

# **THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL**

**Ellet J. Waggoner**



## Foreword

While going through the periodical collections of E.J. Waggoner's writings, I came across a 4-part series called "Under the Law" from 1884.

I pulled this for publishing, and then did a more detailed search on the phrase "under the law." This yielded another 4-part series also called "Under the Law" (from 1886) which I initially thought was just a duplicate of the previous series. Often the same articles were re-published a few years later. However on closer comparison, I couldn't find the usual duplication. There was no similarity between the two series.

Shortly after, I also discovered one more article, "In the Law" that went along with the 1886 set; and again, two other series showed up when I sorted the gospel-related articles in Volume 1 of the Fragments series. These two others were: Christ: the End of the Law, and another collection which I named after the title of this book, The Law and the Gospel. Two other minor series were also discovered: Brief Comments on Romans 7 and Comments on Galatians 3. These appeared during the same time period as the other sets. Most of the articles date between 1884 and 1886, but a few come from 1887, and one from 1888.

I have sorted the series themselves by date. In a few cases, I've included some extra articles at the end of a series that came a year or two later, because they were on the same topic.

Most of these articles were written before 1888, the famous year when E.J. Waggoner and A.T. Jones started gaining official recognition as God's chosen men to unfold "righteousness by faith"

to the church. By this we see that the bestowal of special grace in 1888 and afterwards, was not just a "sudden gift;" rather it was only brought out more into the open from that time forward. But these articles, written before 1888, show that Waggoner was already devoting a lot of thought and study to investigating the relationships between Law and Grace, Righteousness and Sin, Faith and Works. This confirms the truth that God uses those who prepare themselves to be used.

Let us be as diligent to search into these truths as were those whom God used back then, so that we can be used in like manner as they were.

Frank Zimmerman

## Chapter 1

### **An Important Question**

"And, behold, one came and said unto Him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And He said unto him, Why do you call me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if you will enter into life, keep the commandments. He said unto Him, Which? Jesus said, You shall do no murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and your mother; and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The young man said unto Him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what do I lack yet? Jesus said unto him, If you will be perfect, go and sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions." (Matthew 19:16-22)

### **Seeking Eternal Life**

The question asked by the young ruler is one that has been asked by thousands, and one that should interest every person. Life is a boon of inestimable value; men will spend the earnings of years, and travel to the utmost limits of the globe, in order to prolong their lives for a few years. How eagerly, then, should they grasp anything which will lengthen out their lives to all eternity.

It is indeed a wonder that so few manifest an interest in that which pertains to their eternal welfare, while they are so zealous for life and happiness for a short time. In this the majority of mankind manifest only the wisdom of the infant who seizes the glittering toy, and rejects the infinitely more valuable bag of treasure.

But there are some who are anxiously inquiring, "What must I do to be saved?"

And to such the words of our Lord himself on this subject must be of all-absorbing interest.

### **Christ's Divinity is Life**

The reader will notice that Jesus did not at once answer the young man's question, but asked him one on another subject. "Why do you call me good? there is none good but one, that is God." (Matthew 19:17)

Our Saviour did not mean to intimate by this that He was not good. He himself said that it was His meat "to do the will of the Father;" (John 4:34) and again He said to His disciples: "If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love." (John 15:10)

To the Jews, He said, "Which of you convinces me of sin?" (John 8:46)

Thus He demanded the closest scrutiny of His life. Paul says that: "[He] knew no sin;" (2 Corinthians 5:21) Peter says of Him that: "[He] did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth;" (1 Peter 2:22) and even the devils acknowledged Him to be "the Holy One of God." (Mark 1:24)

His character on earth was the same that it is now as our High Priest, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." (Hebrews 7:26)

He was absolutely good; the perfection and embodiment of goodness. This being the case, we can understand His words, "there is none good but one, that is God," (Matthew 19:17) as nothing but a statement of the fact that He himself was entitled to be called God. If there is but one that is good, viz., God, and Christ is good, then Christ must be God. And this agrees with what the prophet had said of Christ: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6)

John also said: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1)

Since He is the Son of God, He partakes of the divine attributes; and so Paul says that He occupies a more exalted position than the angels because "He has by inheritance a more excellent name than they." (Hebrews 1:4)

He was never on probation, as a candidate for life, as are all created beings, but has "life in himself," (John 5:26) being the creator of all things. "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made." (John 1:3) "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him." (Colossians 1:16)

The Father and the Son are one. "I and my Father are one." (John 10:30)

Both are worthy of worship. God alone may be worshiped, "And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then he said unto me, See you do it not: for I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God." (Revelation 22:8-9) but Christ did not refuse the adoration of His disciples. "And they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy." (Luke 24:52)

We are not called upon to explain the mystery of godliness, nor expected to understand it, but Christ has explained to us how He and the Father are one. In His memorable prayer for His disciples, He said: "Holy Father, keep through your own name those whom You have given me, that they may be one, as we are one. ... And the glory which You gave me I have given them; that they may be one even as we are one." (John 17:11,22)

This oneness, then, is that of two distinct individuals having the same thoughts, the same purposes, the same attributes. The Father and the Son were one in creating the earth, and one in the devising and carrying out of the plan of salvation. They never worked at cross purposes.

And in harmony with Christ's prayer that union may exist among His disciples, Paul exhorts us to "all speak the same thing, and...[to] be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1 Corinthians 1:10)

We understand, therefore, that when Christ addressed to the young man the words found in Matthew 19:17, it was because He saw that this ruler, like Nicodemus, did not appreciate the divine

character of Jesus, but thought Him to be a mere man. Christ penetrated the young man's thoughts, and by this question and reply revealed to him his own true nature.

### **Obedience is the Condition**

Having incidentally settled this point, our Lord immediately answers the question, "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" (Matthew 19:16)

He did not say, "You must not do anything," but said plainly, "If you will enter into life, keep the commandments." (Matthew 19:17)

The young man, greatly surprised, asked, "Which?" (Matthew 19:18)

Being a ruler of the Jews, he had, of course, kept the law, and prided himself on the strictness with which he had heeded all its requirements. The strictness of the Pharisees, extending even to the minutest forms and ceremonies, is proverbial. The young man, doubtless, like Paul, lived under the "straitest sect" of the Jew's religion. We can therefore imagine the astonishment and assurance with which he uttered the word, "Which?" As much as to say, "Why, are there any other commandments? Have you some new ones that are not written in the law? If so, tell me what they are."

Jesus calmly quotes a portion of the ten commandments, as showing that the law to which He has reference.

The fact that He did not quote all of them is no proof that He did not design that all should be kept. He did not quote the first nor the third, yet no one would argue from this that Christ meant to indicate

to the young man that he could worship idols or indulge in profanity and still be saved. He simply quoted enough to show that He referred to that which was regarded by all as the law, and that He had no new commandment to offer.

### **Which Commandments?**

Before commenting further on the observance of the commandments as the condition of eternal life, or the truth of the young man's reply in verse 20, we wish to briefly notice what this law is. In a matter of life and death it will not do to make a mistake. If the commandments are to be the test of our fitness for eternal life, we must have those commandments so clearly defined that there can be no doubt.

Fortunately, this is not a difficult thing to do. In the third month after the children of Israel left Egypt, they came to the wilderness of Sinai. The Lord told them to make certain preparations, for within three days He would come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes, And be ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai." (Exodus 19:10-11)

Nehemiah tells us why He thus came down: "You came down also upon mount Sinai, and spoke with them from heaven, and gave them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments." (Nehemiah 9:13)

His object, then, in coming down was to give the people laws of truth, good statutes. Besides this, Nehemiah says, "and commanded

them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses your servant." (Nehemiah 9:14)

If now we can distinguish between the statutes given by the Lord himself and those given to Moses, we shall have discovered that which we seek--the condition of eternal life.

Returning to Exodus, we find that when the necessary preparations had been completed, the Lord did come down upon Mount Sinai, with fire and smoke, thunders and lightnings, and an earthquake. "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that therewere thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly." (Exodus 19:16-18)

In the 20th chapter, verses 3-17, we find the words which the Lord spoke from the mount. In Deuteronomy 4:11-13, Moses rehearses the scenes of Sinai and plainly says that the words which God spoke are the ten commandments.

But may it not be that there is something besides these? Let us see. In the 5th chapter of Deuteronomy, Moses, in the course of his last charge to the people, repeated in substance these ten commandments as recorded in Exodus 20:3-17. When he had finished the recital, he said: "These words the Lord spoke unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and He added no more.

And He wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me." (Deuteronomy 5:22)

Of these commandments, Moses said, "And you shall teach them diligently unto your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes." (Deuteronomy 6:7-8)

That these are the commandments, the keeping of which is the condition of eternal life, is proved by: "And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He has commanded us." (Deuteronomy 6:25)

We have now found the commandments to which our Lord referred. We are not now concerned with the particulars of the other laws given to Moses, since the keeping of them is not required. "What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" (Matthew 19:16)

This is the question in which we are now interested, and those things not pertaining to this may be passed by. We now know what the law is.

Next we will consider the "Nature of the Law," to see why the keeping of it should be able to confer immortality.--Signs of the Times, June 19, 1884

## Chapter 2

### **Nature of the Law**

"If you will enter into life, keep the commandments." (Matthew 19:17)

In the last chapter we considered these words, and we found that the law of God--the ten commandments spoken on Mount Sinai--are the commandments referred to. In harmony with this, we have the words of Christ through the beloved disciple:

"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city." (Revelation 22:14)

#### The Character of the Law

We now want to examine this law, in order to learn its character. First we quote the words of David: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." (Psalm 19:7)

A perfect law, if kept, will form a perfect character. If a man has a perfect character, he is a perfect man, and that is all that God requires of any of us; all that He can require of anyone. Paul also adds his testimony to that of David, and says: "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." (Romans 7:12)

And this also agrees with the words of Nehemiah, that the Lord, on Mount Sinai, gave "true laws [margin: laws of truth], good statutes and commandments." (Nehemiah 9:13)

This idea of the perfection of the ten commandments is more fully expressed by David: "My tongue shall speak of your word; for all your commandments are righteousness." (Psalm 119:172)

They are not simply good; they are righteousness itself. We remember that Moses said of these commandments, "And these words, which I command you this day, shall be in your heart," (Deuteronomy 6:6) and that we should talk of them at all times (verse 7). But it is as true of a man now as when Solomon wrote, that: "As he thinks in his heart, so is he." (Proverbs 23:7)

Therefore if a man continuously meditates upon a law that is perfect righteousness, he can but become righteous. David says that the commandments are righteousness, but the Lord, through the prophet Isaiah, gives us a still deeper insight into their perfection: "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished." (Isaiah 51:6)

If any reader fails to connect this verse with Psalm 119:172, and thus learn what the righteousness that shall not be abolished is, he can satisfy himself that it is the law of God, by reading the next verse: "Hearken unto me, you that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law." (Isaiah 51:7)

Now that we see that the commandments are God's righteousness, it needs no argument to convince us that they cannot be abolished. Abolish the righteousness of God? It would be equivalent to abolishing God himself. The thing is an impossibility.

## **A Transcript of His Character**

It is not, however, the fact that God's law cannot be abolished, that we wish to call your especial attention, but that it is God's righteousness. God is all righteousness--perfection--and therefore the law must be a transcript of His character.

God wanted man to be like himself, righteous, but how could poor, fallen man know what righteousness is? He must needs have a perfect guide to direct his actions. God could not associate with man, and thus teach them what is righteousness, for they could not stand even His voice, much less the sight of His person. So He wrote out a description of His character, in words suited to the comprehension of human beings, and committed it to us.

Christ tells us that the ten commandments hang from the great principle of love, and God is love. By studying them and obeying them we become like them, or what is the same thing, like God. We write this with all reverence. We would not be understood that any human being can approach the perfection of God in any particular; but God himself says: "Be holy, for I am holy." (1 Peter 1:16)

And Christ says, "Be you therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." (Matthew 6:48)

We are to become sinless and pure, and even then God in His goodness will be infinitely above us. But some one may say, "I do not see anything about the ten commandments worthy to be called a transcript of God's character. It seems like degrading God to say that they are His righteousness."

That simply shows that you have not meditated upon them sufficiently to become acquainted with them. Paul says that the law is spiritual, and spiritual things are only spiritually discerned. "The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him." (1 Corinthians 2:14)

We see beauty only in that which we love; and Paul says: "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Romans 8:7)

But when the carnal mind has been subdued, and the man has yielded to the requirement of the law, he can exclaim with Paul, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." (Romans 7:22)

Or with David, "O how I love your law! it is my meditation all the day." (Psalm 119:97)

### **Infinite Depths of Truth**

The better acquainted we become with God's law, the greater it appears to us. David thought much on the law, and he said, "I have seen an end of all perfection; but your commandment is exceeding broad." (Psalm 119:96)

It is so broad that it covers every act that any rational creature can perform, and every thought that the mind of man can conceive. For Bible proof of this we read: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12)

There is no sin either of word, deed, or thought, which the law of God will not search out and condemn. How necessary, then, that we may make it our constant study.

As we do not wish to cherish sin, and thus fail of eternal life, we must understand in all cases just what sin is; and to this end let us never cease to pray with the psalmist: "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law." (Psalm 119:18)--Signs of the Times, June 26, 1884.

## Chapter 3

### **Condemned and Justified**

In the two preceding articles on the law we have considered it simply in the light of Christ's declaration to the young man: "If you will enter into life, keep the commandments." (Matthew 19:17)

No one who contemplates the breadth of the law, and believes the inspired statement that it is perfect--the righteousness of God--can feel disposed to deny the statement of the wise man, that to "Fear God and keep His commandments...is the whole duty of man." (Ecclesiastes 12:13)

Obedience to a perfect law must produce a perfect character, and perfection is all that can be required of anybody.

#### **Justification not by Law**

But while we have been making these statements upon the authority of the Bible, some reader has doubtless called to mind the fact that Paul says, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified;" (Romans 3:20) and he wants this harmonized with what has been said; or, possibly, he may think that it entirely overthrows our argument. We will examine it. The passage in full reads thus: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Romans 3:20)

To understand this verse we must take it in its connection. But first, to the verse itself. Why can no flesh be justified in the sight of God by the deeds of the law? The last clause of the verse gives the answer: "for by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Romans 3:20)

Well, why does the fact that the law gives the knowledge of sin make it impossible for any one to be justified by it? Read from the ninth verse onward, and you will see. Paul says: "We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin." (Romans 3:9)

This he has done in the 1st and 2nd chapters. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one." (Romans 3:10-12)

After particularizing somewhat on this point, the apostle says: "Now we know that what things soever the law says, it says to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." (Romans 3:19)

Then follows the conclusion: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight." (Romans 3:20)

Now we can see the force of Paul's conclusion. Since the law gives us the knowledge of sin, by pointing it out, it condemns the whole world, for there is no man that has not sinned; all the world are guilty before God. And this is a sufficient reason why no one can be justified by the law. The law that justifies a criminal is a bad law; but the law of God is "holy, and just, and good;" (Romans 7:12) it will not justify a sinner.

## A Practical Example

Let us illustrate this by a familiar example. Here is a man who has been taken in the act of robbing a store. He is brought into court for trial. Now will he stand up before the judge, and declare that he wants no counsel; that all he desires is simple justice, and then demand that the law be read, and declare his willingness to rest his case upon that alone? Certainly not, unless he desires to live in prison. He knows that the law does not justify any man in committing robbery; and he will therefore seek in every way possible to evade it.

But there is no possibility of evading the law of God, and consequently all the world stands condemned. No one can fail to see that if the law justified sinners, then sin would cease to be sin; theft, murder, and adultery would be legal acts, and anarchy would prevail and be confirmed throughout the land.

If, however, an innocent man is accused of a crime, he may with all confidence appeal to the law. He does not wish to have anybody turn aside the law from its true meaning. He is anxious that his acts be compared with the plain reading of the law. And when that law is read, it justifies him, because he has done nothing but what it commends.

By these two examples we see the working of a good law: it condemns the guilty, and justifies the one who has scrupulously obeyed its requirements. That this is the case with the law of God is seen by our Saviour's words: "For every one that does evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that does truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." (John 3:20-21)

It is plain that under no circumstances can a good law justify crime. The man may say, "This is the first time I ever violated the law."

But the judge would reply, "You ought not to have violated it this time; perfect obedience is what the law requires."

Or if he professes his determination to keep the law strictly forever afterward, that will not justify his sin, for he never can do more than his duty, and thus make up for past neglect. Whichever way he turns, the law stands in his way condemning him.

Now shall we say that because the law thus condemns sin it is unworthy of respect, and ought to be abolished? By no means; no one but a confirmed reprobate would desire such a thing. The fact that it condemns the sinner shows it to be a good law, and lovers of the right will rejoice to see it maintained.

The position, then, thus far, is this: To keep the commandments is the whole duty of man; it is only by keeping them that we can have eternal life. But no man has kept them, neither can any man show a perfect record in this respect: "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

### **How is Justification Received?**

How, then, it may well be asked, can any one be saved? How can we become justified? The answer comes: "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past,

through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believes in Jesus." (Romans 3:24-26)

Christ was sinless; the law was in His heart. As the Son of God His life was worth more than those of all created beings, whether in Heaven or on earth. He saw the hopeless condition of the world, and came "to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10)

To do this He took upon himself our nature, (Hebrews 2:16-17) and on Him was laid "the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:6)

In order to save us, He had to come where we were, or, in other words, He had to take the position of a lost sinner. Thus the apostle says: "For He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

It was this fact that caused Him such anguish in the garden. He felt that the sins upon Him were shutting Him away from God. It was this that caused Him, when hanging on the cross, to utter that cry of bitter agony, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46)

It was not physical pain that crushed the life out of the Saviour of the world, but the load of sin which He bore. "The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)

Sin will cause the death of every one who is not freed from it, for "sin when it is finished, brings forth death." (James 1:15)

And because Christ was "numbered with the transgressors," (Isaiah 53:12) He suffered the penalty of transgression. But the

suffering of Christ was not on His own account. "[He] did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." (1 Peter 2:22)

He was one who could safely appeal to the law to justify Him, for He had never violated it. The law had nothing against Him. "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities." (Isaiah 53:5)

He alone has done more than His duty--more than was required of Him; consequently He has merit to impart to others. This grace is freely given to all who believe in Him.

Our past life has been nothing but sin, for whatever good we may have thought to do, it was far from perfect. But we believe implicitly in Christ, and have faith in the efficacy of His sacrifice; and because of this simple faith, Christ will take our load of sins upon himself, and we will be accounted as though we had never committed them. He can take them without fear of any evil consequences to himself, because He has already suffered the extreme penalty of the law for them.

And since our sins are taken from us, we are as though we had never broken the law, and therefore it can have nothing against us-it cannot condemn us. So we stand before the court justified. Justified by what? By our works? No; justified by faith in Christ. Our works condemned us; Christ has justified us. And so Paul's conclusion is true: "A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." (Romans 3:28)

We now see that Paul does not contradict himself when he says, "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." (Romans 2:13)

And when he says, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified." (Romans 3:20)

Both are true. The doers of the law are always justified, as we have before shown, and the only reason why there is no one who is justified by the law is because there is no one who has done all the law.

In this article we have given only a brief outline of the way by which the sinner is justified. In subsequent articles we shall consider his relation to the law after he is justified, and also how, although no one is justified by the law, our Saviour's words apply with equal force to all, "If you will enter into life, keep the commandments." (Matthew 19:17)--Signs of the Times, July 3. 1884.

## Chapter 4

### **A New Creature in Christ**

We have shown from the Scriptures that the whole duty of man is to keep the commandments, and that only by so doing can we gain eternal life. We have also found that the law, being perfect and holy, condemns the whole world, and that we can be freed from this condemnation only by faith in Christ.

The law condemns; Christ has opened the way for pardon. When the sinner has acknowledged his guilt, and has accepted Christ as his Saviour, he can say, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1)

### **The Law After Justification**

We now inquire, What is his relation to the law from this time on? and, Does this condition of things make any less true the statement that to fear God and keep His commandments is the whole duty of man? Paul describes a man in this justified state: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

We have heard this text quoted to prove that a man in Christ has no more use for the law, that such old things as that are done away. The absurdity of such a claim is manifest on its very face; for if that supposition were true, it would amount to saying that the law is abolished only for Christians, but that it is in full force until a man becomes a Christian; and since Christians and sinners live side by side in this world, we would have the anomaly of the law being both abolished and in full force at the same time! But the eighteenth verse

tells what the new things are: "And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ." (2 Corinthians 5:18)

If a man in Christ does all things that are of God, he certainly will not violate God's law. The statement of what Christ did for us, proves this: "Who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)

The act of reconciliation implies that certain parties have been estranged from each other--have been enemies. "But God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For 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 5:8-10)

So Paul shows that while we were sinners--transgressing the law--we were the enemies of God, and that we are reconciled by the death of His Son. The prophet Isaiah shows very clearly in what rebellion against God consists, when he says: "This is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord." (Isaiah 30:9)

And Paul also states that the carnal mind is enmity against God, simply because "it is not subject to the law of God." (Romans 8:7)

Since, then, our enmity to God while we were sinners consisted simply in disobedience to His law, it must necessarily follow that when we are reconciled we will keep the law. Indeed, the very act of

reconciliation implies submission on our part to the requirements of God.

## **Reconciling to Obedience**

Paul goes on to say that having received the commission from God, "Now then we [that is, the ministers of Christ] are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God." (2 Corinthians 5:20)

This means simply that the work of the gospel is to persuade men to keep the law of God. The thing is stated in plain words by the apostle Peter, when he says: "The grass withers, and the flower thereof falls away; but the word of God endures forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." (1 Peter 1:24-25)

The point, however, is established beyond all controversy by the closing words of: "For He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

The turn which some give to the first part of this verse, that Christ was made a sin-offering for us, robs the text of all its force. It is true that Christ was our sin-offering, but that is not what the apostle here states. God made Christ (the sinless one) to be sin for us. He was made "in all things ... like unto His brethren;" (Hebrews 2:17) and that means not simply as to the outward, physical frame, but that He bore sin, just as we do. The sins that He bore were not His own, but ours. "[He] knew no sin," (2 Corinthians 5:21) yet, "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:6)

Although the sins that He bore were ours, they were counted as His own, and so caused His death. "He was wounded for our transgression, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5)

## **Saved from Law-Breaking**

And why was this done? Why was the spotless Lamb of God made to be sin for us? Paul answers: "That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

What is the righteousness of God? We have already shown from Isaiah 51:6-7 that it is nothing else but the law of God. Then Paul's words mean that Christ was made to be sin for us in order that, in Him, we might be conformed to the law of God. This, then, is what it is to be a new creature in Christ; it is to put away the old life of sin, and to become reconciled to God by keeping His law.

In the second chapter of Ephesians Paul briefly states the change from being dead in trespasses and sins to being quickened, and made to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. This is done because God is rich in mercy. We read: "For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)

The term "saved" is sometimes used in an accommodated sense. We are really saved only when we are given the victory over death, and are made immortal in the kingdom of God. This salvation is brought to us "at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 1:13)

But since this everlasting salvation is given only to those who overcome their sins, (Revelation 3:21) we are said to be saved when we are freed from our past sins through the pardoning mercy of God. If we continue in this condition, we will receive our full salvation. In this place the word may be taken in both senses. "Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:9)

Simply a repetition of Romans 3:28. God was not under obligation to save us, and we could not atone for past sins, and thus earn salvation. Our salvation is wholly due to the infinite mercy of God through the merits of Christ and consequently we have nothing whereof to boast.

### **Unto Good Works**

Shall we conclude from this, then, that Christ does everything for us, that is, in our stead, and that we have no call to work for ourselves? Paul does not so teach. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:20)

By being "created in Christ Jesus," we are made new creatures in Christ; and for what? That we might be able to perform good works, for that is what God from the beginning designed that we should do, and this is our whole duty.

And now we are able to understand fully Christ's reply to the young ruler who asked the way of life. (Matthew 19:18-21) While He said, "If you will enter into life, keep the commandments." (Matthew 19:17) you will notice that He did not leave him with that. Christ well knew that the man, in spite of his self-righteousness was a sinner. By a simple test He showed that the young man was not

only covetous, but that he did not love his neighbor as well as he did himself, and that he did not love God with all his heart. He was selfish, and loved himself and his property more than he did God and his neighbors; and so he was a violator of all the commandments, for he broke the two great precepts upon which they hang. (Matthew 22:36-40)

Christ well knew that the young man could not justify himself, nor even keep the commandments as they should be kept, in his own strength, and so He added the words, "Come, and follow me." (Matthew 19:21)

What for? That in Christ he might be a new creature; that, whereas by himself he had utterly failed of fulfilling the righteousness of God, in Christ, he might attain to that; in short, that he might be enabled to keep the commandments.

And so it still remains a fact that to fear God and keep His commandments is the whole duty of man and Christ has simply come to our aid, to help us to do our duty. While He assumes the responsibility of the sins which the believer has committed in the past and thus sets him once more in the right way, justified before God, He tells him that "without me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

We are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works," (Ephesians 2:10) but it is only while we abide in Him that we can bear any fruit. (John 15:4) Without Christ our efforts to obey God are vain struggles; with the strength which He gives we can do all things, and at last stand, "complete in Him." (Colossians 2:10)

And this opens the way for us to understand how it is that Christ is the end of the law, which will next be considered.--Signs of the Times, July 17, 1884.

## Chapter 5

### **Christ the End of the Law**

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes." (Romans 10:4)

This is supposed by antinomians to teach the abolition of the law. The text is not usually quoted in full, the objector contenting himself with the statement that "Christ is the end of the law," meaning that Christ abolished the law.

#### **The Law Cannot Be Abolished**

This text is so generally quoted in favor of the abolition of the law, that before we consider its real application, we will briefly show the absurdity of the popular interpretation.

1. If Christ abolished the law, then there can be no sin now, for "sin is the transgression of the law," (1 John 3:4) and, "sin is not imputed when there is no law." (Romans 5:13)

And if there is no sin, there can be no punishment impending, and all men will be saved. Those texts, therefore, which speak of the "wrath of God," and the "indignation," "torment," and "destruction," to be visited upon sinners, are made of no effect. There is no one so much of a Universalist as he who claims that the law of God is abolished.

2. The text says that Christ is the end of the law "to every one that believes." The necessary inference is that He is not the end of the law to unbelievers. Those, therefore, who claim that the

apostle by the expression "end of the law" means abolition of the law, must teach that the law is abolished only for Christians; that is that the law binds worldlings, but that Christians are under no obligation to it.

And so it would follow that while an act performed by an unbeliever might be in violation of the law, and therefore a sin, the same act performed by a believer would be perfectly justifiable. We trust that there is no one who would hold to so monstrous a theory as this, yet that is a legitimate deduction from antinomian claims.

3. If Paul, in Romans 10:4 means that the law is abolished for believers, it would follow that it has been abolished as many times as there are Christians, being done away every time a man is converted; and further, that whenever any believer falls away, and loses his faith, the law is for him re-enacted! The absurdity of this just conclusion must convince every one of the absurdity of the premise.

4 Again: From the parables of the wheat and the tares, (Matthew 13) we learn that both righteous and wicked are to remain together on the earth until the end of the world. We know also that both classes have existed since the fall. It follows, therefore, from antinomian interpretation of Romans 10:4, that the law of God always has been, and will be until the end of time, both abolished and in full force at the same time!

This is the climax of absurdity, and shows conclusively that whatever may be the meaning of Romans 10:4, it certainly does not teach that any part of God's Law is, or ever will be, abolished, either for Christians or unbelievers.

## **"End" Means "Object" or "Design"**

And now as to what the text really does mean. The word "end" is often used in the sense of "object" or design. Thus in James we read, "You have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord." (James 5:11)

No one supposes that this means the end of the Lord's existence, but the object of the Lord in allowing Job to suffer affliction. In like manner we understand Romans 10:4 to teach that Christ meets the design of the law to those who believe. In order to understand how He does this, we must consider the end or design of the law.

In Romans 7:10 the apostle says that the commandment (meaning the whole law) "was ordained to life." That is, if man had never violated the law, it would insure his eternal life. This is what the Saviour said to the young man in Matthew 19:17, as previously noticed.

In the next verse after our theme text we read the same thing: "For Moses describes the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which does those things shall live by them." (Romans 10:5)

But while this is true, the fact presents itself that no man has kept the law, (Romans 3:9,19,23) and that in his natural condition no man can keep the law, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Romans 8:7)

How, then, can anyone obtain eternal life, which the law was designed to bestow? The answer is, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him

should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

The law was "ordained to life;" (Romans 7:10) Christ is our life, (Colossians 3:4) and is therefore the end of the law. But this is only the result.

### **Does Christ Free Us From the Law?**

It might be asked, "Does Christ accomplish this result for us, by freeing us from obligation to keep the law?"

We answer, No; for since only those who do the commandments shall live by them, (Matthew 19:17; Romans 10:7) it follows that no one can receive eternal life if he continues to violate them. Therefore since the object of the law was to give life, it must follow that it was also the design that it must be kept. So we read that: "The end of the commandment is charity." (1 Timothy 1:5)

"Charity" is but another name for "love," and this rendering is given in the Revised Version. But, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." (Romans 13:10)

Or, as John says, "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." (1 John 5:3)

We might therefore paraphrase 1 Timothy 1:5 thus: "Now the object or design of the commandment [or law, see verse 9] is that it should be fulfilled, or scrupulously kept."

This is self-evident; for whenever any law is given, it is certainly the design of the maker that it shall be kept. We have

already seen that no man has attained this end. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

From past sins we are "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Romans 3:21)

But being justified through faith in Christ, we are still dependent on Him, for without Him we can do nothing. (John 15:4-5) It is only by abiding in Him that we are able to bear fruit. And this is why the apostle says of the Jews that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." (Romans 10:3)

The righteousness of God is His law, (Isaiah 51:6-7) and the apostle means that the Jews, being zealous toward God, and desiring to serve him by keeping His commandments, had sought to do so in their own strength, and had failed. Their zeal was good, but their knowledge was deficient, in that they did not perceive that only in Christ could they hope to attain perfection.

To all believers, Christ is made "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;" (1 Corinthians 1:30) not by freeing them from obligation to keep the law, for then He would be to them, not righteousness, but unrighteousness, or, in other words, would become the minister of sin.

Without Him our best efforts are failures; with Him to strengthen us, we can do all things; (Philippians 4:13) and when at last we stand before God holy and without blemish, "not having

spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," (Ephesians 5:27) it will be because we have been made "complete in Him." (Colossians 2:10)

We think it must be evident to all that Romans 10:4 can be pressed into antinomian service only by mutilating it to the extent of leaving out the statement that Christ is the end of the law to believers only, and to them alone for nothing except righteousness, or obedience to it.--Signs of the Times, July 24, 1884.

## Chapter 6

### **All Things Through Christ**

In our last article, two weeks ago, we showed how it is that: "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes." (Romans 10:4)

We wish to consider this matter a little further, for, as we then said, there is very much that might be said upon it. Indeed, the whole gospel is comprised in that one sentence; for the gospel is simply the good news of how men who have broken the law may be saved through Christ, and enabled to keep it.

In all our investigations let it be borne in mind that the righteousness of God is contained in His law, (Isaiah 51:4-7) and that Christ is the end of the law only for righteousness, which is equivalent to saying that He is the object of the law for obedience.

We now call the attention of the reader very briefly to the 7th chapter of Romans. We have space to notice only a portion of the chapter. In that the apostle brings to view, using himself as an illustration, the progress of a man from a state of worldly, carnal security, to that of acceptance with God. Let us follow him in his narrative.

#### **The Law Reveals Sin**

First we notice his statement in verse 7 that the law is not sin: "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law." (Romans 7:7)

This he proves by showing that it is the law which points out and forbids sin. Then, of course, it must be perfect. We can detect base coin only by using genuine coin as a standard. The parallel to this verse is found in: "By the law is the knowledge of sin." (Romans 3:20)

He continues, "For without the law sin was dead." (Romans 7:8)

This is the statement of verse 7 in another form. Before the law was brought to his knowledge, he did not know sin; it did not trouble him any. Although he did not know the law, he was a sinner, yet his sin, so far as his knowledge was concerned, was dead. "For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." (Romans 7:9)

Without the law ("the commandment") he was in a state of ease and carnal security, perfectly satisfied with himself. But when the law was applied, it made his sin assume hideous proportions. He saw himself just as he was. "And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." (Romans 7:10)

How is this? The commandment (law) was ordained to life: that is, its object was to give life, which it will always do to those who obey it. "The man which does these things shall live by them." (Romans 10:5)

This was the object of the law, but now that the law has been violated, it cannot fulfill the end for which it was designed; it can only condemn to death. Mark this well; around this fact the whole argument centers.

## **The Law Regarded with Honor**

And how did the apostle regard that law which, by showing him to be such a sinner, had condemned him to death? Said he: "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." (Romans 7:12)

He acknowledged the perfectness of the law. And herein he showed his honesty of heart. He did not rail at the law, applying to it all manner of opprobrious epithets, and try to evade it or convince himself that it was abolished. No; he confessed himself a sinner, justly condemned by a perfect law.

He recognized the fact that the law had done nothing to him: it had not created anything in him, but had simply brought to light that which previously existed. The effect of introducing the law is to make sin appear exceeding sinful. It is as a rod thrust to the bottom of a vessel of water, which roils the water by stirring up the sediment that lay in the bottom, yet it creates no impurity whatever. The dirt would be there if the rod were not introduced.

## **A Convicted Sinner**

Therefore Paul did not complain, for he knew that the fault was in himself, and not in the law. So he exclaims: "For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin." (Romans 7:14)

In verse 9 Paul anticipates his argument, when he says, "and I died." (Romans 7:9)

This was the final result in his case. What does he mean by this? In the light of the preceding verse the answer is clear. When he was

alive, it was when he was without the law--lawless; a servant of sin. Death is the direct opposite of life; therefore when the commandment came, and he died, it must mean that he yielded to the claims of the law, and ceased sinning. And this will be the result with every one who is as honest with himself as Paul was. This is conversion. But as before said, the apostle anticipates in order to place the effect side by side with the cause; he did not die without a struggle.

We have now the man before us as a convicted sinner, and here is his description: "For that which I do I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." (Romans 7:15)

This verse is introduced by "for," showing that it is a consequence of something that goes before. The preceding clause is, "but I am carnal, sold under sin." (Romans 7:14)

### **A Slave to Sin**

Now what is the condition of a man who is sold into slavery? He is unable to do anything for himself. He may be conscious of the degradation of his position, and long to be free, but he is placed where he cannot help himself; his hands or feet are bound with a chain.

Every sinner is in bondage. (See 2 Peter 2:19) Before the law of God is held up before him, he is unconscious of his slavery; when he sees its claims, he arouses to a sense of his condition. But his struggle to break the galling chain is fruitless, because his long-continued bondage has weakened him. This struggle of the convicted sinner against sin is mentioned in several verses of this chapter. "If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law

that it is good. Now, then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me." (Romans 7:16-17)

Here we have the case of a man convicted of sin by the law, conscientiously trying to keep it, and yet continually violating it, even against his will. He says, "It is not I that do it, I do not design to violate the law; but sin has bound me so long, and has such power over me, that I cannot get free."

It is no longer from desire that he sins, but from the force of habit which he cannot break. And so the fruitless struggle goes on, until the man in an agony of despair, exclaims: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24)

We cannot imagine a more horrible condition than the one here brought to view. In ancient times a criminal was sometimes chained to the dead body of a man, and forced to drag the putrefying carcass wherever he went, until the effluvium caused him to die a miserable death. Think of the desperate attempts such a man would make to get free, and how frantic he would become as he realized the impotence of his arm as compared with the chain that bound him. How his whole soul would go out in that piteous cry, "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?"

How many are there who have felt themselves in such a condition under the load of sin? It is in this condition the apostle (the representative of a class) finds himself. He feels that sin is about to sink him into perdition, and, convinced of the hopelessness of his struggle, he cries out for deliverance, "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24)

## **Christ Delivers from Sin**

Immediately the question is answered, and he again exclaims, this time with transports of joy, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 7:25)

As soon as he realizes his own inability to meet the demands of the law, Christ is presented to his view, and he at once accepts deliverance from the only one who can give it. Christ strikes off the chain, and sets the prisoner free. Not only does He forgive past transgressions, but He helps us to break the chains of habit, and overcome the love of sin. And then the apostle continues: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1)

The reason why there is no condemnation, is told in the following verses, in which it is said that he who is in Christ keeps the law of God; he "walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" (Romans 8:1) in other words, "he is a new creature." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

## **Righteousness Attained by Faith, not Flesh**

This argument is not complete without verse 3 and 4 of the 8th chapter: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:3-4)

What could not the law do? It could not justify any man, and give him life. Wherein lay its weakness? Not in itself, but in "the

flesh." It is the fault of man that the law condemns him, and not the fault of the law. The law cannot give life, because it has been violated.

And in this extremity what did God do? He sent His own Son. What for? That the righteousness of the law (i.e., the law in its perfectness) might be accomplished by us. What we could not do while yet in bondage to sin, we may perform when we become free men in Christ.

Righteousness is required of us, and that means that there is something for us to do, for righteousness is simply right doing. But Christ says, "without me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

Our own righteousness, that is, the good that we attempt to do by our own unaided efforts, amounts to nothing. It is not righteousness at all, but unrighteousness. When, however, we join the strength of Christ to our own weakness, we can truly say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13)--Signs of the Times, August 7, 1884--Original title: Christ the End of the Law.

## Chapter 7

### Relation of the Law and Grace

The subject of this evening is a question which is prefaced by the following text of Scripture, quoted from the Emphatic Diaglott: "Whosoever of you are justifying yourselves by law are separated from Christ; you are fallen off from the favor of God." (Galatians 5:4)

My question is this: "Was not the Mosaic law written on stone, given alone to the Jews?"

Accompanying this question is a letter giving the position of the questioner, some points of which I will notice. In contrast with the Jews, he says of us: "We who are begotten of the Spirit through the belief of the truth are become new (spiritual) creatures in Christ, and are raised spiritual bodies, like unto His glorious body, for there is a natural body and there is a spiritual body."

This remark contains a very grave error. The "spiritual body" is given in the resurrection. (See 1 Corinthians 15) The Christian is spiritually minded, but has yet a natural, corruptible body, being subject to decay, which the spiritual body will not be. Again he says: "He who undertakes to do the deeds of the law has fallen from grace, as say the Scriptures."

If this assertion be true, I have been in fault in my reading, for I never read any such thing in the Bible. And the Bible has no such saying.

## Faith and Works

In regard to justification, we have distinctly avowed that we do not expect it by the law. If there is anybody who seeks or expects to be justified by the law, to him the question will apply: to him this text stands as a reproof. Paul says in Romans 3 that the justification which we receive through faith in Christ, without works, is "for the remission of sins that are past." (Romans 3:25)

But he does not say we can live godly lives, and build up a moral character without works. He exhorts to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Philippians 2:12)

For every man will be judged and rewarded according to his works. "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." (Revelation 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." (Matthew 16:27)

I have before said, in this tent, that all our obedience, our tears, our confessions, our prayers, our repentance, will never remove a single sin we have committed. Remission of past sin is by the blood of Christ through faith alone; not by works at all. But as to the future, when we form character it must be by obedience; then "faith without works is dead." (James 2:20)

It is lifeless, formal, useless. As to the expression, "a new creature," it does not mean another creature. But the "old man" of sin is destroyed. (Romans 6:6) All things--sinful things, worldliness, etc.--have passed away; but the law of God has not passed away.

Mark, the change must all be in man; not in God, nor in His government. Rebellion, sin, does not change God's law, nor does it create the necessity of a change in God's law. It changes our relation to the law, bringing us in opposition to it; and it makes necessary another change in us, a change from sin to obedience; and this is also wrought by faith in Christ, who strengthens us to overcome our sins, and walk in obedience to His Father.

## **Christ the End of the Law**

I am also requested, in this connection, to notice the following: "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believes." (Romans 10:4)

There are three points to be noticed in this text:

### **1. In What Sense Is Christ the End of the Law?**

Not in the sense of abolishing the law, for if that were the meaning, it would apply to all, both to the believer and the unbeliever. If it means the abolition of the law, then we have the anomalous relation of a law abolished to one class, and not to another class. And not only that, but it is abolished to numerous individuals at one period in the experience of each one, and not abolished at another period in his experience!

The word "end" must be used as in: "You have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord." (James 5:11)

Not the abolition of the Lord. "End," in both these texts, means the object or intention. Paul says the law was ordained unto life; it was designed to guide people in obedience to their Creator, that they

might live. For to disobey, to sin, is death. Since we are all sinners, and we can no longer obtain life by the law, Christ comes in and meets the design or the "end" of the law and gives us life.

## **2. This Is "For Righteousness"**

We may learn what righteousness is by the inspired definitions given by John. "Unrighteousness is sin," (1 John 5:17) and, "Sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4)

Now if unrighteousness is the transgression of the law, righteousness is obedience to the law. "He that does righteousness is righteous." (1 John 3:7)

## **3. To Every One That Believes**

In the unbeliever the object of the law is not accomplished, for he, as Paul says, has "pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thessalonians 2:12)

This text does not teach that the law is no longer of obligation, but it does teach that we are to obey the law through faith in Christ.

