennial reign of Christ.

The word "*is*" is placed in *italics* by the translators. This means the word was provided by them, and is not in the original. The correct translation should read, "...but the body of Christ." In other words, they were not to worry about petty human judgments and criticism, but let the *church*, the *body of Christ* be their guide in how they ate or drank with respect to an holy day.

Now, notice carefully how the ensuing verses shed further light on the false teachings and judgmental criticisms Paul was addressing: "Let *no man* beguile you of your reward in a *voluntary humility* and *worshipping of angels*, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

"And not holding the *Head*, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" (Colossians 2:18, 19). Again, the emphasis is on not allowing *men* influence them, beguile them, mislead them. Lead them into what? Into "voluntary humility" and "worshipping of angels!" When "religious" people wanted to *appear* "spiritual" and "religious" to other people, they effected various kinds of drab, unattractive garb. They *put on the pretense of humility*, which was nothing but an outward show. They would *fast* on a feast day, or on the Sabbath, in an outward display of "humility."

Some were "*worshipping angels*," which was nothing more than an attempt to cling to pagan, polytheistic beliefs. Notice that NOTHING is said about God's Ten Commandments! All of this is Paul's effort to prevent these Colossians from drifting into asceticism, put on, fake "humility," various "fastings" and proscriptions against food and drink.

Notice the next few verses, where this very thing is covered: "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the *rudiments of the world*, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

" (Touch not; taste not; handle not;

"Which all are to perish with the using;) after the *commandments and doctrines of men*?"

"Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in *will worship*, and *humility*, and *neglecting of the body*; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh" (Colossians 2:20-23). The "ordinances" which are "against" us, and which Christ "took out of the way, nailing it [them] to His cross [stake]" are the ordinances Paul described: "Touch not, taste not, handle not." They are taboos, restrictions, and the "commandments and doctrines of *men*," not the commandments and doctrines of Almighty God, or the Bible.

Paul said such things "have a show" in "will worship and humility." Of course! Effecting drab clothing styles, hair styles; appearing long-faced and "humble" before other people is a "show." Rather than "showing off" in vanity and pomposity, it is the attempt to "show off" one's supposed "humility" and "spirituality."

Christ condemned this practice, which was common among the Pharisees. Notice how Christ exposed the Pharisees for "doing their alms," or performing their "spiritual" deeds before the public, in an attempt to be

admired! "Take heed that ye do not your alms *before men*, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

"Therefore when thou doest thine alms [perform good deeds, such as tithing and giving, helping the poor and the sick, etc.], do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have *glory of men*. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

"But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

"That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:1-4). This is commonplace in many religions today. Some believe in drab, dull, poor-looking clothing. Some require various hair styles. Some religions force their women to wear black clothing from head to foot, and veils, so that only the eyes are showing. Various religious "orders" effect the same thing. "Voluntary humility" can become so extreme that Islamic fundamentalists can be seen parading down the streets of cities in Iran, naked to the waist, whipping themselves on the back until the blood runs.

Recently, a man was found to have allegedly *nailed himself* to a cross, although it is difficult to see how he could have nailed both hands. Each year, in the Philippines and in Mexico, individuals, in a frenzy of "voluntary humility" and "will worship," have been nailed to crosses. Others parade through streets, whipping themselves with leather whips until their backs are streaming blood! This is nothing more than the "voluntary humility" of PAGAN religions, and is NOWHERE required in the Bible!

Remember, Paul's entire motive in covering all the points he did in the 2nd chapter of Colossians was so no MAN would "beguile them with enticing words" (Colossians 2:4). The "handwriting of ordinances" had nothing to do with the Ten Commandments of God, but was a detailed list of *restrictions* Paul described as "touch not, taste not, handle not." Paul encountered these false teachings continually among the Gentile Christians of the first century. In the churches in Galatia, a province of Asia Minor, he again encountered Judaizers, who were urging Gentile Christians to revert back to the ceremonial laws of the Levitical priesthood.

The Ten Commandments Were Never Called "A Schoolmaster"

The Jew-Gentile controversy was running at a fever pitch in Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, the churches of southern Galatia. Paul wrote an extremely *strong* letter to the converts there, because false teachers were bringing in "*another gospel*" (Galatians 1:6-9), urging the Galatians to adopt the entire "Torah," or the "Book of the Law," with all its ceremonial proscriptions.

