



# UNDER THE LAW

E. J. WAGGONER

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# 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 published many years later, and often repeated in different periodicals.

However on closer comparison, I couldn't find the usual duplication. There was no similarity between the two series. Then I also discovered one more article, "In the Law" that went along with the 1886 set. So I decided to include both these sets in this collection.

As well, during the search for "under the law" I discovered another series on "Christ: the End of the Law", and then a number of single articles that also pertained to the same theme. So these are all gathered and organized into this collection.

I have placed the 1886 "Under the Law" presentations first, under the assumption that they would be the most mature. The next two sections are arranged by date, and the articles in "Related Studies" are also arranged by date.

One interesting note is that the larger part of these articles were written well 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.

This shows that the bestowal of grace at that time, was not just a "flash in the pan" or "sudden gift". These articles 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 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 like they were. May God speed it!

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# UNDER THE LAW (1886)

The Signs of the Times

May 6 to September 16, 1886

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## CHAPTER ONE

# 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:

#### **1 Corinthians 2**

<sup>14</sup> The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God.

#### **Romans 8**

<sup>7</sup> The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

#### **Matthew 15**

<sup>19</sup> For out of the heart proceed naturally evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.

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 explana-

tion to *Romans* 6:14 and kindred texts. That text reads thus:

### **Romans 6**

<sup>14</sup> For sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace.

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:

### **Romans 6**

<sup>12</sup> Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof.

We have already learned that

### **1 John 3**

<sup>4</sup> Sin is the transgression of the law.

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:

### **Romans 6**

<sup>13</sup> 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.

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. See *Deuteronomy* 6:25; *Psalms* 119:172; *Isaiah* 51:6-7, which have already been explained. So the 13th verse 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:

### **Romans 6**

<sup>14</sup> For sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace.

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:

### **Romans 6**

<sup>15</sup> When then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

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:

<sup>16</sup> 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?

<sup>17</sup> 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.

“Whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.” Sin, the transgression of the law, brings death.

## **Romans 6**

<sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death.

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 by the law condemned to death? 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?

### **Romans 3**

<sup>24</sup> Being justified freely by his [God’s] grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;

<sup>25</sup> 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.

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:

### **Romans 5**

<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

<sup>20</sup> Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound;

<sup>21</sup> That as sin has reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

## CHAPTER TWO

# LIFE OR DEATH

### Galatians 5

<sup>18</sup> But if you led of the Spirit, you are not under the law.

**A**ntinomians 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:

<sup>16</sup> This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

<sup>17</sup> For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other.

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.

<sup>19</sup> Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

<sup>20</sup> Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

<sup>21</sup> 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.

The fruit of the Spirit is, of course, the very opposite, being:

<sup>22</sup> ...love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

<sup>23</sup> Meekness, temperance...

Referring to these fruits of the Spirit, the apostle says:

<sup>23</sup> ...against such there is no law.

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 (*Romans* 3:19; 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:

### Galatians 4

<sup>4</sup> But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

<sup>5</sup> To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

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.” 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. In verse 9 Paul says to the Galatians:

#### **Galatians 4**

<sup>9</sup> 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?

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?

<sup>8</sup> Howbeit then, when you knew not God, you did service unto them which by nature are no gods.

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,

#### **John 14**

<sup>6</sup> No man comes unto the Father, but by me.

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:

#### **Ephesians 2**

<sup>1</sup> And you has he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

<sup>2</sup> 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;

<sup>3</sup> 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.

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 (see *Mark* 1:14-15; *Daniel* 9:25) “to redeem them that were under the law.” But in order to do this, he himself had to be “made under the law.” This is in harmony with:

### **Hebrews 2**

<sup>17</sup> 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.

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 in:

### **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>21</sup> 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.

Christ was sinless;

### **1 Peter 2**

<sup>22</sup> [He] did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.

The Law of God was in his heart (*Psalms* 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:

### **Isaiah 53**

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

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* 2:7), having voluntarily placed himself in the same condemnation,

### **Philippians 2**

<sup>8</sup> ...became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

And so the innocent suffered for the guilty. Man had been overcome by sin, and by it brought into bondage (*2 Peter* 2:19), and in order to redeem him from this corruption, and the death that must necessarily follow (*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?

### **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>21</sup> That we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

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. *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.” 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 posi-

tion different from that which he took. This is plainly stated in the Scripture.

### **Hebrews 2**

<sup>16</sup> For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

<sup>17</sup> Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren...

## **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...

### **Titus 2**

<sup>14</sup> ...gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

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.

**Proverbs 28**

<sup>13</sup> He that covers his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy.



## CHAPTER THREE

# THE GALATIAN PROBLEM

### Galatians 4

<sup>21</sup> Tell me, you that desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?

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 first 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 second 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 fifteenth chapter of *Acts*. Certain men had come down from Judea to Antioch, where Paul was laboring, and had taught the brethren, saying,

## **Acts 15**

<sup>1</sup> Except you be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved.

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 second 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.

## **Acts 15**

<sup>1</sup> Except you be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved.

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 Gen-

tiles? 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:

#### **Acts 15**

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> And God, which knows the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;

<sup>9</sup> And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

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. See *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.” *Galatians* 4:17.

## **Christ or Circumcision**

We have before shown that all who are in sin are “under the law,”—condemned. Besides Christ,

### **Acts 4**

<sup>12</sup> ...there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

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:

### **Galatians 5**

<sup>2</sup> Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

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. *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. See *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:

### **Galatians 4**

<sup>10</sup> You observe days, and months, and times [*Deuteronomy* 18:8-10 tells how the Lord regarded this], and years.

