

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Second Quarter 2014: *Christ and His Law*
Lesson 8 “The Law of God and the Law of Christ”

Read for this week’s study

Matt. 19:16–22; John 13:34, 35; Gal. 6:1–5; Acts 17:31; John 5:30.

Memory Text

“If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love’ ” (John 15:10, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Law and the Prophets
- III. The “Rules” of Love
- IV. All Things to All Men
- V. Fulfilling the Law of Christ
- VI. Law and Judgment
- VII. Further Study

Notes for Consideration

Moderator: Zdravko Stefanović

GOD’S WORD: STONE & FLESH

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 2. The Torah of the LORD is perfect
 3. Prophets: Torah and the Testimony
 4. Balance between the Testaments

- B. Jesus and the Torah
 1. Role of the Messiah (Isaiah 42:21)
 2. Positive approach (Matthew 22)
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D. Relevant Issues

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Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

But doesn't the Bible specifically state that sin is breaking the rules? How about the key text we've learned from childhood up: "Sin is the transgression of the law."? 1 John 3:4. Actually, that's a rather free translation. Not all free translations are in *The Living Bible*, there are some in the *King James*; and that's one of them. The Greek word that John used, if you'll forgive pronouncing the Greek, is '*anomia*', a-n-o-m-i-a, and it means literally, lawlessness, rebelliousness. In other words, sin is described as a state of mind. And anyone in that state of mind is a continuing threat to the peace and security of the family. I would say that sin has not been dealt with until our lawlessness has either been changed or eliminated. And that's why I chose the translation I did for this Bible Reference Sheet.

You notice the first verse there; it's the familiar verse, 1 John 3:4. But I'm using Williams' version, which I like very much.

"Everyone who commits sin commits lawlessness; sin is lawlessness." (Williams)

That's precisely the word. Sin is lawlessness. Now the hazard of regarding sin as primarily breaking of the rules is that it tends to encourage an impersonal, even fearful, relationship with our God. This is what He wishes to eliminate. If we regard sin as primarily a breaking of the rules, God's commandments may be regrettably misunderstood as arbitrary regulations, designed to show His authority, and to test our willingness to obey. If we obey, we're rewarded. If we disobey, we're destroyed. Do you want to live under those circumstances?

Since we all have sinned, should we be fearfully awaiting the execution of the sentence? Unless, perchance, God should find some legal way to give us yet another chance. And if we turn down that second chance, oh will He punish us with even greater severity for our ingratitude! Would this understanding help produce the peace and the freedom and the freedom from fear that God desires so much in His universal family? Actually though, if rightly understood, you can say that sin is a breaking of the rules. But look again at the rules. Look at God's commandments;

the ten in particular. The Decalogue. All those Ten Commandments require is that we love God and we love each other. And if we really did that, we would have peace and freedom. In fact in the tenth of the Ten Commandments it says that we should not even want to sin. If we lived in that state of mind, not even wanting to do anything unloving, we would have freedom, to be sure. And all kinds of peace and good will.

But can love be commanded? Or produced by force or fear? To put it vividly, has God said to us children, “You either love Me, and each other, or I’ll have to kill you. Do I make Myself clear?” Have you husbands ever tried that on your wives and children? Did it work? If you husbands should see your wives and children standing trembling in front of you, and all saying in unison, “Oh, yes, daddy. We love you very much”, would you be pleased? Would you be satisfied? Then you’re a brute. And the God some of us worship would never settle for that. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, session 2, “What Went Wrong in God’s Universe?” recorded January, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/2MMCAG>*

Which law was added because of transgression to lead us to Christ? Was it the ceremonial law? Was it the moral law? Was it all law? Would you dare include the Ten Commandments? Well, consider how God gave the Ten Commandments. One day, you recall, He gathered His misbehaving children together at the foot of Sinai. He announced, “I want all the murdering to stop. And all the hating to stop. I want all the stealing, cheating, the lying, and the immorality to stop. I want you to stop going after other gods.” What an emergency in His family, when He had to ask His children to stop doing all those things! You recognize, of course, the Decalogue. It was added because of transgression.

Have you ever had to do this in your home? Some of you fathers might say in the morning at worship, say, next Monday morning before the children leave for school, “Now Billy, let us see if we all can make this a very good day in our family. Billy, when you are at school today, do you promise not to murder any of your friends?”

“Yes, Daddy, if you insist.”

“And Mary, do you promise not to steal any more while you are in school?”

“Well yes, Daddy, if you insist.”