One such proscription, alluded to in Paul's letter to the Colossians, was "touch not." According to the ceremonial law, if one were to touch the body of a dead animal, one was considered ceremonially "unclean." If one touched the dead body of a man, one was considered "unclean" for seven days (Numbers 19:11, 12).

None of this was any longer necessary. For centuries, Gentiles had become "proselytes" to Judaism if they would embrace the entire Law of Moses, including all the rituals and ceremonies, and if they would become circumcised. Some of the early Jewish converts simply could not break ties with their past. Some had been Pharisees, some Essenes, some Sadducees. To many, any Gentile was a lower caste person; someone who needed to be lifted to the spiritual plane of the Jew. Others, including Simon Magus (Acts 8:9-24) were *deliberately* perverting the gospel in order to gain a following for themselves.

Such Judaizers had deeply affected the Gentile Christians in Galatia. As you study some of the passages of Paul's letter to these people, keep in mind all that Paul said, over and over again, about the law of God; that it is "Holy, and Just, and Good;" that the law is "Spiritual," and that Paul was *subject* to the law of God.

Paul wrote, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you [false teachers had deeply affected them], that ye should not *obey the truth*, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?"

"This only would I learn of you: Received ye the Spirit by the *works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*"

"Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect *by the flesh?*" (Galatians 3:1-3).

How did these converts receive God's Spirit? Only through repentance, baptism, and the forgiveness of sins. And what IS sin? It is the transgression of God's law. Remember, God only gives His Holy Spirit to those who are willing to *obey Him* (Acts 5:32). These people had repented of sin. They had been baptized. They had begun to live according to God's laws, as Jesus Christ magnified them and lifted them to a *spiritual plane* by His teaching and example.

Now, false teachers were attempting to get them to go back into the letter of the law; back into the rituals and ceremonies which were only a "shadow of things to come," and were no longer necessary in Christ.

As you study these passages, remember the meaning of the word "justification," and the meaning of the word "grace."

Paul wrote, "For as many as are of the *works of the law* are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that *continueth not* in all things which are written in the *book of the law* to do them.

"But that no man is *justified by the law* in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

"And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall *live* in them.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the *curse* of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Galatians 3:10-13).

Notice carefully that quotation! It is taken from Deuteronomy, the 27th chapter, which relates how the Israelites were commanded to divide up by tribes, and to stand on two opposing mountains, Gerizim and Ebal, to pronounce blessings and cursings. Read the entire chapter. Notice that many of the cursings involved the Ten Commandments. Some, while they were covered by the broad meaning of the Commandments, were detailed. Not a single one of them is a "bad" law. Verse 15 curses idolatry. Verse 16 is covered by the fifth commandment. Several bear upon the seventh commandment, and several bear upon the tenth. After pronouncing all these curses, the final verse says, "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to DO them. And all the people shall say, Amen" (Deuteronomy 27:26).

Paul did not say, "cursed is the man that continues IN the things written in the book of the law. He quoted the passage which says "cursed is every one that continueth NOT" to do them!

The point is, no person can be *made righteous*; no person can be *justified*, by performing the law! It matters not *which* law; whether the Ten Commandments or the added laws of the Torah, justification (which is the removal of past sins and guilt) can never come by doing or performing the works of the law. Justification comes only through faith in the blood of Jesus Christ.

Paul showed that the law is not a matter of *faith* in Christ for the forgiveness of sin, but that the function of the law is to point out *what sin is*. *The law is not preventive legislation!* The law has never prevented a single person from committing sin. It describes sin, but it does not produce forgiveness, or justification from having committed sin.

Paul then showed that the "curse" of the law, meaning the penalty of sin, is *death*. Christ took this terrible

curse upon Himself, as Paul quotes from Deuteronomy 21:22 and 23.

Now, notice how Paul shows that the book of the law was *added* because of *transgressions*, meaning sins! "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was *added* because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" (Galatians 3:19).

And what is a transgression? It is the *breaking of law*. Therefore, there was a law in place which was being broken! There are many Bible proofs that the Ten Commandments were in full force and effect from Creation! They did not come into existence at Sinai, they were *codified; written on two tables of stone*. But the handing down of the law at Sinai did not bring the law into being.

The Sabbath day was created on the seventh day, and hallowed by God (Genesis 2:2, 3). Sin was shown to be against God's law, and punishable by *death* long before Sinai. (Genesis 4:7; Genesis 13:13; Genesis 20:6, 9). Since sin is the transgression of the law, there can be no such thing as sin where no law exists!