<sup>11</sup> I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain.

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 verse 21:

#### **Galatians 4**

<sup>21</sup> Tell me, you that desire to be under the law...

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:

#### **Proverbs 8**

<sup>36</sup> They that hate me love death.

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.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# OLD AND NEW COVENANT

**W**e 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 fourth chapter of *Galatians*, and note what bearing it has on the law. The apostle continues:

#### **Galatians 4**

<sup>21</sup> Tell me, you that desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?

<sup>22</sup> For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman.

<sup>23</sup> But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.

<sup>24</sup> Which things are an allegory; for these are the two covenants; the one from the Mount Sinai, which genders to bondage, which is Agar.

<sup>25</sup> For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answers to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

<sup>26</sup> But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

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. See *Hebrews* 8:8-9. The terms of that covenant are found in Exodus 19:3-8; 24:3-8. They 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. See *Exodus* 24:8.

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,

### **Exodus 24**

<sup>7</sup> All that the Lord has said will we do, and be obedient.

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. See *Romans* 8:7-8; *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.

### **Romans 3**

<sup>19</sup> 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.

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**

### **Jeremiah 31**

<sup>31</sup> 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;

<sup>32</sup> 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 brake, although I was a husband unto them, says the Lord.

<sup>33</sup> 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.

<sup>34</sup> 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.

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. See *Psalms* 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.

### **Romans 8**

<sup>1</sup> There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

## **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 (See *Revelation* 21:2, 9, 10, and onward); and since Christ is the Everlasting Father (*Isaiah* 9:6), and it is he alone that gives freedom (*Romans* 8:1; *John* 8:33-36), the city is very properly called the mother of all those who are saved from sin.

#### **Galatians 4**

<sup>20</sup> But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

This is only another form of what we find in:

#### **Galatians 5**

<sup>17</sup> 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 4

<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless what says the Scripture? Cast out the bond-woman and her son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

Exactly; the works of the flesh must be put away, for...

## Galatians 5

<sup>21</sup> ...they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

<sup>24</sup> They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

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:

## Galatians 5

<sup>1</sup> So, then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free. [Compare this with *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:

## Galatians 5

<sup>2</sup> Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

<sup>3</sup> For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

<sup>4</sup> Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; you are fallen from grace.

<sup>5</sup> For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

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. See *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:

### **Acts 15**

<sup>1</sup> Except you be circumcised...you cannot be saved.

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." 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"?

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." 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 justi-

fied.

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, 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...

### **Psalm 130**

<sup>7</sup> ...with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.

And that the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# 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:

#### Romans 3

<sup>19</sup> 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.

On reading this some one 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-defense, 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:

1. That “sin is the transgression of the law,” and that “where no law is there is no transgression,” and
2. That Paul, in verses 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:

### 1 Corinthians 9

<sup>20</sup> 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;

<sup>21</sup> 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.

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, 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:

<sup>19</sup> For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.”

<sup>22</sup> 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.

<sup>23</sup> And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.

These verses, taken in connection with the 20th and 21st, 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 seventh 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.” 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.

# CHRIST: THE END OF THE LAW

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## CHAPTER ONE

# AN IMPORTANT QUESTION

### Matthew 19

<sup>16</sup> And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> 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,

<sup>19</sup> Honor your father and your mother; and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

<sup>20</sup> The young man says unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?

<sup>21</sup> Jesus said unto him, If you will be perfect, go and sell that you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

<sup>22</sup> But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

### Seeking Eternal Life

**T**he 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.”

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:

### **John 15**

<sup>10</sup> 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.

To the Jews he said,

### **John 8**

<sup>46</sup> Which of you convinces me of sin?

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, and defiled, 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,” 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:

### **Isaiah 9**

<sup>6</sup> 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.

John also said:

### **John 1**

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

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. *John* 1:3; *Colossians* 1:16.

The Father and the Son are one. *John* 10:30. Both are worthy of worship. God alone may be worshiped (*Revelation* 22:8-9), but Christ did not refuse the adoration of his disciples. *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:

### **John 17**

<sup>11</sup> Holy Father, keep through your own name those whom you have given me, that they may be one, as we are one.

<sup>22</sup> And the glory which you gave me I have given them; that they may be one even as we are one.

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?"

He did not say, "You must not do anything," but said plainly,

"If you will enter into life, keep the commandments."

The young man, greatly surprised, asked, "Which?" 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. *Exodus* 19:10, 11. Nehemiah tells us why he thus came down:

### **Nehemiah 9**

<sup>13</sup> 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.

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

<sup>14</sup> ...and commanded them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses your servant.

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. *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 fifth 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:

#### **Deuteronomy 5**

<sup>22</sup> 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.

Of these commandments, Moses said,

#### **Deuteronomy 6**

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

That these are the commandments, the keeping of which is the condition of eternal life, is proved by:

<sup>25</sup> And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us.

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?”

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.



## CHAPTER TWO

# NATURE OF THE LAW

### **Matthew 19**

<sup>17</sup> ...if you will enter into life, keep the commandments.

**I**n 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:

### **Revelation 22**

<sup>14</sup> 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.

## **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:

### **Psalms 19**

<sup>7</sup> The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.

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 any one. Paul also adds his testimony to that of David, and says:

### **Romans 7**

<sup>12</sup> ...the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

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:

## **Psalms 119**

<sup>172</sup> My tongue shall speak of your word; for all your commandments are righteousness.

