

DAY BY DAY

Bible Texts and Topics, With Comments,
For Personal Study and Use at Family Worship.

7: RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH

1. RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH

“The just shall live by faith.” Romans 1:17.

There is no power in man to save himself. Inherently he possesses no righteousness. By nature he is lost and undone, “having no hope, and without God in the world.” Ephesians 2:12. “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23. We are “carnal, sold under sin.” Romans 7:14. “There is none righteous, no, not one.” Romans 3:10. In our flesh there “dwells no good thing.” Romans 7:18.

Failing to recognize this truth, men have sought through all the ages to save themselves. By fasts and penances, by the infliction of bodily pain, by long pilgrimages, by great benevolence and other good works, they have tried to transform their hearts and change their natures, but they have fought a losing battle. No man can extricate himself out of the pit into which his own carnal nature has plunged him, but, thank God, there is a way of escape.

The righteousness of God is expressed in the law of Ten Commandments. This law is the transcript of His character. It reveals what He Himself is.

The righteousness of the law is revealed through the gospel, and by the power of the gospel the believer is enabled to meet in his life, through faith, the righteousness required of the law. Of this the apostle Paul states: “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” Romans 1:16, 17.

The simple means by which the penitent may come to Christ and find in Him pardon, and by faith accept His righteousness, is well stated in these words by A. G. Daniells, in his book *Christ Our Righteousness*.

“Here is a man born in sin. As Paul says, he is 'filled with all unrighteousness.' His inheritance of evil is the worst imaginable. His environment is at the lowest depths known to the wicked. In some way the love of God shining from the cross of Calvary reaches that man's heart. He yields, repents, confesses, and by faith claims Christ as his Savior. The instant that is done, he is accepted as a child of God. His sins are all forgiven, his guilt is canceled, he is accounted righteous, and stands approved, justified, before the divine law. And this miraculous change may take place in one short hour. This is righteousness by faith.”

“But this takes care only of the past. How will the believer be kept from falling back into the sins of which he has been guilty? “If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” Romans 5:10.

“The faith of the penitent, who claims forgiveness for the sins that are past, claims the possession of a new life in Christ Jesus. And so the apostle's desire for the Ephesians was, that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith. Ephesians 3:17. “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” Galatians 2:20.

2. BORN AGAIN

“There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God. For no man can do these miracles that Thou does, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus says unto Him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, You must be born again. The wind blows where it does, and thou hears the sound thereof, but can not tell whence it comes, and whither it goes: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” John 3:1-8.

“The change of heart by which we become children of God is in the Bible spoken of as birth. Again, it is compared to the germination of the good seed sown by the husbandman. In like manner those who are just converted to Christ are, as “new-born babes,” to “grow up” (1 Peter 2:2; Ephesians 4:15) to the stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. Or like the good seed sown in the field, they are to grow up and bring forth fruit. Isaiah says that they shall “be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified.” Isaiah 61:3. So from natural life, illustrations are drawn, to help us better to understand the mysterious truths of spiritual life.

“Not all the wisdom and skill of man can produce life in the smallest object in nature. It is only through the life which God Himself has imparted, that either plant or animal can live. So it is only through the life from God that spiritual life is begotten in the hearts of men. Unless a man is “born from above” (John 3:3), he cannot become a partaker of the life which Christ came to give.” Steps to Christ, page 71.

“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3:3. He may conjecture and imagine, but without the eye of faith he cannot see the treasure. Christ gave His life to secure for us this inestimable treasure; but without regeneration through faith in His blood, there is no remission of sins, no treasure for any perishing soul.

“We need the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit order to discern the truths in God's word. The lovely things of the natural world are not seen until the sun, dispelling the darkness, floods them with its light. So the treasures in the word of God are not appreciated until they are revealed by the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness.” Christ's Object Lessons, pages 112, 113.

3. DAILY CONSECRATION

“He said to them all, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.” Luke 9:23.

“Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, “Take me, O Lord, as wholly Yours. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee.” This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ. . . . When the mind dwells upon self, it is turned away from Christ, the source of strength and life. Hence it is Satan's constant effort to keep the attention diverted from the Savior, and thus prevent the union and communion of the soul with Christ. The pleasures, of the world, life's cares and perplexities and sorrows, the faults of others, or your own faults and imperfections, to any or all of these he will seek to divert the mind. Do not be misled by his devices. Many who are really conscientious, and who desire to live for God, he too often leads to dwell upon

their own faults and weaknesses., and thus by separating them from Christ, he hopes to gain the victory. We should not make self the center, and indulge anxiety and fear as to whether we shall be saved. All this turns the soul away from the source of our strength. Commit the keeping of your soul to God, and trust in Him. Talk and think of Jesus. Let self be lost in Him. Put away all doubt; dismiss your fears. Say with the apostle Paul, "I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Rest in God. He is able to keep that which you have committed to Him. If you will leave yourself in His hands, He will bring you off more than conqueror through Him that has loved you." Steps to Christ, pages 74-77.

