



Glorious Sinai

Part Two

A. W. Pink

Glorious Sinai

Part Two

A. W. Pink

How long the honoured leaders and official representatives of Israel were privileged to continue eating and drinking before the LORD, we know not; but after a while, Moses was required to detach himself from them and resume his mediatorial position. “And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them” (Exod. 24:12). Apparently, Moses was here called to ascend to a higher level on glorious Sinai, and receive from Jehovah the Ten Commandments which He had first spoken in the hearing of the people, and which He had now recorded with His own finger in more permanent form. A special honour was thereby placed upon the Moral Law which was not accorded the “judgments” or statutory enactments mentioned in chapters 21 to 23, nor to the ritual institutions which were given subsequently. Rightly did Thomas Scott (1747-1821) point out, “This intimated that the Rule of duty remains unchangeably the same, though the covenant of works is broken.” In other words, the Moral Law is lastingly binding upon unregenerate and regenerate alike, notwithstanding the violation of the covenant made with Adam as the federal head of his race.

“And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God” (Exod. 24:13). Moses complied promptly, hesitating not—after the recent favour the LORD had so signally shown His people—to approach still nearer the divine presence. This time, he took with him Joshua his minister, whom God had chosen to be his successor. He had previously been singled out for special favour (Exod. 17:9-14); and here, he is granted a further privilege above his fellows. It is to be noted that Sinai is designated, “the mount of God,” because it was here that He vouchsafed His people such glorious manifestations of Himself and revelations of His will for them. “And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you: if any man have any matters to do, let him come unto

them” (Exod. 24:14). Thus, the two men who had supported him by upholding his hands in Exodus 17:12 were now appointed by Moses to see to the ordering of the congregation during his absence from them, and being held responsible for the maintenance of its government and peace.

“And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel” (Exod. 24:15-17). Well might we denominate this unique and glowing scene the Old Testament mount of transfiguration, for one who was upon the New Testament mount of transfiguration spoke of it as “the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” being “eyewitnesses of his majesty” (2 Pet. 1:16); and did not the glorious power and majesty of Jehovah appear here at Sinai when He set up His Throne in Israel’s midst and organized them into His kingdom? For six days Moses, accompanied by Joshua, continued in this elevated station, ere the mediator himself was bidden to approach the summit of the mount. During that time, the divine Shekinah or visible token of the LORD’s presence rested like a crown of glory on the apex of Sinai—the nation at its base beholding its blazing splendour. In appearance, it was “like devouring fire” (Exod. 24:17) intensely bright and scintillating, awe inspiring, yet a magnificent sight.

“And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights” (Exod. 24:18). Nor are we left in ignorance of how that time was spent: he was favoured with further gracious communications from the LORD which had in view the blessing and good of His dear people. Part at least of those communications is recorded in the next seven chapters— Exodus 25-31. From them, we learn that God made known unto His servant that He purposed to take up His abode in Israel’s midst, and therefore, that He would have them provide a habitation for Him: “And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them” (Exod. 25:8). Full directions were given concerning its structure, dimensions, furnishing, etc. We do not propose to digress and comment upon the same, but merely

make three brief remarks. First, the materials for the tabernacle were to be *voluntarily* supplied by the people. No levy was made upon them, no tax demanded from them; instead, an offering was to be brought unto the LORD “of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart” (Exod. 25:2)! Let *that* be duly noted by those who are so fond of drawing contrasts between the Mosaic and Christian eras.

What crass ignorance is it which affirms that God dealt with the Hebrews on radically different principles from those which regulate His dealings with His people in the present “dispensation.” They who so aver do err, “not knowing the scriptures” (Matt. 22:29). There was no “legal” compulsion for the children of Israel to contribute supplies for the tabernacle: rather were their offerings to proceed from gratitude and love, as an unconstrained expression of their devotion unto and delight in the LORD. What clearer proof could be given that under His government the people of the theocracy were dealt with *in grace*—yet a grace which ever reigns “through righteousness” (Rom. 5:21) and produces holiness (Tit. 2:11-12). Thus it was here: the grace of God working in the hearts of His redeemed, moving them to willingly provide the required materials. How blessedly divine grace wrought in this matter we learn from Exodus 35:21 and 36:5, where we are told, “the people bring much more than enough,” so that they had to be “restrained from bringing” (verse 6), so spontaneously and freely did they contribute.