They are not simply good; they are righteousness itself. We remember that Moses said of these commandments, “they shall be in your heart,” and that we should talk of them at all times. 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:

### **Isaiah 51**

<sup>6</sup> 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.

If any reader fails to connect this verse with *Psalms* 119:172, and thus learn what the righteousness that shall not be abolished is, he can satisfy himself that is the law of God, by reading the next verse:

<sup>7</sup> Hearken unto me, you that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law.

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:

**1 Peter 1**

<sup>16</sup> ...Be you holy, for I am holy.

And Christ says,

**Matthew 6**

<sup>48</sup> Be you therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.

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.

## **1 Corinthians 2**

<sup>14</sup> The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him.

We see beauty only in that which we love; and Paul says:

## **Romans 8**

<sup>7</sup> ...the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

But when the carnal mind has been subdued, and the man has yielded to the requirement of the law, he can exclaim with Paul,

## **Romans 7**

<sup>22</sup> I delight in the law of God after the inward man;

Or with David,

## **Psalms 119**

<sup>97</sup> O how I love your law! it is my meditation all the day.

## **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,

## **Psalms 119**

<sup>96</sup> I have seen an end of all perfection; but your commandment is exceeding broad.

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:

## **Hebrews 4**

<sup>12</sup> 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 discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

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:

**Psalm 119**

<sup>18</sup> Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Your law.



## CHAPTER THREE

# CONDEMNED AND JUSTIFIED

**I**n the two preceding chapters on the law we have considered it simply in the light of Christ's declaration to the young man:

### **Matthew 19**

<sup>17</sup> ...if you will enter into life, keep the commandments.

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. 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;" 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:

### **Romans 3**

<sup>20</sup> 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.

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."

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:

### **Romans 3**

<sup>9</sup> ...we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.

This he has done in the first and second chapters.

<sup>10</sup> As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one;

<sup>11</sup> There is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God.

<sup>12</sup> They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one.”

After particularizing somewhat on this point, the apostle says:

<sup>19</sup> 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.

Then follows the conclusion:

<sup>20</sup> Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.

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;” 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:

### **John 3**

<sup>20</sup> For every one that does evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

<sup>21</sup> But he that does truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

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:

### **Romans 3**

<sup>23</sup> All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

## **How is Justification Received?**

How, then, it may well be asked, can any one be saved? How can we become justified? The answer comes:

### **Romans 3**

<sup>24</sup> Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;

<sup>25</sup> 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;

<sup>26</sup> To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believes in Jesus.

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:

## **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>21</sup> For he has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.

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,

## **Matthew 27**

<sup>46</sup> ...My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

It was not physical pain that crushed the life out of the Saviour of the world, but the load of sin which he bore.

## **Romans 6**

<sup>23</sup> The wages of sin is death.

Sin will cause the death of every one who is not freed from it, for

## **James 1**

<sup>15</sup> ...sin when it is finished, brings forth death.

And because Christ was “numbered with the transgressors,” he suffered the penalty of transgression. But the suffering of Christ was not on his own account.

## **1 Peter 2**

<sup>22</sup> [He] did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.

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.

## **Isaiah 53**

<sup>5</sup> But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities.

He alone has done more than his duty—more than was re-

quired 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:

### **Romans 3**

<sup>28</sup> ...a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

We now see that Paul does not contradict himself when he says,

### **Romans 2**

<sup>13</sup> For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

And when he says,

### **Romans 3**

<sup>20</sup> ...by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified.

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,

**Matthew 19**

<sup>17</sup> If you will enter into life, keep the commandments.



## CHAPTER FOUR

# A NEW CREATURE IN CHRIST

**W**e 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,

### **Romans 5**

<sup>1</sup> Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **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:

### **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>17</sup> Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.

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:

## **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>18</sup> And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.

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:

<sup>18</sup> ...who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

<sup>19</sup> To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

The act of reconciliation implies that certain parties have been estranged from each other—have been enemies. So Paul, in *Romans* 5:8-10, 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 (*Isaiah* 30:9) shows very clearly in what rebellion against God consists, where he says:

## **Isaiah 30**

<sup>9</sup> This is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord.

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,

## **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>20</sup> 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.

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:

### **1 Peter 1**

<sup>24</sup> The grass withers, and the flower thereof falls away; but the word of God endures forever.

<sup>25</sup> And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

The point, however, is established beyond all controversy by the closing words of:

## **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>21</sup> 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.

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;" 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," 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.

### **Isaiah 53**

<sup>5</sup> 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.

## Saved from Law-Breaking

And why was this done? Why was the spotless Lamb of God made to be sin for us? Paul answers:

### 2 Corinthians 5

<sup>21</sup> ...that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

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:

### Ephesians 2

<sup>8</sup> For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God;

<sup>9</sup> Not of works, lest any man should boast.

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." 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.

### **Ephesians 2**

<sup>20</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

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 thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments,” 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.” What for? That in Christ he might be a new creature; that, whereas by himself he had utterly failed of ful-

filling 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.”

We are “created in Christ Jesus unto good works,” but it is only while we abide in him that we can bear any fruit. 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.”

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.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# CHRIST THE END OF THE LAW

### Romans 10

<sup>4</sup> For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes.

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 “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,

#### **James 5**

<sup>11</sup> You have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord.

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:

### **Romans 10**

<sup>5</sup> For Moses describes the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which does those things shall live by them.