Paul wrote, "Because the law worketh wrath: for *where no law is*, there is no *transgression*" (Romans 4:15). You cannot be given a traffic ticket for running a non-existent stop sign. There is NO PENALTY for "breaking" a NON-EXISTENT law! For there to have been "transgression," there had to be a LAW in place which was being transgressed. "Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression..." (Romans 5:14). The wages of sin is *death*. Everyone knows that Adam and Eve committed *sin*, yet most fail to understand there was a law being broken!

They broke the law against coveting. They allowed the forbidden fruit to come between them and God, thus breaking the law against idolatry. They stole the fruit, thus breaking the command against stealing. They disobeyed their only parent, thus breaking the law about honoring their parent. As James said, if we break one point, we are guilty of all. Thus, Adam and Eve broke the Ten Commandments, which was *sin!*

Now, notice further what Paul told the Galatians: "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have *given life*, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

"But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe" (Galatians 3:21, 22). As was mentioned earlier, one could keep the Ten Commandments perfectly for ten lifetimes and *never earn salvation*. Salvation cannot be *earned!* It is the free, loving, gracious GIFT of God.

Perhaps the following analogy will help illustrate the point. Suppose a wealthy man, who lived in a fine home, found that his neighbor had been regularly breaking into his home, and stealing from him. The wealthy man approached the neighbor one day, and told him that he knew he lived in poverty; that he knew he had been stealing his silver, cash, appliances and fine arts. Suppose he said to him, "I am going to forgive you for stealing from me. Furthermore, here is a certified cashier's check for one million dollars. With it, I expect you to pay for your home, get out of debt, and put the rest of the money to work."

The grateful poor man took the check. Had he *earned* it? No, of course not! He had *earned*, instead, a potential prison sentence! But the rich man forgave him all!

Is the poor man, who is now a *millionaire*, free to continue stealing?

In like fashion, when God forgives us of sin, through no good works or good deeds of our own, He expects us to quit living in sin!

Paul continued, "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

"But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Galatians 3:23-25). We can only be justified by *faith* in the sacrifice of Christ. Remember, being "justified" means being "*made right*" again; being forgiven of our sins. It does not mean a permanent condition we enter when we are forgiven, and receive Christ as Savior. The law was the "schoolmaster" to the Israelites in several senses. There is nothing *wrong* with a "schoolmaster," by the way. A schoolmaster is an educator; a teacher, who points out the right way to live. By listening to the instructions of a schoolmaster, one not only learns, but one is able to insure success and prosperity in life. Yet, those who seek to do away with God's law invariably attempt to make the statement that the law was a "schoolmaster" as distasteful as possible!

But it led to Jesus Christ! Did Jesus Christ come to *do away with God's law*? *Why not ask Jesus Christ*? He said, "*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*"

"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle [not a single punctuation mark; the crossing of a "t," or the dotting of an "i"] shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

"Whosoever therefore shall break one of these *least* commandments, and shall *teach men* so, he shall be called the *least* in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall *do and teach them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:17-19). The word "fulfill" does NOT mean "destroy! Christ plainly said so!

To "fulfill" means to "do or perform." Jesus Christ kept God's Ten Commandments perfectly in the spirit, thereby "setting us an example, that we should follow in His steps" (1 Peter 2:21). Remember all you have read in the first portion of this book. Jesus Christ of Nazareth continually emphasized *obedience* to God's law. He said, "...I have *kept* my Father's commandments" (John 15:10). But Jesus Christ did not live a righteous life in your stead. Because He kept His Father's laws does not mean we don't have to do the same! Christ died because we have *sinned*, *He did not die so we can continue to live in sin!*

Not only do those attempting to do away with the fourth commandment attack the whole law, they also attack the *entire Old Testament*! Millions of nominal Christians believe (because they have been taught it from their youth) that the Old Testament is "done away." Yet, about one-third of the New Testament is quotation from the Old. The apostles all taught from it, for there was not a shred of the New Testament written until about twenty-five years after the resurrection of Christ.

Notice what Jesus said to His disciples after His resurrection: "Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the *prophets* have spoken:

"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?"