## **Was the Law Only for the Jews?**

The question itself, whether the law was given to the Gentiles or the Jews alone, is quickly disposed of. Was there ever a time when it was no sin in the Gentiles to worship idols, to blaspheme the name of God, to dishonor their parents, to kill, to commit adultery, and to steal? If there is any force to the question, if it has any bearing against our position, it is only in the case that these things were not wrong in the Gentiles.

But if these things were sin in the Gentiles-if for these abominations God abhorred the Gentiles-then the law held them, for "Where no law is there is no transgression," (Romans 4:15) and, "Sin is not imputed when there is no law." (Romans 5:13)

This sufficiently refutes the idea which appears to be in the mind of the questioner, as far as the Gentiles are concerned as a class. But the question has a more specific application, not to Gentiles at large, but to the believers in Christ from the Gentiles. What we have before said, especially on Romans 10:4, is to this point; but it must be noticed more particularly.

### **Justification and Law-Keeping Go Together**

Paul says more on the subject of justification than all other writers of the Bible; and he says more about it, argues it more particularly, in the letter to the Romans, than in all his other writings together. And it is a suggestive fact that the first time he speaks of justification in this letter is in connection with doing the law, while he has never connected, in any man, justification and breaking the law. He never recognizes any such relation. "The doers of the law shall be justified." (Romans 2:13)

An objector once said to me, when I quoted that text: "You, then, believe in justification by the law: but I would not like to risk my salvation on your word on that subject." (Romans 2:13)

I replied:

1. You have not my word on the subject. I quoted Paul's words, and if you have any fault to point out, it is with his words.

2. You have nothing to do with this text, for Paul was not there speaking of you, or of any like you. He said the "doers of the law"; but you are not a doer of the law; indeed, you disclaim any intention to do the law. Therefore you have no claim, and personally no interest in that text.

But the text is useful in this: It teaches that justification is in the law, and we would find it there if we had not forfeited it; if we had not transgressed the law. It is a vindication of the morality of the law, and it fully agrees with Solomon's words, that to keep God's commandments "is the whole duty of man." (Ecclesiastes 12:13)

And if man had done his whole duty, if he had never sinned, he would not be condemned; he must then be justified. Some claim to find a contradiction between this text and the following: "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified." (Romans 3:20)

But there is no contradiction. It may be said that both cannot be true absolutely; one must be qualified to avoid the contradiction. Which shall it be? And the answer generally comes thus: "The first must be qualified, for it is an absolute fact that no one can be justified by the law."

But this answer is made under a misapprehension of the facts, and of the principles underlying them. There is an intermediate statement which makes all plain: let us take the three in connection—they are given in the regular form of an argument:

1. The doers of the law shall be justified.

2. There are no doers; all have gone astray: "there is none that does good, no, not one."

3. Conclusion: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified."

Thus we see that it is no fault of the law that it does not justify us; it is our own fault; we are sinners and the law would be unworthy of respect as a law if it would justify us. We deserve condemnation, and the law very properly treats us as we deserve.

### **Why Keep a Law that Cannot Justify?**

And then another query is raised. "What is the use of keeping a law which will not justify us?"

But this question shows an unenviable state of mind on the part of the questioner. We should not view the subject altogether in the light of its benefit to ourselves: something is due to the Government of God; His authority is to be recognized, His law to be honored.

But if it is necessary to our salvation that past sin should be forgiven, it is equally necessary that future sin shall be prevented. Sin is odious in the sight of God, whether it be past, present, or future. Obedience is better than sacrifice. If all shall be rewarded according to their works, how necessary that our works should conform to the divine will, which we learn only in His law. "Behold, you are called a Jew, and rest in the law, and make your boast of God, And know His will, and approve the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; And are confident that you yourself are a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which

have the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. You therefore which teach another, do you not teach yourself? you that preach a man should not steal, do you steal? You that say a man should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? you that abhor idols, do you commit sacrilege? You that make your boast of the law, through breaking the law do you dishonor God?" (Romans 2:17-23)

To illustrate this let me relate an incident. It is not "founded on fact;" it is the fact itself. Some years ago I was preaching in Wisconsin, and a man gravely informed me that he had learned that we are not justified by the law. I replied that we had learned the same thing; that we did not expect to be justified by the law; the law had no power to justify a sinner, and we did not keep it with the thought of being justified by it.

And he then began to laugh. Being inquired of for the reason, he said he could not help laughing that anybody should be fool enough to keep a law which cannot justify him. Laying the compliment aside, I proposed to present the case in such a manner that he could appreciate it.

Suppose you were accused of stealing a horse, and were proved guilty, and the Judge thereupon asks if you have anything to say, and you ask and are answered as follows:

**Judge, will the law of Wisconsin justify me?**

Justify you? No; we do not have a law in Wisconsin that will justify a man stealing horses! The law condemns you, and I am about to pronounce its sentence upon you!

Well, Judge, I am not such a fool as to keep a law which will not justify me, and hereafter I intend to steal all the horses that I can.

And, said the Judge, I will see that you do not have the opportunity very soon to carry your intention into effect, for I shall give you the full time in prison which the law allows.

And then I inquired: Do you not think the Judge would so answer a man who avowed such an intention?

He answered, "Yes," and added, "But nobody would be foolish enough to talk like that!"

I replied, "Of course not; nobody would be foolish enough to treat the law of the State in that manner; but that is exactly the manner in which you have been treating the law of God. If you, and people in general, would grant as much to the law of God as you require for the law of the State, we would have little need to argue the question. No one ever for one moment supposes that a pardon frees any one from obligation to keep the law of the State which condemns him. But there are thousands who refuse to keep the law of God because Jesus Christ has purchased their pardon by His blood!"

Satan is wily, we know; but it is a marvel that he can so blind the minds of people who appear to be otherwise sensible, as to make them believe that pardon absolves them from allegiance to God and His law!

Redeemed from Disobedience Paul says: "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law." (Galatians 3:13)

But the curse comes only by transgression. Had man not sinned, he would not have been cursed, for "the doers of the law shall be justified." (Romans 2:13)

And the curse invariably, in all cases, follows transgression. Christ redeems from the curse, but not from the duty; He redeems from the condemnation, but not from the obligation. We say that the curse follows transgression "in all cases," because it is as true now that "The wages of sin is death," (Romans 6:23) as it was before Christ died, or would have been if Christ had never died. It is a narrow view of the method of redemption which leads one to say that obedience to the law is contrary to free grace.

### **Not Under the Law**

And this calls us to notice one more point in the position of the questioner. It is his claim on: "You are not under the law, but under grace." (Romans 6:14)

But this is only a part of the text. Taken in its connection it clearly teaches that we are not under the law in the sense of being under its condemnation; from this we are released by grace. But it does not teach that we are free from obligation to the law; to the contrary, it teaches that violation of the law is contrary to grace.

Here are two individuals, one a non-professor, and the other a church member, who claim to be released from the obligation of the law. We can more readily represent the position of the latter (which is the position of our questioner) by the way of question and answer.

Q: What is your position?

A: I am not under the law, but under grace.

Q: Were you always under grace?

A: No; I was by nature a child of wrath, even as others.

Q: When did you come under grace?

A: When I was converted.

Q: Then "under grace" is the condition of a converted man. What was your condition before you were converted, and what is the condition of all the unconverted world?

A: Under the law, of course.

Q: Very well; are they who are under the law condemned by the law if they break it?

A: Certainly; they are under its curse, as sinners.

Q: But if the law has power to curse them-if they are under it - then the law cannot be abolished; it is still in force?

A: No, it cannot be abolished, but I am free from it through faith in Christ.

Q: Are you, then, free from all its claims, so that you are not obliged to keep it?

A: I am not under the law; I am entirely free from it, and it has no authority over me.

Q: But when you were under the law you were under obligation to keep it, and therefore it was sin in you to transgress it. Then we are to conclude that it was sin in you to break the law before you were converted, but it is not sin in you to break the law after you were converted. Is that so?

A: Why, there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus!

Q: We will waive for the present the subject of forgiveness, or justification. But we must conclude from your declarations that what is sinful in an unconverted man, is not sin in a converted man!

This is the doctrine of the old "perfectionists"--a doctrine which we had hoped had disappeared from the face of the earth. According to this doctrine, if a man feels the restraints of the law and wishes to break it, but dare not for fear of condemnation, he has only to be converted and join the church, and he is at once at full liberty to violate the law! This is making "Christ the minister of sin." (Galatians 2:17)

The way of righteousness is not found in such a sham Christianity as this. Look again at these two men. One professes to be a Christian, and the other is an acknowledged sinner. How do we know that he is a sinner? Because he transgresses the law: "Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4) "For by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Romans 3:20)

What, then, is the difference between him and the other man? Oh! this other man is a Christian. But neither does he keep the law; he claims that he is not under its obligation.

So, then, one breaks the law, and he is therefore a sinner; the other breaks the law also, yet he is a Christian! And the only real difference between them is that one professes religion and has his name on the church book! Both are sinners according to every authorized definition of sin.

### **Does Grace Nullify the Law?**

We have here a subject worthy of our earnest consideration. It cannot be too strongly enforced. The idea of the objector is that the law is not now binding; that we are released from its authority by grace. But if that be so, then there is no distinction of classes, for none can be under an abolished law in any sense, and all are under grace. That will answer for Universalists, but Paul says: "For sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace." (Romans 6:14)

Therefore his words will not apply to all the world, but to those only who are not under the dominion of sin. But as long as we transgress the law, so long has sin dominion over us. Sin brings condemnation, no matter when or where it is found. And therefore the apostle's question and answer in the next verses: "What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid. Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6:15-16)

This is a plain declaration that if we sin, or violate the law, after we are justified, or under grace, we again come under the dominion of sin, and the result is death. And the same is shown in the first verses of the chapter. "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" (Romans 6:1)

Some say we shall; they affirm that we deny grace if we keep the law, or abstain from sin. But the apostle says, "God forbid." (Romans 6:1)

And he continues: "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death?" (Romans 6:2-3)

Here is an important lesson. That we are dead is proved by our having been buried--in baptism. Dead to what? to sin. But if we live in it--if we still transgress the law--we are not dead to it. Then we are not under grace, but under the law--under condemnation.

### **Prejudice Against Preaching the Law**

That there is a popular prejudice against preaching the law, we are well aware. And we regret that preachers themselves are strengthening this prejudice by conforming to the popular feeling, and moving in this popular current.

I was once requested to put away exclusiveness and unite with another in holding revival meetings; and was told that I must not talk so much about the law; that people did not want to hear it!

Now I believe in union as much as any do, and am willing to unite on the same terms that they require. They will unite with me if

I will yield my faith and adopt theirs. And, in like manner, I am ready to unite with everybody who will yield the peculiarities of his faith and adopt mine. I am just as liberal as they are. But my inquiry was this:

Q: If I drop the law, what shall I preach?

A: Why, preach repentance; nobody has any prejudice against that.

What an idea, that the minister must conform his preaching to people's prejudices!

Q: But, if somebody asks me of what he shall repent, what reply shall I give?

A: Tell him, of course, to repent of sin.

Q: Just so; and then if he asks me what is sin, what shall I say?

In a hesitating manner he replied:

A: Why, the apostle says, sin is the transgression of the law.

But I thought you were going to set me on a track to get rid of the law, and you have me in the same difficulty still, and yet you tell me I must not preach the law. It thus appears that you think the law is not of sufficient consequence to be preached.

But if the law is of no consequence, the transgression of it is of no consequence; and if sin is of no consequence, repentance is of no consequence; and if repentance is of no consequence, then your

preaching is of no consequence! This is the logical result of depreciating the law. With such preaching I have no desire to unite.

### **Genuine Religion or Fanaticism**

We believe that the great God is displeased with this easy style of religion which ignores His law which He has so highly honored. It is made void by preachers and by people. Either in whole or in part it is set aside boldly, publicly. And yet the Lord has shown that: "He who offends in one point is guilty of all," (James 2:10) for the law is a unit; if we break one commandment we are law-breakers, doers of iniquity. Men will even profess "holiness," entire freedom from sin, and yet transgress the law continually!

- What definition of sin will they give us?
- By what rule shall we be made to believe that God approves their course?
- How shall we determined that their religion is genuine, and not rank fanaticism?

We have a message, which says: "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." (Revelation 14:12)

Paul says that we do not make void the law through faith. "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." (Romans 3:31)

The law and faith are united in true moral and Christian character. And before our High Priest closes His work, there must be a reform; the commandments of God must be honored, and kept,

even as the faith of Jesus.--Signs of the Times, August 21, 1884--A sermon delivered in the tent at Oakland, Cal., August 5, 1884.

## Chapter 8

### **Righteousness and Grace**

There is no text that is more frequently called into service by those who teach the abolition of God's law than: "For you are not under the law, but under grace." (Romans 6:14)

We shall endeavor to set forth the exact meaning of the expression, letting the Bible be its own expositor.

#### Statements About the Law

Before entering upon the study of a disputed text it is always well, if possible, to have some definite statements concerning the point in question. Fortunately, on the subject of the law, the Bible is not lacking in explicit statements. We will quote a few in addition to those previously noticed in these articles. Christ said: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." (Matthew 5:17-18)

But all has not yet been fulfilled. The Lord, through Isaiah, said: "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth." (Isaiah 65:17)

This prophecy has not yet been accomplished, therefore, according to our Saviour's words, the law has not yet passed away. And to show still more plainly the immutable nature of that law, He said: "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." (Luke 16:17)

The words of Christ recorded in Matthew 7:21 bear directly on the text under consideration. It is claimed that Romans 6:14 teaches that Christians are not required to keep the law. But Christ said: "Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in Heaven." (Matthew 7:21)

This covers all who will enter Heaven, of whatever class or nation they may be. Calling on the name of the Lord is not sufficient; only those will enter Heaven who have done the will of God. Then certainly the law is binding on Christians.

### **The Law is God's Righteousness**

Again; as we have already seen, the law is God's righteousness: "My tongue shall speak of your word; for all your commandments are righteousness. ... Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and your law is the truth." (Psalm 119:172,142)

Here we have the two facts stated, that the law is righteousness, and that it is everlasting. In Isaiah the Lord says: "Hearken unto me, you that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law." (Isaiah 51:7)

This again shows that the law of God is righteousness; and the preceding verse says: "My righteousness shall not be abolished." (Isaiah 51:7)

Of course not; who can suppose for a moment that God would abolish righteousness? No one would charge Him with doing such a thing, yet that is just what He would be doing if He should abolish His law.

## **Those Under Grace Keep the Law**

Now we are prepared to consider again, "You are not under the law, but under grace." (Romans 6:14)

Who are they that are not under the law? Those who are under grace. Now Paul says, "By grace are you saved." (Ephesians 2:5)

So then, those, and those only, who are under grace will be saved in the kingdom of God. But we have already seen from our Saviour's words in Matthew 7:21, that only those are saved who do the will, or law, of God. Then it necessarily follows that they who are under grace are the very ones who keep God's law; and therefore the apostle does not mean that we are not obliged to keep the law, when he says we are not under it but under grace.

If we examine the context, we shall find this conclusion confirmed. Going back to the previous chapter, we find the statement that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." (Romans 5:20)

The grace of God was extensive enough to cover all sin. The apostle then continues: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" (Romans 6:1)

The idea is, "Since God's grace is extended to all, and is exhibited the most clearly where sin is greatest, shall we continue in sin, in order that God may have an opportunity to manifest His grace toward us?" "God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:2)

To sin simply in order that God might have a chance to pardon, would be to tempt Him. If such a course were pursued toward an earthly ruler, no one would expect to see a pardon granted. We have learned, then, that those to whom God manifests His grace must not sin. And what is sin? "Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4)

So the subjects of grace must not transgress the law. In verses 3-5 Paul introduces the subject of baptism, and says that we were baptized into Christ--planted in the likeness of his death. "We are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:4)

This agrees exactly with what we read in 2 Corinthians 5:17, that if any man be in Christ he is a new creature. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. ... Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:6,11)

In verses 12 and 13 he exhorts to shun sin and to "yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." (Romans 6:13)

And now we come to the 14th verse: "For sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace." (Romans 6:14)

If people would read the whole of this verse, it would scarcely be possible for them to conclude that "not under the law" means

freedom to break it at pleasure. Let us notice. What is sin? "Sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4)

Now Paul says to certain ones: "Sin shall not have dominion over you." (Romans 6:14)

Why not? Because "you are not under the law, but under grace." (Romans 6:14)

Then we learn that those who are not under the law are not under the dominion of sin; and the apostle's words are framed in such a manner as to force us to conclude that those who are under the law are under the dominion of sin. But sin, as we have learned, is the transgression of the law; therefore those who are under the law are those who sin, or break the law. It seems as though no one could fail to see this clearly. Paul's words, then, in verse 14 amount simply to this: "That those to whom God has manifested His pardoning grace will not yield themselves to break His law."

But this very argument shows that the law is in full force, for if it were not, they could not put themselves under it. The succeeding verses sustain this point: "What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid." (Romans 6:15)

This is simply a repetition of verses 1 and 2.

### **An Object Lesson**

Let us illustrate the apostle's meaning by a familiar occurrence. Here is a man who has stolen a horse. He has been found guilty, and sentenced to a term of years in the penitentiary. He has transgressed

the law, and it has its strong hand upon him; he is under the law. It is the law that shuts him up in prison and holds him there.

But before his sentence has expired, friends intercede for him and the governor pardons him. He is now a free man; the law does not hold him any longer. He is indebted, however, to the governor for his liberty. The governor was under no obligation to interfere in his case, and set him free; that was simply an act of favor, or grace. The man is therefore a subject of the governor's grace.

Now what will he do? You say that if he appreciates the favor that has been shown him, he will lead an orderly, quiet life, and will never again be guilty of violating the law. It was only with the understanding that he would do so that the governor pardoned him.

Suppose, however, he should say, "Now I am a free man; the law held me for a while, but I am not now under it; I am a subject of the governor's special favor. I can now steal horses, or do anything I please."

You say at once that if the authorities heard of his words they would have him watched, and should he be found breaking the law again, he would speedily be remanded to prison.

The governor in granting him special favor did not give him license to break the law. That act of favor simply placed the man once more in the position that he was before he violated the law, except that his obligation to keep it is greatly increased. If before he was set free he had made known his determination to steal again, the governor would never have shown him any favor at all.

Nobody has any difficulty in understanding a case like the above. Well, we may apply the same principles to men in their relation to God. What we want to remember is that all men have transgressed the law, and brought themselves into condemnation and can get no help except from God.

### **A Desire to be Free**

On account of Christ's sacrifice, however, and through His intercession, God is willing to bestow His grace upon all, and thus freely justify them. But He will not save those who are satisfied to be under condemnation; they must have a desire to be free.

And how may it be known who wish to become free, and who are satisfied to remain in bondage to sin? Simply by their actions. If they love sin, and are determined not to cease violating the law, no further evidence is needed. Favor shown to such would be favor thrown away.

But those who groan, as did Paul, to be free from the load of guilt that rests upon them, may with safety be given their liberty, for they will not use it as a license to sin still more.--Signs of the Times, August 28, 1884--Original title: Under the Law.

## Chapter 9

### **Righteousness is Obedience**

Besides Romans 6:14, there are several other instances of the use of the term "under the law." We wish to examine these also, to see if we are justified in our conclusion that the expression is used to denote a state of condemnation.

#### **Servants of Righteousness**

We will first, however, take up Romans 6 where we left off. In the fifteenth verse Paul expresses his astonishment that any one who is a subject of grace should think of again sinning. Then he says: "Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6:16)

Here the idea of service is introduced. If they should yield themselves to sin, they would hereby become its servants. In the two following verses the same idea is expressed. Whereas they were bound by sin, in a bondage that could end only in death, they are now made free, and are the servants of righteousness.

But the servants of righteousness,--those who keep the law,--are free men; for the law itself is a law of liberty, (James 1:25) and David is authority for the statement that those who keep the law walk at liberty. (Psalm 119:45) Christ also says to His disciples: "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32)

## Led by the Spirit into Law-keeping

In the book of Galatians the term "under the law" occurs several times, and in such connection as to leave no doubt as to its meaning. We first turn to the 5th chapter and read: "Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." (Galatians 5:16)

The reader will find the parallel to this in: "But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you." (Romans 8:9)

In the seventeenth verse the enmity between the flesh and the Spirit of God is stated: "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that you cannot do the things that you would." (Romans 8:17)

Compare this with: "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." (Romans 8:7-8)

Also compare this with the account of the struggles of the convicted sinner, as recorded in the latter part of Romans 7. Now read: "But if you be led by the Spirit, you are not under the law." (Galatians 5:18)

We have seen that they alone can please God who are led by the Spirit, and here we learn that such are not under the law. Now what is done by those who walk after (or are led by) the Spirit? Paul says that, "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; That the righteousness (requirement) of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:3-4)

If we fulfill the righteousness of the law, we must conform to its slightest requirement, that is, obey it perfectly. That is what it is to be led by the Spirit; and we have read (Galatians 5:18) that those who are led by the Spirit are not under the law.

It is very clear, then, that spiritually minded persons--those who keep the law--are not under the law; and so we again arrive at the unavoidable conclusion that those who do not keep the law are under it.

### **The Works of the Flesh**

This may be made still more evident. We have already read that the works of the flesh are the direct opposite of the works of the Spirit. And what are the works of the flesh? Paul answers: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murder, drunkenness, revelings, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:19-21)

These things are all forbidden by the law. For proof, see the law itself, and Christ's comments on it in the 5th chapter of Matthew. Now, bearing in mind that doing the works of the flesh make one under the law, we learn that to be under the law one has only to violate it. Again: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance." (Galatians 5:22-23)

That is what is done by those who are led by the Spirit, and Paul says: "Against such, there is no law." (Galatians 5:23)

The law does not condemn a man who does those things, because he is led by the Spirit; but it is against the things enumerated as the works of the flesh. It condemns the doers of such things.

### **The Law Made for Sinners**

In harmony with the above are Paul's words in: "Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for man slayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for men-stealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine." (1 Timothy 1:9-10)

The word "made" in the above text is from keimai, to lay, or place, and the meaning is that the law is not laid or placed against a righteous man, but against the lawless. That is, it does not interfere with the actions of a righteous man, but it comes in direct conflict with a wicked man.

That this is the meaning, is shown by the preceding argument. Paul says in verse 5 that the end, or object, of the commandment is love. In other words, as has been shown in a previous article, the design of the law is that it should be kept. Now a righteous man is one who keeps the law-fulfills its requirements-and therefore the law has no controversy with him. The man who keeps the law, has no fear of it.

But some, the apostle says (verse 6), not having aimed at the law, have turned aside unto vain jangling. Because they have not tried to keep the law, they have got into trouble. He says: "But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully." (1 Timothy 1:8)

Can this mean that a man's acts will have any effect on the law to make it either better or worse than it was when it was given? Is the law a good law when it is obeyed, and a bad law when it is disobeyed? By no means. Whatever a man may do, the law remains the same,--holy, and just, and good.

If a man use it lawfully, that is, if he obeys the law (for that is the only way a law can be used lawfully), it is good to him; it then finds no fault with him. But if a man does not use it lawfully, if he does things that are unlawful, the law is not good to him; it is against him at once. If the law lies against a wicked man, how very natural to speak of man as under it.

Dr. Adam Clarke, speaking of the moral law in his comments on 1 Timothy 1:9, says: "It was, therefore, not made for the righteous as a restrainer of crimes, and an inflicter of punishments; for the righteous avoid sin, and by living to the glory of God, expose not themselves to its censure. This seems to be the mind of the apostle; he does not say that the law was not Made for a righteous man; but ou keitai, it does not Lie against a righteous man, because he does not transgress it. But it lies against the wicked, for such, as the apostle mentions, have broken it, and grievously too, and are condemned by it. The word keitai, lies, refers to the custom of writing laws on boards, and hanging them up in public places within reach of every man, that they might be read by all; thus all would see against whom the law lay."

In our next chapter we shall consider a passage that brings out more clearly than anything yet noticed the meaning of the term "under the law."--Signs of the Times, September 4, 1884--Original title: Under the Law (Continued.)

## Chapter 10

### **The Role of the Law**

#### **Summary**

Before directly considering the remaining passages containing the expression "under the law," we wish briefly to recapitulate some points already canvassed, simply stating propositions, and referring to the texts which establish them.

#### **Man's Duty to Keep the Law**

The keeping of the law of God is the whole duty of man. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." (Ecclesiastes 12:13)

The fact that the word "man" is unqualified, shows that no particular man or race of men is referred to, but that the wise man intended to include the whole human race. It is the duty of all men to love God and their fellowmen.

#### **Obedient Will Be Justified**

Those who obey the law will stand justified before God. "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." (Romans 2:13)

This proposition follows as a natural consequence of the first; for a just God will never condemn a man who does his whole duty. Nothing more than that can possibly be required of anybody.

## **None Are Obedient**

But no man has done his whole duty, for none have kept the law perfectly. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. ... What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one. ... What things soever the law says, it says to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." (Romans 3:23,9-12,19)

## **None Justified by Their Works**

"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." (Romans 3:20)

This is the direct consequence of the fact stated in verse 19. A good law will never justify evil-doers. And in these two verses we again have proof that the law was designed for the whole human family, and not for any particular class; for the law could not condemn those for whom it was not designed. That is to say, a law cannot condemn those who are not within its jurisdiction. But the law does condemn the whole world; therefore all the world are under its jurisdiction.

## **All Under Condemnation**

"Condemnation" [is] "the judicial act of declaring guilty and dooming to punishment." (Webster)

It is the direct opposite of "justification,": "Justification" [is] "a showing to be just or conformable to law, rectitude, or propriety." (Ibid)

Therefore since the law of God declares the whole world to be guilty before God, and will not justify a single individual, it follows that all the world are under the condemnation of the law of God.

## **All Under the Law**

The whole world being found guilty, and being condemned by the law, are said to be "under the law." (Romans 3:19)

Therefore "under the law" is a synonym for "condemned by the law."

## **Justified by Faith Alone**

Since all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, we are "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Romans 3:24)

We are justified by faith alone, "without the deeds of the law," (Romans 3:28) for no amount of good deeds will atone for one sin. If a man had stolen a horse, abstaining from horse-stealing to all eternity would not in the least clear him from the guilt. If we are

freed from past transgressions, it must be solely by an act of favor on the part of God.

### **Only Believers Are Justified**

This justification belongs only to those who believe in Jesus. "To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believes in Jesus." (Romans 3:26)

It is purely a matter of faith on the part of the sinner, and of favor on the part of God. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: ... Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." (Romans 3:21-22,28)

And therefore to obtain justification from past transgressions, the sinner has only to have sincere faith in Christ. It takes just as long to be justified as it does to have faith in Christ, and no longer.

### **Peace With God**

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1) "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1)

That is, those who are in Christ--those who have faith in Him--are not under the law; they are the subjects of God's special favor.

## **Faith Brings True Obedience**

As a consequence of all the preceding propositions, it follows that all men are under the law until they have faith in Christ; from that moment they are out from under the law, unless they again bring themselves into condemnation by again yielding themselves to sin.

## **Law Ordained to Life**

The law was ordained to life. "And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." (Romans 7:10)

That is, if it had been kept perfectly, which is what was designed, it would have given the obedient one eternal life. "If you will enter into life, keep the commandments." (Matthew 19:17)

## **The Fault Is in Man**

But, "The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)

And since all men have sinned, all men are condemned to death. There is no law in existence by which man in his present condition can secure eternal life. That is the gift of God through Christ. But it is not the fault of the law that it cannot give life. It is just as holy and just and good as it was before. The fault lies in man alone. "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin." (Romans 7:12-14)

We are now prepared to consider a passage of Scripture, portions of which have been quoted perhaps oftener than any other part of the Bible, as proving the abolition of the law, but which is one of the strongest proofs of its perpetuity.

It is found in the 3rd chapter of Galatians. Verses 24, and 25 are supposed to teach that Christians need not keep the law. We shall consider these verses, as we do all others, in the light of the context. We shall have but little more to do than to refer to propositions already established by the Bible. We have not space to give Paul's argument in full from the beginning of the chapter, but will begin with the twenty-first verse.

### **The Law and the Promises**

The apostle speaks in some of the preceding verses of God's promise to Abraham, and, through him, to all the faithful. He says that the inheritance was simply by promise, through faith in Christ, yet the law was also given and designed to be kept. Then he asks, "Is the law then against the promises of God?" (Galatians 3:21)

That is a very pertinent question. It opens the whole subject. Is the law against the promises of God? If we keep the law do we thereby manifest our disbelief of, or contempt for, the promises of God? Do we deny Christ by keeping the law? Paul answers in the same verse: "God forbid; for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." (Galatians 3:21)

The idea is, The law is not against (in conflict with) the promises of God, because we do not expect to gain the inheritance

through the keeping of the law. That this is true is proved by the simple fact that if the law could have given life, righteousness should have come by means of it, and there would have been no need of Christ's sacrifice and of the promises. So the simple fact that promises were given, proves that the law is powerless to give life.

And why is it that there could be no law that would give life? Verse 22 contains the answer: "But the Scripture has concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." (Galatians 3:22)

As we have already shown from the Scriptures, the reason why men cannot be justified and receive eternal life through the law is that "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Galatians 3:22)

### **The Law Leads to Christ**

And now mark well this point: The existence of the law, instead of being against the promises of God, is so much in harmony with them that they would amount to nothing without it. How so? Because:

### **Christ Came to Save Sinners**

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (1 Timothy 1:15)

### **Salvation Only for Believers**

He can save only those who believe. "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned."

(Mark 16:16) "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shalt be saved, and your house." (Acts 16:31) "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." (Romans 3:22)

### **All Are Sinners**

All men are sinners, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) whether they are conscious of it or not; but,

### **The Law Reveals Sin**

No one can know that he is a sinner until he examines the law of God, for: "By the law is the knowledge of sin." (Romans 3:20) and,

### **Conviction of Sin Necessary**

If a man did not find himself to be a sinner, he could not be induced to believe in Christ for the remission of sins; for if it is true that: "They that are whole need not a physician," (Luke 5:31) it is equally true that they that think they are whole will not apply to a physician, no matter how sorely they may stand in need of one; therefore,

### **The Law Needed for Conviction**

It is absolutely necessary that the law be in the world, in order to lead men to lay hold on the promises.

The law of itself could save no one; the promises would be of no benefit to men without the law to show them their need of those promises.

The law, by showing all men to be sinners, makes it possible for the promises to be extended to all the world. Whoever, therefore, claims that he is no sinner, puts himself outside the promises of God.

And now, as we quote the text again, we shall have a better understanding of it: "But the Scripture has concluded all under sin, that the promise of faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed." (Galatians 3:22-23)

Right here read once more the propositions at the beginning of this article, and the texts therein cited. In what condition does God's great "sin detective,"--the law,--show men to be? Guilty before God,--condemned to death. How can they be freed from this condition? By faith in Christ. There is no other way by which men can get free from condemnation. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

Then how long must they remain in this state of condemnation? Until they can grasp the great truth of salvation through Christ alone, and exercise faith in Him. They are "shut up" to this one way of escape.

## A Forcible Figure

We wish to call the reader's attention to the forcible figure here introduced. Mr. A has killed a man. In so doing he has broken the law of the State. It may have been his first and only offense; but no matter, he is a law-breaker. And now he is seized by the officers of the law, and taken into court, where, the facts being set forth, the law shows him to be guilty, and he is condemned to death.

But sentence will not be executed for several weeks, and what is done with Mr. A in the meantime? He is shut up in prison, possibly with chains on his limbs. Now what is it that holds him there? It is the law of the State. It was the law that seized him, condemned him, and shut him up in jail. The sheriff and the judge were merely the agents of the law. He is then indeed "under the law."

And now Mr. A begins to realize his impending doom, and longs for freedom. How can he get it? The walls of his cell are impenetrable, the doors are securely bolted, and he is chained to the floor. It is very clear that he cannot help himself. Who can? There is only one man, and that is the governor. To him he turns as his only hope.

He cannot plead the many good deeds that he may have done, for they do not destroy the fact that he has sinned. It was past transgression that brought him into his present condition. He can only promise obedience for the future, and beg for mercy. Through the mediation of powerful friends, and the clemency of the governor, he at last obtains his freedom.

Now how is it in the case of the transgressor against God's law? There is no hope of escaping, for the law is omnipresent, and as

soon as the sin is committed it seizes the unfortunate one. "The wages of sin is death," (Romans 6:23) and since he is clearly a sinner, he is condemned already. Hence he is immediately "shut up." He cannot bribe the jailer, and he has nothing to expect but death.

He casts about for a way to escape from his bondage, but every scheme which he devises fails. One hope alone appears, and that is Christ. He has promised to rescue all who believe in Him, and the unhappy sinner, believing that Christ is able "to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him," (Hebrews 7:25) lays hold on the hope thus held out, and becomes a free man.

### **All the World Under Condemnation**

Now Paul says that before faith came we were all "under the law, shut up," (Galatians 3:23) in just the condition above described. It is not merely the Jews, not a certain few, who are shut up under condemnation of the law, but all men in all ages of the world's history have been in just that condition. As soon as anyone exercised faith in Christ, he obtained his freedom.

The verses that we first referred to, the 19th and 25th, are thus explained; but few more words are needed. As a consequence of the previous statements, the apostle concludes: "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." (Galatians 3:24)

In verses 21-22, the apostle anticipates this verse by showing how absolutely necessary the law is to the carrying out of the promises of God through Christ. See the comments on those verses in the preceding part of this chapter.

## **The Role of the Schoolmaster**

Notice that the law does not point to Christ--that office is intrusted to something else--but it brings us, yea, drives and forces us to Him as our only hope. And this is just what was done by the individual who is called in our version a "schoolmaster." The proper term would be "pedagogue," a word applied anciently not to one who taught children, but to one who accompanied them to the place where they might be taught, and beat them if they ran away.

Of course the law does not bring those who do not wish relief; but when sinners want liberty, and begin to struggle for it, the law allows them no avenue of escape except Christ, who is "the end of the law." (Romans 10:4)

It stands as an impossible wall, in whatever way the sinner may turn for escape, until he sees Christ, the Door across whose portals the law throws no bar. "But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." (Galatians 3:25)

The moment that we implicitly believe that Christ loves us individually, with a love that is able to save us, we are free. The chains that bind us to the body of death are severed, and "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:1)

We are now new creatures in Christ, and must henceforth "walk in newness of life," (Romans 6:4) no longer "under the law, but under grace." (Romans 6:14)

We would like to carry these thoughts still further, but this chapter is already too long. In our next we shall finish our

consideration of the term "under the law," and will then pass to some other phases of the law question.--Signs of the Times, September 11, 1884--Original title: Under the Law (Continued.)

## Chapter 11

### **The Law and Christ**

There is yet one more instance of the use of this term, and though the text is probably not so often quoted in opposition to the law of God as are the others, we will examine it, because it adds strength to the position that the law is unchangeable.

#### **The Bondage of Sin**

In the 4th chapter of Galatians Paul continues the argument of chapter 3. He starts out with the statement that the heir, so long as he is a child, must be under tutors and governors, even though he be lord of all. He cannot come into possession of his inheritance until he is of age. "Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world." (Galatians 4:3)

In this figure the child is used to represent the sinner before he accepts Christ. Until that time, as has been repeatedly shown from the Bible, every man is in bondage, in prison; we are at liberty only when we are in Christ. That the bondage here referred to is indeed the bondage of sin, may be seen by an examination of verses 8 and 9: "Howbeit then, when you knew not God, you did service unto them which by nature are no gods." (Galatians 4:8)

This language shows to whom Paul was writing. The members of the Galatian churches had been heathen, doing service to "them which by nature are no gods," and not to the God who created all things; that is, before they knew the true God they worshiped idols.

And Paul's language to them will apply equally well to us, for, whether a man be brought up in a Christian or a heathen land, so long as he does not know God, he is virtually a heathen; he may not be a worshiper of images of wood or stone, but he has other gods before the one, true God. And no man who is not in Christ can know God, for Christ says: "No man comes unto the Father but by me." (John 14:6)

So then, although Paul addressed his words directly to those who had been idolaters in the commonly accepted sense of the word, they apply to all. The apostle continues: "But now, after that you have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn you again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto you desire again to be in bondage?" (Galatians 4:9)

To what were they once in bondage? To sin, for they had been practicing idolatry, with its accompanying vices, in direct violation of God's law. Then sin, in its various forms, constitutes the "elements" under which they had been in bondage. It is justly termed "the elements of the world," because it is of the earth, and not of Heaven.

It is the same term which Paul uses when, in writing to the Colossians, he warns them not to be spoiled by "philosophy and vain deceit, [by] the tradition of men, [by] the rudiments of the world." (Colossians 2:8)

They are weak in that they can give no liberty or peace even though they promise it; (2 Peter 2:19) and the term "beggarly," fitly expresses the despicable nature of sin.

We find, then, the same statement in Galatians 4:3 that is made in Romans 3:19; Galatians 3:22, etc., namely that all the world are by nature in the bondage of sin, "under the law." What next?

### **Christ Made Under the Law**

"But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Galatians 4:4-5)

Whom did Christ come to redeem? "Them that were under the law." (Galatians 4:5)

Compare this with: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." (1 Timothy 1:15)

And again this: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10)

There should be no doubt as to the meaning of the term, "under the law." The plan of salvation has no reference to any but to those who were "lost," who were "sinners," or, in other words, "under the law." The name "Jesus" was given to Christ before His birth, because, the angel said, "He shall save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21)

He saves us from nothing but sin and its penalty. This point will be made still more clear when we consider the position Christ had to assume in order to accomplish our salvation from sin. The text under

consideration says that He was: "Made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." (Galatians 4:4)

That is, He had to put himself in the exact condition of those whom he would save. In Hebrews 2 we read of Christ: "For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham." (Hebrews 2:16)

The meaning is, as indicated by the marginal reading, that he came not to redeem angels but men. "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." (Hebrews 2:17)

He was made "in all things" like those whom he came to redeem. Someone may exclaim, "What! do you think that Christ was a sinner?"

By no means. "[He] was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15)

### **The Penalty of the Law**

He was absolutely good, the embodiment of goodness, yet he was counted as a sinner. In no other way could he be made "in all things" like His brethren, for they were sinners. In proof of this we quote: "For He [God] has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

As a parallel to this read: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him [Christ] the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:6)

He bore the sins of the world as though they were His own. If it were not so, He would not have died; for: "The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)

None can die except those in whom sin is found; our sins were laid on Christ, and accounted as His; and so, although personally "He knew no sin," He was made to suffer the penalty of the law as a transgressor. And herein is the unspeakable love of Christ, that the innocent should assume the crimes of the guilty, and die in his stead. It was because Christ had taken upon himself. "The form of a servant," (Philippians 2:7) that He became obedient unto death. Some have thought it nothing less than blasphemy to speak of Christ, the sinless one, as being made a sinner, and suffering the penalty for sin, but it is from this very thing that He derives His highest glory. We simply state the fact as we find it in the Bible. This is the unfathomable mystery which angels desire to look into, (1 Peter 1:12) and which will to all eternity call forth the love and adoration of the redeemed hosts.

We think a careful reading of the above, together with many Scripture texts for which we have not space, will convince all that to say that one is "under the law" is equivalent to saying that he is subject to its penalty as a sinner.

Galatians 4:4-5, then, teaches the simple fact that in order to save those who, on account of having violated the law, were under the condemnation of death, Christ put himself in their place and suffered the penalty of the law.

And what is the condition of those who are thus redeemed from under the law? They "receive the adoption of sons;" (Galatians 4:5) and in harmony with this, Paul says in the 8th of Romans that those who "walk not after the flesh," (Romans 8:4) but "are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God." (Romans 8:14)

### **An Erroneous Theory**

Before leaving this text, we wish to apply it to the theory that the law of God was given solely to Jews, and that "under the law" means subject to the law; the theory that would make the law binding upon the Jews alone.

If this theory be true, what is the result? Since Christ came to redeem only those who were under the law, it would follow that all the Jews will be redeemed, and no others. This would be making salvation not only "of the Jews," but for the Jews. This conclusion cannot be evaded.

But Christ came to save the "lost," (Matthew 18:11) those who were "under the law." (Galatians 4:5) Now none can be under the law, that is, transgressors of the law, but those to whom the law was given; and therefore if the law was given for none but the Jews, then none but the Jews will be saved. But this is not true, because "He [Christ] died for all." (2 Corinthians 5:15)

A man should think at least twice before he takes a position that not only contradicts the Bible but shuts him out from an interest in the plan of salvation. Christ died for those who were under the law; and that all men were under the law, is shown by the fact that

"whosoever will," (Revelation 22:17) may avail himself of the provisions of the gospel.

## **The Curse of the Law**

At the risk of making this article too long, we notice one more passage, which should be considered in this connection. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, cursed be every one that hangs on a tree." (Galatians 3:13)

This is an exact parallel to Galatians 4:4-5. Christ was made a curse, in order to redeem us from the curse. Now what was the curse which fell upon Christ? It was death, as the remainder of the verse shows: "For it is written, cursed is every one that hangs on a tree." (Galatians 3:13) "The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)

Death is the curse which the law pronounces upon every transgressor; but from this Christ has delivered us (if we believe on Him), by voluntarily becoming our substitute. Take this verse in connection with the preceding: "And the law is not of faith; but the man that does them shall live in them." (Galatians 3:12)

The man that keeps the commandments of God shall live. (See Leviticus 18:5) But no man has kept them; consequently the curse has fallen upon all. "Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Romans 5:12)

From this curse we can be redeemed only by Christ. And the person thus redeemed from the curse must keep the law, or else he will again bring himself under the curse; for those only have life who keep the law.