Then you turn to your wife and say, “And when I am at work, please do not commit adultery again. Do you promise, wife?”

“Well yes, if you insist.”

If you do this in the morning, be sure not to leave your window open, or the neighbors will assume that terrible things are happening in your home. And you don’t think the devil mocked God for having to say to His children, “Please, I want all this to stop”? The law was added

because of sin. There was no need before sin entered the universe to say to the loyal angels, I want all this misbehavior to stop. They didn't need a law to do what was right. They did what was right, because it was right. But here on this earth, the law was added because of sin. Of course, when sin entered the universe there came the first day when God had to speak of law. Then the first awesome day when God had to say that sin, rebelliousness, disorderliness, lawlessness result in death.

But there are many dangers inherent in the use of law. One danger is that now that the law has been expressed, one will assume that doing right means merely obeying the rules, and that sin is merely disobeying the rules. And that the penalty for breaking the rules is that the Rule-giver will execute you. But God does offer forgiveness and then He won't have to execute you. How has He made this possible? Someone else paid the legal penalty, so it's all right for God to forgive you. What if you turn down the offer? Then you will be painfully destroyed, perhaps more painfully because of your ingratitude. You know how that can lead to the obedience that springs from fear.

But if one takes the larger view of all 66 books, you see that what God really wants is not mere obedience to the rules. He wants us to do what is right because it is right. He wants the obedience that springs from love and trust and that is offered in the highest sense of freedom. And what if I choose to go my own rebellious way? What will He do to me? He will sadly let me go, as He let His Son go. I will die and He will cry. But there is no need to be afraid. Those who watch me die will not serve Him from fear having watched my sad end. God wishes that to be understood for all eternity.

But why then the law? Well, it was added to protect us until we had better understanding and better motivation. We thank God for the rules He gave us. Some are very stern. We needed them. But we must understand that they were emergency measures. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, session 11, "God's Emergency Measures" recorded April, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/11MMCAG>*

Now, what does the law demand? Well, the law seems to demand our love, which can't be demanded anyway. There's no way you can command love. And yet as Paul says, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Jesus said the same. Moses said the same. So does the law say, "You either love God and love each other, or you will be executed in the most painful way known to our Heavenly Father"? Some of our good Christian friends live under the awful weight of believing that God has said, "You either love and obey Me, or you will be tortured in sulphurous flames for eternity." That such good folk can still love God is a real tribute to them, not to God. I mean this is an awesome burden to live under. And yet because they love Jesus, they still love and are still faithful. And they will be in the Kingdom. And I think Jesus will love to introduce such people to the Father. He'll say, "Would you like to meet the Father?" And they'll say,

“Well, if You will go with us.” He says, “There is no need, but I’ll go with you.” And what a marvelous surprise to millions of these people to meet the Father in the Kingdom and discover that He is just as loving and gracious as the Son. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, session 8, “The Most Costly and Convincing Evidence” recorded March, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/8MMCAG>*

On Sunday, Resurrection Sunday, Jesus went up to Heaven and asked the angels, far more of them than of us, “Was it enough? Did I answer your questions?” And they bowed their heads and Revelation tells us they’ve never tired of thanking Him for clearing it up and paying such a price. But think what it says about God that He does not desire the service of fear. Love and trust and freedom are not enforceable, it can’t be done. And if you have time to look through those quotations there are such potent ones there that love cannot be commanded or produced by force. “This new commandment I give you” said Jesus, “actually I can’t command it, I’m just talking in language you can understand.” You cannot command love. Ever try it on your wife or your children? It doesn’t work. Neither does it with God... {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Understanding the Mission of the Church, number 6, recorded September, 1983, Camp AuSable, Michigan} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/6MMUTMOTC>*

Put with that [Hebrews] chapter 4:14. “Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sinning. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

How do you understand those words, in those two places? Are we supposed to understand that because of His experience as a human being, tempted in all points as we are, Christ is better qualified to serve as our high priest? Does this mean that He is more sympathetic and more understanding than the Father? If someone should ask you, what would you say? Now, those of you who are doing this for credit, I’m going to ask you to write out your strongest convictions to date on this subject. How do you explain this? It seems to say that the Father is, perhaps, less qualified, less sympathetic, less understanding?

