

THE TRUTH ABOUT
THE LAW

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Price, 25 Cents

Published By
Service and Supplies for Christian Work
Dr. I. M. Haldeman Publication Headquarters
156 Fifth Avenue New York City

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By I. M. HALDEMAN, D.D.

THERE are those who teach that the law of Sinai contained in the ten commandments, although given primarily to the Children of Israel, was ordained for the whole world; that the whole world is under bonds to keep it; and that Christians particularly are responsible to make it the rule and regulation of their daily life.

This teaching is without foundation in Scripture.

It is a false exegesis.

It is a perversion of the truth.

It is a darkening of counsel by words without knowledge.

The teaching of Scripture is clear and simple.

The Law was never given to any other nation or people but the Children of Israel.

This is the statement of the Apostle Paul.

He says:

“When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves.”
(Romans 2:14.)

This language admits of no misunderstanding nor quibbling. Speaking by the Holy Spirit, the Apostle authoritatively says:

“The Gentiles, which have not the law.”

“The Gentiles, these having not the law.”

This is the Holy Ghost’s definite, dynamic declaration that in Paul’s day the Gentiles did not have the law.

If they did not have it in Paul’s day, they did not have it before his day, because there is no account of it having been taken away from them at any time previous to his day. If they neither had it in his day, nor before his day, they have never had it in any time since his day. If they did not have it before his day, in his day, nor since his day, they do not have it in this day. The statement of Paul is therefore the unqualified affirmation that—

The Gentiles as Gentiles never have been, and are not today, under the law of Sinai.

If the Gentiles never were under the law and are not under it now, then, and beyond all controversy—

The law of Sinai was given exclusively to the Children of Israel.

This is just what Moses the lawgiver himself says:

Hear what he does say:

“For what nation is so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for?”

“And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as *all this law*, which I set before you this day?” (Deuteronomy 4:7.8.)

That the Gentiles knew nothing of the law and were not under it as a system publicly delivered unto them is the testimony of Pontius Pilate, the Roman Procurator of Judea, when our Lord Jesus Christ was brought before him by the Jews on the charge of being a malefactor.

Pilate said to them:

“Take ye him, and judge him according to *your law*.” (John 18:31.)

Plainly and definitely Pilate makes a distinction between Jewish law and Roman law. He affirms the Mosaic law was the law of the Jew, not the law of the Roman.

Remember he did not say, speaking as a Roman, “*our*” law, but as a haughty Roman, despising the Jew—“*your*” law.

Officially and corroboratively, therefore, Pilate says the Gentiles were not under the law in his day and therefore not under the law before Paul’s day, and consequently not under the law *in* Paul’s day; and still more corroboratively not under the law in our day; and thus Paul and Pilate stand together to support the testimony of Moses that the Gentiles *never were under the law*.

Scripture tells us that the law of Sinai was a covenant between the Lord God and the Children of Israel; as it is written:

“And Moses called all *Israel*, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them.

“The Lord our God made a covenant *with us* in Horeb (Sinai).

“The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, who are all of us here alive this day.” (Deuteronomy 5:1-3.)

Again:

“The Lord gave me *the tables of stone*, even *the tables of the covenant*.” (Deuteronomy 9:11, 15.)

A covenant requires two parties.

The Lord God was one of the parties.

The Children of Israel were the other party.

The Children of Israel—*not the Gentiles*.

Here are three witnesses that the law was never given to the Gentiles.

Moses, to whom God handed the law.

Pilate, who as a Gentile, denied the law belonged to them.

Paul, a Hebrew of Hebrews and a Pharisee of Pharisees, who declares the Gentiles did not have it in his day, and necessarily could not have had it since; and demonstrably, never have had it since, as there is no record of the law of the ten commandments given to the Gentiles between Paul's day and this.

What shall we say then to these things?

What can we say, what else dare we say than that—

The law of Sinai was never given to the Gentiles, and the Gentile world is not under the law today.

The law was given to the Children of Israel because they deliberately took themselves off the ground of grace and put themselves on the ground of the law.

The Lord had redeemed them from the sentence of death against the firstborn of Egypt by the blood of the passover lamb.

He had brought them out of the land of bondage by the right hand of His power.

He did this in fulfillment of His covenant with, and His promise to, Abraham more than four hundred years before.

It was an unconditional covenant and a promise of pure grace.

When they came to Sinai the Lord tested them.

He rehearsed all He had done for them.

He bade Moses tell them what He had done, how He had brought them so far as on the wings of untiring eagles. If they would but obey His voice and keep His covenant, they should be to Him a peculiar treasure above all the people of the earth.

The people should have responded to the Lord that as He had dealt with them thus far in grace and

by His mighty power, not their own, had delivered and led them, they would gladly continue to depend upon Him and not in any way upon themselves.

This is the attitude they should have taken, this is what they should have said and—at once.