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,

### **Romans 8**

<sup>7</sup> Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

How, then, can anyone obtain eternal life, which the law was designed to bestow? The answer is,

### **John 3**

<sup>16</sup> 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.

### **Romans 6**

<sup>23</sup> The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The law was “ordained to life;” 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

### **1 Timothy 1**

<sup>5</sup> ...the end of the commandment is charity,...

“Charity” is but another name for “love,” and this rendering is given in the Revised Version. But,

### **Romans 13**

<sup>10</sup> ...love is the fulfilling of the law.

Or, as John says,

### **1 John 5**

<sup>3</sup> This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.

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.

### **Romans 3**

<sup>23</sup> All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

From past sins we are...

<sup>21</sup> ...justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

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.

### **Romans 10**

<sup>3</sup> 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.

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; and when at last we stand before God holy and without blemish, "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," it will be because we have been made "complete in him."

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.



## CHAPTER SIX

# ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST

**I**n our last chapter, we showed how it is that “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes.” 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 seventh 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:

#### **Romans 7**

<sup>7</sup> What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law...

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:

### **Romans 3**

<sup>20</sup> By the law is the knowledge of sin.

He continues,

### **Romans 7**

<sup>8</sup> For without the law sin was dead.

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.

<sup>9</sup> For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

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.

<sup>10</sup> And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.

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.

### **Romans 10**

<sup>5</sup> The man which does these things shall live by them.

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:

## **Romans 7**

<sup>12</sup> Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

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 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:

## **Romans 7**

<sup>14</sup> For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin.

In verse 9 Paul anticipates his argument, when he says, “And I died.” 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:

### **Romans 7**

<sup>15</sup> For that which I do I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

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.” Now what is the condition of a man who is sold into slavery?

### **A Slave to Sin**

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.

<sup>16</sup> If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

<sup>17</sup> Now, then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me.

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:

<sup>24</sup> O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

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?”

## **Christ Delivers From Sin**

Immediately the question is answered, and he again exclaims, this time with transports of joy,

### **Romans 7**

<sup>25</sup> I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord...

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:

<sup>25</sup> ...There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

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;” in other words, “he is a new creature.”

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

This argument is not complete without verse 3 and 4 of the 8th chapter:

### **Romans 8**

<sup>3</sup> 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;

<sup>4</sup> That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

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,

### **John 15**

<sup>5</sup> ...without me you can do nothing.

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,

**Philippians 4**

<sup>13</sup> I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.



# UNDER THE LAW (1884)

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## CHAPTER ONE

# RIGHTEOUSNESS AND GRACE

**T**here is no text that is more frequently called into service by those who teach the abolition of God's law than:

### **Romans 6**

<sup>14</sup> For you are not under the law, but under grace.

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:

### **Matthew 5**

<sup>17</sup> Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.

<sup>18</sup> 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.

But all has not yet been fulfilled. The Lord, through Isaiah, said:

### **Isaiah 65**

<sup>17</sup> Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth.

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:

### **Luke 16**

<sup>17</sup> And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle

of the law to fail.

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:

### **Matthew 7**

<sup>21</sup> 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.

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:

### **Psalms 119**

<sup>172</sup> My tongue shall speak of Your word; for all Your commandments are righteousness.

<sup>142</sup> Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Your law is the truth.

Here we have the two facts stated, that the law is righteousness, and that it is everlasting. In *Isaiah* the Lord says:

### **Isaiah 51**

<sup>7</sup> Hearken unto me, you that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law.

This again shows that the law of God is righteousness; and the preceding verse says:

<sup>6</sup> ...my righteousness shall not be abolished.

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,

### **Romans 6**

<sup>14</sup> You are not under the law, but under grace.

Who are they that are not under the law? Those who are under grace. Now Paul says,

### **Ephesians 2**

<sup>5</sup> By grace are you saved.

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

### **Romans 5**

<sup>20</sup> ...where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

The grace of God was extensive enough to cover all sin. The apostle then continues:

### **Romans 6**

<sup>1</sup> What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

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?”

<sup>2</sup> God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any

longer therein?

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?

### **1 John 3**

<sup>4</sup> Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law.

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.

### **Romans 6**

<sup>4</sup> 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.

This agrees exactly with what we read in *2 Corinthians* 5:17, that if any man be in Christ he is a new creature.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In verses 12 and 13 he exhorts to shun sin and to...

<sup>13</sup> ...yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

And now we come to the fourteenth verse:

<sup>14</sup> For sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace.

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?

### **1 John 3**

<sup>4</sup> Sin is the transgression of the law.

Now Paul says to certain ones:

### **Romans 6**

<sup>14</sup> Sin shall not have dominion over you...

Why not? Because

<sup>14</sup> ...you are not under the law, but under grace.

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:

### **Romans 6**

<sup>15</sup> What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

This is simply a repetition of verses 1 and 2. Let us illustrate the apostle's meaning by a familiar occurrence.

## **An Object Lesson**

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 con-

demnation 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.



## CHAPTER TWO

# 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:

#### **Romans 6**

<sup>16</sup> 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?

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. *Psalms* 119:45. Christ also says to his disciples:

#### **John 8**

<sup>32</sup> You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

### 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 fifth chapter and read:

### **Galatians 5**

<sup>16</sup> Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

The reader will find the parallel to this in:

### **Romans 8**

<sup>9</sup> But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you.

In the seventeenth verse the enmity between the flesh and the Spirit of God is stated.

<sup>17</sup> 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.