Is the Son any *more* understanding and more sympathetic than He was before? And this is why the Son is the one who intercedes for us? And to carry this on, and it becomes less and less palatable as we carry it on, is it that the Father is about to judge against us, but the Son pleads for us, and reminds the Father that He is not experienced, and not qualified, and not as sympathetic? Now, this doesn’t become acceptable at all the further we go, and we’re reminded of Christ’s words in John 16:26. And this is where this text assumes great importance. John 16:26, where He told His disciples that they should pray in His name, to be sure, but He

then added, "I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you, [why not?] because the Father Himself loves you." Or, in John 14:9, His answer to Philip, "If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father."

So, you might consider this as you have time. Ask other people how they understand that. Many times when you ask an individual why Christ became a human, one reason often is given, "so that He might become experienced, being tempted in all points, and thus become a merciful and sympathetic and faithful high priest." Then ask the question that naturally follows; does this mean that the Father is less understanding and less sympathetic than the Son?

Or to put it in the simplest terms; Years ago, when my youngest daughter was only six, the Sabbath school lesson was on the Heavenly Sanctuary, but told for children. And the picture of Jesus was there. The word "intercede" I don't think was used, but "pleading with the Father", or some similar phrase. And she turned to me and said, "Daddy, doesn't God love us as much as Jesus does?" So, you see, even a little child can raise that question, and raise it legitimately. But we have these words and these texts. But we not only have Hebrews 2 and Hebrews 4, we do have John 16:26, where Jesus said, "There is no need for me to intercede with the Father for you, for the Father Himself loves you." Do the versions help? We use a great variety of these. Does Ellen White comment on this? I'm hoping that everyone has access to the *SDA Bible Commentary*; it's well done on Hebrews. Note the many suggestions there.

The book of Hebrews, as we were discussing last week, was written to encourage the Christians in the middle of the first century, like the book of Revelation later in the same century, to look a little higher and consider what's going on in Heaven; the great controversy. The truth that God revealed about Himself, that the greatest basis for encouragement is the truth about God, that He is the kind of person Jesus revealed Him to be. If Hebrews says that the Father has to be interceded with by the Son, does that come to you as encouraging news?

Well, is it encouraging to know we have a friend up there? We often say, "Isn't it encouraging to know we have a friend in court!" What do we mean by that? Does it mean that if we didn't have that friend in court, woe betide us, the Father would *really* give it to us? Is that the implication? Does that mean the Father is not our friend? When we say, "You can have courage as you face the judgment, for we have a friend in court," who is the friend that immediately comes to mind? Isn't it usually the Son? Then what are we implying about the Father? Is the Father not our friend? Jesus said, "If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father. I don't have to beg Him. He loves you as I do."

Then this brings up the whole subject of the Sanctuary, you see? And our "distinctive contribution to the body of Christian thought", we sometimes call it; our Adventist explanation of Christ's ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary. We're immediately projected into it here in the first part of Hebrews. What is Christ doing in the Heavenly Sanctuary? Especially since 1844?

And why is it needed? What purpose, and what difference does it make? Well, you think of many texts and many quotations that could come to mind. “Christ stands between us and the *wrath* of the Father.” Now, what does that mean? From the Father we receive wrath, from the Son we receive intercession and love? We drive a wedge, here, between the members of the Godhead and we put the Father in a very bad light. And Jesus sought to correct that.

The implications here, right away, in Hebrews are most significant for our whole picture of God, which is the basis of all our doctrines, all our beliefs, and particularly does this pertain to our explanation of the ministry of Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary. And as you know, many of our Christian friends do not approve of what they think they hear we’re saying about Christ’s ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary. For many of them, when they left Roman Catholicism with its heavy emphasis on intercession, not just Christ an intercessor, but all the saints are interceding, and the mother of Christ is interceding. When they turn their back on this, they’re puzzled to hear some Protestants saying, “Well, there still is some intercession going on. If Christ were not in there pleading for us; you know, if we didn’t have a friend in court, we’d be in trouble.” We puzzle them and confuse them. So what do we mean? Hebrews 2 and Hebrews 4 are an excellent basis for this. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Hebrews, number 2, recorded October, 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/3MMHEBREWS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/4MMHEBREWS66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love—homage that springs from an intelligent appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced allegiance, and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service. {GC 493.2}

Our will is not to be forced into co-operation with divine agencies, but it must be voluntarily submitted. Were it possible to force upon you with a hundredfold greater intensity the influence of the Spirit of God, it would not make you a Christian, a fit subject for heaven. {MB 142.1}