Instead they answered and said:

“All that the Lord hath spoken we will *do*.”
(Exodus 19:7, 8.)

In giving this answer they fatally affirmed their belief in their own ability to do all the Lord required of them.

Immediately He drew a line about the mount and forbade the people to pass under pain of death.

Along with this came thunder and lightnings, the sound of a trumpet so loud the people trembled. Sinai was altogether in smoke as the smoke of a furnace. The Lord descended upon the mount. The mount shivered and quivered at His presence.

Instead of the God of grace and protecting providence in the shielding cloudy pillar by day and its welcome illumination by night, there was revealed the God of righteousness and inexorable law.

And this is in the very nature and logic of the case.

Grace brings man into the favor of God.

Law shuts him out and shuts him up to himself.

In the issue of law it is no longer a question of what God will do, but what man is under bonds to do.

The law is set up to measure man and not God.

By their refusal to continue in grace the people of Israel came under law.

The law would never have been given had they not turned away from the Abrahamic covenant and the ministration of divine and measureless grace.

The law was given to the Children of Israel, not to keep, but to break.

It is written:

“Wherefore then serveth the law?”

“It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.”
(Galatians 3:19.)

The literal rendering is—

“It was added *for the sake* (that is, for the purpose) of transgressions.”

It was given, not to make them sin, but through transgressions to reveal the sin in them; as it is written:

“I had not known sin, (the nature of sin, that it is back of, and the cause of transgressions) but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.” (Romans 7:7.)

“*By the law is the knowledge of sin.*” (Romans 3:20.)

Again it is written:

“The law entered (was given at Sinai) that the offence (the trespass) might abound.” (B₂ overwhelmingly revealed). (Romans 5-20.)

The Children of Israel broke the law spoken to them before they had received a written transcript of it.

Moses, at the call of God, went up into the mount to receive a copy of the law written by His hand on tables of stone as a record of covenant between Himself and the people.

He was gone for a long while.

The people became impatient.

They gathered about Aaron and said to him:

"Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him." (Exodus 32:1.)

Aaron took the golden earrings of the women and made a calf such as the people had seen worshipped in the temples of Apis.

He then made a proclamation that on the morrow would be a feast of the Lord.

It was an attempted and shameful combination of the service of God and the idolatry of Egypt.

"And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings, and the people sat down to eat and to drink, *and rose up to play.*" (Exodus 32:2-6.)

The word "to play" has profound significance.

It means they proceeded to give themselves up to the abomination that went with such worship; for it is written:

"The people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies)." (Exodus 32:25.)

That is, literally, Aaron had "taken off the bridle," and had given them "free rein," unlimited

license to indulge in the indescribable things which in Egypt passed current for religious rites.

When Moses beheld what the people did, instead of going down to preach the law to them, he cast the tables of stone on which God had written it out of his hands and brake them beneath the mount.

Instead of preaching the law he went back to the presence of God to make an atonement and intercession for the people.

He said to them:

"Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin." (Exodus 32:30.)

The ceremonial law was given to the Children of Israel as a memorial that they had broken the moral law: that they needed an atonement for sin through sacrificial death: and as prophecy that God would send the Lord Jesus Christ to redeem them by His own blood from the curse of a broken law and bring them again into the full blessing of the covenant and promise of grace.

Every time an Israelite brought a sin offering to the gate of the Tabernacle, and when once a year on atonement day sacrifice was made for the sin of the whole people, it was a proclamation that "without shedding of blood is no remission."

These offerings were simply shadows, types, figures of the true offering.

“For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year make the comers thereunto perfect. . . . For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.” (Hebrews 10:1, 4.)

The moral law contained in the ten commandments was a witness of the failure of the people to meet it and the ceremonial law as a consequent and *inseparable* part of the moral law took the place of a schoolmaster (the word means the slave who took the children of a well to do household to the teacher) to lead the people to Christ; as it is written:

“The law was our schoolmaster (the schoolmaster of the *Israelites*—and in Paul’s day that part of Israel called Jews) to bring us unto Christ.” (Galatians 3:24.)

By the tabernacle in all its construction, furniture and service; by the offerings and sacrifices, God was continually preaching an incarnate, sacrificial and redeeming Saviour, a risen Lord and coming King. By all these things He was preaching Christ to them.

By their whole history, their ritual and providential movements, He was testifying to them of their natural weakness, their need of grace and the full provision He had made for them in a coming Messiah.

He was setting before them every day that Christ was the seed in whom all the promises made

to Abraham concerning them should be fulfilled; as it is written:

“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” (Galatians 3:16.)

The coming in of the law did not make the unconditional covenant of Abraham of no effect; but the people having repudiated that covenant and putting themselves on the basis of law and good behaviour, the law was added to seal home to them their need of grace and the assurance that Christ was the eternal depositary of the covenant, the un-failing guarantee of its promised blessings and the source whence all grace should again come to them.