Compare this with:

<sup>7</sup> The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

<sup>8</sup> So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

Also compare this with the account of the struggles of the convicted sinner, as recorded in the latter part of *Romans 7*. Now read:

### **Galatians 5**

<sup>18</sup> But if you be led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

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,

### **Romans 8**

<sup>3</sup> God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh;

<sup>4</sup> That the righteousness (requirement) of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

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:

### Galatians 5

<sup>19</sup> Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

<sup>20</sup> Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

<sup>21</sup> 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.

These things are all forbidden by the law. For proof, see the law itself, and Christ's comments on it in the fifth 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:

<sup>22</sup> The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

<sup>23</sup> Meekness, temperance...

That is what is done by those who are led by the Spirit, and

Paul says: “Against such, there is no law.” 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:

### 1 Timothy 1

<sup>9</sup> 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,

<sup>10</sup> 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.

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:

<sup>8</sup> But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully.

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.”



## CHAPTER THREE

# THE ROLE OF THE LAW

### Summary

**B**efore 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.

1. The keeping of the law of God 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.
2. Those who obey the law will stand justified before God. *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.
3. 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.” *Romans* 3:23 also verses 9-12. “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.
4. “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.

5. "Condemnation" is "the judicial act of declaring guilty and dooming to punishment."— *Webster*. It is the direct opposite of "justification," which 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.
6. 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."
7. 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.
8. This justification belongs only to those who believe 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. *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.
9. "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.

10. 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.
11. The law was ordained to life. *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. See *Matthew* 19:17.
12. 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. *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 third 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,

### **Galatians 3**

<sup>21</sup> Is the law then against the promises of God?...

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:

### **Galatians 3**

<sup>21</sup> ...God forbid; for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

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:

<sup>22</sup> But the Scripture has concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

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."

## **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 har-

mony with them that they would amount to nothing without it. How so? Because:

1. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." *1 Timothy* 1:15;
2. He can save only those who believe. *Mark* 16:15; *Acts* 16:31; *Romans* 3:20, etc.;
3. All men are sinners (*Romans* 3:23) whether they are conscious of it or not; but
4. 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
5. 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," 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,
6. 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:

### **Galatians 3**

<sup>22</sup> But the Scripture has concluded all under sin, that the promise of faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

<sup>23</sup> But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

Right here read once more the propositions at the begin-

ning 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.

#### **Acts 4**

<sup>12</sup> Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

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," 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," 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," 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 24th and 25th, are thus explained; but few more words are needed. As a consequence of the previous statements, the apostle concludes:

### **Galatians 3**

<sup>24</sup> Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto

Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

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.” 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.

### **Galatians 3**

<sup>25</sup> But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

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

### **Romans 8**

<sup>1</sup> There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

We are now new creatures in Christ, and must henceforth walk in newness of life, no longer “under the law,” but “under grace.”

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.



## CHAPTER FOUR

# 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 fourth chapter of *Galatians* Paul continues the argument of chapter three. 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.

#### Galatians 4

<sup>3</sup> Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.

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:

<sup>8</sup> Howbeit then, when you knew not God, you did service unto them which by nature are no gods.

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:

#### **John 14**

<sup>6</sup> No man comes unto the Father but by me.

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:

#### **Galatians 4**

<sup>9</sup> 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?

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, 20. 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

### Galatians 4

<sup>4</sup> But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

<sup>5</sup> To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Whom did Christ come to redeem? “Them that were under the law.” Compare this with:

### 1 Timothy 1

<sup>15</sup> This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

And again this:

### Luke 19

<sup>10</sup> For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

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,

### Matthew 1

<sup>21</sup> ...he shall save his people from their sins.

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:

### Galatians 4

<sup>4</sup> ...made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.

That is, he had to put himself in the exact condition of those whom he would save. In *Hebrews 2* we read of Christ:

## Hebrews 2

<sup>16</sup> For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

The meaning is, as indicated by the marginal reading, that he came not to redeem angels but men.

## Hebrews 2

<sup>17</sup> 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.

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.

## Hebrews 4

<sup>15</sup> ...[He] was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

## 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:

## 2 Corinthians 5

<sup>21</sup> 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.

As a parallel to this read:

## Isaiah 53

<sup>6</sup> 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.

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.” 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,” 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, 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* 4:5-6); and in harmony with this, Paul says in the eighth of *Romans* that those who “walk not after the flesh,” but are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God.

## **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,” those who were “under the law.” 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 Christ died for all. 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,” 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.

### Galatians 3

<sup>13</sup> 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.

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:

<sup>13</sup> ...for it is written, cursed is every one that hangs on a tree.

### Romans 6

<sup>23</sup> ...the wages of sin is death.

Death is the curse which the law pronounces upon every transgressor; but from this Christ has delivered us (if we be-

lieve on him), by voluntarily becoming our substitute. Take this verse in connection with the preceding:

### **Galatians 3**

<sup>12</sup> And the law is not of faith; but the man that does them shall live in them.

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.

### **Romans 5**

<sup>12</sup> ...death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

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

### **1 Corinthians 1**

<sup>30</sup> ...made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.



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# RELATION OF THE LAW AND GRACE

*The Signs of the Times*, August 21, 1884

A sermon delivered in the tent at Oakland, Cal., August 5, 1884

**T**he subject of this evening is a question which is prefaced by the following text of Scripture, quoted from the Emphatic Diaglott:

## **Galatians 5**

<sup>4</sup> Whosoever of you are justifying yourselves by law are separated from Christ; you are fallen off from the favor of God.

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.”