Second, a word upon the divine appointment of *the priesthood*: “And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest’s office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron’s sons” (Exod. 28:1). Here again we behold the goodness of God, making provision not only for the upholding of His own honour, but the supply of their spiritual needs. They were still a people compassed with infirmity and offending in many things, but the selfsame grace which had *brought* them nigh unto the Holy One, here made provision for the *keeping* of them nigh. The priesthood was never designed to procure Israel’s relationship to God, but to *maintain* the privileged one previously established. Typically, Aaron pointed to Christ as the great High Priest over the House of God (Heb. 10:21), and his sons—“who serve unto the

example and shadow of heavenly things” (Heb. 8:5)—to the children of Christ as offerers to God of spiritual sacrifices (1 Pet. 2:5). Very striking is the “take thou unto thee Aaron...and his sons with him...that *he* [not “they”] may minister unto me” (Exod. 28:1)—a blessed foreshadowing of the *union* between our great High Priest and the members of His House (Heb. 3:6).

That the appointment of the Levitical priesthood was not a burden which the LORD laid upon Israel, but rather a special mark of His favour and a provision of love for the blessing of His people, is clear from the closing verses of Exodus 29. For immediately after the LORD’s declaration: “And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest’s office.” He added: “And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall *know* that I am the LORD their God”—“by His presence among them, by the blessings He had bestowed upon them, by His care of and kindness to them”—John Gill (1697-1771). “That brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God” (verses 44-46): “That they might be a free people, under the protection of their King and their God, all of which was a great encouragement to them, and an obligation on them to attend the service of the sanctuary and to obey the LORD in whatever He had enjoined or should command them”—John Gill.

Third, a “pattern” was set before Moses, after which the tabernacle and “all the instruments thereof, even so shall [be made]” (Exod. 25:9). Full and minute instructions were supplied concerning the materials to be used, the size of each vessel, where it was to be placed; every board and pin was defined and even the colours of its curtains described. Nothing whatever was left to the wit or will of man. No less than seven times are we informed in the Word that Moses was to make this sanctuary for the LORD and everything in it in exact conformity to the model shown him (Acts 7:44; Heb. 8:5, etc.), because everything prefigured the person and perfections of *Christ*, and intimated that He would infallibly perform “the [eternal] purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will” (Eph. 1:11). Let it be pointed out, however, that nowhere in the Gospels did Christ promise to supply

any such “pattern” after which His *local churches* were to be organized and regulated, and that there is no hint in the Epistles that such a pattern has been given. Had such *been* supplied, it would have been as clearly recognizable as the model set before Moses, and all who truly desired to please the LORD had conformed uniformly thereunto, leaving no place for the diversity or variety now obtaining.

While Moses was at the summit of Sinai with the LORD, the nation was acting most horribly at its base. Moses was absent from them for forty days, and that is the number of probation and *testing* (Mark 1:13). How the congregation conducted themselves during that interval is made known in Exodus 32. The key to what is recorded there is found in Acts 7:38-40: “This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness... whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt, Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us.” It was not only that they resented the lengthy absence of Moses, but had cast off their allegiance to Jehovah. Less than six weeks before they had heard Jehovah saying, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image” (Exod. 20:3-4); and they had solemnly promised, “All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient” (Exod. 24:7): and now they had blatantly trampled both of those commandments under their feet. The LORD acquainted His servant with this sad fact, and said: “Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them” (Exod. 32:10).

It is clear from what follows that those words of God were a *testing* of Moses. And what a test! If ever an apparently hopeless situation confronted a servant of God, it was here. And, my reader, had God been dealing with Israel on the ground of nothing but “Law” (as the dispensationalists assert), strictly enforcing its demand and penalty according to unrelieved justice, the situation had been *utterly hopeless*. But Moses was better taught than our moderns, and at once betook himself to intercession. First, he appealed to the redeeming grace of God which had delivered His people from Egypt (Exod. 32:11), then to the honour of His name (verse 12 and compare Joshua 7:9), and then to His covenant faithfulness (verse 13). And his intercession prevailed: “And the

LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people” (verse 14). Those words are not to be understood absolutely, but as a divine condescension—God’s deigning to express Himself in *our* language: they signify that He had graciously answered the prayer of Moses. But such a thing was impossible had Israel been “under the law” in the sense that some imagine. In fact, it was a clear case of “mercy rejoiceth against judgment” (James 2:13)!

