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THIS DOTTH GOD REQUIRE

- EXODUS 20:1-11. - JULY 14. -

Golden Text: – Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

– Deut. 6:5.

OUR lesson relates to the first four of the ten commandments delivered to the Israelites at Mount Sinai as the basis of the Covenant which the Lord made with the nation of Israel there. The journey from Egypt to Mount Sinai is about 150 miles, and with intermediate stops nearly fifty days were consumed in reaching it. We recall the leading experiences of these fifty days: (1) The passing at the Red Sea; (2) the making sweet the waters of Marah; (3) the rest at the wells of Elim near the palm grove; (4) the beginning of the supply of manna; (5) the smiting of the rock from which gushed waters for their refreshment – typical, as the Apostle tells us, of Christ and the life and refreshment which now come to spiritual Israelites by faith (1 Cor. 10:4); (6) the battle with the Amalekites, in which Israel, untrained to battle, was victorious, while Aaron and Hur upheld the hands of Moses and "the Lord fought for them"; (7) the organization of the nation by the appointment of seventy elders as judges under Moses. [R4013 : page 186]

All of these experiences were designed of the Lord to prepare Israel for further blessings and mercies, and to make them typical of Spiritual Israel and the heavenly favors to be bestowed upon them in due time. When Moses said to Pharaoh that the Lord commanded that the people should go into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to him, it was but a vague statement of a great fact. The sacrifice which the Lord proposed was a consecration of themselves and all that they possessed to him and to his service. The experiences of the fifty days were calculated to establish faith

in the Lord, and to ground and establish the hope of the Abrahamic Covenant under which they had essayed to leave Egypt to seek the promised land where the blessing would be granted. They had now arrived at the spot in the wilderness, at Mount Sinai, where God proposed to enter into covenant relationship with them. This was, therefore, the important epoch in their history. God proposed to adopt them as his people, and that Moses should be the mediator between him and them.

THE LAW COVENANT SEALED

The Law was read in the hearing of the elders and representatives of the people, and signified the terms and conditions upon which the Lord would grant them his special favor and blessing. If they would obey his statutes and keep his commandments he would make of them a great nation; he would give them prosperity of every kind; he who would do those things should live, and the blessing of the Lord would prosper his every interest. This implied eternal life, though it is doubtful if the faith of the people could fully grasp this part of the blessing. They all, however, could appreciate the fact that they were promised **[R4013 : page 187]** health and wealth if obedient to the Law. On the other hand, if disobedient it was to mean to them disease, national and individual sickness, pain, sorrow, poverty. They were called upon to take their stand once and forever. Would they be the Lord's people and nation and enter into this covenant, or would they not? They responded favorably; they declared, "These things will we do." But little did they appreciate the comprehensiveness of these divine commands – they saw only the outward aspect and not the spirit of the Law.

The Apostle assures us that it was impossible for them or for any other members of the imperfect race to fulfil the requirements of that Law in its real spirit and depth – that the divine Law measures the full capacity of a perfect human being, and hence

that no imperfect being, none of the fallen race, could possibly keep that Law. He says of it, "The commandment which was ordained to life, I [we Jews] found to be unto death." (Rom. 7:10.) This was not the fault of the Law, for, as the Apostle declares, the Law was just and perfect and good. It was the fault of the fall, because "there is none righteous, no not one," therefore there is none able to keep the perfect Law in its very spirit. This fact, however, was kindly veiled from the eyes of the Israelites that they might with the greater courage undertake to do their best and receive the full measure of possible blessing under the circumstances. God from the beginning foresaw the entire plan, and meant in this Law Covenant with Israel merely their blessing at the time, and to use them as a type of Spiritual Israel, who as the great antitypical Mediator will in due time provide for them the benefits of the New Covenant, which will make allowance for their imperfections, and during the Millennium bring them and all others of mankind who desire harmony with God back to full relationship with the Creator and to eternal life – destroying wilful evil-doers.