But he does not say we can live godly lives, and build up a moral character without works. He exhorts to

### **Philippians 2**

<sup>12</sup> ...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

For every man will be judged and rewarded according to his works. *Revelation* 22:12; *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.” 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. 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:

### **Romans 10**

<sup>4</sup> For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believes.

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:

### **James 5**

<sup>11</sup> You have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord.

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,” and “sin is the transgression of the law.” *1 John* 5:17; 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,” and “sin is not imputed when there is no law.” *Romans 4:15; 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 justify in this letter is in connection with doing the law, while he has never connected, in any man, justifica-

tion and breaking the law. He never recognizes any such relation.

## **Romans 2**

<sup>13</sup> The doers of the law shall be justified.

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.”

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.” 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:

## **Romans 3**

<sup>20</sup> By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified.

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. See *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 have not 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,” says 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!”

“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:

### **Galatians 3**

<sup>13</sup> Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law.

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.” 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,” 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 *Romans* 6:14: “You are not un-

der the law, but under grace.”

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.

“What is your position?”

“I am not under the law, but under grace.”

“Were you always under grace?”

“No; I was by nature a child of wrath, even as others.”

“When did you come under grace?”

“When I was converted.”

“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?”

“Under the law, of course.”

“Very well; are they who are under the law condemned by the law if they break it?”

“Certainly; they are under its curse, as sinners.”

“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?”

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

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

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

“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?”

“Why, there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus!”

“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 (*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:

### **Romans 6**

<sup>14</sup> For sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace.

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:

<sup>15</sup> What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid.

<sup>16</sup> 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?

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.

<sup>1</sup> ...Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

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;” and he continues:

<sup>2</sup> How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?

<sup>3</sup> Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?

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

“Why, preach repentance; nobody has any prejudice against that.”

What an idea, that the minister must conform his preaching to people’s prejudices. But, if somebody asks me of what

he shall repent, what reply shall I give?

“Tell him, of course, to repent of sin.”

Just so; and then if he asks me what is sin, what shall I say? In a hesitating manner he replied:

“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, 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 determine that their religion is genuine, and not rank fanaticism?

We have a message, which says:

## **Revelation 14**

<sup>12</sup> Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Paul says that we do not make void the law through faith. *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.

# LOGICAL ANTINOMIANISM

*The Signs of the Times*, May 13, 1886

A writer for a professedly Adventist paper in the East, in an article against Sabbath-keeping, says of the ten commandments:

Paul tells those who keep this law that they are “fallen from grace,” which is equivalent to saying that there is no salvation in keeping the ten commandments.

We never yet came across any such statement in any of Paul’s writings, but we know that there are many people who, in their hatred of the Sabbath, teach just such stuff. There are people organized into churches, whose chief article of faith is that the law of God is abolished, although it is seldom that one is found bold enough to declare that all who keep the law of God are worthy of death. But this is the inevitable conclusion; for if God’s law has been abolished, then it must now be sin to follow the injunctions of that law.

## Painting the Picture

Let us suppose that we have the records of a church whose foundation (?) is the belief that God’s law has been abolished, in which discipline is rigidly enforced. We should read something like this:

Brother A was charged with a crime of not having taken the name of God in vain for three months. A committee was appointed to labor with him, but he acknowledged the truth of the charge, and stubbornly refused to change his course, stating that he was determined always to hold the name of his Creator in reverence. Accordingly he was disfellowshipped as one irrevocably fallen from grace.

Deacon B had in early life been well known as a horse jockey. After he joined the church his natural ability was ex-

erted with tenfold diligence for the edifying of the body of Christ. So skillful had he become by long practice in chicanery, that no man could by any means get even with him in a bargain. He could cheat and lie with unblushing countenance. In short, he was an ornament to the church.

But in an evil day he fell in with a traveling preacher, who persuaded him that the law of God is binding upon Christians, and from that time he became a different man. He began at once to restore to those whom he had defrauded. This caused suspicion in the minds of his brethren.

Finally suspicion became certainty, when Brother X overheard him tell the truth in regard to an old horse which he was selling to one who was no judge of animals. By this unwarranted act, he actually lost the opportunity of cheating the poor man out of fifty dollars! In another instance, he could easily have extorted one hundred per cent interest from a brother who was forced to borrow a sum of money for three months. Instead of doing so, however, he loaned the brother the money without interest.

Patient labor was bestowed upon him, but to all entreaties he turned a deaf ear, perversely repeating the words, You shall not steal, and saying that henceforth he should abide by that rule. He even expressed extreme sorrow that he ever violated it. He was decided to be an incorrigible observer of the old ten-commandment law, and was accordingly disfellowshipped by unanimous vote.

Mr. C had gained a wide notoriety as a “bruiser” and cut-throat. He had “killed his man” many times, and was so expert with the pistol that his bullet never failed to reach the heart. It was his delight to lie in wait for unsuspecting and inoffensive persons, and kill them without any warning. He was so adroit with all, that the officers of the law had never been able to detect him in these acts.

He had never read the Bible, nor heard of the ten commandments. He was finally arrested for a petty crime, and while lying in jail he was visited by a clergyman, who read the Bible to him. For the first time in his life he heard the obsolete commandment, You shall not kill. When he learned that this was spoken by the great Jehovah, amid the thunders

of Sinai, he was struck with terror and remorse, with trembling lips he confessed all his past course, and was assured by the minister that God would pardon.