But how are we to explain what immediately follows Exodus 32:14? Is it not entirely inconsistent? No, complementary: though mercy be shown, the claims of holiness are not ignored. God forgave the penal consequences of their sin, but “thou tookest vengeance of their inventions” (Psalm 99:8). The sequel brings out more fully the perfections exercised by God in His governmental dealings with His people, and shows that, in this life, they are made to reap what they have sown. The typical mediator is now seen acting as the typical *judge*: not in consuming wrath, but in holy zeal correcting and chastening, as Christ is beheld in Revelation 1:13-16, with eyes “as a flame of fire” and His feet like burnished brass, inspecting and governing His churches. “And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses’ anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount” (Exod. 32:19). In holy indignation he acted, just as Christ with “a scourge of small cords” (John 2:15) in His hand overthrew the tables of the money-changers who had defiled His Father’s House.

Next, he took the golden calf, burnt it in the fire, ground it to powder, strewed it upon the water, and made the people drink it (Exod. 32:20). After interrogating Aaron, he bade those who were “on the LORD’S side” to come unto him at the gate of the camp; and, when all the sons of Levi responded, bade them take their swords and go through the camp and slay every man his brother, so that there fell that day three thousand men (Exod. 32:26-28). God had been openly and grievously dishonoured, and a solemn demonstration must be made of His displeasure, the claims of holiness overriding all natural and sentimental considerations. That which is flagrantly dishonouring to God must be dealt with unsparingly. Yet righteousness *and* mercy met together even here:

but a remnant was slain, that the nation at large might be brought to repentance. We cannot now trace out the process, but must look at the result. As the LORD had tested Moses (Exod. 32:10), so the nation was put to the proof by His threat: “For I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people” (Exod. 33:3). When they heard that, “they *mourned*” (verse 4).

The offending Israelites were moved to deep contrition; and in token of their humbling themselves before the LORD, “stripped themselves” of all outward adornments (verse 6). Next, Moses “took the [tent of meeting—for the tabernacle was not yet erected], and pitched it without the camp” and “every one which sought the LORD went out unto [it]” (verse 7). Very blessed was that: holiness forbade that Jehovah should enter the defiled camp, but grace provided a way for them to seek Him outside the camp. Next, Moses entered into the tent and “it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses” (verse 9). That “cloudy pillar was the visible symbol of the LORD’s presence (Exod. 13:21), and its appearance *here* betokened His good will unto them. The effect of that upon the people was very blessed: “And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door” (Exod. 33:10). The LORD was once more accorded His proper place. The false god (the golden calf) was repudiated; the true and living God was now worshipped. Thus were they, in infinite grace, brought back from their wandering, and made to bow in adoring gratitude before the manifested presence of Jehovah.

The immediate sequel is yet more wonderful and blessed: “And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto *his* friend” (verse 11). Those words must not be interpreted so as to clash with verse 23, but are to be understood as signifying the intimate communion with God to which His servant was now admitted. Moses then made request, “If I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way” (verse 13 and compare Psa. 27:11), adding, “If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence” (Exod. 33:15). He knew that without Jehovah’s presence, all would be in vain. Then he added, “For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have *found grace* in thy sight? Is it not in

that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth” (verse 16)—thus, will it be made manifest that we are restored again to Thy special favour. It was to God’s sovereign and illimitable grace that Moses appealed. *That* was all to which he could appeal—for there was nothing whatever in Israel’s favour to plead—but that was all-sufficient, as the next verse shows.

“And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight” (verse 17). The mediation of Moses had completely prevailed. Here was the blessed response to his request, and nothing more was needed for the assuring of his heart, and to guarantee Israel’s safe conduct across the wilderness. It was *grace* pure and simple, sovereign and amazing grace. Grace vouchsafed to a people who had by their abominable conduct forfeited every claim upon God. Grace granted in response to the intercession of their mediator. Reference to this was made long after by Jehovah through one of His prophets: “Thus saith the LORD, The people which were left of the sword [Exod. 32:27-28] found grace in the wilderness; even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest” (Jer. 31:2). How unspeakably blessed, dear Christian reader, to know that Israel’s God is *our* God; that the God of Sinai, the Holy One, the Lawgiver—yet *also* the longsuffering and merciful One—is our God, and that *we* have this same precious assurance while journeying through this wilderness-world: “My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest” (Exod. 33:14)! Oh for faith to realize and enjoy His all-sufficient presence.

Following upon the gracious annunciation and assurance which Moses received from Him, the LORD bade him, “Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest” (Exod. 34:1). It will be remembered that as Moses descended from the mount with the first tables, he beheld the whole congregation engaged in an idolatrous and lascivious dance before the golden calf; and that in holy terror and righteous indignation at such a sight, he flung the tables to the ground. After rebuking and chastening the offenders, he had returned to the LORD, and by his intercession, “[made] an atonement” for Israel (Exod. 32:30, etc.), averting His wrath and restoring them to His favour. Where sin abounded, grace

did much more abound. But grace does not annul the claims of God's government nor set aside the requirements of His holiness, but "reign through righteousness" (Rom. 5:21), making merciful provision for both the maintaining and meeting of the same. That fundamental principle was here plainly and blessedly exemplified. Jehovah had dealt and would continue to deal in sovereign benignity with the favoured descendants of Abraham, yet at the same time upholding the rights of His throne. God's writing the Law on tables of stone *a second time* is full of meaning for us.