In each of these texts that we have considered we are brought to the same point, namely, that Christ is our only hope of escape from the penalty of universal and immutable law. And knowing with what an inexorable grasp the law holds its victims, we can glory in the fact that: "Christ ... is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Corinthians 1:30)--Signs of the Times, September 18, 1884--Original title: Under the Law (Concluded.)

## Chapter 12

### **What the Gospel Teaches**

"And He said unto them, Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15-16)

These words were spoken by our Saviour after His resurrection, and shortly before His ascension. They are perfectly in harmony with His words recorded in: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations." (Matthew 24:14)

### **Gospel Commission to End of World**

There is no mistaking the extent of territory in which the gospel must be preached--nothing less than the whole world. And how long must it be preached? Read the rest of the verse: "And then shall the end come." (Matthew 24:14)

Then the gospel is to be preached until the end. The end here referred to is the same that is mentioned in verse 3: "The end of the world." (Matthew 24:3)

That this "end of the world" is in connection with the coming of the Lord, is shown by the words of the disciples in the verse last mentioned, and by the words of Christ in: "As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be

wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who has ears to hear, let him hear." (Matthew 13:40-43) "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (Matthew 24:30-31)

The fact that by divine command the gospel is to be preached in all the world until the coming of the Lord and the end of the world, proves conclusively that until the Lord comes, a necessity for its being preached will exist in all the world. This needs no further argument, for it is nowhere disputed. We will therefore turn our attention to a consideration of what the gospel is, and what creates the necessity for its being so long and so extensively preached.

### **What is the Gospel?**

The word "gospel" means, literally, "a good message;" Webster's first definition is "glad tidings." According to its derivation, it might be applied to any good news; but in the Bible it is used with exclusive reference to one thing; what that thing is, we may easily learn from the Bible itself. In Luke 2 we find these words, addressed by the angel of the Lord to the shepherds in the field: "Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings [a gospel] of great joy, which shall be to all people." (Luke 2:10)

The next verse tells what this gospel is: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:11)

Then the gospel which is to be preached to all people is the announcement of a Saviour. It is from this that Webster derives his specific definition of the gospel, as, "especially, the good news concerning Christ and His salvation."

But the simple heralding of Christ, without stating the nature and object of His work, would not be the preaching of the gospel. The "good news" consists in the fact that Christ the Lord is a Saviour. That Christ comes as a Saviour, necessarily implies that there are people to be saved, and something from which they must be saved. Turning to Matthew, we read the angel's declaration before the birth of Christ: "And you shall call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21)

Paul says, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (1 Timothy 1:15)

So it is manifest that the preaching of the gospel consists in the announcement that Christ will save people from sin.

### **Knowledge and Conviction of Sin**

But while the gospel is the good news that Christ brings salvation from sin, it is evident that that simple announcement would not suffice to produce the desired results, viz., that men should believe and be baptized. For there are millions of people who virtually say that they are "rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," (Revelation 3:17) not knowing that they are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." (Revelation 3:17)

No matter how destitute a man may be, it would be of no use to offer him money if he were ignorant of his necessities, and perfectly satisfied with his condition. So no man can feel any interest in the gospel as a means of salvation from sin, unless he:

1. Knows what sin is;
2. Is convinced that he is a sinner; and
3. Understands the nature and results of sin, so as to realize that it is something to be shunned.

Therefore the gospel, with its announcement of salvation from sin, must also make known what sin is. This it does, as we shall see. John, the evangelist, so called because it is he who more than anyone else dwells on the love of God and Christ in the salvation of man, defines sin. He says: "Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4)

In harmony with this, Paul says that: "Where no law is, there is no transgression." (Romans 4:15)

And, "Sin is not imputed when there is no law." (Romans 5:12)

Volumes could not define sin more clearly than do these three texts. We have found out then, that:

1. "Gospel" means good news;
2. The gospel of the Bible is the good news of a Saviour--Christ the Lord; (Luke 2:10-11)

3. Jesus saves from sin; (Matthew 1:21; 1 Timothy 1:15) and

4. "Sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4)

So that, in short, the gospel announces the way by which man may be saved from the transgression of the law, and from the consequences of such transgression. Sin is the disease; the gospel is the remedy. And since the gospel is to be preached in all the world, until the coming of the Lord, it follows that "all the world," yea, "every creature," has sinned. This we read: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

It must also be true that sin will be in the world till the Lord comes. And this we verify by a comparison of: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually;" (Genesis 6:5) and: "But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly;" (Genesis 13:13) with: "And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." (Luke 17:26-30)

But since sin is the transgression of the law, it also necessarily follows that "the law" will be in full force in all the world until the coming of the Lord. In other words, sin is the disease, and it cannot

exist where there is no law. "Because the law works wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression." (Romans 4:15)

The disease, sin, does exist in "every creature" in "all the world;" for the remedy, the gospel, is to be thus extensively made known: "And He said unto them, Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15)

The great Physician would not send the remedy where it is not needed. "They that be whole need not a physician; but they that are sick." (Matthew 9:12)

And therefore the law, by which alone "is the knowledge of sin" "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20)--the disease--is binding upon "every creature" "in all the world." Now since "The wages of sin [the transgression of the law] is death," (Romans 6:23) it is important that all men know just what that law is, the transgression of which brings death, and just what is its nature and requirements. These points will therefore next claim our attention.--Signs of the Times, January 7, 1886.

## Chapter 13

### **The Law and the Gospel Coextensive**

In Nehemiah 9 we find the following words in the Levites' confession to God: "You came down also upon Mount Sinai; and spoke with them from heaven, and gave them right judgments and true laws, good statutes and commandments." (Nehemiah 9:13)

Here we have reference made to true laws and good statutes. A good and true law would in every case condemn sin; therefore the law here referred to is of the same character as that which, being transgressed, makes it necessary for the gospel to be preached. This law was given upon Mount Sinai; so we examine the law there given to see if it meets the requirements.

In the 19th of Exodus we have a description of the preparation of the people to hear the law from Sinai. We read: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes, And be ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. ... And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly." (Exodus 19:10-11,16-18)

This was the condition of Mount Sinai when from it God spoke "true laws, good statutes and commandments." (Nehemiah 9:13)

Chapter 20, verses 3 to 17, contains the words which God spoke at that time. We quote them in full:

### **One**

"You shall have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20:3)

### **Two**

"You shall not make unto you any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: You shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments." (Exodus 20:4-6)

### **Three**

"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that takes His name in vain." (Exodus 20:7)

### **Four**

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall you labor, and do all your work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God: in it you shall not do any work, you, nor your

son, nor your daughter, your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger that is within your gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." (Exodus 20:8-113)

## **Five**

"Honor your father and your mother: that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God gives you." (Exodus 20:12)

## **Six**

"You shall not kill." (Exodus 20:13)

## **Seven**

"You shall not commit adultery." (Exodus 20:14)

## **Eight**

"You shall not steal." (Exodus 20:15)

## **Nine**

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." (Exodus 20:16)

## **Ten**

"You shall not covet your neighbors house, you shall not covet your neighbors wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor

his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is your neighbors." (Exodus 20:17)

These are the words which the Lord spoke in the hearing of all the people, from the midst of the fire and smoke upon Mount Sinai. Soon afterward He spoke to Moses, as follows: "Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give you tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that you may teach them." (Exodus 24:12)

Accordingly, we find by reading the remaining verses of the chapter, that Moses went up into the mount, and remained there with God forty days and forty nights. While he was there, the Lord gave him minute directions concerning the building of the sanctuary. Then we read: "And He gave unto Moses, when He had made an end of communing with him upon Mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God." (Exodus 31:18) "And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand; the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables." (Exodus 32:15-16)

Then we are told how Moses, as he drew near the camp, saw the golden calf, and the people dancing around it, "and he cast the tables out of his hands, and broke them beneath [at the foot of] the mount." (Exodus 32:19)

But this was not the end of the matter; for very soon we read thus: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which you broke." (Exodus 34:1)

We will now read the words of Moses, as he rehearses the whole matter to the Israelites, just before his death. We begin with the point last quoted: "At that time the Lord said unto me, Hew two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto me into the mount, and make you an ark of wood. And I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which you broke, and you shall put them in the ark. And I made an ark of shittim wood, and hewed two tables of stone like unto the first, and went up into the mount, having the two tables in my hand. And He wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the Lord spoke unto you in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, in the day of the assembly; and the Lord gave them unto me. And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the Lord commanded me." (Deuteronomy 10:1-5)

One more quotation on this point. In the course of Moses' final address to the people, in which he rehearsed all their history in the wilderness, he repeated the substance of the ten commandments, and at the close he said: "These words the Lord spoke unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and He added no more. And He wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me." (Deuteronomy 5:22)

The gist of these texts of Scripture may be expressed as follows: The good and true laws which were spoken upon Sinai (Nehemiah 9:13) were the ten commandments, found in Exodus 20:3-17; these ten commandments were written by God himself on two tables of stone; and there was nothing spoken to the people by the Lord, except that which was placed upon the tables of stone.

(Deuteronomy 5:22) Therefore the words found in Exodus 20:3-17, and no others, form the ten commandments, the perfect law of God.

But what has this to do with the gospel? Just this: We found that the gospel is the remedy for sin, which is the transgression of the law; and that the law must be in force as long and as extensively as the gospel is preached. We were concerned to know what law it is the transgression of, which makes it necessary for the gospel to be preached, and we have now found it. One more step completes the identification. It is this. Paul says: "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not know sin, but by the law; for I had not know lust, except the law had said, You shall not covet." (Romans 7:7)

The law here referred to must be the same law that is referred to in 1 John 3:4, because it is one that points out sin; it does this because it is "holy, and just, and good." (Romans 7:12)

Therefore it is the law to which the gospel relates. And what law is it? It is the law which condemns unlawful desire by saying, "You shall not covet." (Romans 7:7)

But this is the last one of the ten commandments. Therefore we have proved to a demonstration that the ten commandments of in Exodus 20:3-17,--those commandments which were spoken by Jehovah, in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, of the smoke, and of the thick darkness, and which were written on two tables of stone and deposited in the ark,--form the law which points out sin.

They are the law which has been universally trodden underfoot, making it necessary that the gospel should be preached in all the world, to every creature; and, therefore, it is as plain as the Scripture

can make it, that they are still binding upon every creature in every part of the world.

If it were otherwise, there would be no sin, and, consequently, no need of the gospel. Whoever, therefore, says that he is not under the jurisdiction of those ten commandments, virtually says that he has no sin; and whoever says that he has no sin, places himself outside of the gospel plan; for: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," (1 Timothy 1:15) and no others. His salvation has reference only to those who have transgressed the law of God, the ten commandments.

The above argument is, we think, so conclusive as to make it almost unnecessary to notice the assumption that the gospel of Christ is that which points out sin. If this were true, we should have Christ introducing the gospel into the world in order to save men from the rejection of it! That is, the remedy for the disease creates the disease, the remedy being introduced to cure that which without it would never have existed! Such an absurdity is too puerile to be entertained for a moment.

The gospel must relate to something outside of and prior to itself. Since the gospel saves from sin, it is evident that sin existed before the gospel, and that it continues to exist so long as the gospel exists; and since sin is the transgression of the law, it is just as evident that the law existed before there was sin, and, consequently, before there was any gospel, or any need of it, and that it exists as long, at least, as the gospel exists.

The testimony of men can never add to the force of the Bible; but to show that the view taken here is not a peculiar one among Christians, we quote from the two men, both eminent for scholarship

and piety: "The ordinary method of God is to convict sinners by the law, and that only. The gospel is not the means by which God has ordained, or which our Lord himself used, for this end. We have no authority in Scripture for applying it thus, nor any ground to think it will prove effectual. Nor have we any more ground to expect this from the nature of the thing. "They that are whole," as our Lord himself observed, "need not a physician, but they that are sick." It is absurd, therefore, to offer a physician to them that are whole, or that at least imagine themselves so to be. You are first to convince them that they are sick; otherwise they will not thank you for your labor. It is equally absurd to offer Christ to those whose heart is whole, having never yet been broken. It is, in the proper sense, casting pearls before swine. Doubtless they will trample them underfoot; and it is no more than you have reason to expect, if they also turn again and rend you."--Wesley's Works, Vol. 1, Sermon 85.

"The law of God, and its great and solemn injunctions, should be distinctly set forth. Our congregations should be gathered as a round the base of Mount Sinai, while from its summit is heard the voice of God in those commandments which from its summit are heard the voice of God in those commandments which are unalterable and the eternal in their character. The effect of these utterances will be, that conscience will be awakened, and hearts will tremble. Some will say, with Moses, "I do exceedingly fear and quake," when they behold the majesty of law, the purity of God, and their own impurity. Others may be repelled, and will say, "Let not God speak to us anymore." Some will object to the sternness of the law, and will say, "Prophecy smooth things;" but still that law must be preached. It brings the sinner to recognition of his sins in having transgressed God's holy law, and shows him the fearfulness of the doom which is impending over him.

The law must be followed by the gospel; the awakened sinner must be pointed to the Saviour, that he may feel that, deep as are the stains of his transgressions, the blood of Christ can wash them all away. There are many preachers who love to dwell on the gospel alone. They talk sweetly and beautifully of the fatherhood of God. This is well. It is more than well. It is essential. But sometimes they go beyond this, and declaim against the preaching of the law--intimate that it belongs to a past age, a less civilized society; that men can best be moved by love alone, and they rely wholly on its attractive power. Such a gospel may rear a beautiful structure, but its foundation is in the sand. No true edifice can be raised without its foundations of being dug deep by repentance toward God, and then shall the rock be reached, and the building shall be strong enough through faith in Jesus Christ. The law without gospel is dark and hopeless; the gospel without law is inefficient and powerless. The one leads to servitude, the other to antinomianism. The two combined to produce "charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."--Bishop Simpson in Lectures on Preaching, pp. 188, 189.

The obligations which rests upon all mankind to keep the law of God, will be considered more at length in future articles.--Signs of the Times, January 14, 1886.

## Chapter 14

### **Nature of the Law**

Having found that the law must be in force wherever the gospel is preached, it is very proper that we learn something in regard to its nature.

#### **Righteousness is Obedience**

What we have already learned would teach us that it is just the opposite of sin, for: "Sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4)

But we will see what the Bible has to say further on this subject. We first quote the words of the Psalmist: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. ... More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is your servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward." (Psalm 19:7-8,10-11)

This comprises all that may be said of the law; for nothing can be more than perfect. Nothing can be added to that which is perfect, neither can anything be taken away, without leaving it imperfect. Therefore the testimony of David teaches us that when God spoke His law it was in just the form that He wanted it, and that He never designed that any change should be made in it.

In perfect accord with the above testimony, the apostle Paul says: "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, and just, and good." (Romans 7:12)

This being so, we would naturally expect that the keeping of the commandments would make the keeper thereof perfect and holy. This we find is the case. Moses said to the Israelites: "And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He has commanded us." (Deuteronomy 6:25)

Observe how perfectly this agrees with what we find in the New Testament. Moses said that to keep the law is righteousness. Of course the opposite of righteousness is unrighteousness, and John tells us that: "All unrighteousness is sin." (1 John 5:17)

Then we must conclude that sin is just the opposite of obedience to the law; and that brings us to the original definition: "Sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4)

Unrighteousness means any deviation from that which is right; and since all unrighteousness is sin, we know that the slightest deviation from right is a transgression of the law. To show that this reasoning has solid scriptural foundation, we quote: "I have seen an end of all perfection; but your commandment is exceeding broad." (Psalm 119:96)

And to show how broad and far-reaching it is, we have only to read: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12)

Thus we learn that the law is so broad that it takes cognizance of the very thoughts of the heart, and not alone the outward acts. As illustrating this, we have our Saviour's words in the Sermon on the Mount: "You have heard that it was said by them of old time, You shall not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, You fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." (Matthew 5:21-22)

Again we quote verses 27 and 28 of the same chapter: "You have heard that it was said by them of old time, You shall not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Matthew 5:27-28)

Other instances might be given; but these are sufficient to show the breadth of the commandments of God.

- The sixth commandment may be broken by a single angry thought that may never be expressed; and
- The seventh may be as effectually broken by a single wrong desire as by the overt act.

Surely the law of God is broad; and since in all its prohibitions and requirements it is perfect, we can readily and naturally accept the words of the wise man, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." (Ecclesiastes 12:13)

This statement, we repeat, is a natural consequence of what has preceded; for the keeping of a perfect law will make a man perfect, and nothing more than perfection can be required. There is no sin conceivable that is not forbidden by the ten commandments, and no righteous act or thought that is not commended and enjoined by them.

Of course it would be impossible to go through the whole list of possible thoughts and deeds, in order to demonstrate this; but it will be found true in every case. Things may be mentioned which at first sight may seem to many persons to be outside of the ten commandments, but a little careful thought will show that nothing can be done that is beyond or outside of the perfect law of God. We have not the slightest fear of being brought to confusion because of this statement. We repeat, Nothing more than the duties enjoined in the ten commandments can be required of any man.

### **Exceeding the Righteousness of Man**

In this connection it will be well to notice Matthew 5:20, which some may think opposed to the statement last made, but which strongly supports it. We quote: "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven." (Matthew 5:20)

This text would be opposed to the statement made in the preceding paragraph if it could be shown that the scribes and Pharisees kept the law perfectly, but not otherwise. Indeed, this verse could not teach that it is a man's duty to do more than the ten commandments, without contradicting the 19th verse, which says

that: "Whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven." (Matthew 5:19)

It must be, then, that the scribes and Pharisees, while professing to keep the commandments, did not do all that the law requires. This we shall find was the case, if we read: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. You blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees hypocrites! for you are like unto whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." (Matthew 23:25-28)

The scribes and Pharisees pretended to keep the law, and so far as their outward acts were concerned, they did keep it; but Christ, who "knew what was in man," (John 2:25) saw that in their hearts they despised the law, and that they grievously transgressed it, but yet in such a way that men could not know their wickedness. Such obedience, Christ taught, will not suffice to gain an entrance into Heaven. Unless your obedience to the law is more thorough than that, you can in no case enter the kingdom of Heaven.

## **Letter and Spirit**

Here we see the difference between obedience only to the letter and obedience to the spirit of the law. The law is spiritual, and therefore the spirit of it must be obeyed; but some people think on this ground to excuse themselves for disobeying the law. Say they, "The Lord reproveth the scribes and Pharisees for their obedience to

the letter of the law, therefore we should not think ourselves bound by the letter; if we keep the spirit, that is sufficient."

But mark, the Saviour did not say that our righteousness must be entirely different from that of the scribes and Pharisees, but that it must exceed it. To exceed means, "to pass or go beyond;" and by using that word the Saviour showed that we must keep the law as well as the scribes and Pharisees did, and a great deal better. Not only must the law be kept outwardly, but it must be obeyed from the heart.

He did not reprove the Pharisees for refraining from open adultery; but He reproved them for the lust with which their hearts were filled, and which nothing but their love for the applause of men kept them from manifesting openly. Christ did not reprove them because they refrained from actual murder, but because they cherished envy, hatred, and enmity, thus as effectually breaking the sixth commandment as though they had actually taken human life.

A moment's thought will show anyone the folly of supposing that the law may be kept in spirit and not in letter.

- Can a man worship gods of gold, or stone, or brass, and yet have a proper regard for the God that made heaven and earth?
- Can a man blaspheme the name of God, and at the same time have perfect love and reverence in his heart?
- Is it possible to wantonly violate the letter of the sixth commandment, by taking human life, and yet have no trace of enmity, but only perfect love in the heart?

- Will a man deliberately and persistently take the goods of others, if he has no covetous desires in his heart?

- And does not everybody know that the committing of adultery is only the outward manifestation of the lust that burns within?

There can be but one answer to these questions. Even so there can be no spiritual obedience without obedience to the letter as well.

### **Doers of the Law are Justified**

The statement of the wise man, that to keep the commandments is the whole duty of man, (Ecclesiastes 12:13) and of Christ, that whosoever shall do and teach them shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven, (Matthew 5:19) prepares us for the truth stated by the apostle, in: "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." (Romans 2:13)

Since to keep the commandments of God is the whole duty of man, of course the one who keeps the law will be justified; a man can never be justly condemned, when he does his whole duty. We will not, at this time, inquire just how comprehensive the term "the doers of the law" is, nor whether or not there are any such. For the present we shall be content with the truth, which allows of no exception, namely, that "the doers of the law shall be justified." (Romans 2:13)

In Romans 6 we read that: "The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)

But if a man never sins, he will never receive the wages thereof, consequently the doer of the law will live. And this, again, is no

more than we find plainly stated in: "For Moses described the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which does those things shall live by them." (Romans 10:5)

The man whom the law justifies--the one who is really a doer of all its requirements--will certainly live. Now it is a self-evident fact that when God made a perfect, holy, and just law, He designed that all His subjects should obey it. And since the law, when it is kept, gives life, we can see the force of the apostle's statement, that: "The law ... was ordained to life." (Romans 7:10)

As we shall hereafter see more fully, the law was given that man might ever keep in harmony with God's will, in which condition he must necessarily have life.

### **Everlasting Righteousness**

There is just one more point which we wish to bring out concerning the nature of the law. Let the reader mark it closely; for in the future consideration of this subject it will often be referred to, as it really covers the whole ground; upon it everything else depends. David says, "My tongue shall speak of your word; for all your commandments are righteousness." (Psalm 119:172)

This is really nothing more than is brought out in Psalm 19:7, and other texts; but it leads to another text which materially widens the range of our view of the law of God. In Isaiah 51 we read: "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but my salvation shall be forever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished." (Isaiah 51:6)

Abolish the righteousness of God? of course not; but what is the righteousness of God? The very next verse tells us of what the Lord, through His prophet, is here speaking. We proceed: "Hearken unto me, you that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law." (Isaiah 51:7)

The conclusion to be drawn is very evident. The people who know righteousness are they in whose hearts God's law is enshrined; they know righteousness, because the law is itself righteousness; (Psalm 119:172) and not only is it righteousness in the abstract, but it is the righteousness of God. This is an expression which the apostle Paul often uses in referring to the law.

What an exalted idea of the law of God does this give us! To say that it is perfect may convey various ideas to different persons, for many would be apt to measure the law by their own standard of perfection; but when we learn that it is "the righteousness of God," we know that it must be infinite in its breadth.

The law is a transcript of God's character, a photograph of character which is infinite in its perfection. It is His nature represented in words, for the benefit of His creatures, so that they may know what is required of them if they would be partakers of the divine nature. God says to man, "Be holy, for I am holy." (1 Peter 1:16)

But without some description of the holiness of God, it would be impossible for man to know how he should order his life; for: "The way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walks to direct his steps." (Jeremiah 10:32)

Since the law is "the righteousness of God"--a brief yet comprehensive description of His character--it may properly be termed "the way of the Lord." And so in Isaiah 55 we have an additional evidence of the exceeding greatness of that law: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9)

The holiness of God's law is just as much superior to any goodness that man possesses as God is greater than man. The law of God, then, is very justly called His way, and since those who become acquainted with God by walking in the way with Him, are at peace, (Job 22:21) it follows that a proper term for the law is, "The way of peace." (Isaiah 59:8)

It is the ten commandments, then, to which Paul refers, when, speaking of the universal wickedness of mankind, He says: "Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes." (Romans 3:16-18)

This idea is still further proved by: "O that you had hearkened to my commandments! then had your peace been as a river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea." (Isaiah 48:18)

The law of God is also called the truth. "Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and your law is the truth." (Psalm 119:142)

It is the very perfection of truth, since it is the expression of God's character. This point is brought out in Romans 2. Paul there

says: "Behold, you are called a Jew, and rest in the law, and make your boast of God, And know His will, and approve the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; And are confident that you yourself are a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which have the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law." (Romans 2:17-20)

In that justly celebrated work, *The Life and Epistles of the Apostle Paul*, by Conybeare and Howson, the last clause of the above text is thus rendered: "Possessing in the law the perfect pattern of knowledge and of truth."

This accurately describes the law, which is such a perfect pattern of truth that whosoever follows it will live a life of perfect truth. It is because it is perfect truth that it enables the one who is instructed in it to "try the things which differ" (see margin of verse 18), or, as Conybeare and Howson render it, to "give judgment upon good or evil."

It is impossible for mortal tongue ever to express, or even for mortal intellect to comprehend the breadth, the beauty, and the perfection of God's law. There is in it abundant food for meditation both day and night; and the more we learn of it, the more we can appreciate the psalmist's glowing descriptions of it, and his exhortations to continually study it.

But as man, by searching, can never find out God, so that he can fully comprehend all His attributes, so no man, even when glorified and made immortal, can ever exhaust the law of God. On earth, as we meditate in the law, we can only exclaim, "O the depth of the

riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33)

And in Heaven, even to the countless ages of eternity, as in the glory of His presence we are permitted to look with unveiled eyes upon Him whose character is portrayed in the ten commandments, our wonder will not cease, and we can only join with the angelic beings that support His throne, in saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!" (Revelation 4:8)--Signs of the Times, January 21 & 28, 1886.

## Chapter 15

### **Jurisdiction of the Law**

We have already anticipated this division of the subject, and have shown, by the extent of the gospel commission, that:

1. The law of God has been known and transgressed by men in every part of the world;

2. As the gospel is to be preached in all the world until the coming of Christ, sin will exist just as extensively and just as long; and

3. Consequently, the law, of which sin is the transgression, will be binding in all the world till the end of time.

### **Reconciliation and the Law**

We wish, however, to carry the subject a little further. The apostle says that: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself," (2 Corinthians 5:19) and that He has committed the carrying on of this work to His ambassadors-the ministers of the gospel-who, "in Christ's stead, [pray the world to] be reconciled to God." (2 Corinthians 5:20)

Now, reconciliation implies a previous condition of enmity; and if the world needed reconciling to God, it was because the world was at enmity with God. And since the work of reconciling is still being carried on, it follows that the rebellion, or enmity, still exists. Then the question arises, "In what does that enmity consist?"

The same apostle tells us: "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Romans 8:7)

Men are rebels, because they are in opposition to God's law. And this is the same truth that had been uttered, centuries before, by the inspired prophet: "Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever: That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord." (Isaiah 30:8-9)

This brings out again the fact previously stated, that the gospel announces, and carries on its forefront, the law. It was the transgression of the law that made it necessary for Christ to come to reconcile men to God.

And as men, by continued sin, lost their sense of its heinousness, and of their obligation to God, it became more and more necessary that the gospel, in announcing to men the way of pardon and reconciliation, should make known their need of such reconciliation and pardon by setting forth, in plain terms, the law which they had transgressed.

This is what is plainly stated by Peter, when, after quoting Isaiah's tribute to the enduring nature of the law, "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower thereof falls away: But the word of the Lord endures forever." (1 Peter 1:24-25) he adds, "And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." (1 Peter 1:25)

The quotations made from John Wesley and Bishop Simpson (See Article 2 in this series, The Law and the Gospel Coextensive)

are in harmony with this conclusion. Indeed, the conclusion is so nearly self-evident that it must be reached by all thoughtful, candid minds.

The very fact that a pardon is granted, attests the authority of the law; and before a pardon can be granted, the individual must know and acknowledge his guilt. If a man thinks himself righteous, he will indignantly spurn any offer of pardon, even though he may really stand in need of it. Human nature would leave such to the fate which their own blindness and stubbornness deserve; but God loves the world, and desires that all men shall accept His pardon, and thus be reconciled to Him; and therefore He takes pains to bring men to a sense of their sinful condition, so that the pardon which He offers may be accepted.

The same messenger who is commissioned to announce the pardon, proclaims the law of God, which awakens the self-confident sinner, so that he may appreciate his lost condition. Let us look still further into the matter of the extent of the law's jurisdiction. "Now we know that what things soever the law says, it says to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." (Romans 3:19)

The law speaks only to those who are within the bounds of its jurisdiction; it cannot condemn any who may walk contrary to its provisions, if they are outside of its limits. For example, a man in Russia may commit an act which is forbidden by the laws of the United States; yet he cannot on that account be declared guilty, simply because the United States law has no jurisdiction in his case. He is not amenable to it.

But as a consequence of what the law of God says, all the world are found guilty before Him. This, again, shows conclusively that all the world are in duty bound to keep God's law. There are no exceptions to this fact. We have before learned that. "Sin is the transgression of the law," (1 John 3:4) and that: "Where no law is, there is no transgression;" (Romans 4:15) and therefore we know that wherever we find sin, there must also be the law. To whomsoever sin is imputed, upon him the law has claims; for: "Sin is not imputed when there is no law." (Romans 5:13)

Now we find these statements in the 3rd chapter of Romans: "What then? Are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: ... For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:9-10,23)

Here the apostle descends to particulars, and shows that not to the Jews alone, but to Gentiles as well, is sin imputed, thus proving beyond all controversy that the Gentiles as well as the Jews are under the jurisdiction of the law of God, and have violated it.

## **The Law Before Sinai**

Our investigation of the law began with the time when it was given on Mount Sinai; and we must therefore now examine to see if that was the first of its existence. And here, as in all our study of the law, we find help from our knowledge of the fact that the law is "the righteousness of God." Then it must necessarily have been in existence before the exode. Since it is a transcript of God's character, it necessarily follows that its existence is coeval with the existence of God. "But," it may be objected, "the law, as a

manifestation of God's righteousness, might exist, without being transcribed for the government of mankind."

So it might, if there were no creatures to whom it could be made known; or if there was any time after creatures had been brought into existence when God did not exercise government over them.

But it is not for us to speculate on the state of affairs when God dwelt alone, inhabiting His own eternity, before the existence even of the "sons of God" that shouted for joy (Job 38:7) at the creation of this earth; and there certainly has never been a time since intelligent creatures were formed, either in Heaven or on earth, when God was not supreme ruler. No created beings have ever been independent of His control.

But if God has always been ruler, He must have had some rule of government, and that could be nothing else than His righteousness-His law. The ten commandments are righteousness; they are perfect, holy, just, and good, and therefore exactly fitted to be the rule of a righteous and just government. Then, from the very nature of the law we would conclude that it was binding on men before it was spoken from Mount Sinai.

We shall shortly recur to the argument broached in this paragraph; but first we wish to show from positive evidence that the law of ten commandments was known by men, and was binding on them, before the giving of it on Sinai. In Romans 5 we read that: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Romans 5:12)

Here the apostle shows that death is a consequence of sin; death came into the world because there was sin in the world. If there had

been no sin, there would have been no death, and wherever death is found, it is positive evidence that sin exists. With this passage we may well place: "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law." (1 Corinthians 15:56)

Here death is represented as a cruel monster that has brought many people into its power. It has poisonous fangs with which it strikes its victims, and these fangs, this sting, is sin. Let the fangs be drawn,--let sin be obliterated,--and death's power would be gone. But, "the strength of sin is the law." (1 Corinthians 15:56) "Sin is the transgression of the law," (1 John 3:4) and it is the violated law which provides death with its powerful sting. Were it not for the law, death would have no sting, that is, it would be powerless to destroy. So here, again, we have proof that wherever death is, there is the law also. We read on: "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come." (Romans 5:13-14)

Here we have the statement that until the law, that is, until the time of Moses, when it was spoken from Sinai, sin and death were in the world; therefore we know that the law was in the world. And hereby we know that the expression, "until the law," does not indicate that the time so specified was the first existence of the law; for both sin and death were in the world before that time, and neither can exist without the law, and the law violated. Let us go still further into particulars. "Sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4) and, "Sin is not imputed when there is no law." (Romans 5:13)

But sin was imputed to Cain, (Genesis 4:7-8) and consequently the law was there to condemn. Turn to the commandments, and you

will find that the sixth commandment was the one especially transgressed. Again we read that: "The men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." (Genesis 13:13) "Sin is not imputed when there is no law," (Romans 5:13) and consequently we know that God judged the Sodomites by His law. If He judged them by His law, of course they knew of the existence of that law; otherwise their punishment would not have been just; but we may be sure that "the Judge of all the earth [will] do right." (Genesis 18:25)

Take the case of the sons of Noah. (Genesis 9:22-26) Here we have direct evidence that the fifth commandment was known; that it was violated by Ham, the younger son of Noah, and kept by the other two; and that the one was cursed for his sin, while the others were blessed for their observance of the commandment. These things show the existence of that commandment, a knowledge of its existence, and also a knowledge that it was in full force to condemn the guilty and to acquit the innocent.

We find also the violation of the eighth commandment mentioned in Genesis 31:30. It is not necessary to particularize concerning each of the commandments, but we will notice one more. In Genesis 15 we read these words of the Lord to Abraham: "And you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." (Genesis 15:15-16)

This shows that in the days of Abraham, the inhabitants of Canaan, the Gentiles, were guilty of iniquity. Iniquity is sin, and "Sin is the transgression of the law;" (1 John 3:4) so, therefore, the Amorites had the law of God. Turn now to 1 Kings 21 and you will learn of what the Amorites were guilty: "But there was none like

unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up. And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all things as did the Amorites, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel." (1 Kings 21:25-26)

Here we find that the Amorites were cast out of Canaan because of idolatry,--idolatry, which, in its rites, involved the violation of not only the first and second commandments, but of all the ten. So we find that all the commandments were known and violated hundreds of years before the Jews came to Mount Sinai, and before there ever was a Jew.

The point has now been proved, both from the nature of the law and by actual illustrations of the fact. Thus far we have shown the existence of the law of God from the earliest history of mankind. We wish now to carry the argument a step further, as we have already intimated that we should do.

### **The Rule of God's Government**

We have found the law to be "the righteousness of God," the rule of His government. Since God has always been supreme ruler, and His rule has always been just and righteous, He must have judged only by His own righteous character, which is embodied in the decalogue.

Now God has created many worlds besides this one, (Hebrews 1:2) and since He formed ours that it might be inhabited, (Isaiah 45:18) the conclusion is legitimate, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, that He made the others for the same purpose. No thinking person can suppose that this little earth, one of the smallest

among the innumerable planets of the universe, is the only one that is inhabited.

Now of all these vast worlds, God is the King. "The Lord has prepared His throne in the Heavens; and His kingdom rules over all." (Psalm 103:19)

And since He can rule by naught except justice and righteousness, and all righteousness, even the righteousness of God himself, is comprised within the ten commandments, it follows that they, and they alone, form the rule of action in all God's universe. Of the correctness of this conclusion we have direct evidence in Psalm 103, where we read that the angels "do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word." (Psalm 103:20)

If the commandments are the rule in Heaven, where God himself resides, certainly they are the rule "in all places of His dominion." (Psalm 103:22)

This view of the law, and we are confident that it is a just view, lifts the law question far, far above the plane on which its opposers would fain confine it.

- Instead of being imperfect and not calculated to bring man into proper relation to his Maker, it is the righteousness of God;

- Instead of being confined to a small portion of this earth, the bounds of its jurisdiction are as extensive as the universe;

- Instead of being given to one nation of earth, and to that alone, it is that to which all loyal creatures, even the angels of Heaven, bow in humble allegiance; and

- Instead of being limited to a few centuries of existence, it "stands fast forever and ever," (Psalm 111:8) even as long as God exists and "His kingdom rules over all." (Psalm 103:19)

We are aware that at first sight many will think that this is going too far, and will possibly raise objections, and say that when we consider the nature of certain commandments, it is not reasonable to suppose that they could be in Heaven for the restraint of heavenly beings. We will therefore add one or two more points.

But first we would remark that when a case is supported by positive evidence, we are not at liberty to reject it because there are points about it which we do not understand. Nothing can be proved so clearly that no one can raise an objection, or even frame an argument, against it; and many things that are susceptible of the clearest proof, cannot be fully comprehended even by those who present the proof.

Take, for instance, the question of the existence of God. Both nature and revelation plainly teach that there is a God, who has existed from eternity; yet it is impossible to state the case so clearly that no one can cavil or raise objections; and there is no one, no matter how clearly he can demonstrate that there is a God, who can comprehend Him, or understand how He could exist from eternity. The argument from ignorance is no argument at all. Truth is truth, however great our ignorance of it may be.

The merchant sitting in his office can put a question to his agent a thousand miles distant, and receive a reply the next minute. Tell this well-known fact to a savage, and he will not believe you; he cannot comprehend how such a thing can be done, and will present

objections and arguments which, to his mind, show the utter impossibility of such a thing. Yet in spite of his ignorance, the thing is true.

So there are many things in connection with God and His government which finite wisdom cannot explain, but which we must accept. Now to further show the reasonableness, nay, the absolute necessity, of the ten commandments existing as a rule for all creatures of the universe.

### **The Law Is Perfect**

"The law of the Lord is perfect." (Psalm 19:7)

Since it is perfect, nothing can be added to it or taken from it without making it imperfect. If, then, any creatures should be governed by more or less than this law, they would be governed by an imperfect law. But that, of course, would result in imperfect characters, and would further show the lawgiver to be imperfect; therefore such an idea cannot be entertained.

### **The Law Is God's Will**

"The law of the Lord is perfect," because it is a transcript of His will,--His righteousness. Therefore all intelligent creatures must be governed by it. This has already been stated, but it will bear repetition. Too much stress cannot be laid upon it. Wherever God rules, His will must of necessity be law.

That the ten commandment law, the law out of which the Jews were instructed, is the will of God, Paul shows in: "Behold, you are called a Jew, and rest in the law, and make your boast of God, And

know His will, and approve the things that are more excellent [margin: tries the things that differ], being instructed out of the law." (Romans 2:17-18)

That the ten commandments are here referred to, may be seen from verses 21-23. Paul, therefore, speaking to a Jew, said, "You know the will of God, because you are instructed out of the law."

No further evidence is needed to show that the ten commandments are the will of God. Now, since all intelligent creatures must be governed by the will of God, it is evident that they are governed by the ten commandments, unless it could be shown that God changes, having one will at one time and toward one people, and another will at another time and for another people. But this cannot be; for: "With Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James 1:17)

There is, then, one law for all.

### **A Badge of Loyalty**

There are none who can have a greater interest than the righteous, whether of the redeemed or of those who never sinned, in having the ten commandments maintained as the standard of right. And this for the very reason that it is the standard of right. It is the badge of their loyalty. If there were a place where the ten commandments were not held as the law, the righteous ones would not want to go there; for there would be nothing to show that they were righteous.

But enough has been said to prove beyond a reasonable doubt the universality of God's holy law. In all places of God's dominion, rational beings are by this law either justified or condemned.

### **Those Who "Have Not the Law"**

While we have been making the claim and proving it, that the law of God covers every possible act or thought, and that no responsible being is outside of its jurisdiction, someone has been looking for the verse which says that the Gentiles do not have the law, but are a law unto themselves. Perhaps this is as good a time as any to consider that text.

An answer to it will also involve the consideration of the question why the ten commandments, since they have such universal jurisdiction, were spoken from Mount Sinai only to the Jews. Let us now read the passage above referred to. "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For 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: Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.)" (Romans 2:12-15)

A brief examination of Paul's argument in this chapter will be necessary in order to get a proper understanding of this text. It will be noticed that the 13th, 14th, and 15th verses are parenthetical, and are therefore secondary to the main argument. Therefore in stating the argument, we shall omit those three verses.

In the 1st chapter of Romans, Paul has shown the terribly immoral condition of the heathen world; and in the 2nd chapter he proceeds to show that whoever condemns the heathen, condemns himself; for all are guilty. God, he says, "will render to every man according to his deeds." (Romans 2:6)

To those who patiently persevere in well-doing, He will render eternal life; but to those who are contentious, and do not obey the truth, (See Psalm 119:142) He will render indignation and wrath. And these rewards of good or ill will be rendered to every man, whether he be Jew or Gentile. "For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; ... In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." (Romans 2:11-12,16)

In the first two chapters of Romans, the apostle brings out the fact which is plainly stated in the third, that "both Jews and Gentiles [are] under sin," (Romans 3:9) and that "There is none righteous, no, not one." (Romans 3:10)

In the passage under consideration, he states that, as a consequence, all who do not repent shall suffer "the righteous judgment of God, Who will render to every man according to his deeds." (Romans 2:5-6)

This will be done without regard to nationality; "For there is no respect of persons with God." (Romans 2:11)

That is, it is not a man's birth, but his character, that gives him favor with God. It is the doers of the law whom He justifies,

whether they be Jews or Gentiles, and not those who, as did many of the Jews, hear the law, but do not obey. All who sin, whether with the law or without it, shall perish.

In the 12th and 14th verses, we have the two classes brought to view—those who have the law, and those who have it not. There is no question but that the Jews had the law; they rested in it, (Romans 2:17) and by breaking it dishonored God. (Romans 2:23-24) And the 14th verse tells us plainly that those not having the law are the Gentiles. Before considering their case, we must not fail to note the fact that both the Jews who had the law, and the Gentiles who had it not, had sinned. They were alike guilty before God. "What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one." (Romans 3:9-10)

Now, "Sin is the transgression of the law," (1 John 3:4) and, "Where no law is, there is no transgression." (Romans 4:15)

Therefore it is beyond controversy that both classes here mentioned had transgressed law, and more than that, had been conscious of the fact; for, "Sin is not imputed when there is no law." (Romans 5:13)

So it is certain that the Gentiles had transgressed the law; yet the text says they had not the law, and that they "sinned without law." (Romans 2:12)

How shall we explain this seeming contradiction? Let us see.