Accordingly, as soon as he was released, he applied for admission to the church; but he was told that he had now fallen from grace,—that the ten commandments are abolished; that no man who professed a desire to keep them could become a member of the church of Belial.

After a short talk with the committee, he seemed to see the matter clearly. Drawing a revolver, he shot the chairman through the heart, and with a club he knocked down two of the deacons, all the time using the most violent oaths. Upon this clear evidence of his fitness for church membership, he was at once received into full fellowship.

Brother D was turned out of the church in disgrace. Cause: A rigid observance of the old seventh commandment. At the same time, Mr. F and Mrs. G. on profession of having lived in open adultery for a year, were admitted into the church.

And thus we might read on for pages. Does it seem irreverent to write in such a strain? It is only what would actually be done if “no-law” people always lived up to their profession. People have actually been turned out of churches simply because they kept the fourth commandment; and if people are disfellowshipped for keeping the fourth commandment, why not for keeping any other?

## **Calling Evil Good and Good Evil**

And when men say that it is sin to keep the ten commandments, who shall say what abominable things they do not do in secret? or that they would not do them openly if fear of their fellowmen did not restrain them?

Why is it that professed Christians speak with such contempt of the law of God? Because they hate the fourth commandment, which enjoins the observance of the Sabbath. Primarily, however, it is because of the hatred of all law and restraint.

No doubt they would repudiate the picture which we have portrayed. They would profess abhorrence of murder, adultery, and theft. But if it is a sin to keep the fourth commandment, it is also wrong to keep the sixth, seventh and eight.

If they teach that the law of God is not in force, that those who keep it have fallen from grace, they necessarily teach that it is no longer a sin to swear, lie, steal, kill, and commit adultery! Nay, more, they actually teach people that they must do those things in order to secure the favor of God! A more horrible doctrine could not be imagined.

To teachers of such doctrines we commend a careful consideration of the following texts, the application of which is obvious:

### **Jeremiah 7**

<sup>8</sup> Behold, you trust in lying words, that cannot profit.

<sup>9</sup> Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom you know not;

<sup>10</sup> And, stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?

### **Isaiah 5**

<sup>20</sup> Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

<sup>24</sup> Therefore as the fire devours the stubble, and the flame consumes the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossoms shall go up as dust; because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

# THE RELATION OF THE WORLD TO GOD

*The Signs of the Times*, November 17, 1887

**T**he 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:

### **John 8**

<sup>44</sup> You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do.

Again in the explanation of the parable of the wheat and tares, Jesus said:

### **Matthew 13**

<sup>38</sup> The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one.

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:

### **Ephesians 2**

<sup>1</sup> And you has he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

<sup>2</sup> 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;

<sup>3</sup> 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.

“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 on 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:

## **Mark 7**

<sup>21</sup> For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

<sup>22</sup> Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.

And Paul says:

## **1 Corinthians 2**

<sup>14</sup> The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him.

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

## **Psalms 103**

<sup>13</sup> Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear him.

In the family of God there is no wrath, for only the peace-makers 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:

## **Galatians 4**

<sup>4</sup> God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

<sup>5</sup> To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

<sup>6</sup> And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

<sup>7</sup> Wherefore you are no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Read the same thing in:

## **Romans 8**

<sup>14</sup> For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

<sup>17</sup> 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.

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:

## **Titus 3**

<sup>4</sup> But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

<sup>5</sup> 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;

<sup>6</sup> Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

<sup>7</sup> That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

## **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.”

### **Romans 8**

<sup>14</sup> For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

With this read:

### **Galatians 5**

<sup>18</sup> But if you be led of the Spirit, you are not under the law.

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.

### **Romans 8**

<sup>7</sup> The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject

to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

All men are under obligation to keep the commandments of God:

### **Ecclesiastes 12**

<sup>13</sup> Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.

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.

### **Romans 6**

<sup>12</sup> Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof.

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> For sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under grace.

<sup>15</sup> What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace?

<sup>16</sup> 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?

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:

### **Romans 6**

<sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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.

### **Titus 2**

<sup>11</sup> For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.

To all men “the Spirit and the bride say, Come.” 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.”

Reader will you place yourself on the Lord’s side? If so, you

must come to Christ, who is the way (*Psalms* 119:1), the truth (*Psalms* 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.

# NOT UNDER THE LAW

*The Present Truth*, August 22, 1895

“What you say concerning the Sabbath as a law to be observed by Christians is not scriptural; for we are not under the law, but under grace.”

**T**his is but a sample of numerous communications that come to us, or of statements which we frequently hear. So general is the idea that we are not to keep the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, because the apostle says, “You are not under law, but under grace,” that it deserves special attention.

One strange thing is that we never hear that text applied to any other than the fourth commandment. But the fourth commandment is only a part of the law; and if the fact that we are not under the law absolves us from keeping the Sabbath, then it just as surely frees us from obedience to the other nine precepts of the law.

## **Practical Examples**

Suppose therefore we make the application. The eighth commandment says, “You shall not steal.” But when the thief is reproved for his dishonest practices, and is told that he should live by labor, and not by fraud, he may retort, “Your argument is not scriptural, for we are not under the law, but under grace.”

The violent man whose hand is against every man, when told that hatred and violence are murder, and that the commandment says, “You shall not kill,” has as good a right to use the text to justify himself, as the man who uses it against the Sabbath. “We are not under the law, but under grace,” he will say, as he makes an assault upon his neighbor.