"And *beginning at Moses and all the prophets*, He expounded unto them in *all the scriptures* the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:25-27). Could most nominal Christian ministers do the same today? Jesus did. Notice that the Old Testament was referred to as "scriptures," and that Christ expounded "things concerning Himself" even from the books of Moses!

Notice further, "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were *written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.*"

"Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the *scriptures,*

"And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:44-48).

Jesus Christ thus placed His own divine stamp of approval and authenticity on the Old Testament! He mentioned all three of its parts; The Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, or "Writings." Incidentally, this is the correct *order* for the books of the Old Testament, just as they are found in the Hebrew Bible. The Old Testament should end with 2 Chronicles, not with Malachi.

When the apostles began fulfilling Christ's commission to "go into all the world and preach the gospel," they did so using the *only scriptures extant—the scriptures of the Old Testament!*

There were many aspects of the law which pointed to Christ. The Passover Lamb was a type of Christ. All the animal sacrifices were types of Christ, as is pointed out in Hebrews 9:10-28. Christ was pictured by the unleavened bread eaten during the Days of Unleavened Bread. He referred to Himself as the "bread of life," and the "living bread" which came down from heaven (John 6:48-51). He was pictured by the "wave sheaf offering" (Leviticus 23:10-12). He was pictured by the offering of the "first fruits," which became "Pentecost" (fiftieth). His second-coming was pictured by the Feast of Trumpets. He was pictured by the sacrificial kid on the Day of Atonement. He is pictured as "tabernacling with man" (John 1:14) during the Feast of Tabernacles.

***Believe it or Not, the One
Who Became Christ Wrote the Law!***

There is no clearer scripture than John's 1st chapter. It plainly shows that the One who wrote the Ten Commandments with His own finger is the member of the divine sovereign *Elohim* (the Hebrew name for God) who became a human being, born of the virgin Mary!

Notice the obvious proof! "In the beginning was the Word [Greek: *Logos*, meaning "Spokesman"], and the Word was with God [Greek: *Theos*, which is the equivalent of the Hebrew, *Elohim*, and means more than one], and the Word was God.

"The same was in the beginning with God.

"All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made.

" In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.

"And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" (John 1:1-5). This clearly shows that the one who *did the creating* (Genesis 1,2) was the person of the divine Godhead who was born as Jesus Christ! Clearly, this means the one who created the Sabbath day by resting upon it, and hallowing it, or "making it holy," was the One we know of as Jesus Christ!

Now, WHY would God give a law to Israel that He knew He would later have to abolish? Since the law was so *holy* that Moses' face shone brightly when he came down from the mount; since it was called by this same person of the Godhead "your righteousness" then WHY would God write and deliver a law He knew would not work? Since the vision of the new heavens and new earth includes the temple, and within the temple the Ark of the Covenant, and within the Ark God's laws (Revelation 11:19), why, if the laws of God are so detestable (mainly, the *fourth* one) would they occupy so holy a place?

Notice further proof in John's 1st chapter: "He was in the world, and the world was *made* by Him, and the

world knew Him not.

"He came unto His own [the Jews], and His own received Him not.

"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name:

"Which were born [The Greek is *gennaō*, which should read "begotten"], not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

"And the Word was *made flesh*, and dwelt [Greek: "tabernacled"] among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth (John 1:10-14). Can anything be clearer? The world was MADE by the one who became Jesus Christ. Do you realize the consequences of this? This means that the God of the Old Testament was the person of the divine *Elohim* who became Jesus Christ! It means that the One who wrote the law with His own finger was the one who became Jesus Christ!

The one who appeared to Abraham; who dealt with Isaac and Jacob; who brought Israel out of Egypt; who parted the Red Sea, and who gave the law to Moses; the one who was in the cloud and pillar of fire over the Tabernacle in the wilderness—this one was the *Creator*.

The Word was made flesh!

One of the most oft-quoted scriptures about Jesus Christ is found right in this passage, John 1:12: "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."

Notice some parallel verses in the book of Hebrews, the 1st chapter: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

"Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He *made the worlds*;

"Who being the brightness of His glory, and the *express image of His person*, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by *Himself* purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

"Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

"For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to Him a Father, and he shall be to me a son?"

"And again, when He bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

"And of the angels He saith, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire.

"But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, *O GOD*, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom" (Hebrews. 1:1-8).