Read again verses 14-15: "For 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: Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another." (Romans 2:14-15)

When God made man in His own image, He made him upright. "God has made man upright." (Ecclesiastes 7:29)

Not alone in his physical form, but also in his moral nature, he was in the image of God. While Adam continued in this upright, sinless condition, the law of God was in his heart. We know this from Psalm 40, where David, speaking for the Messiah, says, "I delight to do your will, O my God; yea, your law is within my heart." (Psalm 40:8)

The existence of the law of God in the heart is manifested by the willingness to obey that law; and he who, as was the case with Christ, has the law perfectly formed within his heart, will render perfect obedience to the law. This was the case with our first parents in the garden of Eden.

But man fell from his high estate; he sinned against God, and thus marred the perfect copy of the law which had existed in his heart. The tendency of sin is to multiply itself; like the tares sown among the good grain, it will grow without any attention. So the first sin prepared the way for many more, till at last nearly all the world became wholly given up to sin. In Hebrews 3 the apostle says that men become "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin;" (Hebrews 3:13) that is, the more men sin, the less heinous does sin appear to them, until at last evil appears to be only good, and good evil, and they sin without the slightest compunction of conscience. This principle is something with which everybody is familiar.

Now this progressive love of sin, and the indifference to it, is nothing else than the obliterating of the copy of the law which exists in a more or less perfect state in every heart. This work is not done instantaneously; it takes time for men to so completely obliterate the law from their hearts that they will feel no restraint. But when it is entirely gone, then man is in the condition in which he was just prior to the flood, when "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Genesis 6:5)

So long, however, as any portion remains in the heart, the Spirit is enabled to strive with man, and, by means of that law, to convict of sin; and this whether the individual knows anything of the written revelation or not.

Now the Gentiles did not have the law written on stone and in books, as did the Jews; they only had that portion which still remained unobliterated from their hearts. Of course the Jews, having much more light than the Gentiles had, were far more responsible.

The former would necessarily be judged by the fullness of the law; for they could not plead ignorance of any portion of it. If they sinned, justice required that the condemnation of the law should be visited upon them in full measure.

But the Gentiles could be judged only by the light that they had. Since they had not the written revelation, that, of course, would not be brought up against them. They knew, however, the difference, in many things, between right and wrong; and by this they are judged. Had they lived fully up to the light which they had by nature, they would have been counted as doers of the law; but since they did not,

since their own conscience condemned them, they must suffer the consequences.

The Jews, having the written law, are judged by the law; and the Gentiles, not having the written law, perish without being brought into Judgment by it.

Perhaps this can be made plainer by illustration. The Jews had every one of the ten commandments in such shape that they could constantly be reminded of them, and know the extent of their claims. Now when they came into Judgment, it is no more than justice that the whole law should be held up before them, that the enormity of their guilt may be manifest.

But here is a poor, ignorant barbarian, who, we will suppose, knew by the light of nature, only two precepts of the law,--that it is wrong to kill and to commit adultery. His knowledge of the sinfulness of those acts is shown by his trying to conceal the fact when he has done one or the other of them. His own conscience accuses him.

Now it is not necessary, in order to convict him of sin, that the whole ten commandments be held up beside the record of his life. In the Judgment let the two precepts with which he was familiar be recalled to his mind. By these alone he stands condemned as a sinner; and since "the wages of sin is death," he justly perishes, without ever having seen the written law.

Thus we see that all men, whatever their condition, are amenable to, and are to be judged by, the law of God. When Paul says that the Gentiles have not the law, he means that they had not

the written revelation, but not that they did not have some knowledge of right and wrong, as defined by the moral law.

### **Why the Law Was Spoken Only to the Jews**

Now why was it that only the Jews had the written law? Did the giving of the law to them indicate partiality on the part of God? Not by any means: "For there is no respect of persons with God." (Romans 2:11)

Before the Exode, all the world was on a level, so far as written revelation was concerned. When sin separated man from God so that he could no longer talk with him face to face, then God supplemented the light which men had in their own hearts, by communicating with them in visions and dreams given to His prophets, (Numbers 12:6) and by sending angels to them. (Genesis 22:15)

Had all men hearkened to the voice of conscience, the communication thus opened between God and man would have been sufficient to bring them at last to the state where the law would be perfectly restored in their hearts. This is that which God is still striving to accomplish. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." (Hebrews 8:10)

But men did not care to follow even that portion of the law which they retained in their hearts, and consequently God could not send them more light through His prophets. Thus, "As they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a mind void of judgment." (Romans 1:28)

In process of time, only one family retained the knowledge of God, and all the rest of the world were destroyed for their abominable wickedness.

Within four hundred years after the flood, men had again corrupted their way on the earth, and only Abraham remained loyal to God. He kept God's commandments, (Genesis 26:5) and had the determination to command his children and his household after him, that they should keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.

"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He has spoken of him." (Genesis 18:19)

In order that the descendants of Abraham might retain the knowledge of God, God called Abraham away from his corrupt associates, and gave him the rite of circumcision, in order that the separation might be complete. This rite was not designed to be a mark of birth or nationality, but simply as a means of keeping the observers of God's law from the contaminating influence of those who did not regard it; for whenever one of any other nation became willing to separate from his people and keep the law, he also became circumcised. "And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of your seed." (Genesis 17:12)

This precaution served to keep the descendants of Abraham a distinct people through all their wanderings, and to preserve among

them the knowledge of the true God. some from other tribes, getting the light from them, would occasionally turn to the Lord, to keep His commandments, and, becoming circumcised, would be counted as the descendants of righteous Abraham; but the great mass of the world chose to remain in the darkness of heathenism.

Thus it happened that when the Lord brought His people from Egyptian bondage, they alone of all the people in the world had a knowledge of God. All the rest could say with Pharaoh, "I know not the Lord." (Exodus 5:2)

At that time the Lord chose to give mankind His law in a manner so plain that it could not possibly be mistaken, and so that they could always meditate in it, in its perfection, even though no prophet were at hand. By this means, the Spirit could make greater progress, so to speak, in writing the law in their hearts.

But to whom could He speak the law? Only to those who knew Him, and would accept the law as coming from Him. Therefore He was compelled to give the written law to the Jews, and make them light-bearers to the world. The law, when it entered, came to the Jews, not because it was designed for them alone, but because they alone would receive it.

As a further evidence that God was not moved by race considerations, and did not give the law exclusively to the Jews as a nation, we may notice the fact that when the Jews left Egypt, "A mixed multitude went up also with them." (Exodus 12:38) "And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?" (Numbers 11:4)

This "mixed multitude" was composed of Egyptians, and, no doubt, of people of other nationalities. These went along with the Jews, and with them received the law from God at Mount Sinai.

### **A Warning for the Christian World**

We cannot close this portion of our subject without giving, from the pen of another, the following graphic portrayal of the condition of a people who should have no regard for the law of God:

No error accepted by the Christian world strikes more boldly against the authority of Heaven, none is more directly opposed to the dictates of reason, none is more pernicious in its results, than the modern doctrine, so rapidly gaining ground, that God's law is no longer binding upon men. Every nation has its laws, which command respect and obedience; no government could exist without them; and can it be conceived that the Creator of the heavens and the earth has no law to govern the beings He has made?

Suppose that prominent ministers were publicly to teach that the statutes which govern their land and protect the rights of its citizens were not obligatory--that they restricted the liberties of the people, and therefore ought not to be obeyed; how long would such men be tolerated in the pulpit? But is it a graver offense to disregard the laws of states and nations than to trample upon those divine precepts which are the foundation of all government?

It would be far more consistent for nations to abolish their statutes, and permit the people to do as they please, than for the Ruler of the universe to annul His law, and leave the world without a standard to condemn the guilty or justify the obedient.

Would we know the result of making void the law of God? The experiment has been tried. Terrible were the scenes enacted in France when atheism became the controlling power. It was then demonstrated to the world that to throw off the restraints which God has imposed is to accept the rule of the cruelest of tyrants. When the standard of righteousness is set aside, the way is open for the prince of evil to establish his power in the earth.

Wherever the divine precepts are rejected, sin ceases to appear sinful or righteousness desirable. Those who refuse to submit to the government of God are wholly unfitted to govern themselves. Through their pernicious teachings the spirit of insubordination is implanted in the hearts of children and youth, who are naturally impatient of control; and a lawless, licentious state of society results. While scoffing at the credulity of those who obey the requirements of God, the multitudes eagerly accept the delusions of Satan. They give the rein to lust and practice the sins which have called down judgments upon the heathen.

Those who disregard the commandments of God sow disobedience to reap disobedience. Let the restraint imposed by the divine law be wholly removed, and human laws would soon be disregarded. Because God forbids dishonest practices,--coveting, lying, and defrauding,--men are ready to trample upon His statutes as a hindrance to their worldly prosperity; but the results of banishing these precepts would be such as they do not anticipate. If the law were not binding, why should any fear to transgress? Property would no longer be safe. Men would obtain their neighbors' possessions by violence, and the strongest would become richest. Life itself would not be respected.

The marriage vow would no longer stand as a sacred bulwark to protect the family. He who had the power, would, if he desired, take his neighbor's wife by violence. The fifth commandment would be set aside with the fourth. Children would not shrink from taking the life of their parents, if by so doing they could obtain the desire of their corrupt hearts. The civilized world would become a horde of robbers and assassins; and peace, rest and happiness would be banished from the earth.--Mrs. E. G. White, in *The Great Controversy*, Chap. 36 "The Impending Conflict," p. 584-585.

This is just the state of things that would exist, not only in this world, but in all the universe, if the ten commandments were not the universal rule of action. If there be any portion of the universe where the decalogue is not the recognized law, the above paragraphs accurately describe the condition of its society.--*Signs of the Times*, February 4, 11, 18 & 25, 1886.

## Chapter 16

### **Perpetuity of the Law**

It is impossible to discuss one branch of this great subject of the law without touching more or less upon every other branch. So in considering the nature of the law and its relation to the gospel, we have necessarily shown that it must endure forever. We shall now take up this branch more in detail.

#### **The Law is God's Righteousness**

The law of God is the righteousness of God. It may not be amiss to review the proof on this point. David, in these words, bears witness to the fact that the commandments are themselves righteousness:

"My tongue shall speak of your word; for all your commandments are righteousness." (Psalm 119:172)

Since there is no righteousness but that of God, the commandments must be His righteousness; but we have still more direct evidence. The prophet Isaiah thus contrasts the things of earth with the righteousness of God: "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but my salvation shall be forever; and my righteousness shall not be abolished." (Isaiah 51:6)

In the next verse he proceeds to tell what this righteousness is: "Hearken unto me, you that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law." (Isaiah 51:7)

Because the law is the righteousness of God, it enables those who are instructed in it to "give judgment upon good or evil." (Romans 2:18, margin)

The text says, "my righteousness shall not be abolished." (Isaiah 51:6)

Since there can be no question but that "righteousness" is here used with reference to the law of God, we may properly substitute "law" for "righteousness," thus: "the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but my salvation shall be forever, and my law shall not be abolished." (Isaiah 51:6)

This gives the exact meaning, and is no more positive than we shall find stated elsewhere. "God is from everlasting to everlasting." (Psalm 90:2)

As He cannot exist separate from His nature, or, in other words, separate from himself, and the law is the transcript of His nature, it necessarily follows that the law exists from everlasting to everlasting.

And since created beings, who are all subjects of God's Government, cannot obey an abstract principle, but must have that principle clearly defined, we know that at least from the time that God created intelligent beings as subjects of His Government, the law must have existed in written form or must have been expressed in definite language. And from the beginning of His creation to everlasting ages, it must continue so to exist.

This is exactly what we are taught by the words of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount. Said He: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill [to ratify, establish, or teach]. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." (Matthew 5:17-18)

Here two things are mentioned: the law, and the prophets. Christ did not come to destroy either one. He came in fulfillment of prophecy, and also to teach the law, which He did in the Sermon on the Mount.

He did not, however, fulfill all the prophecy; for some of it reaches far beyond His first advent. For instance in Psalm 89 we read the following prophecy concerning the kingdom of David, over which Christ, as the Son of David: "I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: With whom my hand shall be established: my arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him; and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, You are my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven." (Psalm 89:21-29)

In verses 35-37 we read further: "Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for

ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven." (Psalm 89:35-37)

Here is a prophecy that will be in process of fulfillment as long as the sun and moon endure, even to all the days of Heaven. Now the words of Christ are, that "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." (Matthew 5:18)

Till all what be fulfilled? Evidently till all the prophets be fulfilled, for He is speaking of the prophets, in connection with the law. Then, in view of the prophecy that we just read, we know that not the slightest change can be made in the law so long as Christ reigns on the throne of David; and that will be throughout eternity. Nothing can add to the force of this testimony. We may quote other texts, as, "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail," (Luke 16:17) or, "The works of His hands are verity and judgment; all His commandments are sure. They stand fast forever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness," (Psalm 111:7-8) but, strong as they are, they do not go beyond what has already been presented. To give all the texts which show the enduring nature of the law, would be to quote a large portion of the Bible.

### **Testimony of Eminent Authors**

In our consideration of other points connected with this subject, many additional proofs will necessarily be brought in. But right here we wish to introduce a few quotations from eminent authors of different denominations, to show that they have used just as strong language as we have to set forth the holiness and perpetuity of the law. Bishop E.O. Haven said: "Not only is every one of the ten commandments binding upon all men, [but] every one is often

broken by persons who have received Christian instruction. The decalogue is God's grand compendium of moral philosophy. Whoever obeys it in letter and spirit is a perfect man."--Pillars of Truth, p. 7.

Again the same author says: "This decalogue can never become obsolete. It was designed for all men, and, obeyed, would render all men noble, and worthy of immortal blessedness. It is a kind of concentration of the moral teachings of the Bible."--Pillars of Truth, p. 235.

The Speaker's Commentary, on Matthew 12:8 says: "On what principle of legislation can it be maintained that, because laws are imposed by the ruler for the benefit of the subject, therefore they may be dispensed with at his own convenience? This is utterly untenable as regards the laws of man, still more so as regards the laws of God."

Rev. S. P. Sprecher, pastor of Calvary Presbyterian Church San Francisco, in a sermon delivered Feb. 18, 1883, and reported in the Occident of Feb. 21, 1883, said: "When God gave the ten commandments on Sinai, He did not propose that men should obey them if they commended themselves to the natural heart; but that they should obey because they were the voice of God. Truth is not always seen and appreciated at first. It generally requires a certain favorable state of the heart."

On the words of our Lord in Matthew 5:17, "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill," we find the following comment by Wesley, in the first volume of his works, sermon 25:

Some have conceived our Lord to mean: I am come to fulfill this by my entire and perfect obedience to it. And it cannot be doubted but He did, in this sense, fulfill every part of it. But this does not appear to be what He intends here, being foreign to the scope of His present discourse. Without question, His meaning in that place is (consistently with all that goes before and follows after), I am come to establish it in its fullness, in spite of all the glosses of men; I am come to declare the true and full import of every part of it; to show the length and breadth, the entire extent, of every commandment contained therein, and the height and depth, the inconceivable purity and spirituality of it in all its branches.

Rev. W.A. Jarrel (Baptist), in *Old Testament Ethics Vindicated*, pp. 25-27, speaks as follows concerning the law of God: "The divine will must be what the divine nature is. That the will must be what the nature is, is one of the fundamental truths of all true moral philosophy....While the law is not the nature of God, it is the effect and likeness of that nature; it is the perfect reflection of His infinite holiness and wisdom. It must, therefore, be as unchangeable as the infinite holiness of the divine nature. Law is the positive enactment of this nature; it is the expression of God's will. Law, then, being the expression of the holiness of the immutable, divine nature, it can never be relaxed or changed. As God's nature must forever will only moral right, His law can never be other than the expression of moral right."

This will suffice for quotations from religious authors. These quotations show that the idea here presented are no new thing, so that no one need fear to accept them, lest he should be straying from the old paths.

They help to confirm the argument that the ten commandments are the "old paths," into which God calls all men to turn their steps. They are the way of holiness, the eternal way of peace; and human tongue or human pen can never adequately express their purity and their unchanging nature.--Signs of the Times, March 4, 1886.

## Chapter 17

### **The Foundation of God's Government**

There is one more argument that we would introduce right here. To do so, we shall have to refer to the tabernacle built by Moses, and we shall try to do so as briefly as is consistent with perfect clearness. In general, only references will be given; the reader can look them up at his leisure.

In Exodus 25 we read these words: "And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." (Exodus 25:8)

These words of the Lord follow a command to Moses to receive offerings of gold, silver, brass, acacia wood, fine linen, goat's hair, etc. Of these the tabernacle was to be built. Chapters 25-30 contain the complete description of this structure, together with all the furniture and vessels connected with it.

The framework was composed of boards standing upright. There were twenty on each side, and eight on the west end. These boards were ten cubits fifteen feet long, and a cubit and a half wide, and were entirely covered with gold; each one had at the lower extremity two tenons, which were inserted into the sockets of silver, and this arrangement, together with bars that ran through rings on the sides of the boards, served to keep them in position. (Exodus 26:15-30)

The east end was closed by a vail, or hanging, of fine linen of various colors, with figures of cherubim worked on it. This was called the door of the tabernacle. (Exodus 26:36-37) Four curtains, made respectively of linen, goat's hair, rams' skins, and badgers' skins, formed the covering of the tabernacle. (Exodus 26:1-14)

Besides the door, there was a second vail of the same material, which divided the tabernacle into two rooms; the first was called the "holy place," and the second the "most holy place." (Exodus 26:31-33; Hebrews 9:1-3) So much for the tabernacle itself.

Within this tabernacle were various articles of furniture. Just within the holy place on the north side, was a table, upon which show-bread was placed. (Exodus 27:23-30; 40:22-23) On the south side there was a candlestick, or lamp-stand, having seven lamps, the whole beaten out of one solid piece of gold. These lamps were to be kept continually burning. (Exodus 25:31,39)

In the western extremity of the holy place, just before the second vail, was the golden altar of incense. Upon this the priest offered incense night and morning. (Exodus 30:1-9) This is all that was in the holy place. In the most holy place there was but one article of furniture, the ark of the testimony, (Exodus 25:10-22) and that is of so much importance in our investigation that we shall examine it more particularly.

By a careful examination of the scripture last referred to, we find that this ark was an oblong box of acacia wood, covered within and without with gold. On its sides were rings of gold, through which staves were passed for use in carrying it, so that it need never be touched by human hands.

The cover to this ark was called the mercy-seat, and was of solid gold. Upon the mercy-seat were the cherubim, one on each end, of solid gold, and of the same piece as the mercy-seat itself. The wings of these cherubim were extended so as to form an arch over the ark, and their faces looked toward each other, and downward to the ark.

Within the ark was the "testimony," (Exodus 25:16) which was nothing other than the ten commandments which God spoke from Sinai, written on tables of stone, and delivered to Moses for safe deposit in the ark. (Deuteronomy 10:1-5) This ark, as stated before, was in the most holy place, (Hebrews 9:3-5) into which no man could enter save the high priest, and he only once a year. (Hebrews 9:7) Even then he did not see the ark, because the cloud of incense arising from the censer which he held in his hand, entirely concealed it. (Leviticus 16:12-13) Without this precaution, he would have died, and the reason why will presently appear. Turning to Exodus 25 we read: "And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. And you shall put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I shall give you. And there I will meet with you, and I will commune with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give you in commandment unto the children of Israel." (Exodus 25:20-22)

Now we know why no one except the high priest could enter the most holy place, and why even he, in his yearly visit, could not behold the mercy-seat and live. It was because the glory of God was there. In that place the priest was in the immediate presence of God.

It is now time to inquire how Moses, after having been commanded to build the sanctuary, happened to light upon the special style that he did. For an answer, read: "According to all that I show you, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall you make it. ... And look that you make them after their pattern, which was showed you in the mount." (Exodus 25:9,40)

Since it was to be God's house, God himself furnished the plan. But by reading a little more, we shall find that this pattern was not something then for the first time conceived. In the 9th chapter of Hebrews, Paul, after telling that Moses purified (in a figure) the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry, by sprinkling them with the blood of animals, says, "It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the Heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these." (Hebrews 9:23)

This tells us plainly that the tabernacle and its furniture were copied after things in the Heavens. Now read: "Now of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum: we have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the Heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." (Hebrews 8:1-2)

Now we know that the tabernacle built by Moses as a dwelling place for God, was only a temporary representation of God's real, permanent dwelling-place in Heaven. That God does have a tangible structure in Heaven for His occupancy, where, to use a common expression, He holds court, is evident from the scriptures just quoted, and also from: "The Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord's throne is in Heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids try, the children of men." (Psalm 11:4)

This temple, the place of God's throne, has been seen in Heaven. John says: "And the temple of God was opened in Heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament." (Revelation 11:19)

If we should ask what portion of the earthly tabernacle especially represented God's throne, the reader would almost at once answer: "The ark, with the cherubim on the mercy-seat above; because it was between these cherubim that His glory was manifested."

This would be correct. God's actual dwelling-place is between the cherubim; when He moves from place to place, His throne (a living throne) and the cherubim accompany Him. For proof of this read the following texts: "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you that lead Joseph like a flock; you that dwell between the cherubim, shine forth." (Psalm 80:1) "The Lord reigns; let the people tremble; He sits between the cherubim; let the earth be moved." (Psalm 90:1)

Besides these, read Ezekiel 1 and 10; Isaiah 6:1-3, and Ezekiel 28:14. Remember now that everything in the earthly sanctuary was a representation of some corresponding thing in the heavenly sanctuary, as nearly exact as human hands could approach to a likeness of things not made with hands, and we shall of necessity conclude that the throne of God in Heaven is directly above the original law of ten commandments, of which the tables placed in the ark by Moses were only a copy.

In other words, the ten commandments form the foundation of God's throne. In further pursuit of this thought, read: "Justice and judgment are the habitation of your throne; mercy and truth shall go before your face." (Psalm 80:14)

Also the following: "The Lord reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about Him; righteousness and judgment are the habitation [establishment] of His throne." (Psalm 97:1-2)

We have already learned that the law is holy, just, and good, and that it is righteousness; it is perfect righteousness, and there is no righteousness outside of this law of ten commandments. Therefore when the psalmist says that righteousness is the establishment of God's throne, it is equivalent to saying that God's throne is established upon the ten commandments; that the ten commandments literally form the basis, or foundation, of the throne of God.

This term "throne" is often applied to sovereign authority or royal dignity. The ruler of a country is the representative of that government, and by metonymy the place where the ruler dispenses justice is put for the ruler, and so for the government. We speak of "the throne of the universe," meaning thereby the government of the universe. So, then, the fact that the ten commandments are the foundation of God's throne, shows that they are the rule of His Government; that every act is in accordance with their just sanctions; and that all the creatures of His Government throughout the universe are required to obey them.

This is a conclusion which we are confident cannot be overthrown, nor can any one who holds himself to a strict regard for the plain word of God, contradict it. This being so, what a view it gives us of the perpetuity of God's law! Leaving the eternity that is past, we look forward and ask, "How long shall God's moral law endure?"

And the answer comes, "It will endure just as long as God's throne endures, just as long as God rules the universe; for God's throne could not remain firm if its foundations were destroyed."

And this shows the unchanging nature of the law, as well as its perpetuity. The moral law is composed of ten precepts. Since the law is the foundation of God's throne, we may with propriety call the ten precepts the ten stones composing the foundation.

Indeed, Bishop E.O. Haven, of the M.E. Church, seemed to have a similar idea in his mind, when he wrote the little book, entitled, *The Pillars of Truth*. This work contains ten chapters, each chapter being the substance of a lecture before the students of Michigan University, the subject of the lectures being the ten commandments. These commandments, according to the bishop's idea, are the ten pillars that uphold all truth.

This being true, how can one of them be exchanged for another? What would support the throne of the universe while the transfer was being made? Such a question needs no answer. When we realize the relation which the moral law sustains to God and His Government, the mind at once sees the absurdity of the idea that one jot or one tittle can pass from the law, or that the slightest change could ever be made in it. We must exclaim with the psalmist: "Your word is true from the beginning; and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever." (Psalm 119:160)--*Signs of the Times*, March 11, 1886.

## Chapter 18

### **Doers of the Law**

In previous articles we have laid down some of the fundamental principles of the law. We have found that the moral law of ten commandments, spoken from Sinai, is perfect, holy, and good;

- that it is the instrument which enables us to judge between good and evil;

- that it is "the righteousness of God," so that there is no goodness or morality to be found outside of it;

- that it is also called "the way," "the way of peace," "the truth," "the testimony," the "word of the Lord," etc., and

- that it is the expression of God's will;

- that the transgression of it is sin, which makes it necessary for the gospel to be preached, so that whoever admits the existence of sin, and the necessity for the preaching of the gospel, virtually testifies to the existence of the law.

More than this, we have learned that, as the righteousness of God, it is the foundation of His throne, the basis of His government of the universe, and that it was therefore in full force before this world was brought into existence, and that it will continue in force as long as God's throne endures, the delight of all the redeemed, throughout eternity.

These points must be borne in mind as we proceed to their application in the examination of special texts. In this examination the points mentioned above will be strengthened, if it is possible to strengthen a position already so strong. We have already quoted. "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." (Romans 2:13)

This statement of the apostle is unqualified, and admits of no qualification. The doers of the law shall be justified. The statement is positive and emphatic. There can be no qualification nor exception. Think a moment. It is the righteousness of God, the perfection of holiness. Must not the keeping of it, then, as Solomon says, be "the whole duty of man?" (Ecclesiastes 12:13)

And if a man does his whole duty, and is a partaker of the righteousness of God, can he be condemned? Not by any means. God himself has declared, through His inspired apostle, that "the doer of the law shall be justified." Wherever in the universe a being is found who is a doer of the law, he is just in the sight of God.

Already I hear someone exclaim, "He thinks that man can save himself by his own works, and leaves no room for Christ."

Not so fast; do not pass judgment upon a piece of work until it is completed. Perhaps the proposition will seem clearer if we consider what constitutes one a "doer of the law." Let us illustrate:

A father goes from home, leaving his son a certain amount of work to perform. There is a portion of work for each hour,- enough to keep the son constantly employed. Suppose that the son works faithfully for an hour or two, and then consumes the remainder of

the time in play; has he done what his father commanded? Certainly not.

But suppose that he works faithfully every hour but one, and leaves the work allotted to that hour unperformed; can he now be called a doer of his father's will? He evidently cannot. Unless he can truthfully say, "I have done what my father left for me to do," he cannot be called a doer of his father's will; and he cannot truthfully say that he has done what his father gave him to do, unless he has done all that was enjoined upon him.

This is more than a simple illustration; it is a plain statement of fact. The boy cannot be said to have done what his father told him to do, if he has not done it all; a man cannot be said to have traveled the road from one point to another, if he lacks a mile of it; even so no man can be called a "doer of the law" of God if he has ever violated one of its precepts.

If there be a man who has kept every commandment but one, and has violated that one but a single time, he cannot be called a doer of the law, and hence cannot be justified by the law. He would be almost a doer of the law, but there is no promise of justification for those who simply almost do the law.

Right in this connection we must read the words of James: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For He that said [or that law which said], Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if you commit no adultery, yet if you kill, you are become a transgressor of the law." (James 2:10-11)

Many people, in their shortsightedness, have thought that this is unjust. There is no injustice in it; it is simply a statement of what exists from the very nature of things. The apostle does not say that the man who breaks only one commandment shall be considered as guilty as he who should violate every one, although he is guilty of all. There are degrees of sin.

The law is sometimes likened to a chain having ten links. Now if only one link be broken, the chain is broken, and, until that link is mended, is just as useless as though all the links were broken. So if a man breaks one commandment, he has broken the law, and it is just as impossible for the law to justify him as it would be if he had broken every precept. The following from Dr. Chalmers is direct on this point: "In order that you [may] feel the force of the apostle's demonstration, there is one principle which is held to be sound in human law, and which, in all equity, ought to be extended to the law of God. The principle is this,--that however manifold the enactments of the law may be, it is possible, by one act or one kind of disobedience, to incur the guilt of an entire defiance to the authority which framed it; and therefore to bring rightfully down upon the head of the transgressor the whole weight of the severities which it denounces against the children of iniquity. To be worthy of death, it is not necessary to commit all the things which are included in the sad enumeration of human vices, any more than it is necessary for a criminal to add depredation to forgery, or murder to both, ere a capital sentence go out against him from the administrators of the law upon which he has trampled. You may as effectually cut with a friend by one hostile or insolent expression, as if you had employed a thousand; and your disavowal of authority may be as intelligibly announced by one deed of defiance as by many; and your contempt of Heaven's court be as strongly manifested by your willful violation of one of the commandments, as if you had thwarted every

requirement. ... The man who has thrown off the allegiance of religion, may neither have the occasion nor the wish to commit all the offenses which it prohibits, or to utter all the blasphemies which may be vented forth in the spirit of defiance against the Almighty's throne. And yet the principle of defiance may have taken full possession of his heart, and irreligion may be the element in which he breathes. And in every instance, when his will comes into competition with the will of God, may the creature lift himself above the Creator; and though, according to the varieties of natural temperament, these instances may be more manifold and various with one man than with another, yet that which essentially constitutes the character of moral and spiritual guilt may be of equal strength and inveteracy with both. ... Ungodliness, in short, is not a thing of tale and measure; it is a thing of weight and of quality."-- Chalmers on the Romans, Lecture VI.

The above is a good exposition of James 2:10-11. We learn, then, that when a man willfully violates one commandment, it is not respect for the law, nor for the Lawgiver, that restrains him from violating all of them. He has shown his contempt for the authority that gave them, and thus becomes guilty of all.

Now when we recall the fact that each one of these commandments reaches the thoughts and intents of the heart, we may have something of a sense of what it takes to be a doer of the law. If it is thought that there is even one human being who merits that title, read the following plain declarations: "For we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher; with

their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace they have not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law says, it says to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." (Romans 3:9-19)

After reading the above, you will have no difficulty in understanding why the apostle immediately adds: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Romans 3:20)

It seems hardly possible that any one should now imagine that there is any disagreement between Romans 2:13 and Romans 3:20. It is a fact that all must recognize, that the law will justify all doers of it; and it is just as certain that by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified, because there is no one of whom it can be said, "He is a doer of the law."

It is not the fault of the law that it will not justify anybody; it would do so if it were possible; it is the fault of man that it cannot.-- Signs of the Times, March 18, 1886.

## Chapter 19

### **Justified by Faith**

Before going further, let us have some definitions to keep in our mind.

- Justification is "a showing to be just, or conformable to law, rectitude, or propriety."
- Condemnation is "the judicial act of declaring guilty, and dooming to punishment."

The two words are directly opposite in meaning; and we have the inspired declaration that all the world are guilty (condemned) before God, and that by the deeds of the law none can be justified. That there may be no possibility of a mistake, we will compare Romans 2:13 and 3:20 a little further. Both are true, but they do not both apply to the same classes.

### **Perfect Obedience Required**

The first is a universal truth. The doers of the law, wherever or whenever they are found, are justified. It cannot be otherwise. But in this world there are no doers of the law. There may be many who are trying to do it; but whatever degree of success they may have, they cannot be called doers of the law, for they have repeatedly broken it.

Suppose now that it were possible for a man to turn squarely around and keep the law perfectly, would he be justified? By no

means. The law requires that all there is of us shall be devoted to it all the time. Then if a man gets behind, he can never catch up.

Since all our strength is required for each hour, it is plain that the perfect performance of duty during any hour will not in the least degree make up for the non-performance of duty during any other hour. There can be no such thing as works of supererogation. (supererogation: the act of performing more than is required by duty, obligation, or need)

While the law justifies us in the performance of good deeds, it cannot, as a matter of fact, justify us for a single moment, no matter how good our present actions may be, since on its very first application to us, it must detect the past sin, and consequently must at once condemn us.

Justification and condemnation have reference to our whole lives; and since, however good we may be, for a portion of our lives, at the end, it will be seen that we have not done all our duty, we must therefore stand condemned. The law is just and good, and therefore it can never declare a guilty man innocent.

### **Justification Through Christ**

Is there, then, no hope for any? Since all have sinned, must all receive the wages-death? Will the law with its unrelenting grasp forever hold all the world in the bondage of death? Such would be the case, and there would be no hope for any, had not. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

All the world are guilty before God, because all have sinned; but they may be "Justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Romans 3:24)

There is "hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption." (Psalm 130:7)

Let us read Paul's brief but wonderfully clear statement of how we may be justified: "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believes in Jesus." (Romans 3:24-26)

Take notice that this is not indulgence for sin, nor remission of the law, but remission of sins. The sins are remitted--sent away. By this process, the sins are taken from the individual, so that he may be counted as though he had never committed them.

Note also the fact that it is by the grace of God that we are justified, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. There is no antagonism between the Father and the Son; both are concerned in the great work of man's redemption. The death of Christ, inasmuch as "The Lord laid upon Him the iniquity of us all," (Isaiah 53:6) made it possible for God to justify those who have faith in His blood. "To declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past." (Romans 3:25)

Christ's righteousness was perfect. He delighted to do the will of God, because the law-God's will-was within His heart: "I delight to

do your will, O my God: yea, your law is within my heart." (Psalm 40:8) "[He] did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." (1 Peter 2:22)

He alone, of all the people who ever trod this earth, could challenge even His enemies to find in His life one trace of sin. "Which of you convinces me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do you not believe me?" (John 8:46)

### **An Exchange**

We have learned that righteousness is obedience to the law. Now it is because of unrighteousness--disobedience to the law--that man is condemned. If by any means a man's whole life could be made to appear in perfect harmony with the law, it is evident that the man would be justified. It is also evident that if the sins of his life could be removed, his life would appear in harmony with the law of God.

Now this is just what is done. Christ's righteousness is declared for the remission--taking away--of those sins. As Christ's life is worth infinitely more than the lives of all the world, so through His death His righteousness may be made to take the place of the disobedience of all those who will have faith in Him.

We may say that an exchange is made; Christ takes upon himself the sins of all our past life, and in return lets His righteousness be counted as ours. When this is done for a man, the law can do no other than justify him. It demands perfect obedience in the life, and that is what it finds. It matters not to the law that the obedience which it finds in the man's life is not really his own; it is

counted as his own; and since the obedience is perfect, the law cannot condemn.

Christ suffered the penalty for the sins which the man actually committed:

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. ... Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief: when You shall make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." (Isaiah 53:6,10) "For He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21) "Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes you were healed." (1 Peter 2:24)

And thus God can be perfectly just and at the same time may justify a man who has sinned. But this can be done only for those who have faith in Christ's blood.

It must not be forgotten that we are now speaking only of the sins that are past. It is impossible that remission of sins could have reference to anything else, for that which does not exist cannot be taken away; and to justify a man for sins not yet committed, in other words, to grant indulgence for sins, would throw contempt on the law, and bring in anarchy and ruin.

And no sins are remitted, except of those who believe in Jesus. If any are Christ's, they are Abraham's seed: "And if you be Christ's,

then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."  
(Galatians 3:29)

And therefore, with him, their faith is imputed unto them for righteousness: "And the scripture was fulfilled which said, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God." (James 2:23)

### **Justification Honors the Law**

"Therefore, [says Paul,] we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." (Romans 3:28)

This does not mean that the law is ignored, and that a man who disregards the law can be justified. Nothing of the kind. There could be no justification in such a case; for justification has no connection with injustice, and to clear a guilty man--a violator of the law--is an act of injustice. The Lord says that: "[He] will not at all acquit the wicked." (Nahum 1:3)

And He does not; for the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

And when this is applied to an individual, as it is to all who have faith in it, it frees him from guilt, and then he must necessarily stand justified. But the man could not be justified if the law were left out of the account; for justification, as we have already learned, is: "a showing to be just or conformable to law."

But this will not be done for a man who does not acknowledge the justice of the law which condemns his sins, and, repenting of

them, promise obedience to the law. No just governor would pardon a man under any other circumstances.

Here is a man who has been convicted of theft; he petitions for a pardon, but unless he promises to reform, he will not be likely to get it. If he persists that he has a right to steal, and has no intention of reforming, nothing can secure his pardon.

Of course this is not a perfect parallel to the sinner pleading with God for forgiveness; for when a man receives pardon from an earthly ruler, his guilt remains the same as ever; but when he receives a pardon from God, the same blood which secures the pardon, takes away the sin.

The statement that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law, is only a summing up of Paul's argument, which we have already given. No amount of work will have the slightest effect in securing justification by the remission of past sins. That which is done, we cannot undo.

Nothing that we can do can alter the fact that we have sinned. Your past life has been full of sin, and you want to become free from the guilt of it; what can you do? Though you were able to keep the law without the slightest deviation, that would not remove a single sin. You can do nothing but "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 16:31)

He says: "Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden [with sin], and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)

The blood of Jesus Christ, and that alone, can cleanse from sin. So we conclude, with Paul, that: "A man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law." (Romans 3:28)

We have said that no work of ours, however perfect it may be, can atone for past transgressions; that even though we should be able to turn around and keep the law perfectly, that would not remove a single sin. As a matter of fact, however, it is impossible for the sinner to do any good work, even though it would be counted in his justification. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Romans 8:7) "The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that you cannot do the things that you would." (Galatians 5:17)

This means, of course, while we are serving the flesh, and out of Christ; for Christ says: "Without me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

This was said to those whose sins had been forgiven, and will certainly apply, with all its force, to those who have never known Christ. Christ says that: "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." (Matthew 15:19)

These are the works of the flesh (see the complete list in Galatians 5:19-21), and are what men do by nature. Men may have good desires, but they cannot do what they would. The law of God is so extensive and perfect in its requirements that the best efforts of fallen man, unassisted, must fall far short of it.

And this thought makes us understand still more clearly the statement that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law; for every act that the man performs before he comes to Christ, no matter how good his intentions may be, only sinks him the deeper in condemnation.

Not all our groans and tears,  
Nor works which we have done,  
Nor vows, nor promises, nor prayers,  
Can e'er for sin atone.

Relief alone is found  
In Jesus' precious blood;  
'Tis this that heals the mortal wound  
And reconciles to God.

--Benjamin Beddome, Hymn: Hope from the Gospel Only,  
1818.

And so the sinner, appalled at the multitude of his sins, which like a mountain upon his back well-nigh sink him into despair, having lost all confidence in himself, may sing:

Just as I am,--without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,  
O, Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am-and waiting not  
To rid my soul of one dark blot,  
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,  
O, Lamb of God, I come.

--Charlotte Elliott, Hymn: Just as I Am, Without One Plea.

--Signs of the Times, March 25, 1886.

## Chapter 20

### **Justification and Sanctification**

Having explained Romans 3:28, we are prepared to understand a parallel text that, without the explanation already

given, might be considered a difficult one. The text referred to is: "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets." (Romans 3:21)

The righteousness of God, as we have already learned, is a term applied to the ten commandments, or rather to that righteousness which the ten commandments enjoin. But the question arises, "If the righteousness of God is the perfect righteousness which the law demands, how can it be manifested without the law?"

#### **Dealing with Past Transgressions**

Let Paul explain for himself, as he does in the following verses: "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference; For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." (Romans 3:22-25)

By this we see that the righteousness of God which is manifested without the law, is simply the remission of sins that are past, for which no works of obedience on our part could make any satisfaction. Paul, speaking of Abraham, describes it as follows: "He

staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." (Romans 4:20-25) "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness." (James 2:23) "The same thing," says Paul, "will be done to us also, if we also believe."

The case, then, stands thus: The law demands perfect and unvarying obedience, but it speaks to all the world and finds none righteous; all have violated it, and all are condemned by it. (Romans 3:9,19) Present or future obedience will not take away past transgression, therefore the law cannot help us. But Christ is perfect righteousness, for in Him dwells "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (Colossians 2:9)

Now God says that He will impute the righteousness of Christ to every one who will fully believe on Him. Impute means, "to set to the account of." Therefore we are to understand that whenever we accept Christ, His righteousness is set to our account. Thus "the righteousness of God" is manifested in our past lives, even though we ourselves have never done a single act of righteousness. So we have the wonder of perfect obedience to the law, without a single righteous act on our part. The righteousness of God without the law-Christ's righteousness imputed to us.

## **The Roles of the Law**

But what is the law doing all this time? Has it relaxed its claims? Not at all. Paul says, "The righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law." (Romans 3:21)

The law stands by, and witnesses to the righteousness that is thus manifested in our past life. Whereas it before condemned us, now it justifies us, for in the righteousness that is imputed to us it can detect no flaw. It makes no difference to the law that the righteousness to which it witnesses is not the result of our own works; the righteousness is accounted as ours, and that satisfies the law.

Right here we may profitably note the force of: "Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." (Romans 5:20)

The "entering" of the law refers to the formal giving of it from Sinai. This will be readily seen from Romans 5:13-14, and has already been noted in our comments on that passage. (See the comments in Article 4 of this series, Jurisdiction of the Law) Before the giving of the law, from Sinai, it did not exist in written form in the world. The remains of the law "written in their hearts," and the instruction of men who, like Enoch, and Noah, walked with God were what the people had to depend on for their knowledge of right and wrong.

