

Josiah and the Book of the Law

by C.I. Scofield

The law convicts the sinner and reveals our true condition before God, and we honor the law by accepting its righteous sentence and turning to God for His mercy through Christ Jesus.

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 34:14, Psalm 119:9, Romans 3:20, 2 Corinthians 7:10, Galatians 3:10

Topics: "Gods Law", "True Repentance"

Description

C.I. Scofield emphasizes the powerful impact of the law in convicting hearts and revealing sin, using King Josiah's reaction to the law as an example of despair and realization of guilt. The law's purpose is to stop every mouth and make the world guilty before God, showing the need for mercy through Christ Jesus. Scofield highlights the danger of sheathing the law's cutting edge by viewing it as a mere rule of life instead of a ministration of death, leading to a false sense of self-righteousness and neglect of true repentance.

Transcript

(2 Chron. xxxiv:14-28.)

II. The Heart of the Lesson.

"The law is good if a man use it lawfully," and the lawful use of the law has a beautiful illustration in this lesson: "And it came to pass when the king had heard the words of the law that he rent his clothes"--the oriental gesture of despair. That gesture told better than words how conviction had, through the law, struck through the king's soul. It was as if he had said: "If that is the law of the Lord then am I undone, and my kingdom is undone."

And that is precisely the work of the law. Josiah might have expressed himself in the very words of Paul: "By the law is the knowledge of sin"; "I had not known sin, but by the law"; "For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died."

For the law has but one language: "What things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God." "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"

Perhaps the most serious and hopeless feature of the present condition is that the law has lost its cutting edge. And yet the law is the same, and its lawful use is the same. It would be more exact to say that the sword of the law is sheathed. It is still flourished, and many attempted thrusts are made with it, but no garments are rent, no one is guilty and undone because of it.

And the scabbard in which it has been sheathed and made harmless is the teaching--a survival in Protestantism of Roman theology--that the law is a rule of life, and not, as Paul says: "A ministration of death."

No one is cut down by the law because we are all hoping yet to keep it better. But the law never says: "Try again," to the sinner; it simply launches its curse; pronounces its sentence: "The soul that sinneth it shall die."

And we honor the law when we accept its righteous sentence, and turn to God for His mercy through Christ Jesus.

Nor is it the commandments only which we should read or hear with heart-searching and conviction. The Beatitudes afford an illustration of this. We preach sermons in praise of the beatitudes; we expound them, explaining what it means to be "poor in spirit," to "mourn," to be "meek," and so on. But why do we never say: "Woe is me because I am proud in spirit, self-satisfied, self-seeking, and so wholly lacking this nine-fold blessedness?" In like manner we read the thirteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians, admiring it as if it were a mere poem. Or, if we go beyond literary admiration we only say: "How beautiful is this love of which Paul speaks," and never, or rarely, "Alas! how unlike am I to all this," going away to God in the secret place in brokenness of spirit--not because of this or that overt sin, so much as that our hearts are cold and hard and proud?

When Paul wrote the first letter to the Corinthians the effect of its faithful and tender rebukes and exhortations showed the work of the word in exercised consciences. "What carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal."

There is great need that we should cleanse our ways by taking heed thereunto according to His word.

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