

THE LAW MAGNIFIED AND MADE HONORABLE

**"The Lord will magnify the Law and make it honorable."
– Isa. 42:21.**

"WHERE THERE IS NO LAW there is no transgression" (Rom. 4:15), would seem to be an axiom – a self-evident truth. No one could transgress a law that was not given to him, that was not applicable to him. In his discussion of the Jewish view of the Mosaic Law, St. Paul used this statement to show that the Jews misunderstood the matter. They had the thought that because God had given them the Law at Mt. Sinai, they were justified in God's sight by that Law. But receiving a Law is not keeping that Law. Therefore, the Apostle shows them that by the deeds of the Law no flesh could be justified in God's sight. – Rom. 3:20.

Continuing the argument a little further, St. Paul shows that the entire human race was once in God's favor, as represented in Adam before sin entered. While the race was in that condition of perfection mankind was *just* before God. But when sin entered, it brought the penalty of alienation from God and of death. Thenceforth the human race was dead in trespasses and in sin, having no right to everlasting life. In that condition God did not give mankind a law, but permitted the world to go without law up to the time of Moses. And even in the time of Moses God did not give the Law to the whole world, but only to the Jewish nation. If Israel had been able to keep the Law that was given to them at Mt. Sinai, they would have been a living nation – not a dying nation, as the other nations are.

The Apostle proceeds to say that the commandment, which was ordained to life, Israel found to be unto death. (Rom. 7:10.) A man cannot be justified by receiving the Law, but by keeping the Law. The rest of the world were less condemned than the Jews, for, says the Apostle, God did not give them that Law and they never came under

the penalty of that Law. So, then, Israel found the Law to work death; and they were under more condemnation than were any other people in the world; for they were condemned, not only in Adam, but also by failure to keep the Law. By the Law Covenant given on Mt. Sinai, they were lifted out of the Adamic condemnation and put on trial afresh; and when they failed to keep that Law, they had a second condemnation put upon them.

St. Paul is here demonstrating the mistake of thinking that the Law Covenant gave Israel a special immunity from condemnation. Then he shows that there are some Gentiles who have never come under the Law Covenant, as did the Jew, but who, nevertheless, show a work of progress, which the Jew had not done; for these Gentiles show a law of love ruling in their hearts. In some respects they judge themselves, and in other respects their consciences excuse or accuse them.

GOD'S LAW ORIGINALLY WRITTEN IN MAN'S HEART

The Apostle says that since the Jews are condemned by the Law given at Mt. Sinai, and since the rest of the world recognize by their consciences that they are condemned, then the whole world stands guilty in God's sight. What then is that which condemns the Gentiles? The answer is, the original Law of God remaining in their hearts, though marred by the fall.

God created our first parents in such a condition of perfection that the Law of God was clear, or manifest, to them instinctively. Now, because of the fall, if a man were to use his moral perceptions alone, one man might say that a thing is wrong, and another might say that it is right; each would be guided by his own mind, his own conscience. St. Paul's argument is that no matter how fallen a man may be, he still has so much of the original Law in his heart that his conscience will either accuse him of wrong-doing or excuse his conduct; and unless extremely degraded he will know that it is wrong to steal or to take human life.

To whatever extent a man retains this original Law of God to that extent he is responsible. No one can sufficiently excuse himself so as to say that he is worthy of eternal life. The Jew could not claim that he had kept the Law, for his atonement for sin was an acknowledgment that he had failed to do so; and the Gentile's conscience testified to his unworthiness. Therefore, neither was deserving of eternal life. Continuing his argument the Apostle explains that none of the fallen race can obtain eternal life except by the way that God has provided; and that way is in Christ alone. By the Divine arrangement Christ, who was perfect, was made flesh and gave Himself on behalf of Adam and his race, so that God can be just and still be the Justifier of him who believes in Jesus. – Rom. 3:26.

