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BIBLE STUDY.**LETTER TO THE ROMANS. — NO. 2.**

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The first chapter of Romans, after its introduction, can be summarized as the condition of man without God, and how he gets in that condition. The cause of this condition can be stated in one word—unbelief.

Coupled with unbelief is self-exaltation; with faith, humility. They lost God, "because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." Verse 21. They attributed everything to *themselves*, and as *self* was advanced, faith in God decreased, till they were in the darkness of idolatry.

Men, in the day of Plato, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius, taught what they called moral science; Confucius taught moral precepts. But what they all lacked was to tell men how to do what they taught to be right. Even these men who taught moral science and virtue were themselves practicing the things they condemned, and coming far short of doing what they set forth as moral duty.

While those teachers tell us what to do, but fail to give us power to do it, the religion of Jesus Christ not only makes known what is right, but gives us ability to perform that which is good. Thus when Christ is not woven into the teaching, the very effort to teach morals is simply the old pagan science of morals, which is immorality.

All admit that the State should not teach Christianity; but some say we must teach morals without it. Moral science aside from Jesus Christ is immorality; it is sin.

The works of the flesh are clearly stated in the last part of chapter one. These are found in every individual that has not been converted to Christ; we denounce the heathen for doing these things, but "there is no respect of persons with God" (Rom.

2:11), and he condemns those things in us just the same and shows us that we are no better than they.

"Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things." Rom. 2:1. Whoever knows enough to condemn the evils of the heathen is condemned himself for he does the same things.

The first part of Romans 2 may be summed up in: God is no respecter of persons. He will render to *every man according to his deeds*. In the judgment nothing is taken into account but a man's works. "Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give *every man according as his work* shall be." Rev. 22:12. "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward *every man according to his works*." Matt. 16:27

The character of the works shows the amount of faith in Christ. A simple profession will not do. "Thinkest thou, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" God does not respect our person or profession. We may call ourselves Christians, and pretend to keep the law, and pity the poor heathen, but God classes all together, who fail to have good works.

"As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without the law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law." Verse 12. This with the verses following shows that the law is the standard by which every man in the world will be judged.

But what is it to keep the law? It is to keep all its precepts; our righteousness must exceed that of the Pharisees, which was only an outward form. If we hate, it is murder (Matt. 5:22); if we have impure thoughts it is adultery (Matt. 5:25); if we have an impure heart, we violate all the rest of the law. We may be ever so strict in outward Sabbath observance and adhere closely to the outward obligations of all the rest of the law, but an impure heart renders every act sinful.

"When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law are a law unto themselves." Verse 14.

God has by various agencies placed enough light in the heart of every man to lead him to know the true God. Even nature itself reveals the God of nature. And if a man in the darkest heathenism has a desire to know the true God, he will, if necessary, send a man around the world to give him the light of truth.

Every man that is finally lost will have rejected light that, if cherished, would have led him to God.

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