THE LAW COVENANT FOR ISRAEL ONLY

Much needless confusion prevails respecting the application of the Decalogue. Few seem to notice that it was the basis of the Covenant made with Israel, and that it included in its provisions, promises and penalties only the Jewish nation. Its commands had nothing whatever to do with the Egyptians or any other nation of that time or since, neither are they now applicable to Spiritual Israel. Even those Jews once under this Law Covenant needed to be freed from it before they could become espoused to Christ. The Apostle most distinctly states this, saying to the Jews that, so far as its blessings and opportunities were concerned, these ended at the cross of Christ, that Christ made an end of the Law Covenant, nailing it to the cross. (Col. 2:14.) He further shows us that every Jew who believed in Christ needed first to recognize the death or

end of the Law Covenant under which he had previously been bound before he could become married to Christ, betrothed to Christ as a member of the Bride class, Spiritual Israel.

It will be remembered that the Apostle tells us that the Law Covenant was typified in Hagar, whose son Ishmael typified the Jewish nation under the bondage of the Law – not free, not sons of God in the highest sense, not heirs of the Abrahamic Covenant. He points out that this higher position of the sons was represented in Isaac, whose mother, Sarah, represented the original Abrahamic Covenant, which God made 430 years before the Law Covenant was added at Mount Sinai. As Hagar, the bondservant, brought forth her son first, so Natural Israel was developed before Spiritual Israel: as later Sarah bore the true heir to Abraham, so later the Abrahamic Covenant bore the antitypical house of sons, Spiritual Israel, of which Jesus is the Head and the Spirit-begotten ones members. Our Lord also refers to this change of dispensation and shows that all who were of suitable condition of mind in the Jewish nation were privileged to be transferred from the Law Covenant and the Ishmael seed to the better Covenant, as members of the Isaac class, the house of sons. He says he came unto his own and his own received him not [as a nation], but to as many as received him, to them gave he liberty [power, privilege] to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." – John 1:12.

If the ten commandments, the basis of the Jewish Covenant, were only given to that nation and not to the world, is the world without a covenant? We answer, Yes: the world never has been under any law of God, never has been recognized by God, whose time for dealing with the world is in the future under the terms of the New Covenant, at the hands of the greater Mediator than Moses, namely: Christ, Head and Body. Thus we read, "God has appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness." (Acts 17:31.) That day has not yet come, hence

the world is not on trial, is not being judged, rewarded or punished. The day of the world's trial will as surely come as Natural Israel's time of favor and trial came when they were delivered from Egypt, and as surely as Spiritual Israel's day of favor and judgment came, beginning with our Lord and Pentecost.

Meantime, since the casting off of Natural Israel at the time of our Lord's crucifixion, God has been dealing only with Spiritual Israel, rewarding, punishing, chastising, etc., "every son whom he receiveth" – but not the world, whom he has not received nor entered into covenant relationship with. "The world still lieth in the wicked one," is still blinded by the "god of this world," is still under Adamic condemnation, and therefore still "children of wrath," to whom no favor is due until the inauguration of the Millennial Kingdom.

ALL COMMANDED TO REPENT

With the end of the Jewish Law Covenant, with the accomplishment of Christ's sacrifice at Calvary and the application of the merit thereof to the household of faith, all men everywhere were commanded to repent, and to know that God was prepared to give the trial or testing to all, to the intent that the willing and obedient might be adjudged worthy of everlasting life if assisted thereto through the Redeemer. The law of God was originally written in man's constitution in that he was created in the image and likeness of God, with the qualities of mind which would enable him to appreciate right and wrong, justice and injustice, and esteem righteousness. But the fall largely erased this law from the human heart, until today, in some of the more savage, only the merest trace of conscience and appreciation of right and wrong remain. Consequently the eyes of their **[R4013 : page 188]** understanding and the ears of their heart remain closed to the message that is now promulgated, urging all everywhere to repent and turn to the Lord. That this is true is demonstrated: our Lord

called attention to the fact that few have ears to hear and eyes to see, and declared of some who received his message, "Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear." Furthermore, the promise is that eventually, during the Millennial age, all the blind eyes shall be opened and all the deaf ears be unstopped.

"FULFIL THE LAW OF CHRIST"

The Decalogue is styled the Law of Moses because, as the Apostle declares, "The Law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ." The Jew who did not receive Christ did not receive the grace and truth, and the Christian who has received Christ and his grace and truth is "not under the Law [Covenant] but under grace." (Rom. 6:14.) The Law of Christ is a very different one from that of the ten commandments, and yet there is an agreement between them, because, though Moses' Law was given to the house of servants and the Law of Christ was given to the house of sons, both emanated from the Father and both are based **[R4014 : page 188]** upon his eternal law of righteousness.

