

This is the covering that the transgressors of the law of God have used since the days of Adam and Eve's disobedience. They have sewed together fig-leaves to cover their nakedness, caused by transgression. The fig-leaves represent the arguments used to cover disobedience. When the Lord calls the attention of men and women to the truth, the making of fig-leaves into aprons will be begun, to hide the nakedness of the soul. But the nakedness of the sinner is not covered. All the arguments pieced together by all who have interested themselves in this flimsy work will come to naught.

The Lord Jesus Christ has prepared a covering, the robe of his own righteousness, that he will put on every repenting, believing soul who by faith will receive it. Said John, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Sin is the transgression of the law; but Christ died to make it possible for every man to have his sins taken away. A fig-leaf apron will never cover our nakedness. Sin must be taken away, the garment of Christ's righteousness must cover the transgressor of God's law. Then when the Lord looks upon the believing sinner, he sees, not the fig-leaves covering him, but his own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah.

Christ came to give an example of the perfect conformity to the law of God required of all, from Adam, the first man, down to the last man who shall live on the earth. He declared that his mission was not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it in perfect and entire obedience. In this way he magnified the law, and made it honorable. In his life he revealed its spiritual nature. In the sight of heavenly beings, of worlds unfallen, and of a disobedient, unthankful, unholy world, he fulfilled the far-reaching principles of the law. He came to demonstrate the fact that humanity, allied by living faith to divinity, can keep all the commandments of God. He came to make plain the immutable character of the law, to declare that disobedience and transgression can never be rewarded with eternal life. He came as a man to humanity, that humanity might touch humanity, while divinity laid hold upon the throne of God. But in no case did he come to lessen the obligation of men to be perfectly obedient. He did not destroy the validity of the Old Testament Scriptures. He fulfilled that which was predicted by God himself. He came, not to set men free from that law, but to open a way whereby they might obey that law, and teach others to do the same.

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15th November 1898

By Mrs. E. G. White.

Christ's Attitude Toward the Law.

The great plan of redemption was laid before the foundation of the world. Christ did not stand alone in this wondrous undertaking for the ransom of man. In the councils of heaven, before the world was created, the Father and the Son covenanted together that if man proved disloyal to God, Christ, one with the Father, would take the place of the transgressor, and suffer the penalty of justice that must fall upon him. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." What a price was this for heaven to pay to ransom the transgressor of the law of Jehovah!

Christ did not come to change the Sabbath of the fourth commandment; he did not come to weaken or set aside the law of God in one particular: he came to express in his own person the love of God, and to vindicate every precept of the holy law. Instead of abrogating the law to meet man in his fallen condition, Christ maintained its sacred dignity.

The Lord does not save sinners by abrogating his law, the foundation of his government in heaven and earth. God is a judge, the guardian of justice. The transgression of his law in a single instance, in the smallest particular, is sin. God can not dispense with his law, he can not do away with its smallest item, in order to pardon sin. The justice, the moral excellence, of the law must be maintained and vindicated before the heavenly universe. And that holy law could not be maintained at any smaller price than the death of the Son of God.

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Christ bore sin in man's behalf, that the sinner might have another trial, with all its opportunities and advantages. "Whosoever committeth sin," says John, "transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him."

When Christ gave the sermon on the mount, the Pharisees were present, watching every word. The Saviour read their hearts; he knew that they were bracing themselves to resist light. Their prejudice against him was strengthening. They were saying in their hearts, "He is doing away the law. We will have no such teaching." But while they were bottling up their wrath, there fell on their startled ears the answer to their unspoken thought: "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 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."

This is the judgment pronounced in the kingdom of heaven. Some have thought that the commandment-breaker will be there, but will occupy the lowest place. This is a mistake. Sinners will never enter the abode of bliss. The commandment-breaker, and all who unite with him in teaching that it makes no difference whether men break or observe the divine law, will by the universe of heaven be called least among the human agencies. For not only have they been disloyal themselves, but they have taught others to break the law of God. Christ pronounces judgment upon those who claim to have a knowledge of the law, but who, by precept and example, lead souls into confusion and darkness. They are teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, and making void the law of God through their traditions. "For I say unto you [my disciples], That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

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"Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." As long as heaven and earth remain, not one jot nor tittle shall pass from the law. As long as the canopy of heaven is above our heads, and the earth beneath our feet, there should be no argument nor controversy over this question. Until the heavens and the earth remove, you may be sure that the law of Jehovah will hold its exalted place.

"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." In "fulfilling" all righteousness, Christ did not bring all righteousness to an end. He fulfilled all the requirements of God in repentance, faith, and baptism, the steps of grace in genuine conversion. He did this as an example, that we should follow in his steps. In his humanity, Christ filled up the measure of the law's requirements. And this he did as an example to us. He was the head of humanity, its substitute and surety. Human beings, by uniting their weakness to the strength of his divine nature, may become partakers of his character.

Satan will use every subtle argument to deceive men and women as he did in Eden to deceive Adam and Eve. "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Satan said to Eve. "And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

Adam and Eve both ate of the fruit, and obtained a knowledge which, had they obeyed God, they would never have had,—an experience in disobedience and disloyalty to God,—the knowledge that they were naked. The garment of innocence, a covering from God, which surrounded them, departed; and they supplied the place of this heavenly garment by sewing together fig-leaves for aprons.

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