Can anything be plainer? Yet thousands of professing "Christian" ministers, and millions of members of their churches remain completely *ignorant* of this most vital truth! How can anyone who has read the first

chapter of the Gospel of John doubt for one instant that Jesus Christ is the One Who said, "Let there be light"? He was the Member of the Godhead Who *did the creating* on creation week. Once we understand Jesus Christ is the one who is the God of the Old Testament, dozens of important truths become clear!

Millions *assume* that Jesus Christ came to "*do away*" with the laws of His Father! Millions of nominal Christians believe the laws of the Old Testament were harsh, unyielding, severe. They have been told all their lives that the laws of God were like a yoke of bondage; that Christ *delivered* us from God's laws. Nothing could be further from the truth, as you have seen proved in this book, over and over again.

But what about the "New Covenant"? If we are "New Covenant" Christians, are we under any obligation to keep God's laws?

The New Covenant And God's Laws

Again, one must understand the simple meaning of English words in order to understand biblical concepts. A covenant is an *agreement* between two parties.

God entered into a *covenant* with Israel. He proposed to them that, IF they would keep His holy, perfect laws, He would BLESS them so bountifully they would scarcely be able to receive it. He would give them long lives, healthy bodies, prosperous crops, rain in due season, protection from their enemies, healthy children—everything anyone could ever want.

God said to them, "Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am the LORD your God.

"Ye shall keep my Sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the LORD.

"If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them;

"Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.

"And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely.

"And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land.

"And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword.

"And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.

"For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my *covenant* with you.

"And ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new.

"And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you.

"And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people" (Leviticus 26:1-12). What a fabulous list of promises! What incredible BLESSINGS! Notice that God mentioned His Sabbath days, together

with idolatry, at the very beginning. Notice the "*quid pro quo*" here. God said IF they would KEEP HIS LAWS, including being careful to observe His holy Sabbath days, He would *establish His covenant* with them. The covenant is not *the law*, but an agreement *about* the law!

The covenant God proposed was *accepted* by the people: "And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him.

"And all the people answered together, and said, 'All that the LORD hath spoken *we will do!*' [They accepted the terms and conditions of the covenant]. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD" (Exodus 19:7,8).

But the people *broke* their part of the bargain! Again and again, Israel rebelled against God. The two *great sins* mentioned again and again through their entire history were the sins of idolatry and Sabbath-breaking!

By analogy, God likened the Old Covenant to a marriage agreement. Like a young man of great wealth proposing to a young lady he wants to marry, God promised all the *blessings* listed above if Israel, the bride, would remain *faithful* to Him!

God said, "I became an HUSBAND unto them" (Jeremiah 31:32). But Israel was unfaithful to God, rebelling against His laws, descending into idolatry, and abandoning His weekly and annual Sabbaths.

Notice the Biblical analogy in Ezekiel 16. To save space, we will not reprint the entire chapter here, but each verse bears careful study. Here is a goodly part of it: "And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live.

"I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: thy breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou wast naked and bare.

"Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and *entered into a covenant* with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.

"Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil.

"I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk.

"I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck.

"And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head.

"Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and brodered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom.

"And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD [And WHO was this member of the divine creating Family called *Elohim*? You have seen the *proof* that it was the one who became Jesus Christ of Nazareth, born of the virgin Mary].

"But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pourest out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was.

"And of thy garments thou didst take, and deckedst thy high places with divers colours, and playedst the harlot thereupon: the like things shall not come, neither shall it be so.

"Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them,

"And tookest thy brodered garments, and coveredst them: and thou hast set mine oil and mine incense before them.

"My meat also which I gave thee, fine flour, and oil, and honey, wherewith I fed thee, thou hast even set it before them for a sweet savour: and thus it was, saith the Lord GOD.

"Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou *sacrificed* unto them to be devoured. Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter,

"That thou hast *slain my children*, and delivered them to cause them to pass through the fire for them?" (Ezekiel 6:6-21). By analogy, God shows that Israel, His "bride," whom He brought up from the wretched condition in which He found them in Egypt (as a castaway child, covered with blood), even though she accepted all His fabulous gifts, became a prostitute! Israel drifted into every conceivable evil—even to the point of *infant sacrifice!*

Study also the 23rd chapter of Ezekiel, where God names the two rebellious houses; Judah and Israel, *Ahola* and *Aholibah*, and uses similar language you have seen in Ezekiel 16.