Neither Jew nor Gentile can have eternal life except as the result of faith in Jesus Christ. The Apostle tells us that we cannot *merit* eternal life, but that we must do all in our power to manifest that if we were perfect we would keep God's Law, and that in proportion as we know the Divine will, the Divine Law, we should *prove* our desire to be in harmony with God by doing His will to the best of our ability. The merit of Christ will off-set, [R5071 : page 240] compensate for, the weaknesses of the flesh through heredity, and ultimately we shall attain to full perfection. But none except those who show their willingness to keep the Law will reach this perfection; they must be willing to spare no efforts to keep that Law, so far as in them lies.

TWO CLASSES RELEASED FROM ADAMIC CONDEMNATION

"Where no Law is there is no transgression," for "sin is not imputed when there is no Law." (Rom. 4:15; 5:13.) The world has not yet come under individual condemnation; for the world has not yet been placed under Divine Law. Why not? Up to the present time the world is under the Adamic sentence, and only those who are lifted out of that condemnation can come under another sentence. The whole

world was condemned to death under Father Adam, and mankind cannot be sentenced again until they get out from under the first condemnation. The only ones who have, in any sense of the word, been released from this Adamic condemnation are two classes; the Natural Israelites and the Spiritual Israelites. The Jews could not be tried for life or death without a release in one form or another from the Adamic condemnation. This release they obtained by the Law Covenant; but it was only typical, for the blood of bulls and goats can never take away sin. – Heb. 10:4.

The only ones who have been actually released are those Jews who came under the Covenant of sacrifice, the Covenant which began with the Gospel Age with Christ, and those Gentiles who have entered into this Covenant relationship with Christ. As many of these as have entered into this relationship are on trial before Divine Law, and subject to eternal life or eternal death under that Law. If obedient to that Law they will get eternal life. If disobedient to that Law of the spirit of life, and if they wilfully sin after having been begotten of the Spirit, they will get death.

In the case of the Jew it would be the Second Death if their Law Covenant had been the full and complete Covenant which God intended for them. But it was not; it was merely a tentative Covenant to give them a tentative offer of eternal life; it was simply a typical Covenant. The real one is that which God intended should come in the New Covenant. "The days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the Covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt" (Jer. 31:31,32); God will make a New Covenant with them. He will take away the stony heart out of their flesh and will give them a heart of flesh, that they may keep His statutes and ordinances and do them (Ezek. 11:19), under this New Covenant – the real Law Covenant.

Under that real Law Covenant every Jew will have the fullest opportunity of coming into harmony with God. And the basis of that harmony will be the "better sacrifices" than the typical ones, which Moses offered. The great Mediator will be the Messiah – Christ the Head and the Church His Body. And that great Mediator has the basis of His power in the fact that *He has provided* the "better sacrifices." He provided first His own sacrifice; and during the Gospel Age He has been providing other sacrifices – those who come unto the Father by Him.

THE LAW AN INDICATION OF GOD'S WILL

The Church of this Gospel Age is not under the Jewish Law Covenant; for that Law Covenant was given to the Jew and not to the Gentile nor to the Christian Church. We are not to speak of ourselves as "Gentiles" or as "Jews," but as the *Church of God*. God has made a different Covenant with us; it is spoken of as a Covenant of sacrifice: "Gather My saints together unto Me; those who have made a Covenant with Me by sacrifice." (Psa. 50:5.) This Covenant has been made individually with the entire Church of Christ.

Shall we say, then, that the Gospel Church is without a Law? By no means! We are not under that Law Covenant – the Covenant which demands of us to keep that Law and which binds us to keep it. But we are under a Covenant of *Grace* – a Covenant which makes special provision for us – for our inability to do perfectly. Nevertheless we are still under Divine Law. Every intelligent creature is under Divine Law. To the extent of her knowledge the Church will be responsible to the Law of God.