Our friend sees a man who is going to the house of the

woman whose “steps take hold on hell,” and he admonishes him to turn back, quoting to him the commandment, “You shall not commit adultery.” But this man has heard our friends say that it is unscriptural to keep the fourth commandment, because we “are not under the law, but under grace,” and so he says,

“Have you forgotten your text so soon? Don’t you know that we are not under the law, but under grace? Instead of reproving me, you had better come along with me, for surely so conscientious a man as you are does not want to be in opposition to Scripture.”

What can our friend reply?—Nothing whatever that will have any effect upon that man, unless he says,

“I was mistaken; I made an unwarranted use of those words.”

Let us hope that he would do so.

### **“No Other Gods Before Me”**

Our friend goes as a missionary to China. He teaches the heathen that the Bible is the Word of God, and to be obeyed, and an honest-minded heathen who has read the Bible for himself begins to keep the seventh-day Sabbath, “according to the commandment.” Our friend is shocked, and says,

“That is not at all right; you must not keep the Sabbath; we are not under the law, but under grace.”

The poor Chinaman does not see it clearly; but since it is much more convenient not to keep the Sabbath than to keep it, he allows custom and convenience to make up for the obscurity, and yields to his new teacher.

But the next day our missionary friend is shocked to find his new convert making obeisance to a hideous idol, and burning some strange smelling stuff before it. He exclaims,

“What! Have you forgotten that the great God who created all things has said, ‘You shall have no other gods before Me,’ ‘You shall not make unto thee any graven image...you shall not bow down yourself to them’?”

And the simple-minded man will reply,

“Me no forget; me ‘member your teaching velly well; not under law, under grace.”

By what arguments will our friend make it plain to him that while the expression, “not under the law, but under grace,” takes away the obligation to keep the fourth commandment, it does not in the least diminish our obligation to keep all the others?

We have not drawn a fanciful picture. Many hundred years ago the same argument was used that we have put into the mouth of our friend. Read the reproof which the Lord gave to Israel of old:

### **Jeremiah 7**

<sup>8</sup> Behold, you trust in lying words, that cannot profit.

<sup>9</sup> Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom you know not;

<sup>10</sup> And come and stand before Me in this house, which is called by My name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?

## **Only Applied to One Commandment?**

As a matter of fact the words, “not under the law, but under grace,” are not now used, at least not to any great extent, to justify disobedience to any other commandment than the fourth. And why not? There is but one reason, and that is, that in this country it would be unpopular to do so.

This would be a severe accusation if it were not for the fact that those who make use of the excuse do not know what they are doing. They may say, and with truth, that they do not

wish to steal, and murder, and commit adultery; that such things are abhorrent to them.

Quite so; but that only proves that it is not the commandment of God that restrains them, but the impulse given them by their training and by public opinion. If it were popular to do those things, and they had been brought up to do them, they would plead the same excuse for them that they now do for not keeping the Sabbath.

## Grace and Sin are Opposed

Let us consider what the Scripture really does say, and thus we shall know what it means. The text reads thus:

### **Romans 6**

<sup>12</sup> Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof.

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> For sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace.

<sup>15</sup> What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

Note these obvious facts:

1. Those who are not under the law are those over whom sin has no dominion. But “sin is the transgression of the law.” 1 John 3:4. Therefore,
2. Those who are not under the law are the ones who are not transgressing the law, but who are keeping it.
3. It is not stated, as a universal fact, that all men are not under the law, but under grace. The words, “You are not under law, but under grace,” are addressed to those who have been “baptized into Jesus Christ,” “in the likeness of His death,” and have been made “alive from the dead,” “in the likeness of His resurrection.” It is therefore not at all

true of the transgressors of the law that they are “not under the law, but under grace.” Such persons are still under the law.

4. But “the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.” *Titus* 2:11. Its object is to save men from sin—from the transgression of the law. Those to accept this grace are brought out from under the law, to walk in it without fault before God. For “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.

Let us take heed not to trust in vain words that do not profit, but in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose delight it was to do the will of God, for God’s law was in His heart.



# COMMON SENSE IN RELIGION

*The Present Truth*, September 23, 1897

A member of a persuasion whose fundamental doctrine is that men are free from obedience to the ten commandments, had been arguing that, being under grace and not under the law, all were at liberty to transgress it.

## No Fear for the Just

A few days after, talking with a friend, the person said that a relative was feeling anxious over being summoned on a case in the courts. But as he was innocent of any offense it was agreed that no anxiety need be felt. The person said,

“It is when one has done wrong and brought oneself under the law, that he may well be fearful of being called to answer for it.”

Just so is it with the law of God. When one lives in transgression of it, he is under its condemnation, not when he obeys it.

It is plain, isn't it, in ordinary affairs? The one who is free from the law of the land is the one who is obedient to it. The civil law against stealing cannot touch or trouble the man who lives honestly. He is perfectly free from it. But let a man be caught stealing and at once he is under the law.

## Grace and Law Work Together

Why cannot people use the same common sense in religion? Men will even argue that one who confesses his sins and yields his life by faith to obedience to God's law has fallen from grace and is under the law; while the one who disobeys God's law is supposed to be free from it, and under grace! Was there ever a more unreasonable and wicked argument?

**Romans 6**

<sup>14</sup> Sin [the transgression of the law] shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under grace.

What does grace do?

**Romans 5**

<sup>21</sup> As sin has reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through grace...

**Romans 3**

<sup>31</sup> ...we establish the law.

Grace is given,

**Romans 8**

<sup>1</sup> That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us.

Grace takes man from under the law by forgiving his sins, and bringing his life into harmony with the law of righteousness.