

Jesus' Teaching on the Law

Key Verses: *"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."*
—Matthew 15:8,9

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 15:1-11,-
15-20

saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition."—Matt. 15:3-6

The Lord also quoted from Isaiah to point out the

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sees came as a delegation from Jerusalem to investigate the teaching and works of Jesus. They relied upon the tradition of the elders to question him as to why his disciples did not follow a ritualistic washing of their hands before eating meals, even though such a practice was not a part of the Scriptures.

In upbraiding these leaders for their hypocrisy, Jesus responded to their inquiry by questioning them. "He answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded,

shallow nature of their complaints. (Isa. 29:13) In doing so, he reminded them that they merely paid lip service to God's Word by advocating reliance upon the traditions of men. Our Key Verses contain Jesus' quotation of the prophet, and affirm the general tenor of his rebuke of these false teachers, whose erroneous doctrines nullified God's Word.

Throughout his ministry, our Lord had many occasions to rightly criticize the religious guides of the Jewish people, who twisted the meanings of Scriptures to suit their own ends. Here is another such example: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."—Matt. 5:43,44

The words "ye have heard that it hath been said" implies reliance upon the human tradition of the elders to which the Pharisees adhered. They ignored both the letter and the spirit of the Law as respects the Master, whom they hated. The depth of their degradation can well be illustrated by the fact that after Jesus raised Lazarus—because many people then believed on him—they conspired to not only put Christ to death, but Lazarus also.—John 11:45-53; 12:9-11

We are not under bondage to specific laws as epitomized in the Ten Commandments, nor are we in any degree subject to the religious traditions of men. Rather, we are under the law of liberty. Our love for God is demonstrated not only by avoiding those things that the Scriptures forbid, but also by sacrificing our human rights and privileges in the service of the Truth for the Lord and for the brethren.

Attaining the spirit of love in our words and deeds is evidence that we have been engrafted into Christ. May the transforming influence of the Holy Spirit enable us to fulfil God's law in our lives.—Matt. 22:36-40; John 13:34,35 ■