Now, with this in mind, notice what God says about the "Old Covenant" and the "New Covenant": "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a *new covenant* with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

"Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which *my covenant they brake*, although I was an *husband* unto them, saith the LORD:

"But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will *put my law in their inward parts*, and *write it in their hearts*; and will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jeremiah 31:31-33).

What was WRONG WITH THE COVENANT? Absolutely NOTHING! But the people broke their part of the agreement! The PEOPLE broke the covenant.

God's covenant with Israel was based upon physical promises for obedience in the letter. He did not tell them in that ancient time that hating one's neighbor was a sin! Rather, they were required to keep the *letter of the law*. Therefore, the Old Covenant was based upon physical promises in return for physical obedience. He did not promise them eternal life—He promised them a long, fruitful, successful, happy *physical* life. They were not promised spiritual salvation, but promised material success and blessing.

Now, read that important passage again. Ask yourself the honest question, and give yourself the honest answer: Does the New Covenant DO AWAY with God's law? ABSOLUTELY NOT! Instead, God says He will put His law into our "inward parts" and write it in our hearts!" Are you a "*New Covenant*" Christian? If so, is the LAW OF GOD written deeply into the innermost part of your being? What about the FOURTH commandment? Is it also written there?

Notice the exact same theme quoted in the book of Hebrews, in the New Testament of your Bible: "But now hath He [Jesus Christ, as our High Priest in heaven] obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He is the mediator of a *better covenant*, which was established upon *better promises*."

"For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second [But what was the FAULT with the covenant? It was not God's law, it was the people who sinned, and BROKE their part of the covenant!]

"For finding fault *with them*, He saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

"Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because *they continued not in my covenant*, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will *put my laws into their mind*, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

"And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

"For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their *sins and their iniquities* will I remember no more" [what IS sin? It is the breaking of God's law] (Hebrews 8:6-13). Is the law of God written into the very depths of your being? Is it written into your "inward parts," meaning your heart and mind? Far from "doing away" with God's law, the New Covenant is intended to inculcate it into our very innermost being!

Jesus Christ is the mediator of the New Covenant. Under the Old Covenant; the "Schoolmaster" to which Paul referred, the Israelites were continually reminded of the consequences of sin by the shedding of animal blood. But sacrificing animals could never atone for sin. It was merely a reminder of the "wages of sin," which is death. Notice, "But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

"For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to *serve* the living God?

"And for this cause He is the *mediator of the new testament*, that by means of death, for the redemption of the *transgressions* [sins; the breaking of God's Ten Commandments] that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Hebrews 9:11-15).

Jesus Christ magnified the law, and made it honorable. He commanded that we obey the spirit and intent of the law, not merely the letter! Far from "doing away" with the law, He showed how it is much, much more applicable—how it reaches into every nuance of human behavior—how it applies even to human *thought*.

The Pharisees of Jesus' day were the ultra right-wing religious sect. They not only meticulously observed

the law, they also observed dozens of man-made restrictions which had been added to the law. They rigorously observed the Sabbath and the annual holy days. They paid tithes. They avoided unclean meats. The trouble was, they became totally *self righteous*. They became hypocrites (Matthew 23), haughty, judgmental critics of others.

Notice what Christ said about the difference between the Pharisee's "letter of the law" observance and what was required under the New Covenant: "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20). Then was there anything a person must DO after repentance and baptism? Was it all merely a matter of "belief"? Was it "faith ONLY, without works"? By no means. As you have read, faith without works is dead. Christ continued, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

"But I say unto you, That whosoever is *angry with his brother* without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, ["You wretch; you vain, worthless thing"] shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell [Gehenna] fire" (Matthew 5:20-22).

The wages of sin is death in Gehenna fire! Here, Jesus Christ magnifies the sixth commandment against murder, lifting it to a spiritual plane. He shows that one can break God's commandment against murder by harboring hatred in his heart toward his fellow man! Millions break this commandment each day. Countless thousands of professing Christians harbor utter contempt, disgust, rejection, and anger in their hearts toward others. This is especially true in various *competing religious groups*!

No one can hate quite so virulently as a posturing, self-righteous religious person who holds others who are not of his persuasion in contempt.

The New Covenant emblazons God's laws deep into the innermost being of a converted Christian! Far from "doing away" with the law, the New Covenant greatly magnifies it; makes it apply spiritually.

The Love of God; What is it?