How may we know the Law of God? We may know of it in part by the Jewish Law and the Ten Commandments. Do we ignore the Ten Commandments? By no means. We appreciate them as showing us the Law of God. It is one thing to strive to keep them in mind, in spirit, and a totally different thing to keep them inviolate, as those under the Law covenanted to do; for whoever breaks *one* of the commandments

breaks them *all*. (James 2:10.) We are therefore not under the Law, but under grace. (Rom. 6:14.) That same Law which God gave to Israel, so beautifully represented on tables of stone, is not over us; but the spirit of that Law is applicable to us. St. Paul says that the righteousness of the Law, the true keeping of the Law, is fulfilled in us, the Gospel Church, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. – Rom. 8:4.

With the Gospel Church God is dealing differently from the manner in which he dealt with the Jewish people. God's arrangement with the Jews was that they should keep that Law both in letter and in spirit, or else they would be condemned. His arrangement with the Gospel Church is that they should fulfil that Law to the best of their ability, and that the merit of Christ will make up for their deficiency. While we of the Gospel Church would like to keep the Law we are as unable to keep it, as were the Jews, on account of the weakness of the flesh. Every Christian should feel that he is strictly under obligations to the Divine Law more than are those who are not Christians, because of his greater enlightenment in Divine things, in the instructions of Christ and the Apostles and of the Holy Spirit. Not only is he to seek to live up to the requirements of the Law, but he covenants to do *much more*. He covenants to sacrifice even those rights which he would have under the Law, and to present his body a sacrifice, not even calling for his own rights under the Law.

OBEDIENCE TO THE EXTENT OF ABILITY

We keep the spirit of the Ten Commandments because it is the spirit of righteousness, the Spirit of God. We have become God's children; and having His Spirit, we are to do those things which are pleasing to Him. If, therefore, we can from the Ten Commandments learn what things are pleasing to Him, then they are lessons that we should learn. If any other thing shows us what is pleasing to God, we are to do it. But we are not *under* the Law Covenant. We do not hope for eternal life by keeping it. God's arrangement for us is that being

obedient to the extent of our ability and having the *spirit* of the Law in our hearts, we are counted as perfect in His sight and will receive His blessing.

Some of the Jews thought that they kept the Ten Commandments, yet to their surprise they did not get eternal life. The teachings of Jesus and the Apostles show us that every one of the commandments of the Law had a deeper meaning than the Jews could discern, and that their failure to perceive the spirit of the Law was one of [R5071 : page 241] the reasons why they could not get eternal life. Take the commandment which says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." Some people really have another god *in their hearts*; some idolize their husbands; with others their wives have the first place; with some it is their stocks and bonds. This is idolatry.

The Scriptures tell us that the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," has a still deeper signification than to take life. He who is angry with his brother, he who would like the opportunity to kill and who abstains from so doing merely because of fear, is in his heart a murderer. Similarly, the Master says, He that looks upon a woman to lust after her commits adultery in his heart; he is restrained only because of lack of opportunity.

When we begin to get this deeper view of the teachings of the Ten Commandments we see how the Lord magnified the Law and made it honorable. (Isa. 42:21.) But the fact that Jesus was able to keep the Law shows that God did not give an unjust Law; that it could be kept; that the weakness was in the fallen condition of humanity, and not in the Law.

THE SABBATH OF FAITH IN JESUS' FINISHED WORK

Now as these other commandments have a higher and deeper meaning than that which appears upon the surface, so also has the Fourth Commandment, which relates to the Sabbath Day. The Apostle

Paul gives us the key to this higher meaning when he says that this Seventh Day typifies the *rest of faith* for the people of God. (Heb. 4:9,10.) Whoever *abides in Christ* is a Sabbath-keeper, and those who do not abide in Him lose this rest and thus fail to be Sabbath-keepers. There is a still further expansion of the Sabbath in its typical significance to the Thousand-Year Day. Then humanity will be at rest from Satan, from sin, from the trials, besetments and difficulties of the present time; and all mankind will have an [R5072 : page 241] opportunity of entering into this rest. The Church will enter into it first, in her resurrection. Next the Jew will enter into that rest, when he shall understand God's plan and become the recipient of God's blessing and eternal favors in the Millennial Day; and finally, before its close, all the world will come under its blessed influences. This was the promise of God to Abraham when He said, "In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12:3.) They will be blessed in the wonderful provisions of that great Sabbath Day.