I said: "Let me walk in the fields." He said: "No, walk in the town." I said: "There are no flowers there." He said: "No flowers, but a crown."

I said: "But the skies are black; There is nothing but noise and din." And He wept as He sent me back- "There is more," He said; "there is sin."

I said: "But the air is thick, And fogs are veiling the sun. He answered: Yet souls are sick, And souls in the dark, undone!

I said: "I shall miss the light, And friends will miss me, they say." He answered: "Choose tonight, If I am to miss you or they.

I pleaded for time to be given. He said: "Is it hard to decide? It will not seem so hard in heaven, To have followed the steps of your Guide."

I cast one look at the fields, Then set my face to the town; He said: "My child, do you yield: Will you leave the flowers for the crown?"

Then into His hand went mine, And into my heart came He; And I walk in a light divine, The path I had feared to see. George MacDonald

4. OUR EXAMPLE

"Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law. Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles." Isaiah 42:1-6.

Jesus was the fountain of healing mercy for the world; and through all those secluded years at Nazareth, His life flowed out in currents of sympathy and tenderness. The aged, the sorrowing, and the sin burdened, the children at play in their innocent joy, the little creatures of the groves, the patient beasts of burden, all were happier for His presence.... There was nothing beneath His notice, nothing, to which He disdained to minister....

Jesus is our example. There are many who dwell with interest upon the period of His public ministry, while they pass unnoticed the teaching of His early years. But it is in His home life that He is the pattern for all children and youth. The Savior condescended to poverty, that He might teach how closely we in a humble lot may walk with God. He lived to please, honor, and glorify His Father in the common things of life. His work began in consecrating the lowly trade of the craftsmen who toil for their daily bread. He was doing God's service just as much when laboring at the carpenter's bench as when working miracles for the multitude. And every youth who follows Christ's example of faithfulness and obedience in His lowly home, may claim those words spoken of Him by the Father through the Holy Spirit, "Behold My

Servant, whom I uphold; Mine Elect, in whom My Soul delights.” Isaiah 42:1. The Desire of Ages, page 74.

When Frederick the Great, of Prussia, was ridiculing Christ and Christianity before a company of jolly nobles and officers of the army, there was one brave general who remained gloomily silent. It was Joachim von Zietan, one of the bravest and ablest officers present. Rising and shaking his gray head solemnly, he said to the king: “Your Majesty knows well that in war I have never feared any danger, and everywhere I have boldly risked my life for you and for my country. But there is One above us who is greater than all men. He is my Savior and Redeemer, who has died for Your Majesty, and has dearly bought us all with His own blood. That Holy One I can never allow to be mocked or insulted, for on Him I repose my faith, my comfort, and my hope in life and death. In the power of this faith your brave army has courageously fought and conquered. If Your Majesty undermines this faith, you undermine the welfare of our State. I salute Your Majesty.” Frederick looked at the man in admiration, and in the presence of the illustrious company, apologized for what he had said. Call you and I show less loyalty? H. L. Smith.

5. WALKING AS CHRIST WALKED

“He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.” I John 2:6.

“Our Lord Jesus Christ came to this world as the unwearied servant of man's necessity. He “took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses, that He might minister to every need of humanity. The burden of disease and wretchedness and sin He came to remove. It was His mission to bring to men complete restoration; He came to give them health and peace and perfection of character.

“Varied were the circumstances and needs of those who besought His aid, and none who came to Him went away unhelped. From Him flowed a stream of healing power, and in body and mind and soul men were made whole. The Savior's work was not restricted to any time or place. His compassion knew no limit. On so large a scale did He conduct His work of healing and teaching that there was no building in Palestine large enough to receive the multitudes that thronged to Him. On the green hill slopes of Galilee, in the thoroughfares of travel, by the seashore, in the synagogues, and in every other place where the sick could be brought to Him, was to be found His hospital. In every city, every town, every village, through which He passed, He laid His hands upon the afflicted ones and healed them. Wherever there were hearts ready to receive His message, He comforted them with the assurance of their heavenly Father's love. All day He ministered to those who came to Him; in the evening He gave attention to such as through the day must toil to earn a pittance for the support of their families.

“Jesus carried the awful weight of responsibility for the salvation of men. He knew that unless there was a decided change in the principles and purposes of the human race, all would be lost. This was the burden of His soul, and none could appreciate the weight that rested upon Him. Through childhood, youth, and manhood, He walked alone. Yet it was heaven to be in His presence. Day by day He met trials and temptations; day by day He was brought into contact with evil, and witnessed its power upon those whom He was seeking to bless and to save. Yet He did not fail or become discouraged.