The law existed before that time, for sin was imputed to the people, and "Sin is not imputed where there is no law." (Romans 5:13)

But the law was given "that the offense might abound."  
(Romans 5:20)

The apostle does not mean that the law was given so that there might be more sin, but that it was given so that the sin which already existed might abound, that is, might appear greater than it did before. Paul expresses the exact meaning in another place when he says that sin, by the commandment, became "exceeding sinful."  
(Romans 7:13)

To illustrate: Here stands a glass of water; it does not look perfectly pure, yet it does not seem very impure. Now a rod is thrust down to the bottom of the glass and given a few vigorous turns, when, behold, the water at once becomes exceedingly foul. Did the rod make the water impure? No; the impurity was there all the time; the rod simply made it appear.

So there was sin in the world; but the law, when it was written on tables of stone, and copies could be multiplied in books, and scattered among the people, made the extreme hideousness of sin to appear. And why was this necessary? The answer is implied in the last clause of the verse: "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." (Romans 5:20)

Men could not be saved while defiled by sin, even though they did not realize its heinousness. So the law was brought close to them, to show them their deformity, and make them feel their need of help from some source outside of themselves. And this effect it had; for no matter how much their sins were made to abound, "grace did much more abound." (Romans 5:20)

Christ's righteousness was seen to be sufficient to cover all the sins of the past. With Wesley, the repentant sinner may sing: "Plenteous grace with Thee is found, Grace to cover all my sin;-- Charles Wesley, Hymn: Jesus, Lover of My Soul, 1740. and with David he can realize the blessedness of the man "whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered," (Psalm 32:1) and, "unto whom the Lord will not impute iniquity." (Romans 4:8)

We have seen that the law stands as a witness to the sinner's justification. This shows that no act of Christ has in any way robbed the law of its force. Indeed, without the existence of the law there could be no such thing as justification.

### **Sanctification: Present and Future Obedience**

Now what about the man's future relation to the law? It is evident that unless he keeps it he will again fall into condemnation. The man's faith secured his justification; but that justification was simply the "showing to be just, or conformable to law." His justification was simply pardon for having violated the law; it was an act by which another's righteousness was put in place of his unrighteousness. Now since "faith without works is dead," (James 2:20) it follows as a necessary conclusion, that if the man's faith was genuine (and if it were not he could not have been pardoned), it will now be proved by works of obedience. And therefore the characteristic of the justified man is that he keeps the law.

Of Abraham it is said that his faith was imputed to him for righteousness. But James takes the same subject up and says, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" (James 2:21)

This is no contradiction of Paul's statement in Romans 3:28; for James immediately adds: "Do you see how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness." (James 2:22-23)

By this we see that Abraham's faith could not have been imputed to him for righteousness but for the disposition to work. And since justification has reference to the law of God, it is evident that the works that make perfect the faith that secures justification, must be the works which the law requires. But this continued obedience is sanctification; for Christ prayed for His disciples: "Sanctify them through your truth; your word is truth." (John 17:17)

Paul says that God has chosen us to salvation "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth;" (2 Thessalonians 2:17) but that by which the Spirit acts is the word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit. "And take ... the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." (Ephesians 6:17)

Again Paul says: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Philippians 2:12)

But no one can accuse Paul of inconsistency; for he adds: "For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." (Philippians 2:13)

This is exactly in accord with our Saviour's words: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he that abides in me, and I in him, the

same brings forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing."  
(John 15:4-5)

Peter also bears the same testimony. He says: "Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that you love one another with a pure heart fervently." (1 Peter 1:22)

God's law is the truth, (Psalm 119:142) and to purify is to cleanse from guilt or defilement, to sanctify. So Peter's sentence is that we are sanctified by obeying the truth; but he adds that this is done "through the Spirit." Sanctification, then, is the result of obedience; but as obedience is not simply a momentary act, but the work of a lifetime, it follows that sanctification is not an instantaneous, but a progressive work.

A man is justified as soon as he exercises true faith in Christ; but the work of sanctification goes on as long as there is any truth for him to obey. And since a man, after he has been justified by faith, would fall into condemnation if he should refuse to do any duty that was presented to him, and can only retain his state of justification by continuing in obedience to the law, it may be said that sanctification is but continued justification. Each new duty only makes the performance of others possible, and so, "The path of the just is as the shining light that shines more and more unto the perfect day." (Proverbs 4:18) "Faith without works is dead;" (James 2:20) and on the other hand, obedience without faith is impossible, as is shown by our Saviour's words in John 15:4-5; also by the words of Paul, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." (Romans 8:8)

The man who is destitute of faith in Christ cannot keep the law, or do any act that is really good. In our best efforts there is so much

imperfection, that but for the continual imputation of Christ's righteousness to make up for our deficiencies, we should be lost. The best that we alone can do is bad. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." (Hebrews 11:6)

And thus we see the force of the words: "This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith." (1 John 5:4) "Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith." (Romans 3:27)

The redeemed saint will have no cause for boasting over the lost sinner. True, the law, when applied to their lives, reports perfection in the one case, and only sin in the other; but the saint cannot boast, for without Christ he would have been nothing. If Christ had not put His own righteousness upon him, he would be in as hopeless a condition as the sinner. And to all eternity the redeemed host will join with the heavenly choir in saying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." (Revelation 5:12) "That no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Corinthians 1:29-30) "And this is His name whereby He shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness." (Jeremiah 23:6)--Signs of the Times, April 1, 1886.

## Chapter 21

### **Christ the End of the Law**

In the preceding articles we have considered the fundamental principles of the law, and all its bearings. We have by no means exhausted the subject; for that would be impossible; neither have we referred to all the texts relating to it; but we have given an outline of:

- the nature of the law,
- its origin,
- its perpetuity,
- the extent of its jurisdiction, and
- the relation to it of both righteous and wicked.

By the principles of the law, which have already been enunciated, every text in the Bible that mentions the law may be explained; and bearing those principles in mind, we shall now proceed to consider the application of some texts that are too often regarded as antagonistic to the law.

Without a knowledge of the principles of the law, these texts may justly be considered as difficult; but with such knowledge, we find not only that they are in perfect harmony with those principles, but that they greatly strengthen the argument already made.

Right here, we will say that the task of "harmonizing" different portions of the Bible, is one which no man has to perform. The different portions of the Bible were harmonized by inspiration; all that the expositor has to do is to point out the harmony that already exists. In Romans 10 we read as follows: "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes." (Romans 10:4)

Before showing what this text means, it may be well to briefly show what it does not mean. It does not mean that Christ has put an end to the law because:

1. Christ himself said concerning the law, "I am not come to destroy." (Matthew 5:17)

2. The prophet said that instead of destroying it, the Lord would "magnify the law and make it honorable." (Isaiah 42:21)

3. The law was in Christ's own heart: "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do your will, O my God; yea, your law is within my heart." (Psalm 40:7-8)

4. And since the law is the righteousness of God, the foundation of His government, it could not by any possibility be abolished. "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." (Luke 16:17)

A reading of the verses preceding the one quoted should suggest its meaning. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their

own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." (Romans 10:1-3)

Bear in mind that "the righteousness of God" is His law: "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished. Harken unto me, you that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear not the reproach of men, neither be afraid of their revilings." (Isaiah 51:6-7)

We can see that Paul uses the term in this sense; for, without any break for explanation, he adds, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness." (Romans 10:4)

From these verses we learn that Paul, instead of teaching that the law has come to an end, is showing that Israel, through ignorance, had failed to realize the design of the law in securing righteousness.

What had caused this failure? Paul says it was because they were ignorant of God's righteousness, and went about to establish their own righteousness. They had such low views of the righteousness of God, as required by His law, that they thought they could make themselves righteous.

But, as we have already seen, all men are sinful, and while in the flesh cannot please God. "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." (Romans 8:8)

The only way in which men can appear as righteous, is to have "The righteousness ... which is by faith of Jesus Christ." (Romans 3:22)

When their faith is imputed to them for righteousness, they become, in Christ, new creatures: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

And thenceforth it is possible that with them all things shall be of God. But the Jews rejected Christ, and therefore failed to secure that righteousness which the law was designed to perfect in man. A comparison of Scripture texts will show that the view here outlined is the correct one.

The reader must know that the word "end" does not necessarily mean "termination." It is often used in the sense of design, object, or purpose. For instances where it is so used, see: "You have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." (James 5:11) "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." (John 18:37) "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living." (Romans 14:9) "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light." (Amos 5:18) "And He spoke a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." (Luke 18:1) "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." (Hebrews 13:7) "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." (1 Peter 1:9)

In reading these texts no one would get the idea that faith is ended, or that the Lord had ceased to exist. So in reading Romans 10:4, even without an explanation, one need not suppose that "end" means cessation of existence.

### **What Does It Mean?**

Now for a more detailed exposition of the text. In 1 Timothy, the same writer says: "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." (1 Timothy 1:5)

The word here rendered "charity" is often rendered "love," and is so rendered in this place in the New Version. In John 5, we read: "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." (John 5:3)

And Paul himself says that: "Love is the fulfilling of the law." (Romans 13:10)

In both these texts, the same word (agape) is used that occurs in 1 Timothy 1:5. Therefore we say that this text means, "Now the design of the commandment (or law) is that it should be kept."

Everybody will recognize this as a self-evident fact. But this is not the ultimate design of the law. In the verse following the one under consideration, Paul quotes Moses as saying of the law that: "The man that does those things shall live by them." (Romans 10:5)

Christ said to the young man, "If you will enter into life, keep the commandments." (Matthew 19:17)

Now since the design of the law was that it should be kept, or, in other words, that it should produce righteous characters, and the promise is that those who are obedient shall live, we may say that the ultimate design of the law was to give life. And in harmony with this thought are the words of Paul, that: "The law ... was ordained to life." (Romans 7:10)

But, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God," (Romans 3:23) and "the wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)

Thus it is impossible for the law to accomplish its design in making perfect characters and consequently giving life. When a man has once broken the law, no subsequent obedience can ever make his character perfect. And therefore the law which was ordained unto life, is found to be unto death. "And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." (Romans 7:10)

If we were to stop right here, with the law unable to accomplish its purpose, we should leave all the world under condemnation, and sentence of death. Now we shall see that Christ enables man to secure both righteousness and life. We read that we are "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Romans 3:24) "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1)

More than this, He enables us to keep the law: "For He [God] has made Him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

In Christ, therefore, it is possible for us to made perfect,--the righteousness of God,--and that is just what we would have been by

constant and unvarying obedience to the law. Again we read, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:1,3-4)

What could not the law do? It could not free a single guilty soul from condemnation. Why not? Because it was "weak through the flesh." There is no element of weakness in the law; the weakness is in the flesh. It is not the fault of a good tool that it cannot make a sound pillar out of a rotten stick.

The law could not cleanse a man's past record, and make him sinless; and poor, fallen man had no strength resting in his flesh to enable him to keep the law. And so God imputes to believers the righteousness of Christ, who was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, so that "the righteousness of the law" might be fulfilled in their lives. And thus Christ is the end of the law.

But life is promised to the obedient, and as Christ enables His people to obey the law, He thus secures to them eternal life. Paul says that: "[Christ has] brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (2 Timothy 1:10)

Christ himself says: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10) "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

And because Christ meets the end or design of the law which was ordained to life, He is called our life, as Paul says: "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with Him in glory." (Colossians 3:4)

To conclude, then, we have found that the design of the law was that it should give life because of obedience. All men have sinned, and been sentenced to death. But Christ took upon himself man's nature, and will impart of His own righteousness to those who accept His sacrifice, and finally, when they stand, through Him, as doers of the law, He will fulfill to them its ultimate object, by crowning them with eternal life.

And so we repeat, what we cannot too fully appreciate, that: "[Christ] is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Corinthians 1:30)--Signs of the Times, April 8, 1886.

## Chapter 22

### **Abolishing the Enmity**

Although we have shown by repeated arguments and texts of Scripture, that the law endures forever, and have shown that Christ did not come to relax any of its claims, but that He is the "end of the law," in that He enables sinners to keep it, and thus to secure the life to which the law was ordained, there is a text which to some may seem to be a contradiction, or which may at least cause confusion in their minds. That text, therefore, shall be our next study; it reads thus: "For He is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace." (Ephesians 2:14-15) "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable." (2 Timothy 3:16)

Therefore there can be no contradiction in the Bible, and the text just quoted cannot contradict those texts which say that the law cannot be abolished. Although a certain "law of commandments contained in ordinances" is spoken of as having been "abolished," even before we study it, our faith in the integrity of the Scriptures forces us to conclude that in this text a law is referred to, different from that of which Christ said, "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." (Luke 16:17)

Let us contrast certain expressions. That which is abolished is said to have been "enmity;" but Paul says: "Love works no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." (Romans 13:10)

And John says: "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5:3)

Certainly the same thing cannot be both love and enmity. Again Paul says: "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." (Romans 7:12)

Surely then it is not the law of God to which he applies the term "enmity." He also says: "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man." (Romans 7:22)

But he would not delight in that which was enmity; therefore we know that Ephesians 2:15 has no reference to the law of God, or ten commandments.

Go back now to the time when the law was given from Sinai. The record says that after God had spoken the ten commandments, "He added no more;" (Deuteronomy 5:22) and we have seen that all that God spoke from the mount on the day of the assembly, was written by Him on the two tables of stone, and that nothing but the ten commandments was so written. The people, however, could not know that God intended to speak no more than His own holy law, and they said to Moses: "Speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." (Exodus 20:19) "Go near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say; and speak unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto you." (Deuteronomy 5:27)

Accordingly God told Moses to say to the people, "Get into your tents again." (Deuteronomy 5:30) "And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was." (Exodus 20:21)

Moses was in the mount with God forty days, receiving instruction for the people; and the fact that the people received instruction through Moses, besides that which the Lord spoke to them directly, is thus noted in Nehemiah's prayer: "You came down also upon mount Sinai, and spoke with them from heaven, and gave them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And made known unto them your holy Sabbath, and commanded them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses your servant." (Nehemiah 9:13-14)

Those things which were given by the hand of Moses are recorded chiefly in Exodus, chapters 25-30, and in Leviticus. Among them were many burdensome ceremonies,-the requirement that every male should go up to Jerusalem three times in every year, circumcision, "diverse washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation." (Hebrews 9:10)

We say that these ceremonies were burdensome, for Peter himself said that they were a yoke, "which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear." (Acts 15:10)

Moreover, some of them, at least, were an "enmity," or a cause of enmity, between the Jews and Gentiles. The ceremony of circumcision, which was designed to serve as a line of demarcation between the Jews and the Gentiles, was especially the cause of much enmity. The Jews regarded it as a sure proof of their superior sanctity, and therefore looked with contempt upon the uncircumcised Gentiles; while the Gentiles in turn hated the Jews, and despised their circumcision, looking upon it as little different from a badge of slavery. Acts 11 indicates how the Jews regarded those who were uncircumcised. "And when Peter was come up to

Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, Saying, You went in to men uncircumcised, and did eat with them." (Acts 11:2-3)

This rite of circumcision was done away in Christ. It was given to Abraham as a sign or "seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised." (Romans 4:11)

Thus we see it was designed to mark a real separation, the separation which always exists between the righteous and the wicked. But when a Jew departed from God, his circumcision and separation from the Gentiles was only an outward form, a mockery. Paul assures us that real circumcision is "of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." (Romans 2:20)

God looks upon the heart, and demands that righteousness shall be from within, and not merely from without, as an outward sign. The man who is pure in heart is really separated from the world more completely than he could possibly be by any mere outward mark. And so, "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." (Galatians 6:15)

Thus this source of enmity, which really served as a barrier to the Gentiles, was taken away. We say it served as a barrier to the Gentiles, because, being uncircumcised, they were held to be rejected of God, and would naturally make less effort to become His followers. The Jews, also, in their sectional pride and vain confidence, were really separated from the true Israel. But when this cause of enmity was removed, both could be united in one body by the cross, and so find peace.

But after circumcision as an outward sign lost its force, the keeping of God's holy law still remained as a primary obligation. Said Paul: "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God." (1 Corinthians 7:19)

And the keeping of the commandments from the heart constitutes the true circumcision, "whose praise is ... of God." (Romans 2:20)

Among the "ordinances" there were also various sacrifices. In the 4th chapter of Leviticus we find an account of the sin-offerings. We cannot take time to go over the ground in detail, but simply refer the reader to that chapter, also Leviticus 6:25-30; 10:16-18, and chapter 16.

In the service for sin, an innocent animal was substituted for the sinner, whose sins were confessed over it, and it was slain. Either the flesh or the blood was carried within the sanctuary, and the sinner was forgiven. On the last day of the year, a goat was slain as a sin-offering for all the people; its blood was taken within the sanctuary, and its body was burned. In every sacrifice for sin, the sin was considered as laid upon the substitute as a whole, and it was entirely consumed. But these sacrifices did not atone for a single sin: "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." (Hebrews 10:4)

The only one who can remove sin is the Lamb of God. "The next day John saw Jesus coming unto him, and said, Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29) "[He] appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." (Hebrews 9:26)

On Him was laid "the iniquity of us all," (Isaiah 53:6) and, "[He] bore our sins in His own body on the tree." (1 Peter 2:24)

After Christ's sacrifice, those typical sacrifices that could not take away sin, were no longer required, as we read: "Wherefore, when He came into the world, He said, Sacrifice and offering You would not, but a body have You prepared me." (Hebrews 10:5)

And so it is literally true that: "in His flesh, [Christ] abolished the law of commandments contained in ordinances." (Ephesians 2:15)

So it is that we are required to eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, if we would have eternal life. "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoso eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, has eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, dwells in me, and I in him." (John 6:53-56)

One thought more. Where these ordinances were abolished "in the flesh," it was "to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace." (Ephesians 2:15)

And what alone can make peace? Let inspiration answer: "Great peace have they which love your law; and nothing shall offend them." (Psalm 119:165) "O that you had hearkened unto my commandments! then had your peace been as a river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea." (Isaiah 48:18)

Paul, also, speaking of those who have sinned (i.e., transgressed the law), says, "And the way of peace they have not known." (Romans 3:17)

Therefore we see that instead of the ten commandments of God being abolished "in His flesh," they "stand fast forever and ever," (Psalm 111:8) and are the bond of union of the "one new man;" they are the basis of the peace which both Jews and Gentiles who believe may have with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. And so both those who are near, and those who were afar off, become together members of "the household of God," (Ephesians 2:19) not settled on a new basis, but: "Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone." (Ephesians 2:20)--Signs of the Times, April 15, 1886.

## Chapter 23

### **The Handwriting of Ordinances**

"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." (Colossians 2:13-17)

This text, like Ephesians 2:15-16, is often misapplied; it cannot, however, be applied to those things contained in the ten commandments, unless the texts which show the enduring nature of that law are either forgotten or ignored.

The ten commandments were graven on tables of stone, by the finger of God. "And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables." (Exodus 32:15-16) "And the Lord spoke unto you out of the midst of the fire: you heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only you heard a voice. And He declared unto you His covenant, which He commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and He wrote them upon two tables of stone." (Deuteronomy 4:12-13)

Now the Bible is a consistent book, and has respect to the fitness of things; but it is evident enough that there would be no fitness in speaking of "blotting out" something that was chiseled in the rock. Neither is it an appropriate figure to speak of nailing tables of stone to a cross.

Therefore even if the Bible did not assure us that the commandments of God "stand fast forever and ever," (Psalm 111:8) we should know that the apostle has in this text no reference whatever to the law of God. The things which God gave through Moses were written in a book, and only in a book; consequently it is perfectly appropriate to speak of blotting them out. If it be objected that the ten commandments were also written by Moses in a book, we reply that this makes no difference; since the ten commandments were engraved in stone, they could not be blotted out even though all the books in the world were destroyed.

The fact that the thing here spoken of came to an end by the cross of Christ, should cause us to conclude that the same thing is here spoken of that is spoken of in Ephesians 2:15-16 as having been abolished "in His flesh." In this text it is said to have been "contrary;" in the other it is called "enmity;" and Peter called it a burdensome yoke. This, Paul says, was "against us." But the law of God is holy, and just, and good in its requirements.

We conclude, therefore, that the "handwriting of ordinances," which was nailed to the cross of Christ, was the Levitical law. The ceremonies were typical of the sacrifice of Christ, and when that sacrifice was actually made on the cross, the types at the same time ceased.

We notice that because these ordinances have been blotted out, therefore we are not to be judged concerning certain things. This indicates that those things were part of the ordinances. Paul enumerates them as meats and drinks, feast days, new moons, and sabbaths; "Which are a shadow of things to come." (Colossians 2:17)

The very enumeration of these things shows us that the law of God is not here under discussion, for none of these things formed a part of it. It is true that the fourth commandment is concerning the Sabbath; but the Sabbath of the fourth commandment dates from creation, (Compare Exodus 20:8-11; Genesis 2:2-3) before the fall of man made the coming of Christ a necessity; while the sabbaths mentioned in Colossians were shadows of things in the work of Christ. These sabbaths are given in Leviticus 23, in the ceremonial law. They occurred only once a year, and were:

- The first and seventh days of Unleavened Bread; (Leviticus 23:5-8)
- The day of Pentecost; (Leviticus 23:15-21)
- The first day of the seventh month, being the memorial of Blowing of Trumpets; (Leviticus 23:24-25)
- The tenth day of the seventh month, or the Day of Atonement; (Leviticus 23:27-32) and,
- The first and eighth days of the feast of Tabernacles. (Leviticus 23:34-36)

All these days, as is seen at once in the case of the Passover and the Day of Atonement, were feast days typifying certain parts of Christ's mediatorial work for sinners. Of them the Lord said: "These are the feasts of the Lord, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord a burnt offering, and a meat offering, a sacrifice, and drink offerings, everything upon his day." (Leviticus 23:37)

Notice: The Lord said to Moses, "These are the feast days ... which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations." (Leviticus 23:37)

These are some of the things which God gave by the hand of Moses; (Nehemiah 9:14) but the Sabbath of the fourth commandment was proclaimed by God's own voice. This distinction is plainly marked, for after enumerating the ceremonial sabbaths which were to be observed by the people, the Lord added: "Beside the Sabbaths of the Lord." (Leviticus 23:38)

This shows beyond all question that the sabbaths which ceased when the "handwriting of ordinances" was blotted out, were the ceremonial sabbaths, and consequently that it was not the moral law, but the ceremonial law, which constituted that "handwriting of ordinances."

In addition to these proofs, it may not be amiss to cite the following statements of learned commentators, to show that the same proofs were conclusive to their minds also. Says Dr. Clark: "The apostle speaks here in reference to some particulars of the handwriting of ordinances, which had been taken away, viz., the distinction of meats and drinks, what was clean and what unclean, according to the law; and the necessity of observing certain holy

days or festivals, such as the new moons and particular sabbaths, or those which should be observed with more than ordinary solemnity. ... There is no intimation here that the Sabbath was done away, or that its moral use was suspended, by the introduction of Christianity. I have shown elsewhere that, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy," is a command of perpetual obligation."

Dr. Barnes also says on the same point: "There is no evidence, from this passage, that he would teach that there was no obligation to observe any holy time, for there is not the slightest reason to believe that he meant to declare that one of the ten commandments had ceased to be binding on mankind. If he had used the word in the singular number--"the Sabbath," it would then, of course, have been clear that he meant to affirm that that commandment ceased to be binding, and that a Sabbath was no longer to be observed. But the use of the term in the plural number, and the connection, show that he had his eye on the great number of days which were observed by the Hebrews as festivals, as a part of their ceremonial and typical law, and not on the moral law, or the ten commandments. No part of the moral law, no one of the ten commandments, could be spoken of as "a shadow of things to come." These commandments are, from the nature of moral law, of perpetual and universal obligation.

A few words now concerning the different relations which the people sustained toward the moral law and toward the ceremonial law. The moral law was of primary obligation, and it was binding upon all men alike. The Gentile as well as the Jew was under obligation to worship God, to keep His Sabbath, and to abstain from murder, adultery, and theft. It was the moral law which convicted men of sin, (Romans 7:7) and which showed all the world to be guilty before God. (Romans 3:9)

The ceremonial law, on the other hand, was not of primary obligation. Having reference only to the mediatorial work of Christ, it had no existence before man fell. Moreover it was not of universal obligation. It would have been thought sacrilegious for an uncircumcised person, an idolator, or an atheist, to attempt to engage in the Jewish ceremonies. Yet whenever a Gentile accepted the true religion, he was, through circumcision, admitted on an equal footing with the Jew. Where, then, in individual experience, did the ceremonial law come in? Read what Paul says of Abraham, in this connection: "We say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised." (Romans 4:9-11)

From this we learn, what none will deny, that circumcision and its kindred ceremonies, while they pointed forward to the real work of Christ, did not precede faith in Christ. They were the means by which the people signified that faith which was necessary before they could participate in them. To the man who had never heard of Christ, those ceremonies were meaningless; but to the one who had faith in Christ and His promised work for man, they were a beautiful means of expressing that faith.

The moral law, being of primary and universal obligation, would be impressed by the Holy Spirit on the heart of a heathen. By it he would see himself to be a sinner. Earnestly seeking freedom from condemnation, he would find that the Messiah for whose coming the pious Jews looked with longing hearts, was the only one who could take away his sin.

Joyfully seizing upon this hope, he would separate himself from his heathen associates; by circumcision he would signify the putting off of his own sinful habits; and henceforth, so long as he retained his faith in Christ, he would gladly manifest that faith, and with each manifestation thereof quicken it into renewed activity, by celebrating the ordinances which prefigured the promised sacrifice and atonement of Christ.

But when the reality came, the types ceased. Not so the moral law, the ten commandments of God. Being the foundation of God's Government, there was nothing in them of a fleeting or shadowy nature. They still remain of primary, universal, and eternal obligation. They still convict of sin; and he who by them is convinced of his need of One who can save from sin, may still come to a Saviour who has suffered for sin, and may obtain pardon.

Through the ordinances of the Lord's house,--baptism and the Lord's Supper,--he may show his faith in a sacrifice already made, until his promised redemption is consummated by the return of his Lord; and then from Sabbath to Sabbath he may worship before the Lord, and see His face; and the law, which stands fast forever and ever, will witness to his loyalty to the Creator.--Signs of the Times, April 22, 1886.

## Chapter 24

### **The Law and the Gospel**

The law of the Father and the gospel of the Son are not antagonistic elements. Instead of the former being superseded by the latter, it is honored, magnified, and established by it. The plan of salvation was devised not to abolish the law, but that "[God] might be just, and the justifier of him which believes in Jesus." (Romans 3:26)

We know that man is a moral being, under the domain of law and directly responsible to his Creator for all his acts. John tells us that in prophetic vision, he "saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." (Revelation 20:12)

And again, we are told that: "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Romans 14:12)

Nor are we left it in any uncertainty as to the standard of the judgment to which we are all hastening; the wise man says: "Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)

While the master himself said to the young man, "If you will enter into life, keep the commandments." (Matthew 19:17)

But, "Who then can be saved?" (Matthew 19:25)

How can any escape death, the wages of sin, "For all have sinned?" (Romans 3:23)

And because of what the law says every mouth is stopped and all the world is guilty before God. (Romans 3:19) The question is answered in those matchless words of our Saviour: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

And with Paul every humble, trusting soul may exclaim, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 7:25)

And this because there is "no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:1) "For He [God] has made Him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Or, as the apostle expresses it elsewhere, God sent His "Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin [margin, "by a sacrifice for sin"], condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:3-4)

And all this agrees perfectly with the words of our Saviour: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of

these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven [Campbell's translation, "of no esteem in the sight of Heaven"]: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven." (Matthew 5:17-19)

But let every soul that has named the name of Christ remember "That no flesh should glory in His [God's] presence. But of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glories, let him glory in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 1:29-31) "For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." (Philippians 2:13)--Signs of the Times, March 17, 1887.

## Chapter 25

### **Exposition of 2 Corinthians 3:7-11**

Several questions have of late been asked us upon 2 Corinthians 3:7-11. As that is a passage which those who are striving to teach the law often find difficult to explain, and which enemies of truth use with great confidence as being opposed to the law, we will try to give a simple scriptural exposition of it.

The fifth and sixth verses of the chapter read as follows: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also has made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter kills, but the spirit gives life." (2 Corinthians 3:5-6)

It will be noticed that the last clause of verse 5 is an answer to the question, "Who is sufficient for these things?" asked in verse 16 of the preceding chapter. The subject which is under consideration is the Christian ministry, as is seen by verse 6, and the first verse of chapter 4. "Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not." (1 Corinthians 4:1) The apostle is showing its excellence, and in so doing contrasts it with the ministry of the old covenant.

The word "testament" in verse 6, means "covenant," and the statement is that we are made ministers of the new covenant; "not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter kills, but the spirit gives life." (2 Corinthians 3:6)

Many people seem to have the idea that in this verse Paul is contrasting the two testaments or covenants. The old covenant they

call the letter, and the new covenant the spirit. But one who reads the verse carefully cannot fail to see that this is an error. The old covenant is not referred to till we reach the seventh verse.

Paul's statement is simply to the effect that he and his associates were ministers of the spirit of the new covenant, and not of its letter; for the new covenant has its letter as well as the old. On this point Dr. Clarke makes the following pertinent comment: "Every institution has its letter as well as its spirit; as every word must refer to something of which it is the sign or signifier. The gospel has both its letter and its spirit, and multitudes of professing Christians, by resting in the letter, receive not the life which it is calculated to impart. Water, in baptism, is the letter that points out the purification of the soul; they who rest in this letter are without this purification; and dying in that state, they die eternally. Bread and wine in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, are the letter; the atoning efficacy of the death of Jesus, and the grace communicated by this to the soul of the believer, are the spirit. Multitudes rest in this letter, simply receiving these symbols without reference to the atonement or to their guilt; and thus lose the benefit of the atonement and the salvation of their souls. ... It may be safely asserted that the Jews in no period of their history ever rested more in the letter of their law than the vast majority of Christians are doing in the letter of their gospel. Unto multitudes of Christians Christ may truly say, 'You will not come unto me that you may have life.'"

In the above quotation it is shown that the letter of the new covenant kills; but the reason why it kills will be made plain after we have made a brief comparison of the two covenants. These two covenants with their ministrations are brought to view in contrast in verses 7 and 8, which read thus: "But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of

Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?" (2 Corinthians 3:7-8)

In this verse the old covenant is called the "ministration of death." Why it was so called is very apparent to one who understands what the old covenant was. We will state it briefly. Before the Lord gave the ten commandments from Mount Sinai, He said to the Jews: "You have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak unto the children of Israel." (Exodus 19:4-6)

On the third day after this, the Lord spoke the ten commandments in the hearing of all the people: "And He added no more. And He wrote them in two tables of stone." (Deuteronomy 5:22)

Then Moses went up to the Lord in the mount, and the Lord gave to him precepts growing out of the ten commandments. (See Exodus 21-23) The confirmation of the covenant, the preliminaries of which are given in Exodus 19:5-8, is related in Exodus 24:3-8. There learn that, "Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord has said will we do." (Exodus 24:3)

After this, "Moses wrote all the words of the Lord;" (Exodus 24:4) and after he had built an altar and offered sacrifices, and read in the audience of the people, they said, "All that the Lord has said will we do, and be obedient." (Exodus 24:7)

Then, "Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold, the blood of the covenant, which the Lord has made with you concerning all these words." (Exodus 24:8)

Thus was the covenant confirmed. We learn from this that the old covenant was simply an agreement between God and the children of Israel, concerning the commandments of God. The people on their part promised faithfully to keep the commandments, and the Lord promised to make of them a great nation.

In connection with this covenant there were "ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary." (Hebrews 9:1)

This sanctuary is described in Exodus 25, 26, 27, and 30, and the principal "ordinances of divine service," are described in Exodus 29:38-42, and Leviticus, chapters 4 and 16. With these facts before us, we may understand why the ministration of the first covenant was called a "ministration of death."

1. In this covenant the people had made an explicit agreement to keep the law of God.

2. By this law is the knowledge of sin, (Romans 3:20) "for sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4)

3. The "ordinances of divine service" connected with the first covenant were for sin; but Paul tells us (Heb. 10:4) that: "It is not

possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." (Hebrews 10:4)

Those "ordinances of divine service" were only "a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things," (Hebrews 10:1) and therefore the sacrifices which the people offered had no power to make them perfect. Therefore,

4. All who had to do with the old covenant alone were condemned to death, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God;" (Romans 3:23) "and the wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)

There was in the old covenant no provision for the forgiveness of sins; therefore the ministration of that old covenant, which was performed by earthly priests, was, so far as their work extended, the ministration of death. Only the perfect can have life, and their ministration made nothing perfect.

It is true that during the time of the ministration of the old covenant, sins were forgiven, (Leviticus 4:26,31,35) and this forgiveness was real, but it was obtained solely by virtue of faith in the promised sacrifice of Christ, and not because of anything in the old covenant. Paul says of Christ, that: "He is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." (Hebrews 9:15)

Thus we see that when sins committed under the first covenant were forgiven, they were forgiven by virtue of the second covenant.

Some stumble over the first clause of 2 Corinthians 3:7, "The ministration of death, written and engraven in stones," (2 Corinthians 3:7) but the Scriptures furnish means for the complete exposition of this. Paul cannot mean that the ministration was written and engraven in stones, for that would be impossible, because the ministration was the service of the priests. Then it must be that he means that death was written and engraven in stones. But some will say, "This makes nonsense of the text."

Let us see. It is very easy to ascertain what was written and engraven in stone. Exodus 31 says that the Lord "gave to Moses, when He had made an end of communing with him upon Mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God." (Exodus 31:18) "And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand. The tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables." (Exodus 32:15-16)

These two tables were broken, and after Moses had, by the command of the Lord, made two other tables, he said, "And He [the Lord] wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the Lord spoke unto you in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, in the day of the assembly." (Deuteronomy 10:4)

These texts show that it was the ten commandments, and the ten commandments alone, that were written and engraven in stones; and therefore by the word "death," in 2 Corinthians 3:7, Paul must refer to the ten commandments.

But is it allowable to speak of the ten commandments as

"death"? Are they death to anybody? It certainly is allowable, for they are death to all men, because all have sinned, and: "the wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)

The law is the cause of death to every sinner that shall perish, and so by metonymy (Metonymy: the substitution of the name of an attribute or adjunct for that of the thing meant) it is called death. In like manner the sons of the prophets said of the poisonous gourds, "There is death [i.e., a cause of death] in the pot;" (2 Kings 4:40) and the Lord said that "The tree of the field is man's life [sustainer of life]." (Deuteronomy 20:19)

So when Paul describes his conviction as a sinner, he says of the law, "And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." (Romans 7:10)

Thus we find that in every case of the word, the ministration of the old covenant was "the ministration of death." We have found then, that:

1. The law, which was the basis of the covenant, was death to all, and
2. The ministration concerning that violated law offered no relief, but in itself tended to death.

Notwithstanding all this, there was a wonderful glory connected with the old covenant and its service. The giving of the law was attended with glory the like of which has never been seen on earth before or since, and will not be until the Lord shall come in the

glory of His Father with all His angels. When Moses returned from the mount, his face was so glorified that the people could not look at it; and the glory of the Lord was present in the sanctuary to so great a degree that the priests were forced to obscure it with a cloud of incense, lest they should die.

Now let us briefly outline the new covenant. Paul says that this was "established upon better promises." (Hebrews 8:6)

Its terms are found in Hebrews 8:8-12, which reads thus: "For finding fault with them, He said, Behold, the days come, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, says the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." (Hebrews 8:8-12)

We find here the same condition as in the old covenant,--the people are to obey the law of God. But this covenant is established on "better promises" than the first, in that the Lord promises to forgive their sins, to write the law in their hearts, and to remember their iniquities no more. These things are all accomplished by virtue of Christ, who is the mediator of the new covenant. (Hebrews 8:6; 9:15) "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin,"

(1 John 1:7) by securing the remission of past sins, (Romans 3:24-25) and enabling us to walk in harmony with the law. (Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 2:10; Hebrews 13:20-21)

The law, then, is the basis of both covenants; hence it could not be done away with the old covenant, else there could be no new covenant. The terms of the new covenant leave no doubt on this point, and Christ's connection with it brings the fact out still more clearly.

Thus Christ is the minister of this new covenant (Hebrews 8:1-2) and is now performing the ministration in the true sanctuary in Heaven. (Hebrews 9:24) His ministration has reference to the law, for He came to save sinners, (1 Timothy 1:15) and He is offering His blood to save men from sin. (Romans 3:24; 1 John 1:7; Matthew 1:21) This redemption we get through faith, (Romans 3:24) and faith establishes the law. (Romans 3:31) The law itself, having been violated, brings death; Christ redeems us from its curse, (Galatians 3:13) and thus becomes our life. (Colossians 3:4) Now note the contrast between the two covenants:

1. The first had the ministration of death, because everything connected with it tended to death; the violated law was death to the sinner, and the earthly ministration freed no one from that condemnation.

2. The second covenant has the ministration of the Spirit, because "the Lord is that Spirit," and "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Corinthians 3:17) and life. (Galatians 6:8)

But although there is no death in the second covenant, there is in the rejection of it, for the law is still death to sinners, and all who are

opposed to Christ are sinners, and condemned to death; so Paul says that the letter of the new covenant kills. The reason is that holding the mere letter of the new covenant,--the performance of the gospel ordinances while not receiving Christ in the heart,--is really a rejection of Christ.

Of the Lord's Supper, Paul says that he who does not discern the Lord's body, eats and drinks damnation to himself. (1 Corinthians 11:9) He is in the same condition as though he had never heard of the new covenant. But in every case, whether of the sinner under the old covenant, or of one who rejects the new, it is the law that causes his death.

In the text under consideration Paul contrasts the two ministrations as to glory. If the ministration which could not cleanse from sin, was glorious, the ministration of the Spirit, which gives freedom from sin, must be more glorious. "If the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more does the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory." (2 Corinthians 3:9)

And so much more glorious is the ministration of the second covenant than that of the first, that in comparison the first covenant seems to have had no glory. Why the ministration of the second covenant should be so much more glorious than that of the first, is because it is established upon "better promises," and Christ is its minister. "For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remains is glorious." (2 Corinthians 3:11)

Now what was done away? The answer must be that it is that which "was glorious." Verse 9 states that it was the ministration of condemnation that was glorious. Then it must be the ministration of condemnation that was done away; that which remains is the

ministration of the Spirit. By no possibility can verse 11 be made to refer to the law, because it contrasts something done away with something that remains.

And we have found that the law is the basis of both covenants, and therefore it cannot have been done away; but the ministration of the old covenant as well as the covenant itself was done away, as was indicated by the fading glory upon the countenance of Moses.

But it needs no abstract reasoning to show that it is the tabernacle service, and that alone, to which the apostle refers in verse 11 as being "done away," for he says, "If that which is done away was glorious," (2 Corinthians 3:11) showing by the "if" that he had before called attention to something glorious; and the only thing which he has so designated in this connection, is the ministration of death. (2 Corinthians 3:7)

We think that any reader who carefully follows this brief exposition will be able to see for himself, on reading 2 Corinthians 3:7-11, that the apostle is simply contrasting the glory of the service of the two covenants, and that the law of God is not under consideration at all, except by an incidental allusion which goes to show its permanent character.--Signs of the Times, June 2, 1887-- This article was also published again as two articles: August 5 & 12, 1889, and again on January 5 & 12, 1891. There was no change in the contents.

## Chapter 26

### **What Condemns Men?**

Solomon, the man to whom God gave wisdom such as none ever had before or since his time, sums up everything as follows: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)

There is a very close connection between these two verses. The statement in verse 14 depends upon that in verse 13. To "Fear God and keep His commandments ... is the whole duty of man;" (Ecclesiastes 12:13) and the necessity of performing this duty is enforced by the statement that: "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing." (Ecclesiastes 12:14)

From these verses, then, we learn:

1. That the ten commandments contain the whole duty of man; there is no duty outside of them;
2. That the ten commandments are the standard by which men shall be judged; for they are to be judged according to what they have done, and the ten commandments is what they are required to do;
3. That the Judgment will take into account every work, and every secret thing; and

4. That therefore the ten commandments cover every work and every secret thing, that is, every thought.

From the nature of the law of God we know that it must of necessity cover every work or thought for which it is possible for God to call men to account:

1. It contains the whole duty of man.

2. The law is perfect: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." (Psalm 19:7)

If it is perfect, the man who obeys it strictly must also be perfect, and God requires nothing more than this. "Be therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:48)

3. Above all, it is the statement of God's character, which is perfect righteousness. God himself calls His law "my righteousness": "My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and my arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on my arm shall they trust. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished. Hearken unto me, you that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear not the reproach of men, neither be afraid of their revilings." (Isaiah 51:5-7)

4. It is the will of God. "Behold, you are called a Jew, and rest in the law, and make your boast of God, And know His will, and

approve the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law." (Romans 2:17-18)

Now since all God requires of men, in order that He may admit them into His eternal kingdom, is that they should do His will: "Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 7:21) therefore there can be no duty for man outside of the ten commandments. It is utterly impossible to conceive of any sin which is not forbidden by some one of the commandments.