Wherefore it is written:

“The covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.” (Galatians 3:17.)

The law brought them face to face with their innate sinfulness, their helplessness to live up to the standard of God’s righteousness, the futility of their own righteousness at its best, and shut them up to a faith that looked forward to a redeemer and saviour; as it is written:

“The scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might come upon them that believe.

“But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up to the faith which afterwards should be revealed. (Doesn't the logic of the thing run ahead and tell you that if they were kept under the law till faith should be revealed, after that faith should be revealed they would no longer be kept under the law?)

“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us (the children of Israel) unto Christ.” (Galatians 3:22-24.)

The law of Sinai has been done away in Christ, and both Jew and Gentile have been put completely under the grace of the Abrahamic covenant.

By the hand of Moses law came demanding that the people should by their obedience and perfect living earn the blessings promised in and by the covenant.

By our Lord Jesus Christ came the grace that is ready to bestow the wealth and riches of the covenant blessings upon all who are willing to receive them through faith; as it is written:

“The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17.)

The law was a temporary addition “till the seed (Christ) should come to whom the promise was made.” (Galatians 3:19.)

“The law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, *grace did much more abound*:

“That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so

might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 5:20, 21.)

The world today is not under the “reign of law,” but under the “reign of grace.”

By virtue of the cross and the empty grave; by virtue of the blood which the risen and ascended Lord took up within the veil, the throne of judgment has been transformed into a throne of grace, and the “much more” of grace reigns with its mercy over a world of sin.

By that grace men are now called to turn to the Lord and through faith receive the life which will enable them to triumph over sin in them, rebuke transgressions and walk pleasingly before God and in blessing to men.

The law *demand*ed righteousness.

Grace *bestow*s it.

Because grace reigns judgment is hushed and God waits to know what man will do with His offered mercy.

The law is not the ground of salvation to the sinner.

The reasons are manifold:

1. *Because the law demands a perfection of life and character no man can give.*

The law in its essence has been defined by our Lord Jesus Christ.

He said:

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

“This is the first and great commandment.

“And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (Matthew 22:37-40.)

The first commandment requires perfection of love to God.

Perfect love to God means perfect obedience to the will of God in deed, in word, in thought and the intents and purposes of the heart.

It means perfect righteousness, the soul like a mirror reflecting the character of God, not a mere reflection of goodness, but Godness; so that, God shall be lived and breathed, perfectly revealed and completely expressed by the soul—such a condition would be *sinless perfection*.

This is the demand God makes of every soul of man, not by any mere law written in tables of stone, but in the very nature of God. God himself, being holy, perfect, cannot admit into fellowship with Himself anything less perfect than His own character; to do so would be to condone sin and imperfection in man.

For man to love his neighbour as himself, he must deny himself and make the self of another first, not only in deed, but in heart and intent. This would be perfection of man toward man.

Nor must there be a failure or lapse in any particular of this attitude of man to man and man to God.

To break one link in a chain that holds a ship to its anchor is to break the whole chain.

To break the law at any one point, so far as the law can link a man to God, is to break the whole law. This is the declaration of Holy Writ.

“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend *in one point, he is guilty of all.*” (James 2:10.)

He is guilty of all because the law demands no less than perfect obedience, not partial obedience, but obedience in all points.

You may have a piece of costly ermine, whiter than the heart of a lily; it is not the great spot, but the small one that spoils it—it is the surrounding whiteness that will reveal it. Should you keep the law in every respect but one, the one failure would be conspicuously revealed by the otherwise spotless perfection; but that one failure would cry aloud that you had missed the actual demand of the law—perfect obedience. Sinless perfection!

That is the demand of the law to all who, throwing themselves on their own resources, boasting in their own righteousness, seek to be justified by the deeds of the law.

What man is there on earth who can respond to this demand?

He who declares himself perfect is guilty of folly. His folly shall condemn him as guilty of sin and his acts shall prove him to his neighbour as one who has fallen short. If he shall be ignorant of his failure

or seek to conceal it to himself his fellow men will know it and proclaim it in his ears.

There is no difference!

Hear what God himself says:

“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:22, 23.)

The law is not the ground of salvation to the sinner.

2. Because sentence of death has been passed upon all men, and the law does not ask a condemned sinner to keep it or bring forth a good character under it.

“Death passed upon all men.” (Romans 5:12.)

“It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” (Hebrews 9:27.)

No matter how much a man condemned by the state to die should offer to keep the law on condition that he should be saved from the sentence, the law would be deaf to every plea. It would mercilessly say to him, “Pay me that thou owest. Pay me thy life. Thou must die.”

Nay! the law is not the ministration of life. It is the ministration of death; as it is written:

“*The ministration of death, written and engraven in stones.*” (2 Corinthians 3:7.)