“In all things He brought His wishes into strict abeyance to His mission. He glorified His life by making everything in it subordinate to the will of His Father. When in His youth His mother, finding Him in the school of the rabbis, said, “Son, why has Thou thus dealt with us?” He answered, and His answer is the keynote of His lifework. “How is it that you sought Me? Know you not that I must be about My Father's business?”

“His life was one of constant self-sacrifice. He had no home in this world, except as the kindness of friends provided for Him as a wayfarer. He came to live in our behalf the life of the poorest, and to walk

and work among the needy and the suffering. Unrecognized and unhonored, He walked in and out among the people for whom He had done so much. He was always patient and cheerful, and the afflicted hailed Him as a messenger of life and peace. He saw the needs.... and to all He gave the invitation, "Come unto Me." Ministry of Healing, pages 17-19.

6. FORSAKING THE WORLD

"Know you not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." James 4:1.

"Be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Romans 12:2.

"It was by associating with idolaters and joining in their festivities that the Hebrews were led to transgress God's law, and bring His judgments upon the nation. So now it is by leading the followers of Christ to associate with the ungodly and unite in their amusements, that Satan is most successful in alluring them into sin. "Come out from among them, and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean." 2 Corinthians 6:17.

"God requires of His people now as great a distinction from the world, in customs, habits, and principles, as He required of Israel anciently. If they faithfully follow the teachings of His word, this distinction will exist; it cannot be otherwise. The warnings given to the Hebrews against assimilating with the heathen were not more direct or explicit than are those forbidding Christians to conform to the spirit and customs of the ungodly. Christ speaks to us, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." "The friendship of the world is enmity with God; whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." I John 2:15; James 4:1. The followers of Christ are to separate themselves from sinners, choosing their society only when there is opportunity to do them good. We cannot be too decided in shunning the company of those who exert an influence to draw us away from God. While we pray, "Lead us not into temptation," we are to shun temptation, so far as possible.

"It was when the Israelites were in a condition of outward ease and security that they were led into sin. They failed to keep God ever before them, they neglected prayer, and cherished a spirit of self-confidence. Ease and self-indulgence left the citadel of the soul unguarded, and debasing thoughts found entrance. It was the traitors within the walls that overthrew the strongholds of principle and betrayed Israel into the power of Satan. It is thus that Satan still seeks to compass the ruin of the soul.

"A long preparatory process, unknown to the world, goes on in the heart before the Christian commits open sin. The mind does not come down at once from purity and holiness to depravity, corruption, and crime. It takes time to degrade those formed in the image of God to the brutal or the satanic. By beholding, we become changed. By the indulgence of impure thoughts, man can so educate his mind that sins which he once loathed will become pleasant to him." Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 458, 459.

7. LED BY THE SPIRIT

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Romans 8:14.

"Religion consists in doing the words of Christ; not doing to earn God's favor, but because, all undeserving, we have received the gift of His love. Christ places the salvation of man, not upon profession merely, but upon faith that is made manifest in works of righteousness. Doing, not saying merely, is expected of the followers of Christ. It is through action that character is built. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" Romans 8:14. Not those whose hearts are touched by

the Spirit, not those who now and then yield to its power, but they that are led by the Spirit, are the sons of God.

“Do you desire to become a follower of Christ, yet know not how to begin? Are you in darkness, and know not how to find the light? Follow the light you have. Set your heart to obey what you do know of the word of God. His power, His very life, dwells in His word. As you receive the word in faith, it will give you power to obey. As you give heed to the light you have, greater light will come. You are building on God's word, and your character will be built after the similitude of the character of Christ.” Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, pages 215, 216.

“We cannot use the Holy Spirit; the Spirit is to use us. Through the Spirit, God works in His people “to will and do of His good pleasure.” Philippians 2:13. But many will not submit to be led. They want to manage themselves. This is why they do not receive the heavenly gift. Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His guidance and grace, is the Spirit given. This promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train. It is given according to the riches of the grace of Christ, and He is ready to supply every soul according to the capacity to receive.

“The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ. Those only who are thus taught of God, those only who possess the inward working of the Spirit, and in whose life the Christ life is manifested, can stand as true representatives of the Savior.” Gospel Workers, page 285.

I will forgive, O Lord,
For I would be forgiven,
Forget the wounds and scars,
For I, too, must be shriven.
Deep in my heart, my God,
Implant Thy holy love;
Give me the peace and hope
That come from heaven above.

I will forgive, O Lord,
For I have also erred
In giving way to self,
By harsh and haughty word.
So may I know the joy
And comfort of Thy grace.
I have forgiven; from me
Thou wilt not hide Thy face!
May Cole Kuhn