The Fourth Commandment was never given to us, and we are *not* enjoined to keep the seventh day either in the letter or in the spirit. The Sabbath Day was never given to the Church. A higher thought than that of physical rest is given to us. God has provided for us a *rest of faith* in Christ's finished work. We may enjoy our rest seven days of the week, and every day in the year. If we begin to appreciate that thought we have a rest about which the Jew knows nothing. This is an earnest of the future when we shall be through with all our difficulties and shall remain ever in the rest of God.

SUNDAY AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE NEW ORDER OF EVENTS

We are not under commandments ourselves in God's sight; we are not under obligation to keep any day of the week. Why do we observe a Sabbath? Because of our own volition. The Law of this land provides for the keeping of Sunday. We are glad that the Law makes this provision for a quiet day once a week. We are pleased to have it so,

and would not have any objection if there were two Sundays each week. We do think that the day chosen is a beautiful reminder of our Lord's resurrection. It is also a very fine illustration of the new order of things so soon to be established; and it is a very appropriate day for us. As for the world, quite probably, under the New Covenant there will be a day set specially for them in which they will rest from labors, etc. Perhaps it will be the seventh day.

SONS NOT UNDER LAW OF SERVANTS

It is nowhere said that Christians are to keep both the spirit and letter of the Ten Commandments. If it were so stated, we would be under that Law as were the Jews, who although bound by their Covenant to keep every jot and tittle of the Law, could do no more than to observe the *spirit* of the Law and to endeavor to keep, so far as possible, the letter also.

Christians are under grace; for they are sons of God by adoption. A son has many privileges which a servant does not have. To illustrate: Suppose we had been adopted into a millionaire's family. Upon going to the new home, as we look around we notice certain inscriptions over doorways; as, for instance, "Servants' Entrance," "Tradesmen's Entrance," "Servants' Washroom," "Servants' Quarters," etc. Upon further observation we discover various rules put up, regulating the duties and affairs of the servants in general. These we read, and thereby gain information as to the will of our kind friend. We ask ourself, "Do I come under this classification? No, for I have been adopted into the family. These are not for me. Yet, from these instructions I perceive something of the law of the house, but I have duties and privileges far beyond those of a servant; I am a son and have privileges corresponding thereto."

So, the Apostle says, God deals with us as with sons. He has not given us the Ten Commandments. Why not? It would be an insult to give us of His Spirit, His mind, etc., and yet put us under a command which would imply that we had not received His Spirit. It would be

quite inconsistent to say to a New Creature, "Do not steal, do not commit murder." The New Creature would not want to steal or to murder. The more we know about the Law given to Israel the more we appreciate it, the better we comprehend the Divine standpoint for everything. So while we may get some good out of that Law given to servants, we realize that it is not a command given to us, although it gives us some idea of what a son should do. Those commands should make us know better what is the Father's will; and thus we are the better able to do that will.

In proportion as we learn to appreciate the Father's will and to copy the principles underlying the Divine Character, we as New Creatures are "changed" from glory to glory of *heart* quality. And thus changed in our hearts, our minds, our wills, our conduct, we become fit or "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."
– Col. 1:12.

page 241

"THE MYSTERY HIDDEN FROM AGES"

"Wondrous mystery, long concealed,
Unto us has been revealed.
Herald wide the gracious story –
'Christ in you, the hope of glory!'

"Christ in you the world's sore need,
Christ in you the promised Seed.
Canst receive it? Then thou art
Of the Christ, indeed, a part."

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