The law of ten commandments is not to be looked upon as much from the prohibitory side, as from the mercy side. Its prohibitions are the sure guarantee of happiness in obedience. As received in Christ, it works in us the purity of character that will bring joy to us through eternal ages. To the obedient it is a wall of protection. We behold in it the goodness of God, who by revealing to men the immutable principles of righteousness, seeks to shield them from the evils that result from transgression. {1SM 235.1}

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death. {1SM 235.2}

There is no peace in unrighteousness; the wicked are at war with God. But he who receives the righteousness of the law in Christ is in harmony with heaven. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Psalm 85:10).—Letter 96, 1896. {1SM 235.4}

The same divine mind that is working upon the things of nature is speaking to the hearts of men and creating an inexpressible craving for something they have not. The things of the world cannot satisfy their longing. The Spirit of God is pleading with them to seek for those things that alone can give peace and rest—the grace of Christ, the joy of holiness. Through influences seen and unseen, our Saviour is constantly at work to attract the minds of men from the unsatisfying pleasures of sin to the infinite blessings that may be theirs in Him. To all these souls, who are vainly seeking to drink from the broken cisterns of this world, the divine message is addressed, "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17. {SC 28.1}

There was but one hope for the human race—that into this mass of discordant and corrupting elements might be cast a new leaven; that there might be brought to mankind the power of a new life; that the knowledge of God might be restored to the world. {Ed 76.1}

Christ came to restore this knowledge. He came to set aside the false teaching by which those who claimed to know God had misrepresented Him. He came to manifest the nature of His law, to reveal in His own character the beauty of holiness. {Ed 76.2}

Christ came to the world with the accumulated love of eternity. Sweeping away the exactions which had encumbered the law of God, He showed that the law is a law of love, an expression of the Divine Goodness. He showed that in obedience to its principles is involved the happiness of mankind, and with it the stability, the very foundation and framework, of human society. {Ed 76.3}

So far from making arbitrary requirements, God's law is given to men as a hedge, a shield. Whoever accepts its principles is preserved from evil. Fidelity to God involves fidelity to man. Thus the law guards the rights, the individuality, of every human being. It restrains the superior from oppression, and the subordinate from disobedience. It ensures man's well-being, both for this world and for the world to come. To the obedient it is the pledge of eternal life, for it expresses the principles that endure forever. {Ed 76.4}

Christ came to demonstrate the value of the divine principles by revealing their power for the regeneration of humanity. He came to teach how these principles are to be developed and applied. {Ed 77.1}

With the people of that age the value of all things was determined by outward show. As religion had declined in power, it had increased in pomp. The educators of the time sought to command respect by display and ostentation. To all this the life of Jesus presented a marked contrast. His life demonstrated the worthlessness of those things that men regarded as life's great essentials. Born amidst surroundings the rudest, sharing a peasant's home, a peasant's fare, a craftsman's occupation, living a life of obscurity, identifying Himself with the world's unknown toilers,—amidst these conditions and surroundings,—Jesus followed the divine plan of education. The schools of His time, with their magnifying of things small and their belittling of things great, He did not seek. His education was gained directly from the Heaven-appointed sources; from useful work, from the study of the Scriptures and of nature, and from the experiences of life—God's lesson books, full of instruction to all who bring to them the willing hand, the seeing eye, and the understanding heart. {Ed 77.2}

“The Child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him.” Luke 2:40. {Ed 78.1}

Thus prepared, He went forth to His mission, in every moment of His contact with men exerting upon them an influence to bless, a power to transform, such as the world had never witnessed. {Ed 78.2}

In every human being He discerned infinite possibilities. He saw men as they might be, transfigured by His grace—in “the beauty of the Lord our God.” Psalm 90:17. Looking upon them with hope, He inspired hope. Meeting them with confidence, He inspired trust. Revealing in Himself man's true ideal, He awakened, for its attainment, both desire and faith. In His presence souls despised and fallen realized that they still were men, and they longed to prove themselves worthy of His regard. In many a heart that seemed dead to all things holy, were awakened new impulses. To many a despairing one there opened the possibility of a new life. {Ed 80.1}

Christ bound them to His heart by the ties of love and devotion; and by the same ties He bound them to their fellow men. With Him love was life, and life was service. “Freely ye have received,” He said, “freely give.” Matthew 10:8. {Ed 80.2}