When this statement is made, people sometimes cite the case of the ancient Israelites, who were required to bring offerings and make sacrifices for sin. On the day of atonement an offering was to be made for the whole congregation, to atone for the sins of all the people; and it was declared that whoever should not afflict his soul on that day should be cut off from among the people.

Now it is asked which one of the ten commandments was violated by the man who refused to regard the day of atonement; and the idea intended to be conveyed by the questioner is that there are moral duties outside of the ten commandments.

Again we are cited to the ordinance of baptism as something which the Lord requires, but which the commandments say nothing about. Both these objections are the same, and are covered by the question which we have been asked, "What commandment does a man violate by not having faith in Christ?"

We think it can be shown that although death will be the portion of those who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, (2

Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 4:17) their destruction comes primarily and solely because they have not kept the commandments.

In Romans 6 we read that: "The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)

Wherever there is death there must have been sin, for without sin there is no death. But, "Sin is the transgression of the law," (1 John 3:4) and therefore it is certain that all who shall be "punished with everlasting destruction," (2 Thessalonians 1:9) will be punished because they have broken the law. But the law to which the apostle refers is the ten commandments, for Paul says that it was only the law which says, "You shall not covet," (Romans 7:7) that convicted him of sin. We are also told that: "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) "Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Romans 5:12) "There is none righteous, no, not one." (Romans 3:10)

All men then are condemned to death, and condemned solely by the law of God. When Christ was upon earth, He was not acting as judge, but as reconciler, and therefore He did not condemn sinners. He did not come to condemn, but to save. He himself said: "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believes on Him is not condemned; but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:17-18)

This being true, it follows that nothing which pertains to Christ's work of saving men, can condemn them. Christ came to save the world, not to condemn the world. Therefore nothing in His work of saving the world can condemn the world.

Let the reader bear in mind the reason why Christ did not come to condemn. It was not because He had any sympathy for sin, but because He came to save. Now the very fact that He came to save, shows that they were lost. They had violated the law of God, and consequently were "condemned already." (John 3:18)

The ancient sacrifices, like baptism and the Lord's Supper, were connected with Christ's work of saving men. They were part of the gospel. Men who are "condemned already" may be justified by believing in Jesus. "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believes in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith." (Romans 3:24-27)

Christ has died, and we are saved by faith in Him. Our faith in Him brings strength to overcome: "For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith." (1 John 5:4)

But first we must have the "remission of sins that are past," (Romans 3:25) which is given in return for simple faith in Christ's sacrifice. Now all the ancient sacrifices of the Jews were simply means by which they showed their faith in the Messiah, whose blood could take away sin. In like manner baptism and the Lord's Supper are ceremonies by which we show our faith in Christ's death and resurrection.

Someone may say that many of the Jews did not understand the full meaning of their sacrifices, and did not fully understand the work of Christ. Very true, and so thousands of professed Christians do not understand the full meaning of baptism and the Lord's Supper; yet the fact remains that these ceremonies are for the purpose of manifesting faith in Christ, and the object for which they were designed is not affected in the least by the ignorance of any who may use them.

From the above, it will readily be seen that a refusal to offer sacrifices, or to take part in the exercise of the atonement day, indicated a lack of faith in Christ as the Saviour of sinners. Since Christ has ordained that men shall show their faith in Him, if they have any, by the ordinances of the gospel, it follows that those who reject those ordinances, do so because they reject Christ and His sacrifice.

In other words, they refuse pardon and salvation. All such, without any doubt, will suffer destruction; but it must be remembered that the penalty which they suffer is not as a punishment for failure to comply with the provisions of the gospel, but for the sins which they have committed, from which they might have been freed by accepting the gospel.

Let us illustrate this by something which is more common. Here is a murderer who is under sentence of death. He is told that the Governor will pardon him if he will acknowledge his guilt and make application for pardon, promising, of course, to obey the law in the future. But he refuses to do this, and the law is allowed to take its course, and the man is hanged.

Now why is the man hanged? Is he hanged because he refused to sue for pardon? Of course not. He is hanged for the murder. There is no law saying that a man must apply for pardon, and making death the penalty of refusal, but there is a law against murder, and death is the penalty for its violation. Whoever commits murder is condemned, and is subject to the penalty.

If he is hanged, even though a pardon has been offered and rejected, he is hanged solely for the murder. No part of the penalty is inflicted because he refused the pardon, although every particle of the penalty would have been remitted if he had accepted the pardon.

Carry the illustration a little farther: Here are two murderers in their cells awaiting execution. Both are equally guilty; their crime is the same. Now suppose that pardon is freely offered to one, but not to the other. The one who has been offered pardon refuses it, and both he and the one that had no pardon offered him are hanged.

Now which is the guiltier man of the two? When they were put in their cells, both had the same degree of guilt. Has the one who refused to be pardoned acquired additional guilt by that refusal? Not by any means. If he is hanged, he is hanged for precisely the same reason that the other one is,--because he has broken the law.

So it is with the sinner in his relation to the law of God. He is "condemned already." Now Christ comes, offering pardon; if the sinner accepts it, he may be saved; but if he refuses pardon, then the curse of the law, death, is allowed to fall upon him.

God invites men to be saved, but he has no law to compel them to be pardoned. The refusal to receive the pardon is not that for which men are destroyed, but it is the sins which they committed

and which condemned them even before the way of salvation was made known to them.

Now if it is borne in mind that a failure to comply with the provisions of the gospel, whether in the so-called old dispensation or in the new, is simply a refusal to receive the pardon which the gospel brings, it will be seen that the fact that men were cut off for not afflicting their souls on the day of atonement, is no evidence whatever that the death penalty is inflicted for anything save violation of the ten commandments. As Christ said, "He that believes not is condemned already." (John 3:18) "Sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 4:3) "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

Not merely have all men broken the law as a whole, but all men have broken every portion of the law, as it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one." (Romans 3:10-12)

We read also that: "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." (Romans 14:23)

Therefore if we were asked, "What commandment does a man violate if he doesn't have faith in Christ?" we should reply that he breaks them all, or rather that he is a breaker of all of them, and that his punishment will be inflicted for such violation and not for his lack of faith.

Once more: Sin is active and positive. Failure to have faith is not an act at all. It is the absence of action. It is a passive condition,

which leaves him exposed to punishment for sin, but it is not of itself a sin for which he is to be punished.

But enough has been said to make the point clear, that violation of the law of God, and that alone, brings punishment. Let no one think that we lightly regard the ordinances of the gospel. We do not. No one can lightly regard them if he has any just conception of the law of God.

But they are not primary duties. The punishment which will be inflicted upon the finally impenitent will be death, just what would have been inflicted upon man if the gospel had never been introduced. The gospel, with its ordinances, furnishes the way by which man may escape the wages of his sins, and therefore it is of the most vital importance.

To those who imagine that a belief that men are punished only for violation of the moral law must be at least a partial ignoring of the gospel, the following words are in place: "And do you think, O man, that judges them which do such things, and do the same, that you shall escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? But after your hardness and impenitent heart treasure up unto yourself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds." (Romans 2:3-6)--Signs of the Times, June 30, 1887.

## Chapter 27

### **The Relation of the World to God**

The relation which men sustain to God is the thing that above all others should be understood, and which is understood the least. Not only does the world in general fail to understand the matter, and feel perfectly indifferent over it, but many professed Christians, and even teachers of religion, have very crude ideas upon the subject.

This thought was brought to mind very forcibly by a sentence in a sermon by Rev. Phillips Brooks, D.D., which was published in the Christian Union. It was this: "The world is not under law, but under grace."

The context showed that this statement was meant to be taken literally, and not to convey the idea that the grace of God is held out to the world. It is a parallel to the teaching which is so common, about "the Fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man." We propose, therefore, as briefly as possible, to show just how the world does stand related to God.

#### **God is Not the Father of All**

In the first place, we will say that God is not the Father of all people who are in the world. God is the Creator of all, the Judge of all, and if sin had not entered into the world, He would be the Father of all; but now the mass of mankind have a far baser parentage.

Adam was the son of God. (Luke 3:38) While he was sinless, God was at once his Father and his King. But when he listened to the voice of the tempter, and deliberately [for he was not deceived,

(1 Timothy 2:14) ] did the bidding of Satan, he yielded to Satan the principality--the earth--which had been intrusted to him, and forsook his allegiance to God.

It is sin that separates from God. (Isaiah 59:12) Jesus said to the wicked Jews who claimed God for their Father: "You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do." (John 8:44)

Again in the explanation of the parable of the wheat and tares, Jesus said: "The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one." (Matthew 13:38)

In these two texts sinners are directly charged with being the children of the devil.

### **By Nature Children of Wrath**

The apostle Paul makes the same point, and says that he himself was once a member of the same family. He says: "And you has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience; Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." (Ephesians 2:1-3)

"By nature the children of wrath." This fact answers the cavil that people often make against the destruction of the wicked, saying that God will not destroy His own children. No, He will not.

"The wrath of God [comes only] upon the children of disobedience," (Ephesians 5:6) and all are by nature the children of disobedience, and consequently of wrath, since it is in the nature of man to sin,--to obey Satan rather than God. Said Christ: "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evileye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." (Mark 7:21-22)

And Paul says: "The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him." (1 Corinthians 2:14)

Then since this is the nature of, not one man or a few men, but of all mankind; since "the whole world lies in wickedness," (1 John 5:19) and the children of disobedience are the children of wrath, how can any escape the wrath of God, which brings destruction? Simply by becoming the children of God, since God will never destroy His children; for "Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them thatfear Him." (Psalm 103:13)

In the family of God there is no wrath, for only "the peacemakers ... shall be called the children of God." (Matthew 5:9)

### **Children of God by Adoption**

But that which proves most conclusively that men are not by nature the children of God, is the fact that they become such by adoption. Says Paul: "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons,

God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore you are no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." (Galatians 4:4-7)

Read the same thing in: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." (Romans 8:14-17)

Natural children are heirs without adoption; therefore we say that the fact that all who are the children of God become so only by adoption, shows that there are no natural children of God.

And how do men become the children of God? By receiving the Spirit of God, which is also the Spirit of Christ, which makes them like Christ, and consequently heirs with Him. This Spirit is given through the mercy of God, to those who exercise faith, as Paul says: "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; "That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus 3:4-7)

## **All the World Under Law**

But what has this to do with deciding whether the world is, or is not, under the law? It has everything to do with it, settling the question completely, and showing that all men are by nature under the law, and that only the sons of God are under grace.

Notice carefully: The Spirit of God is the pledge of our adoption as sons of God; (Romans 8:16) it is "the Spirit of adoption. ... For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Romans 8:15,14)

With this read: "But if you be led of the Spirit, you are not under the law." (Galatians 5:18)

The obvious conclusion from this text and the context is that those who are not led by the Spirit are under the law; and since only those who are led by the Spirit are sons of God, it follows that all who are not children of God are under the law. And since the children of God are few in comparison with the children of the wicked one, it follows that the greater part of the world are under the law.

### **Definition of "Under the Law"**

Now what is meant by "under the law"? Does it mean, as most commonly supposed, subject to the law? in a state of obligation to keep the law?

Our investigation concerning the sons of God furnishes the answer. Remember that only those who are not led by the Spirit,

who are not children of God, are under the law. Then the children of the wicked one are under the law.

Remember also that it is only sinners that are the children of Satan; as Paul expresses it, they are "children of disobedience." It is because they are disobedient that they are strangers from God, children of the wicked one, under the law. And this is corroborated by the words of the apostle:

"The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Romans 8:7)

All men are under obligation to keep the commandments of God: "Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." (Ecclesiastes 12:13)

But all men are not under the law; those who are led by the Spirit are not under the law; therefore we conclude that it is simply the disobedient,--those who do not do their duty, in keeping the commandments,--who are under the law.

### **Only Commandment-Keepers Under Grace**

All others are under grace, since it is only by the grace of God that anybody can keep the commandments. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6:12-16)

In this passage we have the fact emphasized that those who are not under the law are the ones over whom sin has no dominion, and that those who are under the law are the servants of sin.

But sin brings condemnation; those only are free from condemnation, who walk according to the Spirit,--are led by the Spirit,--and who consequently are the sons of God. And the condemnation under which the sinner rests is a condemnation to death: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

Remember also the idea in verses 14-16, that those who are under the law, servants of sin, are servants "of sin unto death."

Man's relation to God, then, is simply this: By nature all men are sinners,--servants of sin,--children of Satan,--under the law,--condemned to death. By the righteousness of Christ, through faith in the blood, men may be made righteous,--servants of obedience unto righteousness,--children of God,--delivered from the condemnation of the law.

Only those who are in Christ attain to this high honor; but this does not free them from obligation to keep the law. This can be seen from the very fact that it is sin that brings condemnation. Now if those who have been freed from condemnation,--have been taken out from under the law,--should transgress the law, they would thereby show their lack of appreciation of the grace of God, and would bring themselves into condemnation,--would bring

themselves under the law. "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men." (Titus 2:11)

To all men, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." (Revelation 22:17)

With every man that enters into the world, the Spirit strives to cause him to renounce the service of Satan, and to become a child of God. But, alas! with the exception of a few who esteem the reproach of Christ, "the whole world lies in wickedness." (1 John 5:19)

Reader will you place yourself on the Lord's side? If so, you must come to Christ, who is the way, (Psalm 119:1) the truth, (Psalm 119:142) and the life,--the one in whose heart is the law of God,--that you may become changed into the same image, having, like Him, the law of God completely formed in your own heart.--Signs of the Times, November 17, 1887.

## Chapter 28

### **Lawful Use of the Law**

The apostle Peter said of the epistles of Paul, that there are in them "some things hard to be understood," (2 Peter 3:16) and every man who has ever read those epistles has been made conscious of the truth of the saying. Indeed, some have thought that nearly all things in Paul's writings are "hard to be understood."

But because some things are hard to be understood, there is no reason to say that they cannot be understood. The more difficult a thing is, the more need of study, and the greater will be the gain when study has made the subject clear.

That it is not impossible to understand the hard things in Paul's writings, is evident from what Peter further says of them: "Which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction." (2 Peter 3:16)

It is only the unlearned and unstable that so wrest them. To wrest a thing is to pull or force it away from its natural position. The Bible is one book; every part depends on every other part. It is not like a chain, the last link has no immediate connection with the first, but every link is joined to every other link, so as to form the most perfect net-work.

To some this makes it seem very intricate, but it is the beauty of the book. It is only because there is this interdependence of the various parts, that it can be understood. When a text is not wrested from its setting, and scripture is allowed to explain scripture, all may be understood.

Of all the things which the unlearned wrest to their own destruction, those things which treat of the law of God are most frequently so mutilated. This is to be expected, since "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Romans 8:7)

And since the law comprises the duty of man and is the way of life, it is evident that where instruction concerning the law is perverted, destruction must follow. Among the texts which are perverted by the unstable, or which are a source of difficulty to many who are honest at heart, 1 Timothy 1:9 is prominent. As we have recently been asked to explain this text, we will quote it and consider it by the light of inspiration. It reads thus: "Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers." (1 Timothy 1:9)

It needs nothing more than a knowledge of the meaning of some of the simplest terms in our language, to show one that this text does not teach that righteous men are absolved from allegiance to the law of God, and that they may break it with impunity. For "lawless" means contrary to law, and if a righteous man should think himself at liberty to disregard the law, he would at once become one of the lawless ones, for whom the apostle says that the law "is made." This shows the necessity for the righteous to keep the law, if they would retain their righteousness.

That the law of God is binding upon all men may be shown in various ways. The gospel commission shows it. Said Christ to His

disciples: "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 10:15)

The gospel is the "good news" of a Saviour, "which is Christ the Lord," (Luke 2:11) who is called Jesus, or Saviour, because "He shall save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21)

The gospel, therefore, is God's remedy for sin. But sin is the transgression of the law of God, the ten commandments. "Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4) "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, You shall not covet." (Romans 7:7)

Wherever sin is, it is evidence that the law is there, and violated. Now God would not apply His remedy where it is not needed; but He has sent the gospel to every creature; therefore every creature is amenable to the law of God, and has broken it. This conclusion is plainly stated by Paul in Romans 3:9-20, a portion of which we quote: "We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: ... Now we know that whatsoever things the law says, it says to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Romans 3:9-10,19-20)

The law can speak only to those who are within its sphere, who are subject to its jurisdiction; but as a consequence of what the law says, it proves all the world to be guilty before God, because all have transgressed it; therefore the law has claims upon all who are

in the world. Then according to 1 Timothy 1:9, the law is made for the whole world, for "there is none righteous, no, not one." (Romans 3:10)

The word rendered "made" in the text is from the Greek koimai. An illustration of one use of the word may be found in: "And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." (Matthew 3:10)

The idea conveyed by these words is that the edge of the ax is against the bad trees for their destruction, and the words "is laid" are the same in the original as the words "is made" in 1 Timothy 1:9. Now when we remember that they who keep the commandments of God shall enter into life, (Matthew 19:17) and that the wages of sin is death, (Romans 6:23) we can see in what sense the law is made for, or is against, the lawless and not the righteous.

The same thought is expressed by the apostle in Galatians 5:17-23. There he says that those who are of the works of the flesh are "under the law," (Galatians 5:18) and those works are set forth. But those who are led of the Spirit, who do not walk after the flesh, are not under the law; for after enumerating the fruits of the Spirit, he adds, "against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:23)

Why is not the law against such things, and against those who do them? Because those things are the very principles of the law, as the psalmist says: "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord." (Psalm 119:1)

The law has various offices, depending on the condition of men. Its primary office was to give life. This office it can fulfill only to

those who have never sinned. So long as a person is sinless, the law is the best friend he can have; but when he has once sinned, the law has nothing but death for him. Its office then is that of a stern taskmaster, or rather of a jailer and executioner. It shuts up in prison all who violate it, keeping them in ward until the time set for the execution.

Fortunately a way of escape has been provided from the execution of the death sentence. Christ was manifested to take away sin; and when sin has once been taken away, the law has no power over the man to shut him up. Christ sets at liberty them that are bound, and those whom He sets free are free indeed.

He is now the only source of life, and the law, instead of comforting the sinner, is against him, continually standing in his way, and hurling itself again and again against him, never relaxing its severity until the sinner flies for refuge to the hope set forth before him.

While its original office was to give men life, its office now, owing to the sinful condition of men, is to drive them to Christ for life. When the sinner goes to Christ, the law is satisfied, and pursues him no further. But he has not fled outside the sphere of the law, for that is impossible. In the Son, as well as in the Father, the law stands personified, so that now he who was a sinner can say, "Oh how I love your law! it is my meditation all the day." (Psalm 119:97)

It is no longer a terror, but a delight, for there is "no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1)

Happy is the man who knows how to use the law in a lawful manner, for he shall prove it to be "holy, and just, and good." (Romans 7:12)--Signs of the Times, July 13, 1888.

## Chapter 29

### **Definitions**

One of the peculiarities of the human mind is that while it readily grasps a pleasing story or a fable, it refuses to accept truth until it is compelled to. So strong is this tendency toward error, that mental philosophers are obliged to take it into account. One of Bacon's rules for avoiding erroneous conclusions is the following: "In general, let the student of nature take this as a rule, that whatever the mind seizes and dwells upon with particular satisfaction is to be held in suspicion."

### **Truth Not Easily Received**

The converse would teach that truth will naturally be repelled and rejected. And this is just what the Bible says: "The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God." (1 Corinthians 2:14) "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Romans 8:7) "For out of the heart proceed naturally evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." (Matthew 15:19)

These things are directly opposed to the law of God; and therefore, as a general thing, before men will accept the truth of the Bible concerning the law, every feature must be made perfectly clear. It is not enough that the principles be unfolded, but the harmony of all the texts bearing on the subject must be shown.

Accordingly we find it necessary to devote special explanation to Romans 6:14 and kindred texts. That text reads thus: "For sin

shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace." (Romans 6:14)

So strong is the natural tendency to reject truth, that in spite of the overwhelming evidence already produced to show that the law is to all eternity binding upon every created rational being, many people will seize upon the expression, "You are not under the law," and claim that there are some, at least, who have no duty to keep it. The readiness with which this view is seized and dwelt upon, should alone arouse suspicion as to its justice.

But that there may be no chance for an honest doubt, we propose to examine not only this text, but every text which contains the phrase, "under the law."

### **Defining Sin and Righteousness**

In Romans 6:12 the apostle gives this exhortation: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof." (Romans 6:12)

We have already learned that: "Sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4)

Therefore when the apostle tells us not to sin, he virtually tells us not to transgress the law. But this is an evidence that the law is binding upon us; and therefore we are assured that the statement in verse 14 cannot mean that the law has no claims upon us. The apostle continues: "Neither yield you your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." (Romans 6:13)

This is but a repetition of the argument presented in the preceding paragraph. For he says we must not sin, that is, must not transgress the law; and again, that we must yield our members as instruments of righteousness.

Now righteousness is obedience to the commandments of God: "And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He has commanded us." (Deuteronomy 6:25) "My tongue shall speak of your word: for all your commandments are righteousness." (Psalm 119:172) "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished. Hearken unto me, you that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear not the reproach of men, neither be afraid of their revilings." (Isaiah 51:6-7)

So Romans 6:13 is an exhortation not to transgress the law, and another exhortation to keep the law, both of which amount to the same thing, and show that the apostle recognizes the fact that the law is in existence and is to be obeyed. Then comes the conclusion: "For sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace." (Romans 6:14)

Notice a few facts and necessary conclusions:

1. Since "sin is the transgression of the law," the absence of sin must indicate obedience to the law. Therefore when the apostle says to any persons, "Sin shall not have dominion over you," it is an evidence that they are keeping the law.

2. Those over whom sin has no dominion are those who are not under the law. "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law." The fact that sin has no dominion over them is an evidence that they are "not under the law." Therefore, to be "not under the law" is equivalent to being free from the dominion of sin.

3. But we have already seen that to be free from the dominion of sin represents a state of obedience to the law; therefore, to say that one is "not under the law" is equivalent to saying that he is keeping the law.

### **Only Two Classes**

These propositions will stand the test of any criticism, and they demonstrate that the apostle's argument is based on the fact that the law is in full force, binding upon all, and that there are but two classes of people; those who keep the law, and those who transgress it.

Those who keep the law are not under it, and of course those who transgress it are under it. In other words, those over whom sin has dominion are under the law; and those over whom sin has not dominion, are not under the law. In harmony with this, the apostle continues: "When then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid." (Romans 6:15)

That is, "Shall we transgress the law because we are not under it? By no means. Keep from being under it, by refraining from sin."

Thus far we have not shown the full force of the terms "under the law," and "not under the law," but have simply shown that they

do not indicate that any persons are outside the jurisdiction of the law; that those "under the law" are violating it, while those "not under the law" are obeying it.

The next two verses give us a clue to the real force of the terms.

They read thus: "Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that you were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." (Romans 6:16-17)

"Whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness." Sin,--the transgression of the law,--brings death. "For the wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)

Every one who sins is under condemnation of death; and since, as has been abundantly proved, those who sin are "under the law," it follows that "under the law" is an expression meaning, "under the condemnation of the law." Now see how aptly this meaning fits verses 14 and 15:

"You are not under the condemnation of the law, but under the grace of God. Shall we sin, then, because we are not condemned to death by the law? No, indeed; for that would at once bring us again under condemnation. Let us keep from sinning, and then we shall be no more condemned."

## Freed from Condemnation

How are we freed from the condemnation which the law brings? "Being justified freely by His [God's] grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the commission of sins that are past." (Romans 3:24-25)

Having accepted Christ, His righteousness is imputed to us, which makes us clear before the law, and we are then subjects of the grace, or forbearance of God.

Take an illustration from human affairs. Here is a man that has been convicted of murder. The law of the State forbids murder, and therefore it condemns the man. The murderer is then "under the law," because the hand of the law is upon him. Nothing that he can do will avert the threatened punishment. He may be sorry for his crime, and may resolve never to break the law again; but that will make no difference. He has already broken the law, and must suffer the penalty.

But now, through the intercession of powerful friends, and because of his repentance and his promises of future obedience, the Governor is induced to pardon the criminal. Now he is no longer under the law,--a condemned prisoner,--but a free man. He is free by virtue of the grace or favor of the Governor. Therefore he may be said to be "under grace."

The question now arises. Is he at liberty to commit murder, because he is not under the law, but under the grace of the Governor? Everybody says, "No, indeed." He is now under even greater obligation to keep the law than he was before, because he is

the subject of the Governor's special favor; and that favor would not have been extended to him, but for his promise to henceforth keep the law.

And as sin brought condemnation and death, so, when we are cleared from sin and condemnation, continued obedience, or righteousness, brings eternal life through Christ. This is indicated by the expression, "servants ... of obedience unto righteousness," (Romans 6:16) and, "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

In closing this preliminary study of the term, "under the law," the reader can profitably compare with what he has read, the following verses: "Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; That as sin has reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 5:18-21)--Signs of the Times, May 6, 1886--Original title: Under the Law.

## Chapter 30

### **Life or Death**

"But if you be led of the Spirit, you are not under the law."  
(Galatians 5:18)

Antinomians very rarely quote this verse, doubtless because it is so very evident from the connection that the law is recognized as being in active existence. Let us give it our attention for a little while, that we may see what beautiful harmony there is in the Bible on the subject of the law.

### **The Spirit or the Flesh**

Since those who are led by the Spirit are not under the law, it follows that those who are not led by the Spirit are under the law. Again, the preceding verses read as follows: "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other." (Galatians 5:16-17)

These verses state in the plainest terms that the flesh and the Spirit are contrary to each other; that walking in the flesh and walking in the Spirit are directly opposite conditions. Then since those who are led by the Spirit are not under the law, and those who are not led by the Spirit are under the law, it follows that those who are under the law are those who are fulfilling the lusts of the flesh. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like; of the which I tell

you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:19-21)

The fruit of the Spirit is, of course, the very opposite, being: "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance." (Galatians 5:22)

Referring to these fruits of the Spirit, the apostle says: "Against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:23)

That is, those who are led by the Spirit, and who yield its fruits, are in harmony with the law; while the law is against the works of the flesh; and those who do the works of the flesh are condemned by the law, or are under it.

Here we arrive at the same conclusion as in regard to Romans 6:14, that "under the law" simply represents a state of antagonism to, and violation of, the law; and of course no one could be in such a state if the law were not in full force. Now since all sinners are by the law condemned to death, "Now we know that what things soever the law says, it says to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." (Romans 3:19) "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23) it follows again that "under the law" means condemned by the law--under the sentence of death.

## **The Elements of the World**

Turning backward, we find the expression "under the law" used twice: "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth

His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Galatians 4:4-5)

In the third verse the apostle says that when we were children we were "in bondage under the elements of the world. But [that marks a change] ... God sent forth His Son. To redeem them that were under the law." (Galatians 4:3-5)

We would naturally expect the redemption to be from that under which we were in bondage, which was "the elements of the world." In the fifth verse the redemption is said to be from "under the law," thus showing that "in bondage under the elements of the world," and "under the law," are equivalent terms.

Let us trace further this matter of bondage. Paul says to the Galatians: "But now, after that you have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn you again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto you desire again to be in bondage?" (Galatians 4:9)

Here it is implied that they were in danger of returning to a condition in which they had previously been. And what condition was that? "Howbeit then, when you knew not God, you did service unto them which by nature are no gods." (Galatians 4:8)

That is, they were heathen. So being in bondage to the elements of the world,--the "weak and beggarly elements,"--is equivalent to being in a state of heathenism. Those who do not know God are termed heathen. But no man can know God without being a follower of Christ, as the Saviour said, "No man comes unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6)

In the strict Bible sense, therefore, all who are not in Christ are heathen. And therefore although Paul addressed his epistle to those who had been idolaters in the commonly accepted sense, the argument is of universal application. We conclude, then, that the "elements of the world" are simply the various forms of sin. This is still further shown by: "And you has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience; Among whom also we all had our conversation [manner of life] in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." (Ephesians 2:1-3)

Nothing but sin is meant by "the course of this world," the "weak and beggarly elements," and "the elements of the world." And to be "in bondage under the elements of the world," is to be "under the law," in a state of condemnation.

### **Christ Made Under the Law**

Christ came in the fullness of time "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent, and believe the gospel." (Mark 1:14-15) "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." (Daniel 9:25): "To redeem them that were under the law." (Galatians 4:5)

But in order to do this, He himself had to be "made under the law." (Galatians 4:4)

This is in harmony with the following: "Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." (Hebrews 2:17)

The people whom Christ came to redeem were "under the law," therefore He was made like them, "under the law." Now if there is any lingering doubt as to the meaning of "under the law," compare with the above and Galatians 4:4-5, Paul's words: "For He [God] has made Him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Christ was sinless; "[He] did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." (1 Peter 2:22)

The Law of God was in His heart, "I delight to do your will, O my God: yea, your law is within my heart." (Psalm 40:8) and His whole life was an exemplification of the law. Yet knowing no sin, He was made to be sin for us. As the prophet said: "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:5-6)

We were in bondage to sin, "under the law," and He took upon himself the same bonds, and was made under the law. Moreover, since those "under the law" are condemned, under sentence of death,

"[He] being found in fashion as a man," (Philippians 2:8) having voluntarily placed himself in the same condemnation, "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Philippians 2:8)

And so the innocent suffered for the guilty. Man had been overcome by sin, and by it brought into bondage, "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." (2 Peter 2:19) and in order to redeem him from this corruption, and the death that must necessarily follow, "Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." (James 1:15) the spotless Son of God took upon himself the form of a servant of sin, and consented to be covered with the same degradation into which man had plunged himself.

### **To Make Us Righteous**

What for? "That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

In order that we might be made without "spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," (Ephesians 5:27) perfectly conformable to the holy Law of God; and that thus being enabled, in Christ, to keep the commandments, we might through Him have eternal life. "And He said unto him, Why do you call me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if you will enter into life, keep the commandments." (Matthew 19:17)

Before leaving this text in Galatians, there is one more point which we wish to place before the reader. We read that Christ was "made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law." (Galatians 4:4-5)

It was necessary for Christ to assume the condition of those whom He would redeem. This being the case, we may know that Christ redeems none who occupy a position different from that which He took. This is plainly stated in the Scripture. "For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren." (Hebrews 2:16-17)

### **All Are Under the Law**

Those whom He was made like, He can redeem; others He cannot. We read also that: "[Christ] died for all." (2 Corinthians 5:15)

What, then, is the necessary conclusion? Just this: since He was made "under the law," and was made like those whom He came to redeem, and He came to redeem all men, then all men were "under the law."

Further, the text indicates that He came for the sole purpose of redeeming them that were under the law; their being under the law made necessary some act for their redemption. If they had not been under the law, they would have needed no redemption. Now we recall Paul's words to the effect that: "[Christ] gave himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus 2:14)

The conclusion is unavoidable that "under the law" indicates the state of sin which characterizes every human being, and from which none can be rescued but by Christ.

But notice the dilemma in which they place themselves, who claim that Gentiles are not "under the law," and that the law was only for the Jews. If that position were true, it would necessarily follow that since Christ came to redeem only those who are under the law, He came to redeem only the Jews! For certain it is, that no person who is not in the position which Christ took upon himself when He came to redeem man, can have any part in that redemption.

We think that none, when they consider this point, will place themselves outside of God's scheme of redemption, by refusing to admit that they are by nature and by practice "under the law." Let us rather acknowledge our guilt, that it may be washed away in the blood of the Lamb. "He that covers his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy." (Proverbs 28:13)--Signs of the Times, May 13, 1886--Original title: Under the Law.

## Chapter 31

### **The Galatian Problem**

"Tell me, you that desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?" (Galatians 4:21)

A complete understanding of the force of this verse can be had only by:

1. A knowledge of the peculiar danger of the Galatians, which made the writing of this epistle necessary;
2. An examination of the remainder of the chapter, which involves
3. A brief consideration of the two covenants.

As this is all in the line of our study of the law, and will be very useful in our further investigation, we will take time right here to examine these points.

#### History of the Controversy

In the 1st chapter of Galatians, Paul speaks of his call to the ministry, and his first connection with the church. His call, he says, was not from men, but from God. It was three years after his conversion before he went to Jerusalem, and then the only apostles whom he saw were Peter and James. Therefore he did not receive his knowledge of the gospel from men, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

In the 2nd chapter, Paul states the occasion of his second visit to Jerusalem, which was fourteen years after his first visit. The occasion of this visit was the council which was held in Jerusalem, and which forms the subject of the 15th chapter of Acts. Certain men had come down from Judea to Antioch, where Paul was laboring, and had taught the brethren, saying, "Except you be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved." (Acts 15:1)

After much discussion in regard to the matter, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas, and a few others, should go up to Jerusalem to lay the matter before the apostles and elders.

That the question which came before this council was the one which was troubling the Galatian brethren, in regard to which they were in danger, appears from the 2nd chapter of Galatians. Paul mentions the visit, but assures the brethren that those who "seemed to be somewhat in conference," that is, the leading men in the council, "added nothing" to him. The gospel had been made known to him by direct revelation from Jesus Christ, and so he knew the whole truth of the matter before the council convened.

Further, he states that after the council, he had a controversy on the very same subject which was there discussed, with Peter, who was acting contrary to the decision of the council.

These things show that the danger which threatened the Galatian brethren, and which called out Paul's epistle to them, was the same thing into which the men from Judea tried to lead all of Paul's converts. For the Jews constantly followed Paul around, trying to overthrow his work.

## The False Teaching

Let us now examine the teaching of these men from Judea.

"Except you be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved." (Acts 15:1)

Of course all the kindred ordinances of the ceremonial law were included with circumcision. Now why did they want to force circumcision upon these converts from among the Gentiles? The reason given was, in order that they might be saved. Circumcision, they taught, was the one thing indispensable, if they would secure salvation. But the only thing which stands in the way of salvation of all men is sin; and therefore since circumcision was put forth as the condition of salvation, we must conclude that it was urged as a means of justification.

But this was directly contrary to the gospel which Paul preached, namely, that justification comes only through Christ. This was indeed "another gospel," which was no gospel at all. That the seditious ones urged circumcision upon the Gentiles as the means of justification, is still further shown by the words of Peter, who said: "Men and brethren, you know how that a good while ago, God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knows the hearts, bore them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." (Acts 15:7-9)

Peter's argument was that God purposed to treat the Gentiles who believed just as He did the believing Jews, giving both the Holy

Ghost, and purifying them by faith, and not by circumcision or by any other work which they could do.

Notice particularly the effect which the teaching of these men from Judea must necessarily have had on those who accepted it. It led those who accepted it to reject Christ as the means of justification from sin. If they were justified by circumcision, of course they would have no need of Christ. And this was why that doctrine was taught.

These men from Judea did not accept Christ; their sole opposition to the preaching of Paul and the other apostles was that Christ was set forth as the only means of justification and future resurrection. "And as they spoke unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead." (Acts 4:1-2)

These men from Judea are sometimes styled "Judaizing Christians," but they were not Christians at all. Their sole work was to oppose the gospel of Christ. And in their hatred of it and of Christ, they went about among the churches, trying to induce the new converts to seek pardon and salvation by circumcision, instead of through Christ.

These were the men who were "zealously affecting" the Galatians, with the sole purpose of "excluding" them from the faith of Christ. "They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that you might affect them." (Galatians 4:17)

## **Christ or Circumcision**

We have before shown that all who are in sin are "under the law,"-condemned. Besides Christ, "There is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

Since men are not justified by any works of their own, but solely by faith in Christ,--it follows that all who accepted the teaching of the men from Judea, and were circumcised for justification, were still "under the law." No amount of work, whether it was circumcision or something else, could clear them from the guilt of past sins.

Moreover, those who had accepted Christ, and had been forgiven, if they listened to this teaching, fell from grace; for to be circumcised with a view to justification thereby, was simply rejecting Christ and repudiating their former profession. And this is just what Paul told them: "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." (Galatians 5:2)

Paul did not mean that there was anything wicked in circumcision of itself, for he himself circumcised Timothy, and that, too, after the council at Jerusalem. "Then he came to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek." (Acts 16:1-3)

Timothy's father was a Gentile, although his mother was a Jewess, and if Timothy had not been circumcised, he would not have been allowed to labor with Paul among the Jews in their synagogues. Therefore as a matter of expediency, Paul circumcised Timothy, thus showing that whether a man was circumcised or not, was regarded by him as a matter of no vital importance. "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God." (1 Corinthians 7:19)

But when men submitted to circumcision as a means of gaining salvation, that moment they rejected Christ, man's only hope, and therefore Christ profited them nothing, Christ cannot help those who reject Him. So we see that it was a grave heresy which was being preached to these young Christians.

### **The Danger of Heathen Customs**

Note again: The heathen religion was a religion of forms and ceremonies. Some of these ceremonies were of the most licentious nature. Now if the converts from among the heathen could only be induced to rest their hope of salvation on Jewish ceremonies, it would be but a step for them to sink back into their old heathen customs.

This was actually the effect that it had on the Galatians; for Paul said to them: "You observe days, and months, and times, 'When you are come into the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you ... an observer of times.' (Deuteronomy 18:9-10) and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain." (Galatians 4:10-11)

Their being circumcised did not lead simply to the substitution of Judaism for Christianity, but to a relapse into heathenism. And thus we see that the Galatians were really going back "under the law," or, as stated in verse 9, they were turning to the weak and beggarly elements of the world, to which they were desirous of again being in bondage.

Some may wonder at the expression which Paul uses in: "Tell me, you that desire to be under the law." (Galatians 4:21)

Why should Paul charge them with desiring death? For if "under the law" means under sentence of death, he did virtually charge them with desiring death. A parallel passage is found in: "They that hate me love death." (Proverbs 8:36)

Now while no one would love death itself, so as to deliberately choose it, people do love sin, not realizing that the end thereof is death.

So with those to whom Paul speaks. They desired a certain thing which would bring them under the condemnation of the law; and therefore they could be said to desire to be under the law, although they did not realize that such would be the consequences of their choice.--Signs of the Times, May 27, 1886--Original title: Under the Law.

## Chapter 32

### **Old and New Covenant**

We have now learned the danger which threatened the Galatian brethren, and can understand Paul's fear for them, and his statement that they desired to be "under the law,"--in bondage to the elements of the world.

#### **An Allegory**

It will therefore be a short task to examine the remaining portion of this 4th chapter of Galatians, and note what bearing it has on the law. The apostle continues: "Tell me, you that desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory; for these are the two covenants; the one from the Mount Sinai, which genders to bondage, which is Hagar. For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answers to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." (Galatians 4:21-25)

It will be seen at once that in these verses three things are placed in contrast with three other things: Hagar, ancient Jerusalem, and the old covenant are placed in opposition to Sarah, the new Jerusalem, and the new covenant. Ishmael and Isaac stand respectively as representatives of those under the old covenant, and those under the new.

It will also be noticed that those who are free are the children of the New Jerusalem, the new covenant, while those in bondage, "under the law," are children of the old Jerusalem, the old covenant. The explanation of this chapter, then, involves an explanation of the two covenants. This we can do only in the briefest manner.

## **The First Covenant**

The first covenant was made with the children of Israel when they left Egypt. "For finding fault with them, He said, Behold, the days come, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, says the Lord." (Hebrews 8:8-9)

The terms of that covenant are found in: "And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shall you say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; You have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak unto the children of Israel. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord has spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord." (Exodus 19:3-8) "And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the

judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord has said will we do. And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning, and built an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord has said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord has made with you concerning all these words." (Exodus 24:3-8)

These terms were simply as follows: God promised to make of the Israelites a great nation, a kingdom of priests, if they, in turn, would obey His law. This they promised to do. Thus the covenant, or agreement, was made. The law of God was the basis of the covenant, or that concerning which the covenant was made. "And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord has said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord has made with you concerning all these words." (Exodus 24:6-8)

Now notice what this covenant required of the people. The Lord had first promised to do certain things for them if they would obey His voice. Then they heard His voice speaking the law in thunder tones from Sinai, and after that they renewed their promise of

obedience, saying, "All that the Lord has said will we do, and be obedient." (Exodus 24:7)

This was nothing less than an agreement to yield perfect obedience to the law. Those who "hear the law," know that it covers every act or thought of man's entire life. Therefore, if the Jews had fulfilled their promise, they would have merited all the blessings which God promised them; but, unfortunately, they did not, neither could they. They had already broken the law many times, and were sinful by nature, so that it was utterly impossible for them, in their own strength, to yield perfect obedience to it. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." (Romans 8:7-8) "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that you cannot do the things that you would." (Galatians 5:17)

Now in this covenant there was no provision for the forgiveness of sins either past or future,--no hint of Christ, through whom alone forgiveness and power to keep the law can come. They had virtually made a promise to make themselves righteous before God.

But every one who attempts to do this must fail, and therefore it is truly said that that covenant gendered to bondage. Let no one imagine that we mean that that covenant made them under obligation to keep the law. The obligation to keep the law existed before any covenant was made; but we mean that that covenant left them just where it found them,--in condemnation because of violated law.