John wrote about love. He was that "disciple whom Jesus loved." John wrote repeatedly about God's laws; about His Ten Commandments. Many professing Christians speak of how nice it is to "know the lord." Let's see if such people really "know the Lord" the way they think they do: "And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we *keep His commandments*" (1 John 2:3).

But what if some say they "know the Lord," and yet argue that His laws are "done away"? John writes, "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth NOT His commandments, is a *liar*, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:3). Strong words! Again and again, John shows that Christians are to obey God's laws! As you have already read, John wrote, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for *sin is the transgression of the law*."

"And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; [so we would begin to obey His laws, and quit sinning] and in Him is no sin.

"Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him.

"Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous" (1 John 3:4-7). Psalms 119:172 tells us, "All thy commandments are righteousness."

John continued, "He that committeth sin [breaks any point of God's Ten Commandments] is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning" (1 John 3:4-8). God's Ten Commandments show us, in the first four points, HOW to love, and in the last six, HOW to love our neighbor. John wrote, "For THIS IS the love of God,

that we *keep His commandments*: and His commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3).

There is no Bible truth which can be absolutely proved any more conclusively than the fact that God's children are required to *obey* Him! Yet, countless thousands of religious tracts, articles and books have been written by theologians attempting to *set aside God's laws*. Again, WHY? As we saw in the beginning of this small book, most professing Christians have no difficulty with nine of the Ten Commandments. It is that fourth one they hate!

Finally, notice the description of God's true Church in the very last days of our decadent civilization. Here, near the end of the Bible, when the terrible days of the "Great Tribulation," the heavenly signs and the Day of the Lord are occurring, John describes the surviving remnant of the saints who are being terribly persecuted by Satan.

"And the dragon [Satan: see vs. 7] was wroth with the woman [the true church], and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 12:17). The testimony of Jesus Christ is the *gospel*. *It is all He taught*. Remember, and never forget, that when a man asked Jesus Christ if there was anything he needed to DO in order to inherit eternal life, Christ answered, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments!" (Matthew 19:17).

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob kept God's commandments. Christ said they will be in the Kingdom of God with Him. The righteous prophets and the righteous men and women listed in Hebrews 11, who became martyrs for their faith, kept God's commandments. They will be in God's kingdom. The laws of God will be *enforced* in Christ's world-ruling kingdom!

Notice, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains [symbols of governments], and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

"And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the *law*, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

"And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:2-4). Make no mistake! God's Ten Commandments will be the *law of the land* in the Kingdom of God. And, because God will *enforce His laws* upon all mankind, a time of great peace and prosperity never known in the history of man will ensue. Because of obedience to His laws, countless millions of human beings will come to know only wondrous blessings of good health, sound minds, healthy, happy children, success and prosperity!

Gone will be all disease, drug abuse, murder, rape, arson, burglary, gang wars, racism, extortion, violence and war! Satan will be bound for one thousand years; cast into a figurative "abyss," not allowed access to the earth (Revelation 20:1-3). All *evil* will be abolished from the earth. There will be love, joy, and *peace* everlasting! One thing is sure: the time for "argument" about God's laws will be *over* when God Almighty sets His hand to intervene in the course of human events and sends Jesus Christ to rule this world with a rod of iron (Revelation 2:26). Then, the time will be long past when petty human religious teachers can argue and reason around God's Word, and *deceive* their followers into believing that God's Ten Commandments are "done away." Then, Jesus Christ will command them to obey in person!

Look at this beautiful picture of the millennial reign of Christ: "And there shall come forth a rod [a shoot] out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch [a type of Christ] shall grow out of his roots:

"And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

"And shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears:

"But with righteousness shall He judge [the cause of] the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked.

"And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins.

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

"And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

"And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' [adder's] den.

"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

"And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse [Jesus Christ], which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and His rest shall be glorious" (Isaiah 11:1-10).

What a fabulous picture! Think of it! The KINGDOM OF GOD established right here, on this good, green earth at last! Then, there will be NO MORE DISEASE; no more CRIME; no more drought, famine, or war! There will be NO false religions; NO posturing, hand-wringing, hair-shirted, breast-beating Pharisees presiding over the SUFFERING of those who incur their wrath. There will NO religious persecution!

Instead, the knowledge of God will be as prevalent on earth as the waters cover the seabeds! For the sake of sin-sick, war-weary, carnal mankind, may God speed that day! o

-End-

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