No wonder, then, that there is a harmony between them. The Law of Christ is positive and is called a new commandment. It does not attempt to say what we shall not do, as did Moses' Law, but taking the positive form tells us what all of Christ's followers shall do, must do, in order to be acceptable to him. His law is that we shall love God and "love one another as I have loved you." Under this divine arrangement with the house of sons he that loveth not is not of God – "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ [the spirit of love] he is none of his," and if he have the spirit of love for God and consequently for his fellowmen he would not think of doing things forbidden the house of servants in the Decalogue. What was proper enough as a prohibition to the natural man would be wholly inappropriate to the members of the New Creation, the Body of Christ, who have been begotten of the holy Spirit of love. What an insult it would be to such to command

them not to blaspheme God's name, not to worship other gods, not to kill, not to steal! Would God steal? would God murder? and would any who have been begotten of his Spirit have the wish or desire to do these things? Surely not! Hence the prohibitions contained in the ten commandments are not for the New Creation and were never given to them. As the Apostle declares, "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" – the Mosaic Law. – Rom. 8:2.

"MOSES GAVE YOU THE LAW"

These were Jesus' words, and he adds, "none of you keepeth it." (John 7:19.) They could not keep it, could not be justified by it. Do we then of the New Creation keep the still higher law of love? and if so, how? The Scriptures answer – "The righteousness of the Law [its requirements – full obedience] is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit" – who are striving to the best of our ability to be in harmony with the very essence of the divine will, Love. Not that we can walk up to the spirit of the Law, but that when we walk after it with our best endeavors God counts it unto us as though we walked up to its requirements – the merit of Christ our Lord and Head being imputed to and compensating for all our unwilling imperfections.

Nevertheless, although we are not under the Mosaic Law, we – the New Creatures, begotten of the holy Spirit and accepted in the Beloved under the Covenant of grace – may gain valuable lessons from an examination of the Law of Moses, because the study of it will open wider and wider the eyes of our understanding to see what are the particular and exact requirements of the divine law and our own natural shortcomings. Our study of the Law, however, will not bring to us condemnation, for we remember that we are not under the Law but under grace – not condemned because unable to fulfil every requirement of the Law, but justified before God and the Law through the merit of Jesus when

we put forth our best efforts to the accomplishment of the divine will. In the declarations of the Law designed for Natural Israel we see the outlines of the perfect will of God, and the more clearly we discern this the more it will enable us to fulfil the desires of our hearts and to come into fuller accord with God's perfect will in thought, word and deed.

THE FIRST TWO COMMANDMENTS

God properly puts himself first, for he is first, head, chief over all beings and all things, and to him properly belongs their homage, their reverence, and only as mankind come to realize this do they approximate the spirit of a sound mind. The Israelites had been in contact with idolatry in Egypt, and would again be in contact with it when they entered Canaan. The first lesson they were to learn was, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one" – Jehovah – and "thou shalt have no other gods before me." No other rulers of any kind were to be allowed to usurp the place and honor of the great Ruler, nor should they attempt to make any likeness of the true God, for a true representation of him could not be made. They were to bow down to nothing in the sky or on the earth or in the waters as an object of worship, but were to recognize the true God as the invisible one, whose energy and power are everywhere present throughout the universe. Disregard of this command would bring upon them trouble, for God would not consider it a light thing, but would visit the iniquities upon them to the third and fourth generations of those despising him, and would show mercy unto thousands of those loving him and keeping his commandments. The application of this commandment to Natural Israel is very evident; its language is simplicity itself. What lessons can Spiritual Israelites draw from this command given to Natural Israel?

We can, as the Apostle urges, keep our hearts from idols; we are not in danger of making idols of wood or stone or metal in the

image of God. We have too thoroughly gotten rid of the ignorance and superstition engendered by the fall to take such a course; but we should remember how natural it is for us to turn the organs of reverence and worship into improper channels, and to give a measure of worship to children or parents or husband or wife or minister; or to have such an appreciation of and desire for honor of men as to reverence their gift of office, or to have such a love for money and the honors and blessings it will give as **[R4014 : page 189]** to become Mammon worshipers. Thus we may draw valuable lessons from what the Lord said to the house of servants, and although we cannot apply the letter of the commandment to the sons, the latter can get blessings from the spirit of it.