Had there never been any other covenant than this, the whole world must have been lost. "Now we know that what things soever the law says, it says to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." (Romans 3:19)

Some will ask, "But didn't God know that they could not of themselves keep the law perfectly, and isn't it therefore trifling with them to make such a covenant with them?"

God did indeed know that they had no power to do as they agreed, but in making the covenant He was not trifling with them. The making of such an agreement was the most forcible way that could be devised to bring home to their minds a sense of their condition. In their vain endeavors to keep the whole law in their own strength, they would learn their need, and that would turn their attention to that other covenant, called the new covenant, but which in reality had been in existence ever since the fall. Here it is:

### **The New Covenant**

"Behold, the days come, says the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they broke, although I was a husband unto them, says the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after these days, says the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the

greatest of them, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

In what respect does this covenant differ from the other? Is it in regard to the keeping of the law? No; for that is required in both. But in this there is forgiveness of sins, and the blotting out of transgressions. More than this, the law is to be written in the hearts of the people, and that means that they will be enabled to keep it perfectly. "I delight to do your will, O my God: yea, your law is within my heart." (Psalm 40:8)

This work is done by Christ. Through Him pardon is secured, and He enables us to be made the righteousness of God. It will readily be seen that, whereas the other covenant found and left the people in bondage to sin, and under condemnation of death, this covenant enabled them to become free from sin and condemnation. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:1)

### **Applying the Object Lesson**

Now the application of Paul's object lesson is easy:

- Hagar was a bondwoman, and Ishmael, her son, was begotten according to the flesh.
- Sarah was a freewoman, and her son, Isaac, was a child of promise, born not according to the flesh, but when humanly speaking, such a thing as the birth of a child was impossible.

Since Ishmael "was born after the flesh," he is a fit type of those who are "in the flesh;" and in this condition are all careless sinners, as well as all who attempt to secure salvation by their own unaided efforts.

When men have once sinned, it is contrary to anything in nature that they should ever be made to appear perfectly righteous,--as though they had never sinned. But God, by a miracle of grace, which is manifested through Jesus Christ, causes this to be done, so that the sinner may stand before the law uncondemned.

And so those who have obtained this freedom may be fitly represented by Isaac, who was born contrary to the order of nature, solely because of the promise of God. So likewise, the old Jerusalem, which was rejected of God because it had killed the prophets, and stoned them which were sent to it, and had rejected Christ, is very aptly termed the mother of those who are in bondage because of sin.

The New Jerusalem, however, is called the Bride, the Lamb's wife: "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ... And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come here, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." (Revelation 21:2,9-10)

Since Christ is the Everlasting Father, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called. ... The everlasting Father."

(Isaiah 9:6) and it is He alone that gives freedom, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1-2) "They answered Him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how do you say, You shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abides not in the house for ever: but the Son abides ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." (John 8:33) the city is very properly called the mother of all those who are saved from sin. "But as then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now." (Galatians 4:20)

This is only another form of what we find in: "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that you cannot do the things that you would." (Galatians 5:17) "Nevertheless what says the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman." (Galatians 4:30)

Exactly; the works of the flesh must be put away, for "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. ... They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." (Galatians 5:21,24)

The apostle, having shown the bondage in which all sinners are held, and how Christ alone can set men free, and enable them to do the requirements of the law, says: "So, then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free." (Galatians 5:1)

Compare this with: "Howbeit then, when you did not know God, you did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that you have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn you again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto you desire again to be in bondage?" (Galatians 4:8-9)

Here we might leave this portion of Scripture, since we have fully explained verse 21, which is all that we set out to do; but the one who has read thus far will scarcely fail to read the verses immediately following the one last quoted, and will doubtless be puzzled over one or two expressions which are there found. A few words will suffice to explain them. We quote: "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; you are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." (Galatians 5:2-5)

The reader will recall what has before been said concerning circumcision and other ceremonies. It is evident that Paul did not mean that circumcision was in itself so terrible a thing that the receiving of it would cause a person to fall from grace; for the apostle himself circumcised Timothy as an act of expediency. "Then he came to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek." (Acts 16:1-3)

It must be, then, that he refers to circumcision as taught by the men who came down from Judea, and who were trying to turn away Paul's converts from the faith. They urged it as the means of justification. They said: "Except you be circumcised ... you cannot be saved." (Acts 15:1)

But since pardon and justification can be secured through Christ alone, those who adopted circumcision for that purpose necessarily rejected Christ; and if they had previously accepted Christianity, of course their rejection of Christ was a fall from grace. Christ was of no effect in anyone who expected to be justified by his own works.

But we, on the contrary, says Paul, "Wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." (Galatians 5:5)

This shows that the mode of justification from sin is the subject still under discussion. But how about the expression, "I testify to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law?" (Galatians 5:3)

Does that mean that if a man is circumcised he must keep the law, but that if he is not circumcised he may disregard the law? Not by any means. The law is of universal obligation; all men, whatever their condition, are in duty bound to keep it.

It is because this duty rests upon every individual, that all the world are guilty before God; for all have transgressed the law. Since all have transgressed the law, they are condemned. Now, "The doers of the law shall be justified." (Romans 2:13)

None others can be. But "a doer of the law" is one who can present a record of obedience unbroken by a single sin. Thus it

follows that, after all have sinned, by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified.

Now suppose a man starts out with the determination to secure righteousness without the aid of Christ. What must he do? Why he must do the whole law. Very well; suppose that it is possible for him to keep the law perfectly for the remainder of his life, will he be lacking in anything? Certainly; for the law demands obedience for that part of his life which he spent in sin, before he attempted to do right. Perfect obedience is required of him who would stand as a doer of the law. So Paul virtually says: "If you set out to be justified by circumcision, or by any other work, it will be necessary for you to show a perfectly clean record: you must your own self take away those past sins, so that the law will witness to your perfect righteousness,--so that it may appear that you have never sinned."

But this he cannot do, and therefore he is in the fullest sense "a debtor,"--eternally a debtor. He is in the condition of the man who owed his lord ten thousand talents, (Matthew 18:24-35) and had nothing with which to pay, and who was cast into prison till he should pay it all. For him there was no hope. To all eternity he must remain a debtor to his lord.

So with the man who seeks to stand justified before God by any works of his own. There is a depth of meaning to the words, "he is a debtor to do the whole law," which the casual reader does not catch. The hopelessness of the bondage into which the man is cast who goes about to establish his own righteousness can scarcely be conceived.

In this bondage we all are, or have been. Let us ever rejoice that "With the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption." (Psalm 130:7)

And that: "the blood of Christ ... cleanses us from all sin." (1 John 1:7)--Signs of the Times, June 3, 1886--Original title: Under the Law (Concluded.)

## Chapter 33

### In the Law

The expression, "under the law," occurs twelve times in King James version of the New Testament, in the following verses:

1. Romans 3:19

2. Romans 6:14

3. Romans 6:15

4. 1 Corinthians 9:20 (three times)

5. 1 Corinthians 9:21

6. Galatians 3:23 (the equivalent expression "under a schoolmaster," is found also, in verse 24)

7. Galatians 4:4

8. Galatians 4:5

9. Galatians 4:21

10. Galatians 5:18

In previous articles we have considered all these instances of the use of the term, except Romans 3:19, and 1 Corinthians 9:20-21. In every case thus far we have found that it indicates a state of sin, and consequently of condemnation by the law. The one who has violated

the law is under sentence of death, and so the law is represented as being upon him, holding him down to death.

### **Romans 3:19**

Now in Romans 3:19, a different thought is presented to one who reads the text carefully. We will read it: "Now we know that what things soever the law says, it says to them that are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." (Romans 3:19)

On reading this someone will say, "Your idea that 'under the law' means condemned by the law certainly cannot hold here, for that would make the text of no force; it would be the same as saying, 'What things soever the law says, it says to them who are condemned by the law, in order that every one may be condemned,' and that would be nonsense."

The point is well taken, and we should have to conclude that the term "under the law" does not always indicate a state of sin and condemnation, if it were not for the fact that the expression does not really occur in Romans 3:19 at all.

In all the texts which we have heretofore considered, the Greek words which are rendered "under the law" are, *hupo nomon*, which should be rendered, as they invariably are, by the phrase "under the law."

But in Romans 3:19 the Greek words which in the King James version are rendered "under the law" are, *en to nomo*, which cannot properly be translated in any other way than "in the law." The same expression is found in the Greek of Romans 2:12, where the

translators have correctly rendered it "in the law." The text under consideration should therefore read thus: "Now we know that what things soever the law says, it says to them who are in the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before [margin: subject to the judgment of] God."

That is, the law speaks to those who are within its jurisdiction, or, as Professor Boise renders it, "within its sphere," and as a consequence it declares that all the world are subject to the judgment of God, because it shows that all are sinners.

The expression, "that every mouth may be stopped," is very forcible. When a man is brought into court, and charged with any crime, he begins, through his counsel, to plead his own cause, and to try to establish his innocence. But sometimes the evidence of a man's guilt is so overwhelmingly clear that he has no defense to make; his mouth is stopped, and he is forced to acknowledge the justness of the charge against him.

So the law of God speaks to those over whom it has jurisdiction, and charges them with sin; and the evidence is so clear that no one can speak a word in self-defence, but all the world stand condemned before God.

### **The Law Rules Over All**

By this rendering of Romans 3:19, and it is the correct one, we are taught an important truth concerning the extent of the law's jurisdiction. Note these points:

- The law speaks only to those who are within its sphere; if any such have violated it, it condemns them, and it can condemn no others.

- The law has no power to condemn any who do not owe allegiance to it, or who are outside its pale.

Now Paul has shown (Romans 3:9-18) that there is not a person on earth who has not sinned, and he therefore emphatically declares that the law, speaking only to those within its jurisdiction, stops every mouth, and condemns the whole world.

There could be no more forcible way of saying that every individual in the world is amenable to the law of God. Jews and Gentiles are all in the same condemnation, because they are all within the pale of the law, and have all violated it.

Perhaps some may think that this makes a contradiction between Romans 3:19 and Romans 2:12, but there is none. It is true that Romans 2:12 speaks of those "without law" as distinct from those "in the law;" but those who are spoken of as without law, are also spoken of as having sinned, and we have already learned that:

1. "Sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4)

2. "Where no law is there is no transgression." (Romans 4:15)

3. Paul, in Romans 2:14-15, shows that these same ones who are in one sense without law, "show the work of the law written in their hearts," and that they therefore do have the law.

Some sin in the face of the full light of the law, while others sin against only that knowledge of the law which they have by nature; but all are counted as sinners in God's sight, and they could not be so reckoned if they were not amenable to the law; hence he declares that all are in reality "in the law."

### **1 Corinthians 9:20-21**

Let us now read: "And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ) that I might gain them that are without law." (1 Corinthians 9:20-21)

In this text the term, "under the law," occurs four times. In the first three instances, reference to the same thing is made in each case. In the fourth instance, however, in verse 21, the Greek is *en to nomo*, as in Romans 3:19, and should be rendered "in the law."

Then the verse would read, "To them that are without law [I became] as without law, (being not without law to God, but in the law to Christ) that I might gain them that are without law."

In order to get the full force of this text, we must note the verse immediately preceding, and the two following: "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. ... To the weak become I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you." (1 Corinthians 9:19,22)

These verses, taken in connection with the twentieth and twenty-first, show Paul's meaning to be that in his ministerial work he sought to adapt himself, as far as possible, to the condition of those for whom he labored. He did not approach all men in the same manner, but adapted his teaching to the different classes of people whom he taught. He took every one upon his own ground.

### **Adapting to All Men**

To the Jews, he became as a Jew. This he could easily do, for he was himself a Jew, and knew all their habits and customs. The book of Hebrews is an instance of how he became as a Jew to the Jews. From their own history, their Scriptures, and their religion, he demonstrated the Messiahship of our Saviour, and also his whole work in connection with the plan of salvation.

To them that were under the law, he became as under the law, that he might gain them that were under the law. That is, he drew on his own experience as a sinner, that he might successfully labor for those who felt the condemnation of God's law upon them in consequence of their sins.

The 7th chapter of Romans is an instance of this. If Paul had not felt the terrible anguish which comes from the knowledge of an offended God, and the sense of impending doom, and the wondrous peace which comes from believing in Jesus, he could never have written a chapter so full of encouragement to the convicted sinner.

To them that were without law, that is, to the Gentiles who had not the written law, and the full knowledge of God, he became as without law, that he might gain them that were without the law. An instance of this is given in his dealing with the Athenians. (Acts

17:22-31) He took them on their own ground, and from their own heathen worship, and their own heathen literature; he demonstrated to them the existence of a great Creator, and the certainty of a future general Judgment. But while he became to them as without law, he says that he was in reality "not without law [to God], but in the law to Christ." (1 Corinthians 9:21)

That is, he all the time recognized his obligation to keep the whole law of God, and that Christ was to him the end of that law for righteousness,--he did all things only by the aid of Christ.

This closes up the consideration of the expression "under the law." Taking out 1 Corinthians 9:21 and Romans 3:19, in which texts, as we have seen, the term does not really occur, we can arrive at this positive conclusion, that in every instance of its occurrence, "under the law" indicates a state of sin and condemnation.

And since it is everywhere stated that only those who are in Christ are free from the condemnation of the law, and that all who are not in Christ and have not His Spirit, are under the law, the fact that the law is still in active operation is everywhere demonstrated.--  
Signs of the Times, September 16, 1886.

## Chapter 34

### **The Role of the Law**

The 7th chapter of Romans may be said to be Romans 6:14 expanded. It is a masterly argument for the holiness and perpetuity of the law, and is all the stronger because the nature of the perpetuity of the law is not the subject under discussion.

The apostle shows, in the 6th and 7th chapters, what a true Christian life is, and how one is brought to be a Christian. The references to the law are, we may say, incidental, and show how impossible it is to ignore the law when speaking of Christian experience. We should give this chapter a brief exposition, dwelling only on the portions that are often misunderstood by the casual reader.

We have already shown from Romans 6:14; Galatians 5:18-23; 4:4-5; and 4:21-31, that "under the law" indicates a condition of condemnation on account of sin; and that persons are freed from the law, or redeemed from under the law, only through faith in Christ, by which they are thenceforth enabled to comply with its just demands.

In this chapter the apostle carries out the figure of life and death, introduced in the 6th chapter, representing the one still under the condemnation of the law as alive, and the justified one as being dead. The relations of the man to his sins, to the law, and to Christ, are first indicated by an illustration, which we quote: "Know you not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman which has a husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as

he lives; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man." (Romans 7:1-3)

In this illustration we have four terms, namely:

1. A woman,
2. Her first husband,
3. Her second husband, and
4. The Law.

The law says, "You shall not commit adultery," (Exodus 20:1) and thus defines marriage as the union of one woman and one man. Such a union the law sanctions. Not only does the law sanction such a union, but it binds the parties during life. While her husband lives, the law binds the woman to him; but when the husband dies, then of course the union is at an end. "Now," says the apostle, "she may be married to another man, and she will be no adulteress, because she is freed from the law that bound her to her first husband."

How was she freed from that law? By the death of her husband, which rendered further union impossible. But did the law itself change in any particular? Not in the least: it performs the same office that it did before. The law binds the woman to the second husband just the same as it did to the first; and if while her second husband lives she should be married to a third, the law will condemn

her as adulterous just the same as it would if she had married her second husband while the first husband was living.

Thus we see that the law is the one thing that remains unchanged. Now read the application. "Wherefore, my brethren, you also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that you should be married to another even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." (Romans 7:4-6)

Here, as in the illustration, we have four parties, namely:

1. The man,
2. His sins,
3. Christ, and
4. The Law.

In the first place, the man is united to his sins. That is when he is "in the flesh," (Romans 7:5) "under the law," (Galatians 5:18) and unable to please God. (Romans 8:7) Here is a union in which the law holds him fast. "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit and to death." (Romans 7:5)

The apostle says that the sins were "by the law." This is the same as "where no law is, there is no transgression." (Romans 4:5)

If no law existed, there could be no such thing as sin, and therefore Paul says that the motions of sin were by the law. "The strength of sin is the law." (1 Corinthians 15:56)

Now we say that the law holds the man fast in this union with sin. That does not mean that the law delights to have the man a sinner; nothing of the kind. The law has no choice in the matter. By his own voluntary action the man has transgressed the law and thereby become a sinner, and now the law can do nothing else than declare him to be such.

If the man, through fear of the consequences of his sins, or for any other reason, wishes to escape from this union, he cannot. The law still reiterates, "You are a sinner."

If the law could die, or could be made void, then the man at once would be free; but that cannot be.

There is, however, a way by which the man may be freed from the galling bondage to sin, if he feels it to be a galling bondage, and that is through faith in the death and resurrection of Christ. He may be "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are passed, through the forbearance of God." (Romans 3:24-25)

When "The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ," (Romans 3:22) has been imputed to the man, the law no

longer calls him a sinner. He is justified, freed from the body of sin. But this freedom from sin, and consequent deliverance from the condemnation of the law, has been accomplished only through Christ. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God." (2 Corinthians 5:17-18)

Now the man is united to Christ, and by the same law which before held him to be a sinner. While he was in the flesh, the law could not for a moment allow that he was righteous; now that he is in Christ, the same law witnesses to his righteousness. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the prophets." (Romans 3:21)

The law remains the same; the man only has changed. Notice the parallel between the illustration and the application. The law binds the woman to her husband. She cannot escape from that union, even though it be disagreeable to her. But the husband dies, and she is a free woman, and may legally be married to another man.

So a man is united to sin, and the law, true to itself, holds him to that account. But by Christ the body of sin is destroyed; and now the man, being free from sin, is united to Christ, and the law sanctions the union.

As a woman cannot legally be united to two husbands at the same time, so no person can be united at the same time both to his sins and to Christ. "You cannot serve God and mammon." (Matthew 16:2)

Union with Christ while we are in sin is impossible; and if, while professing Christianity, a person still clings to sin, he is guilty

of spiritual adultery. "You adulterers and adulteresses, know you not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" (James 4:4)

The law sanctions no such union as that. The reader may, however, think that he detects a flaw in our reasoning, because in the application the apostle tells us that we have to die in order to become united to Christ. "This," he will say, "is not an exact parallel to the case of a woman whose husband dies that she may be joined to another."

The difficulty is only apparent, not real. The parallel is as close as it is possible for any parallel to be. In the illustration the husband dies, and thus the woman may be united to another. Now if you should suppose a case in which the woman died with her first husband, and then had a resurrection, and was thus united to another, we have an exact parallel to the case of the sinner being freed from sin and united to Christ.

The case is of sufficient importance to warrant a more detailed investigation. The following verses contain the whole argument: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. ... The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:1-7,23)

The law demands the death of every sinner. But, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

For Christ "bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness." (1 Peter 2:24)

By baptism we show our belief in the death and resurrection of Christ, and our acceptance of Him as a propitiation for our sins. Indeed, by baptism we are joined to Christ: "As many of you as have been baptized in the Christ has put on Christ." (Galatians 3:27)

But we are baptized into Christ, by being "baptized into His death. We are buried with Him by baptism into death." (Romans 6:3-4)

And thus it is that we receive the penalty of the law; not in person, but in figure. Christ has suffered for sin; and if we are "in Him," we also are accounted as having received the penalty. And since it is by baptism that we become united to Him, we become dead to the law and united to Christ at the same time. "Dead to the law." What does the apostle mean by that expression? Simply that we have (in Christ) received the penalty of the law, and that it now regards us as dead. To illustrate: A man guilty of stealing is by the law sentenced to a term of years in the penitentiary. He serves his sentence, and then is set at liberty. Now he has no fear of the law. He may go boldly into the court-room, and even into the prison; for he knows that, having received the penalty for his crime, the law will not molest him.

Now carry the illustration a little further: A man commits murder and is sentenced to death. When he has been executed, the law is satisfied. Suppose now that it were possible for the man to come to life again. Having received the full penalty of the law, he is, so far as his past offense is concerned, thenceforth considered by the law as a dead man.

So with the sinner's relation to the law of God. It condemned him to death. In Christ he received the death penalty, and now that he is raised to walk in newness of life, the law considers him to be a dead man. He is now a new man; the man who sinned is dead, and the man who takes his place shuns those things which the former man did, and therefore the law declares him to be righteous.

In harmony with the above quotation and explanation are the following words: "If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Colossians 3:1-3)

Read also of the following statement by the same apostle: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless 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." (Galatians 2:20)

Now why was it necessary for us to go through this process of dying and being raised to new life? Because we have upon us a burden of sin from which we could not otherwise be free. Did we get rid of this body of sin by that means? Yes; hear the apostle: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body

of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin." (Romans 6:6-7)

The body of sin was the first husband. We became disgusted with that union, and desired to become united to Christ, but could not as long as the first husband was living; and in order for that husband to die, we ourselves have to die.

For a moment, both are dead; then we are raised to be henceforth joined to Christ in a new life, because the first husband, the old man, the body of sin, remains dead. So long as that body of sin remains dead, we, although alive in Christ, are dead in the eyes of the law. But if at anytime the old man should come to life by our falling back into our old sins, that moment the law would condemn us as adulterers.--Signs of the Times, June 17, 1886--Original title: Brief Comments on Romans 7.

## Chapter 35

### **The Struggle and the Deliverance**

The remainder of the 7th chapter of Romans is a graphic account of the steps which lead the sinner to hate the sin in which he was bound, and to his freedom therefrom. It is not, as some have supposed, a Christian experience; it is simply an account of the experience of a man passing from a state of sin, through conviction, to a new creature in Christ.

It will be worth our while to give it a little study, that we may learn more of the law's dealings with the sinner. The apostle first declares (verse 7) that the law is not sin; this is proved by the fact that it points out sin. But for the law, he could not have known what sin is. "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead." (Romans 7:8)

Here sin is regarded as a person, producing all manner of evil in the heart. And since without the law there would be no sin he says that sin took occasion by the commandment. In the next verse he embodies this idea and carries it farther. He says: "For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." (Romans 7:9)

The first clause of this verse presents to us a picture of carnal security. It is the confidence of the man who is insensible to danger. "Without the law" means that the law had not been driven by the Spirit into his heart. Many a man who has read the ten commandments scores of times, has never felt them searching his heart. Therefore his way is right in his own eyes, and he feels

secure. [An easy mind is by no means a sure test of acceptance with God. It was forgetfulness or ignorance of this fact that caused David so much trouble. (Psalm 73) He saw the wicked wholly at ease, and that there were no bands even in their death. But when he learned their end, he found that such a condition is not an enviable one.] But as soon as a personal application of the law is made to his heart, the sin stands out in bold relief. "When the commandment came, sin revived." (Romans 7:9)

The law did not create the sin; it simply brought to his view that which already existed. A room may be very dusty and dirty, yet if it is dark, the filth will not appear. But let a bright light be brought in, and the foulness becomes all too noticeable. So the law of God lights up the dark corners of the heart and reveals the depravity within. When this had been done, says Paul, "I died." (Romans 7:9)

He does not here mean death to sin; for the next verse says: "And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." (Romans 7:10)

The law had shown him that he was a sinner, and "the wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)

Therefore he felt himself to be virtually a dead man. He did not actually die, but he speaks as though that which was inevitable had already come. In like manner the Lord said to Abimelech, who had taken Abraham's wife, "You are but a dead man." (Genesis 20:3) "For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." (Romans 7:11)

Sin is deceitful; it arrays itself in a pleasing garb so that to the unsuspecting one it appears to be good. But underneath its pleasing

exterior it carries a weapon that wounds to the death all who come in contact with it.

Notwithstanding all that the law had revealed to Paul, he could say, "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." (Romans 7:12)

He would uphold the dignity of the law, and shield it from all blame for his present deplorable condition. Although he had before said that the law, which was ordained to life, he found to be unto death, he insists that it was not the law, "that which is good," (Romans 7:13) that was made death to him, but that it was sin that condemned him to death, and that the commandment had simply made sin "become exceeding sinful." (Romans 7:13)

Happy is the awakened sinner who views the law in this light. Such a one is "not far from the kingdom of Heaven." (Mark 12:34)

Unfortunately too many rail at the law, as though it were the cause of their lost condition, and then, as if they could avert the danger by shutting their eyes, they turn away from the law, and relapse into their old state of false security. "For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." (Romans 7:14-15)

Again we must caution the reader against supposing that in these verses Paul is relating a Christian experience. Up to this point he has shown how any a person is convicted of sin. He has related the experience of one who, when the law convicts him of sin, does not turn from the light, but honestly desires to obey.

Now he proceeds to give the experience of one under conviction, until he is made a free man in Christ. He uses the first person and the present tense in order to make the narrative more vivid, as he portrays the sinner's struggle for freedom. It was once a present matter with him, and is the experience that all pass through, though with various modifications, before they find peace with God.

"Sold under sin." This idea is carried out in many places. Peter says that the sinner is "in bondage." (2 Peter 2:19)

Paul says that he is in bondage "under the elements of the world; ... to the weak and beggarly elements." (Galatians 4:3,9)

He is a slave to sin. "Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that you were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." (Romans 6:16-17)

In a future article [Editor's note: It is not entirely clear which "future article" Waggoner was referring to. The series, Comments in Galatians, which follows this series, were printed in the following issues of Signs. So perhaps that is what he meant. There didn't seem to be any articles that would otherwise match his description in the next six months, other than those] we shall see the case stated in even stronger terms. The idea is that the sinner is helpless. He may "consent unto the law that it is good," (Romans 7:16) and may with his "mind serve the law of God;" (Romans 7:25) that is, he may desire to obey it, yet sin has dominion over him, and he is forced to serve the law of sin, namely his natural, sinful habits. As Paul

elsewhere says, they that are in the flesh "cannot do the things that they would." (Galatians 5:17)

This is the condition of the awakened sinner. He would do good, but evil is present with him, so that he does the very thing that he has resolved not to do. The flesh is depraved, having no good thing in it, so that although he may determine to do good, he will not find any power in him to carry out his determination. The trouble is, sin dwells in him; it has never been killed.

Let the reader imagine a man bound with fetters and having a dead carcass fastened to him by a strong chain. He is fully conscious of the seriousness of the situation, and knows that death must be the inevitable result. Every day the load which hangs to him becomes more noxious, and the whole air becomes putrid. Imagine the terror of the man as he contemplates the steady and sure approach of a horrible death, and imagine his despair when he finds that all his frantic efforts to escape from the disgusting cause of that death are in vain.

It would be impossible for the imagination to overdraw the feelings of horror and despair that would fill the soul of the unfortunate man. This was the condition in which Paul found himself. Sin was upon him as a terrible burden; he knew that unless he could get rid of it and lead a life of righteousness it would sink him into perdition; and he found that his most desperate efforts to get rid of it, and to do the good that he longed to do, were unavailing.

It was the law that revealed his condition to him. As he continues to look into that holy law, his sin becomes more and more disgusting to him, and yet the more he looks, the larger and more

revolting does the burden of sin become. What shall he do? Must he sink into perdition? In the agony of his despair he cries out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24)

Even as he utters this wail for help, the help appears, and he immediately answers his own question, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 7:25)

He has found peace and rest in Christ. His condition now is presented in the following words,--a Christian experience: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:1-4)

"No condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," because they are new creatures. They are not the ones against whom the law had such a terrible indictment. The condemned ones have died, have been crucified with Christ, and now although they live, it is no more they, but Christ dwelling in them. Once sin dwelt in them; now Christ has taken its place.

Verse 2 is a parallel to Romans 3:21-22. The righteousness of Christ being imputed to the sinner, frees him from sin and the fear of death. For a long time he may have tried to make himself righteous, but he found his best deeds so far below what the law requires that they alone would have been sufficient to ruin him. Even if he could

have fulfilled the requirements of the law, that would not have removed past transgression.

What the law cannot do is to make a sinner righteous. This is not on account of any defect of the law, but is solely owing to the weakness of the flesh. The law points out the disease and shows what a condition of health would be; then the man begins an ineffectual struggle to reach that high condition; the law goads him on until he finds that he has not power to accomplish his desire; and when he has lost all confidence in himself, he accepts Christ as the only source of help, and at once becomes free.

Thus the law drives the sinner to Christ that Christ may free him from his past sins and enable him to keep the law.--Signs of the Times, June 24, 1886--Original title: Brief Comments on Romans 7 (Concluded.)

## Chapter 36

### **No Justification by the Law**

There is probably no portion of Scripture which is more commonly supposed to give "aid and comfort" to the enemies of the law of God, than the 3rd chapter of Galatians. It is true that there are in this chapter, as in other parts of Paul's writings, "some things hard to be understood," (2 Peter 3:16) but only the unlearned and unstable will wrest them to their own destruction. The student of the Bible may rest assured that the law of God stands fast forever and ever, and cannot be overthrown. "All His commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness." (Psalm 111:7-8)

And he may also remember another thing: those texts which are the most depended upon by antinomians in their opposition to the law, will be found, after careful study, to be strong bulwarks in its support. No weapon formed against God's law can prosper. "Concerning your testimonies, I have known of old that You have founded them forever." (Psalm 119:152)

There is not a point in the 3rd chapter of Galatians that has not been explained in our study of other texts; therefore in our brief study of this chapter we shall only emphasize facts already established.

The reader will recall our remarks in a previous article [See the book, *Under the Law*, especially the series published in 1886] on the particular errors into which the Galatian brethren had fallen, and the object of the epistle to them. It will not be necessary to give more than an outline of the statements there made. Men had come from

Judea saying to the young converts, "Except you be circumcised ... you cannot be saved." (Acts 15:1)

This was teaching them that their salvation depended on their own works, and was directly contrary to Paul's teaching, that works outside of Christ amount to nothing. Paul taught that sinners can obtain justification only by the grace of God, through faith in the blood of Christ; those Jews taught that circumcision was the true means of justification. It can readily be seen that the latter teaching was directly subversive of the former, and that the acceptance of it was equivalent to the rejection of Christ.

In harmony with the above idea are the opening words of the 3rd chapter: "O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" (Galatians 3:1)

"Christ and Him crucified" had been set forth among them, and Christ is "the truth." (John 14:6) Through faith in Him they had begun the Christian life, and now they were in danger of turning from Him and endeavoring to be "made perfect" by their own works. (Galatians 3:3) For such a proceeding they justly merited the epithet "foolish."

Abraham is next taken as the model for Christians: "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." (Galatians 3:6)

Nothing else but his faith could be counted to him for righteousness, that is, for his past life; for any work that he could do could not take away a single sin. Abraham did works, as it is written, "Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my

charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." (Genesis 26:5)

But these works were done only through his faith. Works are necessary, but they are of no avail outside of Christ. Paul says: "For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:8-10)

The patriarch was justified by faith, and then by works his faith was made perfect, or shown to be genuine. "Do you see how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" (James 2:22)

Having shown that even Abraham was not justified before God by his own works, Paul shows that the promise is to none but the children of Abraham; and since the children of Abraham are those only who have the same faith that he had, only those that are of faith can receive the promise. These are his words:

### **Galatians 3**

Following this statement, the apostle emphasizes the fact that we can be justified only by faith, and not by works. He says: "Know you therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In you shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." (Galatians 3:7-9)

Following this statement, the apostle emphasizes the fact that we can be justified only by faith, and not by works. He says: "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." (Galatians 3:10)

This verse is the cause of much stumbling, and is often wrested from its true meaning, but its explanation is simple, and is contained within the verse itself. It is written, "Cursed is every one that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." (Galatians 3:10)

These words are quoted from Deuteronomy 27:26, and Jeremiah 11:2-4, in both of which places they have unmistakable reference to the ten commandments. The law contains the whole duty of man, and the transgression of it brings death, and therefore the man who fails to obey it comes under the curse of God.

But there is no man who has kept the law perfectly. Consequently if any are saved they must have recourse to something outside of the law; for the law cannot justify the sinner. Or, to use the words of Paul, "As many as are of the works of the law [that is, as many as depend upon the law], are under the curse." (Galatians 3:10)

They are "under the law;" condemned to death. "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident; for, the just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith; but, the man that does them shall live in them." (Galatians 3:11-12)

This is a repetition of the thought already presented, showing that no man can be just except through faith. It is parallel to: "For

Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes. For Moses describes the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which does those things shall live by them." (Romans 10:4-5)--Signs of the Times, July 8, 1886--Original title: Comments on Galatians 3. No. 1.

## Chapter 37

### **The Curse of the Law**

The next verse that we come to is another "stone of stumbling" to many, but with an understanding of the tenth verse, it is impossible to go wrong on this. We quote it with the fourteenth: "For Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree; That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." (Galatians 3:13-14)

What is the curse of the law? Is it obedience to the law? No; for it is written, "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5:3)

The psalmist also says: "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord." (Psalm 19:1)

Now if the keeping of the law is a blessing, disobedience, with its consequences, must be the curse. And so Paul, after warning the Ephesians against whoredom, covetousness, and idolatry, says: "For because of these things the wrath of God [curse of the law] comes upon the children of disobedience." (Ephesians 5:6)

And, "The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)

So, "the curse of the law" is, in a word, death. That death is the curse from which Christ has redeemed us, is evident from the latter part of the ninth verse. He redeemed us from the curse by being

made a curse for us, and the curse which He suffered was His death,--being hanged on a tree, which was absolutely necessary, in order that Christ should be made in all respects like those whom He would redeem. "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." (Hebrews 2:17)

He came to save sinners, therefore He was counted as a sinner. "He has poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." (Isaiah 53:12) "For He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

And being found in fashion as a man, He suffered the curse which hung over guilty man. He died that we might live. And because He was made a curse for us, we may all through faith share in the blessing of Abraham. "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulls or adds thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promise made. He says not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to your seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." (Galatians 3:15-17)

Here the apostle introduces a new point, the conclusion of the argument being: "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." (Galatians 3:21)

That the law is not against the promises of God. He makes the positive and unquestionable statement that if a covenant be once confirmed it cannot afterwards be altered. Now the covenant was confirmed to Abraham by "two immutable things [God's promise and His oath] in which it was impossible for God to lie." (Hebrews 6:18)

Therefore, as is stated in verse seventeen, the law given from Sinai four hundred and thirty years after, cannot make the promise void, nor destroy the fact that the inheritance is solely by promise. Thus the main idea of the chapter, that God's grace as manifested in Christ is man's sole hope, is kept prominent.

But there is still another point which we should not fail to consider in connection with the fifteenth verse. Although the law "was four hundred and thirty years after" the covenant with Abraham, it was nevertheless in existence at that time, and long before, and was the basis of that covenant. Said God to Abraham, before making the promise: "Walk before me, and be perfect." (Exodus 17:1)

And in renewing to Isaac the promise made to Abraham, God said it was: "because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." (Exodus 26:5)

Thus the law could not be against the promises of God, because the law was the foundation of the promise.

Although the covenant was confirmed in Christ to Abraham, it was only in anticipation. As the first covenant was confirmed by blood,--the blood of beasts,--so the second covenant was also

ratified by blood,--the blood of Christ. "[Christ himself] confirmed the covenant with many for one week," (Daniel 9:27) in the midst of which He shed His blood on the cross, thus affixing the final seal to the covenant of God's grace.

As the commandments were the condition of the Abrahamic covenant, so they are of what is known as "the second covenant," which is in every respect the same as that made with Abraham. (See Jeremiah 31:33; Hebrews 8:10) None can deny that in His earthly ministry Christ taught the necessity of obedience to the law of God. (See Matthew 5:17-19; 19:17; Luke 16:17, etc.) Always, in the strongest terms, He proclaimed the enduring nature and obligation of God's law.

Now since the death of Christ was the final ratification of the covenant, and since, as Paul says, when a covenant is confirmed "no man can disannul or add thereto," it follows that after the death of Christ, no change in the covenant was possible. And since the law was one of the terms of the covenant, we are assured that not one jot nor one tittle could pass from it.

The fact that God's law cannot be changed, we have learned before; but it is well to emphasize it in connection with the death of Christ. That which some suppose marked the abolition of the law, was that which emphasized its perpetuity. It is admitted, even by antinomians, that the law of God was in full force until the death of Christ, and therefore Galatians 3:15 should convince them that it is in full force now. Says Paul, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law." (Romans 3:31)

Verse sixteen also shows that the promise is made only to Christ and to those who are His. In the verses following, the apostle shows the relation of the law to the promise of God. "And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that is should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise." (Galatians 3:17-18)

What covenant was it that "was confirmed before of God in Christ"? Manifestly it was the covenant with Abraham, quoted in verse eight from Genesis 12:1-3; 13:14-15; 17:7-8, and 22:18. The promise was that Abraham should be "heir of the world," (Romans 4:11) and that in his seed all nations should be blessed. The condition was that he should walk before God and be perfect. (Genesis 17:1-8) But this was not such a covenant as was made with the Israelites at Horeb. That one contained no reference to Christ, and no provision for the forgiveness of sins. The one with Abraham was confirmed "in Christ" (Galatians 3:17) and was made not on condition that he should be righteous by his own unaided efforts, but was made on condition of his having the righteousness of faith. (Compare Romans 4:11 with Galatians 3:22-25) This of course involved the forgiveness of his sins; and so we see that the covenant with Abraham (which is the one referred to in this chapter) was exactly the same as "the second covenant," which is made with us.

The covenant made at Horeb, and called "the first covenant," although it was after that made with Abraham, was, as we have before learned, only for the purpose of showing the people the need of the help promised in the Abrahamic or second covenant.

Now the apostle says that the law, which was formally announced from Sinai four hundred thirty years after the covenant with Abraham, cannot disannul that covenant, that it should make the promise of none effect. "For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise." (Galatians 3:18)

That is, if the inheritance be given to those who depend upon their own deeds for justification, then it is not by promise. If it be bestowed because of works, then faith in Christ is ruled out. But this, he says, cannot be; for God gave the inheritance to Abraham by promise, contingent on his faith.

The reader can readily see the force of the apostle's argument. He is trying to convince the Galatians, and with them all men, that out of Christ, there is no salvation. The man who hopes to gain an inheritance in the kingdom of God through his own works, no matter how high his aim may be, will fail. The promise is "Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:9)

But it is through faith in Jesus Christ, that He may be "Lord of all." (Acts 10:36) "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)--Signs of the Times, July 15, 1886--Original title: Comments on Galatians 3. No. 2.

## Chapter 38

### **The Purpose of the Law**

"Wherefore then serves the law?" (Galatians 3:19)

This is a very pertinent question, and several points need to be borne in mind in reading it.

The word "serves" seems to convey to many minds the idea that the law was subservient, or secondary, to something else. There was really no necessity for the insertion of the word by the translators, for it is not expressed in the original. The text reads, *Ti oun ho nomos?* "Why then the law?"

This conveys the exact meaning. It may also be more freely rendered, "Of what use, then, is the law?"

It must be remembered that questions of this sort are very common in Paul's writings. After having stated a proposition, he puts himself in the place of a supposed objector, in order that, by answering the question, he may bring out an additional thought. By so doing he anticipates every objection that might be brought against his argument.

Now recall the argument of verses 16-18, and you will readily see the force of this question. He has shown that the works of the law will not suffice to gain the promised inheritance for anybody. Faith in Christ is the only condition of salvation. Then the objector speaks up, and says, "Then what is the use of the law? If the inheritance is only by promise, what do men gain by having the law? Is it not rather a detriment to them?"

There was need of asking and answering this question; for, notwithstanding Paul's answer, thousands are today asking the same question, and in so doing they imagine that they are making an unanswerable objection against the law. They say, "If we are saved by grace, what need have we of the law?" And what is the answer? "It was added because of transgression, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator." (Galatians 3:19)

This is a very short answer, but it is full of meaning. Let us examine it candidly and carefully, giving due weight to every word. "It was added." (Galatians 3:19)

Here the casual reader is liable to be misled into supposing that some mathematical process is referred to. It is true that the word (prostithami) is most commonly used in the sense of "add," but every word must be rendered in accordance with its connection. When used in connection with the law, it does not have the sense of "add."

The only other instance in the New Testament where this word is used with reference to the law is Hebrews 12:19, where it is rendered "spoken." Paul says that when the people heard the voice of God proclaiming the law from Sinai, "they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken unto them any more." (Hebrews 12:19)

This makes the meaning more clear than if it had been rendered, "They that heard entreated that the word might not be added to them any more."

In fact, that rendering would not bring out any idea at all. The "Emphatic Diaglott" uses "added" in this place, thus: "The hearers of which entreated that not another word should be added to them."

But by the change of construction the expression is equivalent to that in the regular version. So if in Galatians 3:19 it were rendered "spoken," the meaning would be brought out more clearly. "It was spoken because of transgression."

Now when the antinomian asks: "What was the use of the law, if the inheritance was only by promise?"

Paul answers, "It was spoken because of transgressions." (Galatians 3:19)

"Because of transgressions." Again the casual reader will say: "You have told us that there can be no transgression when there is no law; yet here you have the law spoken because of transgressions already existing; how is this?"

It is all right. There can indeed be no transgression when there is no law; but it must be remembered that the law existed in full force long before it was spoken from Sinai, yes, long before the creation of man. In the temple of God in Heaven the law of God was beneath the throne of God, the basis of His Government. This we have clearly demonstrated.

And when it was spoken from Sinai, and a copy of it was given to Moses to place within the ark, there was no more law in existence than there was before. The people of the world were under just as much obligation to keep the law before that time as they were afterward.

And that was just why it was then given. The people being under obligation to keep the law perfectly, it was necessary that they should have it in such a form that they could study it carefully.