“*The letter killeth.*” (V. 16.)

By the “letter” is meant the law graven in stone.

The man who turns to the law for salvation is as guilty of senseless folly as the sentenced criminal

who should go to the electric chair expecting to get life instead of death.

The law is not the ground of salvation,

3. Because salvation is not a matter of good works.

Good works are set aside, not only because of man’s inability to render them, not only because the sentence of death nullifies them, but because God will allow no man to boast in his own righteousness; as it is written:

“Not of works, lest any man should boast.” (Ephesians 2:9.)

“By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.” (Romans 3:20.)

“By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” (Galatians 2:16.)

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done.” (Titus 3:5.)

“Not according to our works.” (2 Timothy 1:9.)

“All our righteousness are as *filthy rags.*” (Isaiah 64:6.)

The law is not the ground of salvation,

4. Because God Himself has achieved the work of redemption for lost and dying men.

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.” (1 Peter 2:24.)

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust.” (1 Peter 3:18.)

“Who was delivered for our offences, and raised for our justification.” (Romans 4:25.)

“Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.” (1 Corinthians 15:3.)

“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.” (John 19:30.)

That the work of redemption was finished is proclaimed by our Lord’s resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the glory.

In face of such a finished work and finished by such an author as God in the person of His Son, there is nothing left for man to do but receive the salvation which it brings.

The law is not the ground of salvation.

5. Because God is dealing with the world on the basis of the Abrahamic covenant reopened in Christ as the true seed, and now made good to the whole world in His death and resurrection.

“It (the law) was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.” (Galatians 3:19.)

“He saith not, And to seeds, as of many, but of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” (Galatians 3:16.)

“And this I say, that the covenant . . . was confirmed before of God in Christ.” (Galatians 3:17.)

The Abrahamic covenant, it is to be remembered, is an unconditional covenant, a covenant and promise of grace.

Because of the functioning of this covenant now, grace and grace alone is the source of salvation.

“By grace are ye saved.” (Ephesians 2:8.)

“The grace of God that bringeth salvation.” (Titus 2:11.)

It is *sovereign* grace that brings salvation.

It is not of man nor his devising, but of the Lord; as it is written:

“Salvation is of the Lord.” (Jonah 2:9.)

“Salvation belongeth unto the Lord.” (Psalm 3:8.)

“It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.” (Romans 9:16.)

“Who hath saved us, and called us, with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” (2 Timothy 1:9.)

The law is not the ground of salvation.

6. Because salvation by the decree of God is wholly through faith and not works.

“The righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed (foretold) by the law and the prophets.

“Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.” (Romans 3:21, 22.)

“By grace are ye saved through faith.” (Ephesians 2:8.)

“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith—*without the deeds of the law.*” (Romans 3:28.)

There are those who teach the law convicts men of sin, and because of that conviction brings them to repentance and to the Gospel which saves them.

It is true the Gospel saves, but it is not true the law convicts the individual sinner and leads him under the consciousness of that sin to receive the Gospel.

The law it is certain has brought the whole world in as guilty before God; but it has done so because it has revealed the sin and failure in Israel; as it is written:

“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law (the Jews): that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” (Romans 3:19.)

If all the world were at that time under the law, there was no need that Paul should say, “to them who are under the law,” nor would there have been any value in such a phrase; but the fact that the Apostle makes such a statement is a demonstration that he was making a distinction, and that only a class were under the law. That class we have seen were the Children of Israel; and their failure at Sinai, together with the co-ordinate institution of the sacrifices, was witness that if the nation chosen of God had failed under law and were proven guilty, how much more in the light and demand of that law was it evident the whole world was guilty before the God of that law.

The convicting power of sin in this age is not the law, it is the *Holy Spirit*.

He is here for that purpose.

But He is here not to convict men of the violations of the moral law.

He is not here to convict men of lying, cheating, robbery and such like, the common law of the land will do that: He is here to convict men of one immense sin that includes all moral failure, the sin of unbelief; as it is written:

“When he (the Holy Spirit) is come, he will reprove (convict) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

“Of sin, *because they believe not in me.*” (John 16:8, 9.)

The sin of all sins is unbelief in the Son of God. For this He made no atonement.

This is the sin that never will be forgiven.

Neither here nor in eternity.

“He that believeth not is condemned already, because (mark that causation well) he *hath not* believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:18.)

Condemned! because he has hesitated a single moment; because he did not, the moment he heard the Gospel, believe at once.

This is the sin which will render eternity an anguish and make endless existence a curse.

No matter what argument I may bring, nor how strongly I may speak, I cannot convince a modern moral man, a man upright in all his dealings, meet-

ing all his duties and discharging all his responsibilities—I cannot convince such a man that the sin that will shut him out from eternal life and nullify all the earthly good he may have done will be, failure to believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, that God gave Him to die as a sacrifice for sin and raised Him from the dead to be the alone Saviour of men.