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

The command, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain," was evidently very appropriate as a limitation upon the Jews, the house of servants. It forbade profane swearing of every kind, and would be proper for the natural man everywhere and always. Why should any profane the name of the Almighty? Why should not all the world fear so wrong a course? This taking of God's name in vain would include perjury, false swearing, which has always been punished by all civilized peoples. Under the Jewish Law an offender was to be punished with the very penalty which his perjury was intended to prevent. It was punished by the Egyptians with death or mutilation, and by the Greeks with a heavy fine, and ultimately with the loss of civil rights. In the world the man who uses the name of the Deity profanely is properly esteemed to be no gentleman – to be coarse, rude, vulgar. It may well be noted here, however, that nothing in this command even among the Jews would have hindered them from the taking of a legal oath before a court of law. Such oaths are not profane nor taking the Lord's name in vain. They are

merely affirmations in public that the thing said is the truth as God knows it to be the truth.

What lesson may the Spiritual Israelite learn from this commandment? We reply that none who are Israelites indeed, begotten of the spirit of love for God, would need any command not to blaspheme his name by profane swearing. We can make still more deep and suitable application of the command, however: we who have accepted Christ, who have vowed the full consecration of all we have and are to the Lord, have been begotten of his Spirit, and been told that we may consider him our Father and ourselves his children – we should realize that in one sense of the word we have taken upon us the name of the Lord. Just the same as a child adopted into a family takes the name of the family, so we have taken upon ourselves the name of the sons of God in accepting the divine proposition to this effect. As we accepted this holy relationship with a realization of what it signifies – "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is (1 John 3:2) – having confessed this relationship before man, it is for us to show and for them and the Lord to see whether it has been in vain or with a sincere heart. If the latter, we will to the extent of our ability be showing forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light, and this thought will help to hold us firm and loyal to our obligations to the Lord and his truth, and to all the members of the household of faith, to each of whom we have become related through this spirit of adoption. In line with this the Apostle exhorts, "See that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." (2 Cor. 6:1.) Our adoption into the Lord's family in the present life is merely on probation. If faithful the matter will be confirmed, and we will be granted our perfect bodies in the First Resurrection and a share with our Redeemer in his glory, honor and immortality. If we receive this relationship in vain sin lieth at the door, and we will be excluded from the family in glory whatever

may be our portion either in the Great Company of Rev. 7 or wherever.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT TO ISRAEL

In this command the Lord set apart the seventh day in each week that thereon the people should do no work. This would be a blessing to them in giving rest from toil and opportunity for recuperating and for thoughts of him who had made this provision for their necessities. The command contained no obligation to do good, to preach, to teach, nor even to receive instructions on this day. It merely commanded rest, leaving it to the individual Jew to determine how he would employ his own time. By general **[R4015 : page 189]** consent, however, the nation seemed to recognize the propriety of devoting the Sabbath day to consideration of the divine Law and the precious promises, and even to the prophecies. The appointment of the day was in the interest of all; to the poor it would mean protection from the greed of capital, and to the enterprising and prosperous it would mean a break upon their selfish propensities – the acknowledgment of the Lord and of the interests of their fellow-creatures. With the command was a reminder that in some respects it resembled the course of Jehovah, who, after six creative epochs, "rested on the seventh." The lesson to Natural Israel was plainly evident; what does this command impart to Spiritual Israel?

We might be at a loss to know what lesson would be in this commandment for us did not the Lord through the Apostle make the matter very clear, assuring us that the Sabbath rest of the Jewish nation was typical of the higher and better rest of the house of sons. The Israelites were obliged to rest every seventh day, every seventh year and every jubilee year, that they might make a type of a better rest which God provided, and which would be entered into first by Spiritual Israel and subsequently by Natural Israel and the whole world. The Apostle explains this matter

in Hebrews 4, where he speaks of a rest [Sabbath] into which the Spiritual Israelites now enter, represented by the Sabbath day of the Jew, and also of another rest that remaineth for the people of God which we should fear to come short of, namely, the great Sabbath, the Millennial Kingdom – the seventh thousand-year period.