The great controversy between good and evil will increase in intensity to the very close of time. In all ages the wrath of Satan has been manifested against the church of Christ; and God has bestowed His grace and Spirit upon His people to strengthen them to stand against the power of the evil one. When the apostles of Christ were to bear His gospel to the world and to record it for all future ages, they were especially endowed with the enlightenment of the Spirit. But as

the church approaches her final deliverance, Satan is to work with greater power. He comes down “having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.” Revelation 12:12. He will work “with all power and signs and lying wonders.” 2 Thessalonians 2:9. For six thousand years that mastermind that once was highest among the angels of God has been wholly bent to the work of deception and ruin. And all the depths of satanic skill and subtlety acquired, all the cruelty developed, during these struggles of the ages, will be brought to bear against God’s people in the final conflict. And in this time of peril the followers of Christ are to bear to the world the warning of the Lord’s second advent; and a people are to be prepared to stand before Him at His coming, “without spot, and blameless.” 2 Peter 3:14. At this time the special endowment of divine grace and power is not less needful to the church than in apostolic days. {GC ix.4}

In the great final conflict, Satan will employ the same policy, manifest the same spirit, and work for the same end as in all preceding ages. That which has been, will be, except that the coming struggle will be marked with a terrible intensity such as the world has never witnessed. Satan’s deceptions will be more subtle, his assaults more determined. If it were possible, he would lead astray the elect. Mark 13:22, R.V. {GC xi.1}

Love, the basis of creation and of redemption, is the basis of true education. This is made plain in the law that God has given as the guide of life. The first and great commandment is, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.” Luke 10:27. To love Him, the infinite, the omniscient One, with the whole strength, and mind, and heart, means the highest development of every power. It means that in the whole being—the body, the mind, as well as the soul—the image of God is to be restored. {Ed 16.1}

Like the first is the second commandment—“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Matthew 22:39. The law of love calls for the devotion of body, mind, and soul to the service of God and our fellow men. And this service, while making us a blessing to others, brings the greatest blessing to ourselves. Unselfishness underlies all true development. Through unselfish service we receive the highest culture of every faculty. More and more fully do we become partakers of the divine nature. We are fitted for heaven, for we receive heaven into our hearts. {Ed 16.2}

“God is love” is written upon every opening bud, upon every spire of springing grass. The lovely birds making the air vocal with their happy songs, the delicately tinted flowers in their perfection perfuming the air, the lofty trees of the forest with their rich foliage of living green—all testify to the tender, fatherly care of our God and to His desire to make His children happy. {SC 10.1}

The word of God reveals His character. He Himself has declared His infinite love and pity. When Moses prayed, “Show me Thy glory,” the Lord answered, “I will make all My goodness pass

before thee.” Exodus 33:18, 19. This is His glory. The Lord passed before Moses, and proclaimed, “The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.” Exodus 34:6, 7. He is “slow to anger, and of great kindness,” “because He delighteth in mercy.” Jonah 4:2; Micah 7:18. {SC 10.2}

God has bound our hearts to Him by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. Through the things of nature, and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us. Yet these but imperfectly represent His love. Though all these evidences have been given, the enemy of good blinded the minds of men, so that they looked upon God with fear; they thought of Him as severe and unforgiving. Satan led men to conceive of God as a being whose chief attribute is stern justice,—one who is a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor. He pictured the Creator as a being who is watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men, that He may visit judgments upon them. It was to remove this dark shadow, by revealing to the world the infinite love of God, that Jesus came to live among men. {SC 10.3}

The great law of love revealed in Eden, proclaimed upon Sinai, and in the new covenant written in the heart, is that which binds the human worker to the will of God. If we were left to follow our own inclinations, to go just where our will would lead us, we should fall into Satan’s ranks and become possessors of his attributes. Therefore God confines us to His will, which is high, and noble, and elevating. He desires that we shall patiently and wisely take up the duties of service. The yoke of service Christ Himself has borne in humanity. He said, “I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart.” Psalm 40:8. “I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.” John 6:38. Love for God, zeal for His glory, and love for fallen humanity, brought Jesus to earth to suffer and to die. This was the controlling power of His life. This principle He bids us adopt. {DA 329.3}

In Isaiah’s day the spiritual understanding of mankind was dark through misapprehension of God. Long had Satan sought to lead men to look upon their Creator as the author of sin and suffering and death. Those whom he had thus deceived, imagined that God was hard and exacting. They regarded Him as watching to denounce and condemn, unwilling to receive the sinner so long as there was a legal excuse for not helping him. The law of love by which heaven is ruled had been misrepresented by the archdeceiver as a restriction upon men’s happiness, a burdensome yoke from which they should be glad to escape. He declared that its precepts could not be obeyed and that the penalties of transgression were bestowed arbitrarily. {PK 311.1}