Nevertheless, this is the actual truth. It is the truth because in this age the question of all questions is not *the sin question*. It is not an issue of how more or less sinful a man may be; nor, whether one man is a greater sinner than the other. That is not the question, because God has concluded all under sin, and in respect to meeting the standard of God's glory, which is his holiness, He, Himself, has declared, "there is no difference."

The supreme question that outranks all others is—the *Son* question.

Our Lord put that question in definite form when He said, "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?" (Matthew 22:42.)

God the Father is putting that question to the world today:

"What do you think of Jesus Christ? Is He my Son whom I sent to redeem the world and save the souls of sinful men?"

That issue is mighty and determining enough.

Heaven and Hell depend, not upon what you *do*, but what you *think*, yes, upon what you *think* about Christ.

If you think of Him as God thinks and as God has clearly revealed His thought in Holy Scripture; if you confess and make known your thought, even though you were the blackest sinner out of hell, you are saved. If you do not think of Him as God thinks of Him and has commanded all men everywhere to think of Him, even though you were the whitest soul on earth, you are lost now, and if you do not repent will be damned and lost forever.

But what self-righteous man, I repeat, will believe *that*, though I spoke with the tongue of an angel and the force of divine truth; nay, even though I should quote scripture after scripture in support of it? I assure you such a man would not believe it.

All the thunder of the law, all the flash of its lightnings would not do it.

There is only one person who can bring the conviction of that truth home to the heart and conscience of any human being, and that is the Holy Spirit.

The law then is not the instrument of conviction; it is not in any wise the ground of salvation.

If it were so, if the keeping of the law, if the establishment of a satisfactory righteousness before God by the works of the law could save, then the death of the cross was the most criminal blunder ever committed, the most useless shedding of blood God ever permitted.

And this is the logic of Scripture itself; as it is written:

“If righteousness come by the law, *then Christ is dead in vain.*” (Galatians 2:21.)

This settles it.

Christ did not, could not die in vain.

Therefore—the law is not the ground of salvation to the sinner.

Christians are not under the law as the rule of life.

“Ye are *not under the law*, but under grace.” (Romans 6:14.)

“*Ye also are become dead to the law* by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.” (Romans 7:4.)

The Apostle was referring to those Christians in the Roman Church who were *Jews*.

He says:

“I speak to *them* that *know the law.*” (Romans 7:1.)

He compares these Jewish Christians to a married woman, the law to her husband. As long as her husband lives she is bound by the law to him; but when he dies she is loosed from the law of her husband.

She is loosed from him in *two ways*:

He is dead and no longer can exercise any claim upon her.

She is dead too; that is, as a wife. She judicially died in him, his death was her death legally. (This

is true in common law today—the woman dies as a wife in her husband's death.)

Just so, when our Lord dies on the cross, the law ceases to have any further claim on Him. It has no more claim on Him than a dead husband has over his wife. Since He is dead to the law, *the law is dead to Him.*

When Christ dies on the cross as a substitute for believers, they also are reckoned of God to have died in Him. The law therefore has no more claim upon them than it has on Him; no more claim than the law of the state has upon the man it has put to death in the electric chair; so far as that dead man is concerned the law is dead to him, as dead and without jurisdiction as though it never had been a law.

Since the *Jewish Christians* died in Christ who answered for them under the law of Sinai as well as under the general law of God against sin, they were like the woman legally dead in her husband. They were dead to the law and *the law was dead to them.*

Since a woman whose husband was dead was free to marry another and by him bring forth children, so the Hebrew Christians who had been under the law of Sinai as a first husband were now through faith married to another husband, even to the risen Christ; and where before that first marriage was sterile, so that they could not bring forth fruit unto righteousness, now by union with Christ and His union with them, they could bring forth fruit unto God.

By this statement the Apostle not only testifies that Hebrew Christians are dead to the law and the law dead to them, but that Gentile Christians who never were under the law, by the death of Christ and the consequent end of the law in Him, are not and could not be under the law of Sinai today.

The Apostle says those who preach the law of Sinai to Christians are troublers.

He says:

“There be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ.” (Galatians 1:7.)

He says the teachers who have endeavored to put the Galatians, the Gentile believers, under the law have “bewitched” them; that is, deceived them.

He asks a question of them:

“This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

“Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” (Galatians 3:1-3.)

He here makes it plain that the law has to do with a man *in the flesh*, not a man in the spirit.

He calls the law a “*yoke of bondage.*” (Galatians 5:1.)

In this he is in accord with the Apostle Peter, who in the first great council of the Church at Jerusalem, himself protesting against the Judaizing

teachers who sought to put Gentile believers under law, raised his voice and said:

“Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?” (Acts 15:10.)