As elsewhere more fully pointed out,* Israel's day Sabbaths every year pointed to a culmination, for following the Passover they counted seven times seven days, which brought them to the fiftieth day or Pentecost. As the Passover typified the death of Christ, so their fiftieth day pointed out the full complete rest or Sabbath of the present time, into which the Spiritual Israelites entered at Pentecost, when they received from the Father through the Lord Jesus the holy Spirit, which indicated that their sins were covered and that they were accepted of the Father as New Creatures, begotten of the holy Spirit. So all followers of Jesus from that time to the present, when begotten of the holy Spirit, are accepted into this rest of faith, and, ceasing from all hope of self-justification, accept Christ as the end of the Law [R4015 : page 190] for righteousness, and the imputation of his merit as the full satisfaction for their sins and reconciliation with the Father. Only those who have had this experience have ever kept the real antitypical Sabbath. And so long as they maintain this faith and trust they are fulfilling the antitype of the Sabbath day given to Natural Israel.

*MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. VI.

This, as the Apostle explains, excludes works and the Jewish Law as a basis of reconciliation to God, and accepts instead the blood of Christ; but it does not exclude works as manifestations of our love, thankfulness and devotion to God in view of his mercy in the forgiveness of our sins. On the contrary, our faith and hope and trust without the works of thankfulness would, the Apostle assures us, soon die, for a faith not manifested by endeavors to do

right would not have the divine approval. Indeed, the measure of our rest in the Lord and his finished work will depend largely upon the measure of our thankfulness and appreciation, and the latter will manifest itself in loving devotion to him and the righteousness which he represents.

Thus has God bound together our faith and obedience to the extent of our ability and the rest or Sabbath which we may enjoy. He who lacks this rest lacks the evidence that he is an Israelite indeed and in covenant relationship with God through Christ. He who has this rest of heart has in it a foretaste, an assurance, of the perfect rest of the future. For if now we can rest by faith, notwithstanding the besetments of the flesh and the Adversary under present adverse conditions, how gloriously we will rest by and by, when that which is perfect shall have come, not only in our own change to the Lord's character-likeness, but in the change of all the outward environments which will then be accomplished. On the other hand, the hope and faith respecting a future rest or Sabbath is without foundation if we do not enjoy the present rest by faith, if the peace of God which passeth all understanding is not ours.

We are not in this repudiating the observance of a day of rest every week, but we are repudiating any demands of the fourth commandment upon Spiritual Israelites as respects any day of the week, for that commandment was not given to us but to Natural Israel. Ours is the higher commandment. Nevertheless we are to recognize as of divine oversight and permission the fact that a weekly Sabbath day is enjoined by a civil law throughout Christendom. We rejoice in such a privilege, and consider it a great mercy to the natural man that he has thus by law a portion of time set apart for rest, with the privilege and opportunity for mental improvement. This wonderful privilege and blessing should be especially appreciated by all those who enjoy the higher light of Present Truth. If it is a privilege for the world to have one

day in seven for rest from physical toil, how much more is it a blessing to those whose eyes and ears of understanding are gradually opening more and more to the heavenly things! We could use profitably two or three Sabbaths every week for the study of the divine Word and for building one another up in the most holy faith.

We trust that with this view clearly before our minds none will use his knowledge on this subject to his own injury, to his own loss, nor to the breaking down of an institution which, however falsely based in the minds of the public, is so great a blessing to all and almost indispensable to us who are seeking to walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. By obedience to the laws of the State respecting abstinence from labor and business we not only set a good example in letter and in spirit as obedient to the powers that be, but we strengthen our influence for the Truth as lovers of law and order and righteousness, and thus furnish ourselves with better opportunities for presenting to those who have the spiritual sight and hearing the true significance of the Sabbath to the Israelite indeed.

While this Sabbath-keeping of rest is especially for the consecrated, as the Jew commanded that his children and his servants were similarly to rest, so all who come under our influence, either as our children or employes, should be influenced by our rest and be partakers of our trust and confidence in God – through our knowledge of him, which they could only partially appreciate.