Before the giving of the law upon Sinai, God had conveyed a knowledge of His will to the people by His prophets, as Enoch and Noah. The people also had in their hearts, more or less, traces of the law originally written in the heart of man.

But the only people who cared to remember God had been in long and cruel bondage to the heathen, and their knowledge of right and wrong had become blunted. Consequently the law was given that wrong might be known to be wrong.

If this point be kept in mind, the reader will not become confused by the text, even though he retains the rendering "added" instead of "spoken." Thus the law was already in existence, and known to man, although only by tradition; but now the Lord added it in written form.

But however it is rendered, there is no more reason for supposing that it teaches that the law was here first introduced than there is of supposing that by the "entering" of the law, in Romans 5:20, or the "speaking" of it, in Hebrews 12:19, the first introduction of the law is indicated.

A parallel to the expression, "It was added [or spoken] because of transgressions," is found in: "Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound." (Romans 5:20)

The "entering" of the law was at Sinai. Why did it enter? That the offense (sin) which previously existed might abound. The previous existence of sin implies the previous existence of the law; but it was then formally given that the enormity of sin might be seen. And why was it necessary that the enormity of sin might be seen? Says Paul, "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; That as sin has reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 5:20-21)

That is, it was necessary for men to see the real nature of sin, in order that they might seek the grace that is in Christ, which alone can take away sin. And the more enormous sin appeared, the more comprehensive views could they have of grace; for no matter how greatly sin abounded, grace super-abounded. This will be made more clear further on.--Signs of the Times, July 22, 1886--Original title: Comments on Galatians 3. No. 3.

## Chapter 39

### **The Coming of the Seed**

"Till the seed should come to whom the promise was made."  
(Galatians 3:19)

There is no question of course but that the "seed" is Christ. The sixteenth verse plainly says so. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He said not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to your seed, which is Christ." (Galatians 3:16)

Then what is the coming of the seed? Some have supposed it to be Christ's first advent, but a little study will show that the second advent is here spoken of. The "seed" is never mentioned except in connection with the promise, and the promise is fulfilled only at the second coming of Christ. The following texts and argument will make this appear.

#### **Bruising the Serpent's Head**

In Genesis 3:15, the Lord, in pronouncing the curse upon the serpent (Satan), said, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; it [the seed] shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." (Genesis 3:15)

Paul, in his letter to the Romans, many years after Christ had come and had ascended to Heaven, said, "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." (Romans 16:20)

The bruising of a serpent's head is its destruction; but this was not accomplished at Christ's first advent, but was something still

future. The destruction of Satan begins only at Christ's second coming. (See Revelation 20)

### **Possessing the Gate of the Enemies**

Again, in the promise to Abraham it was said, "And your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies." (Genesis 22:17)

This was not fulfilled at the first advent of Christ. On the contrary He was then delivered into the hands of His enemies, and they did to Him whatsoever they would. (Matthew 17:12) He will possess the gate of His enemies only when the following promise is fulfilled: "Ask of me, and I shall give you the heathen for your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; you shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (Psalm 2:7-8)

And this is fulfilled at Christ's second advent, when He takes vengeance "on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel," (2 Thessalonians 1:8) as is described by the revelator: "And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in Heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations; and He shall rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords.

And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and He cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That you may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. ... And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh." (Revelation 19:11-18,21)

Thus He possesses the gate of His enemies.

### **Possession of the Earth**

Again, another part of the promise to the seed was that he should possess the whole earth. "I will declare the decree: the Lord has said unto me, You are my Son; this day have I begotten You. Ask of me, and I shall give You the heathen for your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession." (Psalm 2:7-8)

Here the uttermost parts of the earth are promised to Christ for a possession; also see: "And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now your eyes, and look from the place where you are northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which you see, to you will I give it, and to your seed for ever. And I will make your seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall your seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto you." (Genesis 13:14-17) "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." (Romans 4:13)

But when Christ was on earth, He possessed not so much as a place where He could lay His head. "And Jesus said unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has not where to lay His head." (Matthew 8:20)

When, however, the seventh angel sounds (when the mystery of God is to be finished, Revelation 10:7), then it will be said: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ." (Revelation 11:15)

The eighteenth verse says that this is at "the time of the dead, that they should be judged," (Revelation 11:18) showing conclusively that it is at the second coming of Christ. (Compare 2 Timothy 4:1)

Still further, in the prophecy of Ezekiel the promise of the earth to Christ is directly associated with His second coming. The prophet foretells the captivity of the Jews, the succession of the four universal monarchies, and the setting up of the kingdom of God, as follows: "And you, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, Thus says the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown; this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him." (Ezekiel 21:25-27)

The diadem was taken from the king of Israel when he and his people were carried away to Babylon. At that time Babylon was a universal monarchy. Then three "over-turnings" are mentioned, which reach to the second coming of Christ. Thus:

1. The first overturning made Medo-Persia a universal dominion;
2. The second gave the dominion of the world to Grecia; and
3. The third overturning made the empire of Rome fill the world.

This was the state of things at Christ's first advent, and for four hundred years later, and the prophet declared that there should be no more general revolution, "until He come whose right it is." (Ezekiel 21:27)

Note the parallel between this and the clause in Galatians 3 which says, "Till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." (Galatians 3:19)

In the light of Ezekiel 21:25-27 we think there can be no question but that in the latter passage the second coming of Christ is referred to.

### **All Families of the Earth to be Blessed**

Once more: The promise to the seed was that in Him all the families of the earth should be blessed. This of course could not be fulfilled as long as any wicked are in existence. But when Christ comes, sitting on the throne of His glory, to destroy sinners out of the earth, "Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matthew 25:34)

From the above quotations and references it will be seen that the promises to "the seed" are not fulfilled until the second coming of Christ; they all culminate at His second advent.

It was willful forgetfulness of this fact that caused the Jews to reject Christ. They read the promises to the seed,--promises of glorious triumph,--and applied them to the coming of the Messiah; and when they saw none of those promises fulfilled in Him, they rejected Him.

Let us not, like them, fall into grievous error by referring to His first advent those promises to be fulfilled only at His second glorious coming. That was the time of His humiliation, not of His triumph. Christ then came as an offering for sin, and not as the seed to whom the promise was made.

When He comes the second time He comes as "King of Kings and Lord of Lords;" (Revelation 19:16) He comes to take possession of the gates of His enemies, whom He will dash in pieces as a potter's vessel; He comes to take possession of His inheritance, even "the uttermost parts of the earth," (Psalm 2:8) and to receive as His own a great multitude whom no man can number. (Compare Revelation 7:9 and Genesis 13:16) In short, He comes as "the seed ... to whom the promise was made." (Galatians 3:19)--Signs of the Times, July 29, 1886--Original title: Comments on Galatians 3. No. 4.

## Chapter 40

### **The Time of the Inheritance**

In last week's article, texts were quoted to show that the expression, "Till the seed should come to whom the promise was made," (Galatians 3:19) has reference to the second coming of Christ. This is an important point, and we wish to have it well fixed in the mind of the reader. We therefore present a few more thoughts in the same line of argument. Let us first read the eighteenth and nineteenth verses in connection: "For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Wherefore then serves the law? It was added [spoken] because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." (Galatians 3:18-19)

There can be no question but that the "promise" referred to in verse 19 is the same as that mentioned in verse 18. And what is that promise? It is the promise of "the inheritance." What inheritance was promised to Abraham? Paul tells us that the promise to Abraham was "that he should be the heir of the world." (Romans 4:13)

This promise must be the same as that discussed in the 3rd chapter of Galatians, because:

1. Only one inheritance was promised to Abraham, and
2. The same means of securing the inheritance is given, both in Romans and in Galatians. Compare the two texts: "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For

if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect." (Romans 4:13-14) "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise." (Galatians 3:16-18)

That the thought in these two texts is identical, there can be no shadow of doubt. It therefore needs no further argument to show that the "promise" is the promise of "the inheritance," and that "the inheritance" is the whole earth, which God gives to Christ, the seed, (Psalm 2:7-8) and to all who, by faith in Christ, become children of faithful Abraham. (Galatians 3:7,29) And this is at the second coming of Christ.

The next point to be emphasized is that in speaking of the seed, "the inheritance" is in the mind of the apostle. His argument, in outline, is this: The inheritance is given solely on account of faith. To the objection that this makes void the law, he replies that the law was spoken (made more plain) to serve an important purpose in connection with faith, and that it will continue to fill this office until the seed shall come to whom the promise was made, and through whom alone the inheritance can be obtained. The coming of the seed brings the fulfillment of the promise, and, of course, the end of faith. "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." (2 Peter 1:9)

And when will this take place? For answer, note two texts that have been previously quoted. Through the prophet, Ezekiel the Lord says of the dominion of this earth: "I will overturn, overturn,

overturn it; and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him." (Ezekiel 21:27)

And that this refers to the second coming of Christ, He himself showed when He said: "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: And before Him shall be gathered all nations. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matthew 25:31-34)

From the foregoing we think that there can be no doubt in any mind that the apostle has reference in verse 19 to the second coming of Christ. This will appear even more plainly as we develop the argument which he bases on this point.

The next thing for consideration will be the relation which the law sustains to the promise and its fulfillment. This is the objective point of the whole argument; but since the limits of this article will not allow the matter to be presented in such shape that it could well be left for a week, we shall defer a discussion of that question until the next number.--Signs of the Times, August 5, 1886--Original title: Comments on Galatians 3. No. 9.

## Chapter 41

### **The Work of the Schoolmaster Finished**

We now know from the foregoing question, that the answer to the question, "Of what use, then, is the law?" (Galatians 3:19) may justly be paraphrased thus: "It was spoken in order that all sin might be perfectly well known to be sin, until the coming of Christ should bring the fulfillment of the promise."

And now before the reader hastily jumps to the conclusion that this implies the doing away of the law at the second coming of Christ, let him carefully note the following points:

1. The law existed in its fullness before it was "spoken" from Sinai. This has been amply demonstrated. It is the foundation of God's throne, and was in existence from the beginning of God's Government. The giving of it from Sinai added no feature that had not existed for ages.

2. It was spoken from Sinai for a special purpose. That purpose, as stated by Paul in Romans 5:20, was that sin might be made to appear more plainly than it did before. God hated sin just as much before that time as He did afterward. And there were men who understood fully the nature of sin, and that God required "truth in the inward parts;" (Psalm 51:6) but the mass of mankind had wandered so far from God that He could not communicate with them as He did with Adam, Enoch, Noah, and such ones; and the only way that they could constantly know His will was to have it in writing. By the law in written form, they could always know God's will, just as well as if they could converse with Him; for the law is a likeness of His character.

3. The making of sin to abound by the entering of the law, was necessary to the fulfillment of the promise. The inheritance can be given to none but the righteous; there must be no spot in those who inherit the earth. "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. ... Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." (Matthew 5:5,8)

It is true that righteousness can be obtained only through Christ, but sins must be confessed before they can be pardoned, and that cannot be done till sin is known. If the law had not been "spoken," perfect knowledge of sin could not have been had.

The inheritance was not promised through the law, but through faith; but this, instead of making the law unnecessary, called for the clearest statement thereof. The law points out sin; the knowledge of his sinful condition drives the sinner to Christ as the only source of help; Christ imputes to the repentant sinner his own righteousness, which is the righteousness of God, and enables him to live up to the requirements of the law, thus making him "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." (Colossians 1:12)

4. When Christ comes, this design will have been accomplished. Under the second covenant the law will have been written in the hearts (See Jeremiah 31:33) of all who have desired the better country, and thus they will "all be righteous, [and fit to] inherit the land forever." (Isaiah 60:21)

They will be righteous because the law is written in their hearts. They will then be as pure as was Adam when he was first created, with this advantage, that their characters will have been fully tested. When that time comes, the prophet says: "And they shall teach no

more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, says the Lord." (Jeremiah 31:34)

It will not be necessary for them to teach one another,

1. Because the law will be written in their hearts, and
2. Because they can go direct to the great Fountain of truth.

The prophet, speaking of the time when the promise shall be fulfilled, says: "And all your children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of your children." (Isaiah 54:13)

When "the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them;" (Revelation 21:3) when "They shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads," (Revelation 22:4) there will be no necessity for one man to say to another, "Know the Lord." When men can come in person to that glorious and awful throne of God, whose foundation is the perfect law of God, and can talk face to face with the author of that law, then:

- There will be no need for copies of the ten commandments written in books, or even engraved on rock of man's hewing.
- The preaching of the gospel will be no more heard, and
- Bible societies will not be known.

The law will have done its work in bringing men to Christ, and thus to perfect obedience to it, and then "they shall all know the

Lord," for His law shall be in their hearts, and His name shall be in their foreheads.

5. To say that when that time shall come there will be no less law than there is now, or than there was in the days of Abraham, or of Adam, or before it was spoken from Sinai, is now unnecessary, for all must see it plainly. Indeed, it will then be far better known than it has been at any time since the fall, for men will literally "walk with God," as did Adam and Enoch. This point will be still more fully developed when we consider verses 24 and 25.--Signs of the Times, August 12, 1886--Original title: Comments on Galatians 3. No. 6.

## Chapter 42

### **In the Hand of the Mediator**

"And it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator."  
(Galatians 3:19)

There is probably no man living who can fully comprehend this passage. We know that when God came down upon Mount Sinai, He was accompanied by ten thousands of His saints (holy ones), (Deuteronomy 33:2) and that they must have had some part to act in that great event; but what part they acted, no man can tell. The details of all that was done within that dense cloud which veiled Sinai's top from human gaze, have never been revealed to man.

A parallel to this passage in Galatians is found, however, in Stephen's address to the Jewish Sanhedrin: "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom you have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." (Acts 7:51-53)

Those wicked men were uncircumcised in heart because they had not kept the law of God. (See Romans 2:25-29) They had violated the law which forbids murder, although they had received it "by the disposition of angels." To the same effect the apostle writes to the Hebrews: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of

reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Hebrews 2:1-3)

As we said before, it is useless to conjecture on these passages. Just what part the angels acted in connection with the proclaiming of the law, we cannot tell; we only know that in each of the above texts the statement that is made concerning the angels is made to emphasize the guilt of those who should violate the law, or should reject the gospel, which has reference to the law. With this we must leave this expression,--"it was ordained by angels,"--the only really difficult passage in the chapter. "In the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one." (Galatians 3:19-20)

The expression, "but God is one," indicates that God is one of two parties between whom there is a mediator in whose hand the law was ordained. Now when we read that "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," (1 Timothy 2:5) the conclusion seems irresistible that the "mediator" in whose hand the law was ordained, or disposed, was none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. If to anyone this conclusion seems unnatural, let him remember that the Son is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person, and that by Him the worlds were made. (Hebrews 1:1-3) "For by Him were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." (Colossians 1:16-17)

He is one with the Father, (John 10:30) and therefore is worthy to be called God, and to be worshiped as God. (John 1:1) "Without Him was not anything made that was made." (John 1:3)

It would be expected therefore that the active work of proclaiming the law to men should also be performed by the Son. Whatever is done by the Son is the same as if done by the Father. It will be profitable right here to note how inseparably the law and the gospel are united, and how impossible it is to separate, in any transaction, the Father and the Son. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Genesis 1:1)

But it was the Son "by whom He made the worlds." (Hebrews 1:2)

God formed the earth to be inhabited, (Isaiah 45:18) and therefore man was made in the image of God; (Genesis 1:27) but before man was made, God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." (Genesis 1:26)

This has unmistakable reference to Him who is "before all things," (Colossians 1:17) and, "by whom all things were created." (Colossians 1:16)

Man fell, and thereby lost all hope of immortality, for which he was created. Then Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; (1 Timothy 1:15) but: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." (2 Corinthians 5:19) "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us." (Romans 8:31)

But He is not alone in His love, neither does He have to move a heart hardened against man, "For God so love the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

And when God spoke the law from Sinai, He said, "I am the Lord your God, which have brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." (Exodus 20:2)

But we know that an angel, in whom was the name of the Lord, was with the people, whom they were to obey: "Behold, I send an Angel before you, to keep you in the way, and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him, and obey His voice, provoke Him not; for He will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in Him." (Exodus 23:20-21)

And it was this angel "who spoke to Moses in the Mount Sinai, ... [when he] received the lively oracles to give unto us." (Acts 7:38)

Moreover we are plainly told that it was Christ who was with them in the wilderness, supplying both literal and spiritual food and water. "Moreover, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." (1 Corinthians 10:1-4)

Thus in everything that concerns man, we see oneness of thought and action between the Father and the Son. It is not true that "the Jewish age," so-called, was the administration of stern justice by the Father, and that "the Christian age" is the administration of tender mercy by the Son. If the life of one man had spanned the entire interval between creation and the present time, he could say, "Goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life." (Psalm 23:6)

There is no change of government between the fall of man and the restoration of all things. As it was the great love of God to the fallen world which moved Him to give His only begotten Son for their redemption, we are not surprised to learn that when Christ's ambassadors pray to men, "Be reconciled to God," (2 Corinthians 5:20) it is God himself beseeching sinners to accept His pardon. Even so when we learn that Christ was with the church in the wilderness, that He was upon Mount Sinai, and that it was in His hand that the law was ordained, we are not surprised to hear Him say, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." (Matthew 5:17-18) "Is the law then against the promises of God?" (Galatians 3:21)

That it is not, was shown by the 18th verse. It is directly in harmony with the promise, because by it men are enabled to see and forsake their sins, so that they may receive the promise. So the apostle says: "God forbid; for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." (Galatians 3:21)

Righteousness would have been by the law if such a thing had been possible. If by any means men could have received life without the death of Christ, we may be sure that this means would have been adopted. God is infinite; His love is infinite; therefore it was at an infinite sacrifice that God gave up His Son to die that the world through Him might have life. But there was no other way, for the law once violated could not by any possibility give life. It was ordained to life, but sin caused it to be unto death. "But the Scripture

has concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." (Galatians 3:22)

Blessed conclusion?

"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (1 Timothy 1:13)

Therefore, since all are concluded under sin, He came to save all. The provision is ample enough for all, but only those who believe can be made partakers. Unfortunately, too many will not acknowledge the authority of God's law, and will not confess themselves to be sinners, and therefore the "promise by faith of Jesus Christ," (Galatians 3:22) cannot be given to them; for we are taught by verse 22, that it is necessary for men to be "concluded under sin," in order that they may be sharers in the promise by faith. This again shows how the law works in harmony with the promise.--  
Signs of the Times, August 19, 1886--Original title: Comments on Galatians 3. No. 7.

## Chapter 43

### **Kept Under the Law**

"But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed." (Galatians 3:23)

It has been abundantly proved that "under the law" indicates, in general, a state of sin and consequently of condemnation. See the comments on Romans 6:14; Galatians 4:4-5, 21; 5:18; and Romans 7. The idea of bondage is everywhere connected with sin. It is a cruel master. Paul says: "The law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin." (Romans 7:14)

In the verse before us, we have the strongest expression on this point that occurs in the Bible. Take earthly laws as an illustration of the fact. When they are violated, the offender is seized as soon as possible, and cast into prison. He is "shut up" to await either the execution of the penalty or a pardon.

Of course in earthly affairs miscarriages of justice often take place. Sometimes a culprit is not apprehended, and very often the guilty escape without either sentence or pardon. But from the law of God there is no escape. There is a standing sentence of death on all who violate it, and consequently as soon as a man sins, he brings himself under its curse. He is "condemned already." (John 3:18)

Moreover, although sentence may not be executed speedily, God's government does not, like human governments, need detectives to ferret out the criminals. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." (Proverbs 15:3)

As in human governments the criminal is cast into prison as soon as he is detected, so violators of God's law are at once "shut up." As soon as they transgress the law, they are indicted and condemned, and there is no possibility of escape from the threatened penalty. Yet there is just one way of escape: "The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ," (Romans 3:22) will make the man stand free before God. The sinner, as is described by Paul in Romans 7:14, 24, may strive with all his might to keep the law, and to get rid of the body of death that is fastened to him. But how can the guilty one help himself when he is "shut up" in prison, "in bondage," and securely chained to a body of death? All his struggles are fruitless.

He makes an effort to escape in this direction, but finds himself confronted by the prison wall; then he makes an effort on the other side, and there the massive wall opposes an effectual barrier to his progress. He is absolutely "shut up" to the faith which may afterwards be revealed as the only means of escape from present guilt, and from the wrath to come.

Peter carries out the same idea when he calls the wicked antediluvians "the spirits in prison," (1 Peter 3:19) and says that Christ, by the Spirit, went and preached to them. (1 Peter 3:18-20) If they had listened to His preaching, they might have been released from prison, for it is the mission of Christ "to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." (Isaiah 61:1)

Take notice that in every case of just imprisonment it is the law that seizes the criminal, shuts him up, and keeps him confined until his trial and execution. The sheriff, jailer, and executioner are only

agents of the law. It is the strong arm of the law that gives power to the prison walls and bolts. But for the violated law, they could have no power to confine a man. So the law is in reality the jailer to every criminal.

This idea is carried out in the verse under consideration. The New Version makes it emphatic by saying, "But before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed." (Galatians 3:23,RV)

The addition of the words "in ward" is not unwarranted. The Greek is sugkleismenos, which carries the idea of confinement, from kleis, a key. Alford says on the expression, "were kept in ward": "Not simply 'kept,' as authorized version, but as Chrysostom says, as it were in a fortress."

And this agrees strikingly with Luther's version, which reads: "Wurden wir unter dem Gesetz verwahrt und verschlossen." "We were under the law, guarded and imprisoned."

The word verschlossen means "locked up," from schloss, a lock, a castle, a fortress. All this agrees with the known office of any law, -to confine within prison walls those who violate it. "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." (Galatians 3:24)

The word "schoolmaster" does not convey to us the idea of the original. The Greek is paidagogos, pedagogue. The paidagogos was a slave who attended the children on their way to school, beating them if they were inclined to play truant. He also had charge of them out of school, having the general duty of correcting their manners.

We have come to use the word pedagogue as synonymous with school-teacher, but in reality we have nothing which corresponds to the ancient paidagogos. In the New Version the word is rendered "tutor," the first definition of which is, "One who guards, protects, watches over, or has the care of another."

The word occurs in but one other place in the New Testament, where in King James's Version it is rendered "instructor": "Though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have you not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." (1 Corinthians 4:15)

Here the same idea is conveyed as in Galatians 5:24-25. The Corinthians might have many tutors, many who would lay down the law to them, and show them their errors, but they had not many, who, like Paul, would preach "Christ, and Him crucified," (1 Corinthians 2:2) and with the tenderness of a father win them to faith in Christ. The old meaning of "pedagogue" still attaches to the word "tutor," for it is very common to speak of "tutoring" some person, the idea being that of disciplining, of correcting with authority. This idea is still further carried out in Luther's translation, where the Greek word paidagogos is rendered Zuchtmeister, which means "a master of a house of corrections," "a task-master," "a jailer." "Before faith came we were kept in prison, under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed; wherefore the law was our master in that house of correction, to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith."

The reader will notice that the idea that the law acts as a jailer to sinners does not conflict with the idea that it also acts as a tutor, or pedagogue. It acts as pedagogue by virtue of its office as jailer. As jailer it shuts us up in a stronghold from which we cannot escape.

Now the more galling this imprisonment is made, the more our desire to escape is increased; and since there is no means of escape except through faith in Jesus Christ, it follows that the more of a jailer we feel the law to be, the more of a pedagogue it becomes, forcing us to flee for refuge to the hope set before us.

This office the law now has, and it has no other. It cannot pardon; it can only point out our sin. It is this which, directed by the Spirit of God, convicts of sin. Stung by his awakened conscience, the guilty one seeks peace and rest, but the law relentlessly charges him with his sin. All that it will do is to deepen convictions, and thus add to the load that weighs down the sinner. Finally, when he loses confidence in himself, and cries out, "O wretched man that I am," (Romans 7:24) he is forced to cast himself at the feet of Jesus, saying, "Lord be merciful to me, a sinner," (Luke 18:13)

This is the only avenue of escape, and it is one that never fails. Thus the law literally drives the sinner to Christ, by shutting up every other way of freedom from guilt. And when the sinner has come to Christ, he learns from the one whose life is but the embodiment of the righteousness of the law. He is thus exhorted to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3:18)

Christ says: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." (Matthew 11:29)

He is "the way, the truth, and the life," (John 14:6) that is, the law in its perfection. In Christ he may perform good works, because he walks at liberty. As the justified one abides in Christ and Christ in him, (John 15:4) he is enabled finally to grow "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:13) "But after

that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Galatians 3:25-27)

The best comment on the expression, "after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster," is found in: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:1-4)

Or this: "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid." (Romans 6:14-15)

Still another comment on Galatians 3:22-25, and a parallel passage is found in: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to

declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." (Romans 3:20-25)

Not only may the above text be applied the same as Galatians 3:20-25, but it must be applied to the same thing, for the argument in each place is exactly the same. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Jesus Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you be Christ's then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:27-29)

This closes the chapter, and the argument. In the 4th chapter, an exposition of which has been given, the apostle goes over the ground in another way, to bring out additional points. There, as here, Christ is the focal point. Baptism is for the remission of sins. We are buried with Christ by baptism into death, and by that act we "put on Christ." (Galatians 3:27)

And if we are Christ's, which honor we attain to only by the exercise of faith, then we are children of faithful Abraham, and with him are heirs of the promise. In this way, and in this way alone, can we be made "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." (Colossians 1:12)--Signs of the Times, August 26, 1886--Original title: Comments on Galatians 3. No. 8.

## Chapter 44

### **Redeemed from the Curse**

We think the reader who has carefully followed us through the 7th of Romans and the 3rd of Galatians, will have no difficulty in seeing how thoroughly the majesty of the law is vindicated throughout, and its perpetuity shown, and also how beautiful is the harmony between the law and the gospel. Right here we wish to quote a pertinent passage from John Wesley:--Sermon 34, Properties of the Law.

It is the ordinary method of the Spirit of God, to convict sinners by the law. It is this, which being set home on the conscience, generally breaks the rock in pieces. It is more especially this part of the word of God which is quick and powerful, full of life and energy, and "sharper than any two-edged sword." This, in the hand of God and of those whom He has sent, pierces through all the folds of a deceitful heart, and, "divides asunder even the soul and spirit;" yea, as it were, the very "joints and marrow." By this is the sinner discovered to himself. All his fig leaves are torn away, and he sees that he is "wretched, and poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked." The law flashes conviction on every side. He feels himself a mere sinner. He has nothing to pay. His "mouth is stopped," and he stands "guilty before God."

To slay the sinner is the first use of the law; to destroy the life and strength wherein he trusts, and convince him that he is dead while he liveth; not only under the sentence of death, but actually dead unto God, void of all spiritual life, "dead in trespasses and sins." The second use of it is to bring him unto life, unto Christ that he may live. It is true, in performing both these offices, it acts the

part of a severe schoolmaster. It drives us by force, rather than draws us by love. And yet love is the spring of all. It is the spirit of love which, by this painful means, tears away our confidence in the flesh, which leaves us no broken reed whereon to trust, and so constrains the sinner, stripped of all, to cry out in the bitterness of his soul, or groan in the depth of his heart:

I give up every plea beside,--  
Lord, I am damned, but You have died.

The third use of the law is to keep us alive. It is the grand means whereby the Holy Spirit prepares the believer for larger communications of the life of God. I am afraid this great and important truth is little understood, not only by the world, but even by many whom God has taken out of the world, who are real children of God by faith. Many of these lay it down as an unquestioned truth that when we come to Christ we have done with the law, and that in this sense "Christ is the end of the law to every one that believes." "The end of the law"--so He is "for righteousness," for justification, "to every one that believes." Herein the law is at an end. It justifies none, but only brings them to Christ, who is also, in another respect, the end, or scope of the law,--the point at which it continually aims. But when it has brought us to Him, it has yet a farther office, namely, to keep us with Him. For it is continually exciting all believers, the more they see of its height, and depth, and length, and breadth, to exhort one another so much the more:

Closer and closer let us cleave  
To His beloved embrace;  
Expect His fullness to receive,  
And grace to answer grace.

Therefore, I cannot spare the law one moment, no more than I can spare Christ, seeing I now want it as much to keep me to Christ as I ever wanted it to bring me to Him. Otherwise, this "evil heart of unbelief" would immediately "depart from the living God." Indeed, each is continually sending me to the other,--the law of Christ, and Christ to the law. On the one hand, the height and depth of the law constrain me to fly to the love of God in Christ; on the other, the love of God in Christ endears the law to me "above gold or precious stones."

The above view of the law is a just one. But all have not so clear an understanding of the law and the gospel as Wesley had. Since some, following the lead of Dr. Clarke, have either confounded the moral law with the Levitical or ceremonial, or else have supposed that the 3rd chapter of Galatians refers principally to the ceremonial law, it may not be amiss to show briefly why it is impossible that the ceremonial law should be the subject of discourse in that chapter. A few points will suffice.

Paul says that: "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." (Galatians 3:13)

Now,

1. There was nothing in the ordinances of the ceremonial law to condemn any one. Condemnation could come only through violation of the ten commandments. The ceremonial law was the sum of the gospel ordinances in the Jewish age. And there was no curse in any way attached to it, any more than there is to the gospel.

It certainly did not curse those who carried it out with a sincere heart; for such, like David, offered "sacrifices of joy;" (Psalm 27:6) and those who neglected it and thus showed their unbelief, were condemned by the moral law alone, because of their sins; as Christ said, "he that believes not is condemned already." (John 3:18)

2. Even admitting that the ceremonial law had a curse connected with it, or was itself a curse, "we" never had any connection with that law, and consequently could not be redeemed from it.

3. The Galatians, to whom this epistle was personally addressed, were chiefly converts from among the heathen, and had never had any connection with the ceremonial law. Therefore, although Paul might properly tell them to keep clear of it, he could not say that they had been redeemed from it.

4. The result of Christ's being made a curse for us is "that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." (Galatians 3:14) And the blessing of Abraham comes on the Gentiles only as they are redeemed from iniquity,--the transgression of the moral law.

Therefore, "The Scripture has concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." (Galatians 3:22)

Only the moral law could conclude men "under sin." There was nothing in the rites and ceremonies of the Levitical law that was of primary obligation,--nothing that could show men to be sinners. "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed." (Galatians 3:23)

This is in no sense true of the ceremonial law. It did not precede faith, but followed it. No one ever heard of such a thing as the ceremonies of the Levitical law being performed by one who knew nothing of Christ. But it is true of all men that, before they have faith in Christ, they are "under the law," condemned, and "shut up" to the faith which may be revealed to them, as the only means of freedom from condemnation. "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." (Galatians 3:24)

By no possibility can this refer to the ceremonial law. This text is sometimes read as though it said that the law was our schoolmaster to point us to Christ, and then it is asked, "What is there in the moral law that points to Christ?"

The answer is, of course, that there is nothing. But the text says the law brings us to Christ. We have shown how the moral law does this, by giving the convicted sinner no rest until he flees to Christ.

The ceremonial law, however, brought no one to Christ. It was simply the means by which those who already believed in Christ as the one who should be offered for sin, might indicate their faith in Him. The ceremonial law comprised the gospel ordinances of the Jewish age.

The order was, first the moral law to convict of sin and show the necessity for Christ, and then the rites of the ceremonial law to indicate and keep alive the faith that they already had. See Leviticus 4: "Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which ought not to be done, and shall do against

any of them: ... And if the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance, and the thing be hid from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done somewhat against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which should not be done, and are guilty; ... And if any one of the common people sin through ignorance, while he does somewhat against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which ought not to be done, and be guilty." (Leviticus 4:2,13,27)

Justification has reference only to the moral law. From the transgression of that, man needs justification; but the law cannot justify any sinner, it can only condemn. And so it drives him to Christ, that he may be justified by faith. "But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." (Galatians 3:25)

But it was only after faith came that people had anything to do with the ceremonial law. Is there a man in this age who has more faith than Moses, or David, or Isaiah, or Jeremiah, or Daniel, who all prophesied of Christ, and who looked to Him for salvation? Those men. "Through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." (Hebrews 11:33-34)

And yet all their lives long they performed the rites of the ceremonial law. If Galatians 3:25 refers to the ceremonial law, those faithful men ought never to have offered one of the sacrifices of that law. It was their faith, however, that led them to offer the sacrifices of the ceremonial law, as Paul says, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." (Hebrews 11:4) "The law was

our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith." (Galatians 3:24)

The past tense can be used here only by those who have come to Christ and have been justified by faith, as Paul shows in the next verse. Since the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, it must still be the schoolmaster (pedagogue) to those who are not in Christ, and must retain that office until every one who will accept Christ is brought to Him. Therefore the law will be a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ, as long as probation lasts.

But the Levitical law passed away hundreds of years ago; therefore it cannot be the law referred to here. To put the matter briefly, we may say that if the law is a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ, to divest it of that office while there are men still out of Christ, yet willing to come to Him, would be to prematurely cut them off from hope of salvation.

We would by no means be understood as holding that the ceremonial law does not figure in the epistle to the Galatians. The controversy over the ceremonial law drew out the epistle. But there was in that controversy, which this epistle must have effectually settled for all candid minds, something deeper than the mere question whether or not men should be circumcised. Paul repeatedly asserts that it makes no difference whether or not a man is circumcised. "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing." (1 Corinthians 7:19)

But when men submitted to it as a means of justification, that moment it became a serious matter, for such an act is a rejection of Christ. Suppose a man has accepted Christ and in Him has been made "a new creature." (Galatians 6:15)

Now suppose that he is led to accept circumcision, or any other work, as a means of justification, thereby rejecting Christ; what will be the immediate result? He will at once go into sin; for out of Christ no man can by any possibility refrain from sinning. No matter to what heights of holiness a man may have attained, just as soon as he loses sight of Christ as his "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," (1 Corinthians 1:30) he becomes carnal and cannot please God. This was the case with the Galatian brethren. They had been called into the grace of Christ; but some had troubled them with another gospel--a gospel of works and not of faith--which was no gospel at all, and by accepting it they had lost their faith in Christ, and consequently had become sinners "under the law." And it is on this account that the apostle exclaims, "O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, (Compare Psalm 119:142,151) before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" (Galatians 3:19) and again, "You did run well; who did hinder you that you should not obey the truth?" (Galatians 5:27)

But this is sufficient. We did not design to discuss the whole book of Galatians, but simply to show that it gives no comfort to the enemies of the law of God.

We wish the reader to keep in view the main thought in our study,--that God desires that all men should be saved. His love is as boundless as the universe, and reaches to the least of His creatures. But He cannot endure sin in His presence. Neither could the sinner be happy in the presence of the pure and holy God.

Nay, more, it would be impossible for the sinner even to look upon God. Everything that dwells with God must be in perfect

accord with Him. But all men have violated His holy law, and are by it condemned to death. God has a glorious inheritance promised to the righteous, but who can obtain it? No one can make himself righteous.

The sinner studies the law, and learns what sort of a character he ought to have, but that only condemns him the more. It provides no way of escape, but drives him toward the door of mercy, which is ever open. Then, instead of profitless struggles, "Being justified by faith, he has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1)

Thus the law proves to be the strongest ally of the promise by faith. And this tutorship it exercises until the Seed comes to whom, and through whom, the promise was made, and then God's people being all righteous, it ceases to drive them. They are "in Christ," and the law is in their hearts. In Christ they find everything. No need have they now to teach one another the way of truth, because the truth, is in their hearts.

More than this, they are all taught of God, and their peace is like a river, constantly flowing. (Isaiah 66:12) Fully reconciled to God, they see His face, and in His presence find fullness of joy, and at His right hand enjoy pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:11)

Reader, "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation." (2 Corinthians 6:2) "Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." (Hebrews 3:15) "The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God;" (1 Corinthians 2:14) but if with sincerity you pray with the psalmist, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me," (Psalm 51:10) He will for Christ's sake pardon all your iniquity, and then, being a new creature

in Christ, you can say, "O how I love your law! it is my meditation all the day." (Psalm 119:97)--Signs of the Times, September 2, 1886--Original title: Comments on Galatians 3. No. 9.

## Chapter 45

### **Bondage and Freedom**

From a brother in Washington Territory we have received a request to explain Galatians 4:1-31, as there are some in the neighborhood who are trying to use that passage against the truth.

It is impossible to give in one brief article an exhaustive explanation of the passage, since that would involve quite a lengthy dissertation on the law and the covenants. But we shall try to give a clear outline, so that the Bible student may readily grasp the apostle's meaning. Before long we hope to give a more full exposition of this and kindred passages.

To anyone who has carefully read the verses indicated, it is evident that three things are put in contrast with three other things. Hagar, ancient Jerusalem, and the old covenant, of which the first two stand as figures, are placed in opposition, to Sarah, the New Jerusalem, and the new covenant. Ishmael and Isaac stand respectively as representatives of those under the old covenant and the new.

Since Hagar was a bondswoman, the apostle, in using her as a symbol of the old covenant, means to indicate that the children of the old covenant are in bondage. They who are of the new covenant, are free, as Isaac was the son of a free woman. They that are of the old covenant, are after the flesh; while they of the new covenant are, as was Isaac, children of promise.

Before applying these points, let us briefly notice the difference between the two covenants. The first was made with the children of

Israel when they left Egypt. (Hebrews 8:9) The terms of that covenant are found in Exodus 19:3-6; 24:3-7. They were simply these: God promised to make of the Jews a great nation, a kingdom of priests, and they, in turn, promised to keep His law. This was all.

Now in this covenant there was no provision for the forgiveness of sin either past or future,--no hint of Christ, through whom alone forgiveness or power to keep the law could come. Before they made this covenant, they had all broken the law, and since they were unable of themselves to keep the law, for without Christ nothing can be done, (John 15:6) it is evident that the covenant or pledge to keep the law simply brought them into bondage.

When we say that it brought them into bondage, we do not mean that it brought them under obligation to keep the law, for that obligation existed before any covenant was made, and whenever they violated the law they were really in bondage; but their promise brought the matter right home to them, and served to cause them to realize that they were justly condemned.

Had there never been any other covenant than this, the whole world must have been lost, since without divine aid no one can keep the law, for "The carnal mind ... is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Romans 8:7)

Some will ask if God did not know that they could not fulfill the promise so readily made, and if it was not trifling with them to make such a covenant with them. God did indeed know that they had no power to do as they agreed, but He was not trifling with them. With this promise in mind, and a desire to keep it, they could not fail to learn their true condition--lost--and that would turn their attention to that other covenant, already in existence, which the Lord makes with

His people. This is the second covenant: "After those days, says the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, says the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jeremiah 31:33-34)

The only difference between this and the first is that provision is made for sins to be pardoned, and the law is to be written in their hearts. That is, this covenant makes it possible to arrive at perfection, for that is what is meant by having the law in the heart. Forgiveness of sins is an instantaneous work, but the writing of the law in the heart is a progressive work, the work of a lifetime. When the law is fully written in the heart, then the individual is indeed sanctified; he is like Christ, (Psalm 40:8) and is ready for translation.

We said that this second covenant was even then in existence. So it was, in effect. It is the same covenant which was made with Abraham since that covenant was confirmed in Christ, (Galatians 3:17) and Abraham had the righteousness of faith.

The same covenant had been made long before, as soon as the fall, as is indicated by the sacrifices by which the people showed their faith in a Saviour whose blood would secure their pardon. Had it not existed in substance from the beginning, there could have been no salvation for any; but men did receive pardon from the beginning, and the work of restoring the law in the hearts of believers has ever since been going on.

This covenant, by procuring pardon for past sins and enabling the individual to keep the law, tends to liberty. It sets men free. The other covenant could not free a soul from the bondage in which he already languished. Those who cling to that are of the flesh, (Galatians 5:19,21) since they cannot keep the law. And it may properly be said that all who are out of Christ are under the old covenant; they are in bondage.

Now note in the passage under consideration, that the Galatians, who seemed willing to forego the blessings of the new covenant, are said to wish to be "under the law." Then we may know that being children of the first covenant, being under the law, being after the flesh, and being in bondage, are all the same thing.

But to be after the flesh is to be a violator the law of God, (See Galatians 5:19-21) and therefore to be "under the law" is equivalent to being a violator of the law, and such are, of course, in bondage. (See Romans 7:14; 2 Peter 2:19) Those who are children of the new covenant, have the law written in their hearts; they keep it, and therefore they walk at liberty. (Psalm 119:45)

Now we learn from the first portion of the 4th of Galatians, that this was exactly the condition of the Galatians. Says Paul: "Howbeit then, when you knew not God, you did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that you have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn you again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto you desire again to be in bondage?" (Galatians 4:8-9)

They were leaving Christ and going back into slavery, and this, Paul assured them, would make them children of the bond-woman.

This probably explains all that causes any controversy. Remember why it is that those who are children of Sinai are in bondage. It is not because we have nothing to do with that law which was spoken from Sinai; just the contrary. That law stands fast as the throne of God, and abates not one jot of the righteous demands.

And because it is so firm, those poor sinners who know nothing of Christ's salvation, or, knowing it, will not accept it, are in hopeless bondage--hopeless until they turn to Christ. If the law were abrogated, there could be no bondage for any--Signs of the Times, September 3, 1885--This article is not part of the series on Galatians 3, but it was written about a year earlier, and covers Galatians 4, so it fits in well here.