For Jewish believers to go back under the law was to be entangled again with the yoke of bondage; therefore Paul exhorts them to stand fast in the liberty of Christ.

“Stand ye fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us (Jews) free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” (Galatians 5:1.)

He says further:

“*Christ is become of no effect* unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; *ye are fallen from grace.*” (Galatians 5:4.)

He calls legal preaching and teaching “a persuasion,” and says they did not get it from the Lord who called them and compares it in its corrupting influence to leaven.

“This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.”

“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” (Galatians 5:8, 9.)

Leaven in Scripture is never a symbol of good, but always of that which is evil. Seeing that it is in itself, essentially a sour, rotten and corrupting thing it cannot be a symbol of the Gospel.

It is a symbol of false doctrine, and is so declared by the Lord Himself.

“Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the *doctrine* of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” (Matthew 16:12.)

Thus in clear terms, speaking by the Holy Spirit, the Apostle denounces the preaching and teaching that would put the Christian under the law.

To those who under this teaching were being circumcised he says to attempt to keep one part of the law is to be under bonds to keep the whole law.

“For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.” (Galatians 5:3.)

It is either law or grace!

You cannot mix law and grace any more than you can mix “woollen and linen.”

The woman who lives with two husbands is guilty of adultery. The Christian who seeks to live under law and grace at the same time is guilty in God’s sight of spiritual adultery.

The moment you touch the law and attempt to keep it in any particular, whether it be circumcision or keeping the Jewish Sabbath, you are a debtor to the whole law—you have fallen from grace.

Writing to Timothy the Apostle says:

“The law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners.” (1 Timothy 1:9.)

But Christians are not ungodly (genuine Christians) neither are they sinners in the sight of God.

On the contrary, the righteousness of God is upon them; as it is written:

“The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and *upon all them that believe.*” (Romans 3:22.)

That is, by *His* faith which led Him to become “obedient unto the death of the cross,” His obedience is transferred to the account of the believer,” and He thus becomes legally and judicially the believer’s righteousness before God.

But more than that—

The believer in Christ—in Him—is the very righteousness of God; as it is written:

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that *we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*” (2 Corinthians 5:21.)

And again:

“As he is so, are we in this world.” (1 John 4:17.)

How immense that is.

He is in Heaven on the throne of the universe, beautiful, glorious, not only very God, but *the Man in the glory*, the perfect man in the glory. And God looks upon us, faltering, feeble and failing Christians as we may be, as perfect as He is, because He sees us in Him, and sees us in that way only.

The fact is, the gracious fact, that God looks upon us as crucified with Christ, “risen with Christ”

ascended with Christ, with Him already gone into Heaven and seated with Him in the Heavenly places:

“And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” (Ephesians 2:6.)

To such a risen and heavenly people, a law, intended for the ungodly and the sinner, has no place, and cannot be preached to the Christian without an insult to the Christian, without offence to God and to His blood-sealed and measureless grace.

The law has to do with the Aaronic priesthood: the priesthood which on earth has to do exclusively with the family of Aaron, the tribe of Levi and therefore with the Jewish nation alone.

Grace has to do with the Melchizedec priesthood of Christ (effective not on earth, but in Heaven; “for if he were on earth, he should not be a priest,” (Hebrews 8:4) and a people risen and seated with Him, as to their character representatively, in Him—in Heaven.

The moment a Christian puts himself under the law, he comes down from the heavenly places in Christ to the region of the earth, the flesh and the priesthood in Levi. He is on Jewish, not on Christian ground at all.

The Gentile Christian who puts himself under the law and keeps the Jewish sabbath becomes a *counterfeit Jew*.

He is so styled by the risen Son of God:

“I know the blasphemy of them which say they

are Jews, and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan.” (Revelation 2:9.)

There were persons in Smyrna who professed to be believers in Christ, and said they were Jews.

Our Lord says they were not Jews.

If they were not Jews they were Gentiles.

They were Gentiles then who, while professing to believe in Christ, called themselves Jews.

They could claim to be Jews only on the ground that they kept the law; that they were circumcised or were observing the Jewish sabbath.

There are Christians today who hold that all believers in Christ are—spiritually—Jews.

They quote a certain scripture in support of that claim.

“He is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter.” (Romans 2:29.)

The application of this text to the Gentile believer is shut out by the context.

The context shows the Apostle is speaking of *a Jew* who is such by nature—not of *Gentiles at all*.

He says:

“Behold, *thou art a Jew*, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God.” (Romans 2:17.)

A real Jew, a chosen and elect Jew, is not merely a Jew as to his flesh, he must be a *regenerated Jew*.

The Apostle emphasizes this further on.

“They are not all Israel, which are of Israel.

“Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

“That is, They which are the children of the flesh, *these are not the children of God*: but the children of the *promise* are counted for the seed.” (Romans 9:8.)

