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The Law and Love

From the very beginning of the great controversy in heaven it has been Satan’s purpose to overthrow the law of God.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 582.

Why? Because the law, as the foundation of God’s government, expresses the moral integrity of the cosmos; and to overthrow that law would be to overthrow the moral order of the creation itself.

Think about it. If no god existed, and no life either, the universe would be amoral. Not *immoral*, as in having bad morals, but *amoral*, as in having no morals, because nothing in it—such as lifeless rocks hurling through a godless cosmos—could manifest moral qualities.

However, God exists, and humans do as well, and we have been created as moral beings with the capacity to give and to receive love. For this love to exist, however, freedom, *moral* freedom, must exist, too, because love is a moral concept that couldn’t arise in an amoral universe (such as one composed of only rocks and cold space).

Morality, though, means the ability to choose right or wrong, good or evil—and the only way for the universe to be moral, to allow the potential for good or evil, for right or wrong, would be for it to have a law that defines right or wrong.

And, of course, it does have such a law.

“What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what cov-

eting really was if the law had not said, ‘Do not covet’ ” (*Rom. 7:7, NIV*).

Is it sinful to have red hair? Why not? Because God’s law doesn’t forbid red hair. If it did, as the law forbids covetousness, then having red hair would be a sin. But it cannot be sin if no divine law defines it as such.

Morality without law is as impossible as is thought without mind. Our universe is moral because God created free beings answerable to His law. If there were no law against coveting, there would be no sin of covetousness; if there were no law against red hair, there would be no sin of red headedness—no matter how many red-haired coveters populated the cosmos.

God created humans as creatures who can love. Love, though, can’t exist without freedom, moral freedom. And moral freedom can’t exist without law, moral law. Love rests on freedom, and freedom rests on law. Hence, the core of God’s government, the foundation of that government—a government of love—has to be His law. That’s why Ellen G. White wrote what she did about Satan’s desire “to overthrow the law of God.” The attack on the law is an attack not just on Christ’s character but on the moral order of the creation itself.

Hence, the topic for our quarter: Christ and His law. We will study the law, especially the question of why so many Christians—misunderstanding the relationship between law and grace—have fallen into the trap of denying the continued validity of the Ten Commandments, thus, unwittingly helping the attempt to “overthrow” God’s law.

The Bible, though, is clear: “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments” (*1 John 5:3, NKJV*). The link between our loving God and the keeping of His commandments is stronger than we realize. We can love God because we live in a universe where love can exist, and it can exist because the universe is moral. That morality is based, at least for us as created beings, on God’s moral law—the subject we will now explore.

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