The regenerated Jew, the chosen and elect Jew is the real Jew in God’s sight.

It is true the Gentile who believes is called a child of Abraham, because through faith (the faith Abraham had before he was circumcised, and more than four hundred years before the law) he is a child of God; but because through Abraham’s faith he is a child of God he does not become a Jew, any more than the Jew who through Abraham’s faith becomes a child of God—is a Gentile.

The Gentile therefore who put himself under the law whether he be circumcised or keeps the sabbath is a counterfeit Jew; and any so called Church assembly formed on the ground of the law of Sinai is not a Church at all, it is a synagogue—and a synagogue of Satan.

It is urged on behalf of law keeping that our Lord Jesus Christ did not come to destroy or do away with the law, but to fulfil it; as it is written:

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.” (Matthew 5:17.)

This is absolutely true.

But it took two things to fulfil the law.

1. To obey it perfectly and earn life by it.

“This *do*,” said the Lord to the lawyer who tempted Him concerning the law, “*and thou shalt live*.” (Luke 10:28.)

2. To undergo the sentence of death against sin. Our Lord did both.

He magnified the law and made it honorable in and by His life. He so kept the law as “minister of the circumcision for the truth of God,” that He could challenge the Jews about Him and say unto them—

“Which of you convinceth me of sin?” (John 8:46.)

He so kept the law that He earned eternal life.

By this it is not meant to say He did not already have it; but, rather, by the keeping of the law He justified Himself as that eternal life which was with the Father, as the one who had the right to it.

He not only magnified the law and made it honorable by His life, He did so by His death.

On the cross as the *burnt offering* He fulfilled that side of the law which demands the surrender of self in unmeasured devotion to God—even unto death.

On the cross as the *sin offering*, “made sin for us,” treated as “sin in the flesh,” the nature of sin, He justified the law of God in its edict of death against sin and the sinners He represented.

That He fulfilled all the law’s demands in death is proclaimed by His resurrection from the dead and His ascension to, and session, on the throne of God.

Risen, ascended and seated in glory, having fulfilled the law, He has legal right to give the eternal life He earned for others to all who shall believe.

What the law demanded man should earn He freely and fully bestows. This is what is meant by the Lord's fulfillment of the law.

But because He met all the demands of the law in life and death does not mean that He puts that law in any respect upon those who have been owned of God to have died in His death, risen in His resurrection and in Him, representatively, are seated in Heaven. Such a conclusion from His fulfillment of the law would be childish reasoning, if it were not so monstrous.

Nay! His fulfillment of the law delivers them from the law, not that they may become lawless, but bound unto Him as their true law, as their new and spiritual life, owning Him as their law; wherefore it is written:

"Not without law to God, but under law (literally enlawed) to Christ." (1 Corinthians 9:21.)

There is another scripture quoted continually by those who insist the Christian is under law.

This is the familiar and oft repeated passage:

"The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." (Galatians 3:24.)

As this epistle was written to Gentile believers in Galatia, it is confidently asserted that in using the pronouns *we* and *us* the Apostle was involving

the Gentiles with himself as both being under the law.

But, if this were so, then those who quote it as proving Christians are now under law are cleanly knocked down by their own argument; for, the succeeding verse declares these Galatian believers were no longer under a schoolmaster.

Hear what the verse says:

"But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." (Galatians 3:25.)

This is just as plain as language can make it; for, even if the Gentile Galatians had been under the law, since the schoolmaster is a symbol of the law, and they were, after faith, no longer under a schoolmaster, then by every line and link of logic—they *would be no longer under law.*

But by the very use of the pronouns "we" and "us" the Apostle conclusively proves the Gentiles never were, and now that they believed, never could be, under the law. For when the Apostle uses these personal pronouns in relation to the law in this epistle he is making a distinction between Jews and Gentiles.

The proof is to be found in his own words:

"*We* who are *Jews* by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles." (Galatians 2:15.)

By all these facts it is evident—

The law is not the rule of life to the Christian.

The law as already seen is not the ministration of life, but death.

It would be impossible for those who are risen and living in Christ, and in whom Christ is living by the indwelling Spirit, to go by such a rule or regulation as that.

There is a rule, a clear and definite rule, by which the Christian is to live and walk every day; as it is written:

“In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

“And as many as walk according to *this rule* (canon), peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.” (Galatians 6:15, 16.)

The rule is stated in verse 15.

“A new creature.”

Literally, “*a new creation.*”

Scripture tells us clearly what that new creation is:

“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (creation): old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17.)

This new creation signifies:

“Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Colossians 1:27.)

The Apostle puts it in unqualified language:

“I am (was) crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but *Christ liveth in me.*” (Galatians 2:20.)

The life of the risen Christ in the believer, that is the rule, the canon, the law and regulation for the Christian’s daily life.

If the Christian yield to this life it will lead him to glorify God in his body and spirit and be a blessing to his fellow men.

And now, mark you, side by side with this clear enunciation that the Christian is *not under the law of Sinai*, but *under the indwelling power of the life of a risen Christ*, the Holy Spirit has given us the most monumental witness that the Gentile believers are not spiritual *Jews*, but that believing Jews become themselves *spiritual Jews* and constitute those of whom Paul speaks as being such “inwardly.”

You have it in the expression—

“And upon *the Israel of God.*”

The emphatic and turning word is the conjunction—*and*.

Peace and mercy upon all Gentile believers who walk according to Christ in them—*and*—upon the Israel of God.

And who, I ask you, can the Israel of God in a Gentile Church in addition to the Gentile believers be—but Jews, Hebrews who, by the grace of God, had been led to accept Jesus of Nazareth as their crucified and risen Messiah, their Lord and Master?

These and these only form the Israel of God in this age. They are the “remnant according to the election of grace” of whom the Apostle speaks in the eleventh chapter of his epistle to the Romans.

And these all, both Gentile and Jewish believers, are to walk as new made persons, as persons who

have been made over, created anew in Christ. They in Christ and Christ in them.

How far is this *law of life, this life that becomes a law*, above the stony writing, the terrifying thunder and the blazing, flashing fire and smoke of Sinai, in the presence of a trembling crowd of self righteous, yet condemned and sinful people!

This then is the law for the Christian—

Christ reincarnated in the soul.

The Holy Spirit in the name of a risen and ascended Christ dwelling in the believer's body as His proxy, manifesting Him to the consciousness of the believer so that Christ may actually dwell in that body and exercise His own faith and power as when He was on earth.

It is life—not law—contained in commandments that will produce devotion to God and consideration of man for man.

If a mother does not love her child, all the law and all the renewed legislation in the world will not make her love it. If she have a true mother heart, she will need no law to make her love her child.

All the law accented by thunder and illuminated by lightning cannot make human beings love God or be unselfish in relation to one another.

But when the life of Christ is in the soul; when the believer gives the right of way to that life in him, he needs neither the reverberating crashes of Sinai, nor its fiery challenge, nor the threatening whiplash sting of command to love God, or be interested in the soul of another.

For those who live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit and bring forth the fruit of the Spirit, it is written:

“*There is no law.*” (Galatians 5:23.)

The preaching and teaching that would put the Christian under the law and call him to live on Jewish ground began with the very beginning of Christianity. As already stated it came up as a disturbing issue in the first great Church council held at Jerusalem, the very hotbed of Judaizing and legalizing preachers.

So widespread, perverting and disturbing was this heresy, that the Apostle, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, was set to writing the epistle to the Galatians as a divine treatise on Law and Grace.

The distinction between the two is easily summed.

The Law brings a *work to do*.

Grace brings a *word to believe*.

The Law says *do* and *live*.

Grace says *believe* and *live*.

The Law tells you what man *ought* to do.

Grace tells what God *has done*.

Law is a “*yoke of bondage*,” “unbearable servitude,” and the end—*death*.

Grace is the *bestowal of life*, the service of *free men* and—the power of an *endless life*.

The epistle to the Galatians teaches that the Christian has been removed from the plane of law and lifted into the plane of life—even the life of God *in the soul*.

So false, disastrous and rapidly widespread was this contagion of legal teaching, so upsetting to faith and spiritual peace, so turning the believer away from the finished work of the cross and the emancipating and sustaining power of the resurrection, that the Apostle writing to the Galatian Church utters the most intense and terrific of denunciations,

He says:

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you unto the grace of Christ unto another Gospel:

“Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would *pervert the Gospel of Christ*.

“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be *accursed*.” (Galatians 1:6-9.)

Those who today are preaching and teaching the law; who are demanding Christians shall keep the Jewish sabbath (and let it be remembered the Jewish sabbath, the seventh day, is an inseparable part of the law), who pervert the Gospel, rob the cross of its glory, grace of its virtue, put the yoke of bondage on the freemen of Christ, make them the keepers of times and seasons, such troubling and perverting teachers would do well to hear the solemn denunciation of the Holy Spirit coming through the ordained and Heaven-given words of the Apostle.

“Let him be accursed,” are words spoken of any teacher who shall pervert the Gospel of the grace

of God and put the blood-ransomed believer under the law of condemnation and death.

Because of the grace that has sought and found those of us who believe, this grace that can keep us, we should, indeed, live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit and bring forth the fruit of the Spirit.

Because of this grace that holds back judgment and speaks with the voice of invitation, every soul who hears the Gospel message should turn, and turn at once, before grace gives way to judgment; for, always, and unfailingly, rejected grace becomes *added* judgment.

Remember—*not law*, but *grace*, *the rule of life* for the Christian.

Remember—*not law*, but *grace*, *the offer of mercy* for the sinner.