Let us quote from a piece by one who is the very last to be regarded as a "legalist," namely *The Law and a Christian*, by John Bunyan (1620-1677). "The Law was given twice upon mount Sinai, but the appearance of the LORD when He gave it the second time was wonderfully different from that of His when at first He delivered it to Israel. 1. When He gave it the first time, He caused His terror and severity to appear before Moses, to the shaking of his soul, and the dismaying of Israel. But when He gave it the second time, He caused all His goodness to pass before Moses to the comfort of his conscience and the bowing of his heart. 2. When He gave it the first time, it was with thunderings and lightnings, with blackness and darkness, with flame and smoke, and a tearing sound of the trumpet. But when He gave it the second time, it was with a proclamation of His name to be merciful, gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgressions, and sins. 3. When He gave it the first time, Moses was called to go up to receive it through the fire, which made him exceedingly to fear and quake. But when he went to receive it the second time, he was laid in a cleft of a rock.

"From all which I gather that, though as to the *matter* of the Law, both as to its being given the first time and the second, it binds the unbeliever under the pains of eternal damnation (if he close not with Christ by faith); yet as to the *manner* of its giving at these two times, I think the first doth more principally intend its force as a covenant of works, not at all respecting the Lord Jesus; but this second time not (at least in the manner of its being given) respecting such a covenant, but rather as a *rule or directory* to those who already are found in the cleft of the rock, Christ; for the saint himself, though he be without law to God as it is considered the first

or old covenant, yet even he is not without law to Him as considered under grace, nor without law to God, but under the law to Christ (1 Cor. 9:21)... The Christian hath now nothing to do with the Law as it thundereth and burneth on Sinai, or as it blindeth the conscience to wrath and the displeasure of God for sin, for from its thus appearing, it is freed by faith in Christ. Yet *it is* to have regard thereto, and is to count it holy, just, and good, which, that it may do, it is always when it seeth or regardeth it, to remember that He who giveth it to us is merciful, gracious, longsuffering..."

In full accord with what the Spirit-taught author of *Pilgrim's Progress* mentioned, yea confirmatory thereof, it may also be pointed out that the first "tables of stone" were provided by Jehovah Himself—"I will give thee" (Exod. 24:12)—whereas the second ones were to be supplied by Moses—"hew *thee*" (Exod. 34:1)—typical of the Mediator who declared: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. 5:17); and in the verses that followed, He enforced the strictness and spirituality of its precepts. Finally, let it be carefully noted that the second set of tables were deposited for safe custody in the ark (Deut. 10:5)—a figure of Him who said: "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart" (Psa. 40:8). What anointed eye can fail to see, in the whole of what has here been set before the reader in connection with the twofold giving of the Law at Sinai to God's people— a striking adumbration of His giving it to His elect first *in Adam*, which Law they break; and second, the Law being given to them *in Christ*, who now faithfully and righteously administers it as the gracious and merciful Mediator, according to the terms of Psalm 89:30-34?

The breaking of the first tables by Moses was an expressive emblem of that moral breach which the sins of the people had made between them and God. That breach had been healed, and the covenant re-established; but before the fundamental words of the covenant were written by Jehovah on the second tables of stone, He gave to Moses—and through him, to the people—a further revelation of His name, that the broken relationship might be renewed under still clearer apprehensions of the benign character of the One with whom they had to do, and unto whom they were required to yield the submission of gratitude and love. "And the

LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty” (Exod. 34:6-7). To proclaim His “Name” was for the LORD to make *Himself* more fully known, to disclose His wondrous perfections: as in “And thou shalt call his name JESUS: *for* he shall save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). The “name” Jesus revealed who and what He was and is—the divine Saviour. So “the Name” in which believers are baptized (Matt. 28:19) publishes and attests the triune God. Thus here this proclamation of Jehovah’s “name” was a spelling out of *His glorious attributes*.

Before taking up the details of that sevenfold revelation of God’s Name, let us point out first that the LORD Himself was the publisher of this good news. Second, that this Gospel revelation was made by Him in His character of “The LORD, The LORD God” (Exod. 34:6), or the *unchanging One*, which looks back to and then amplifies what He had said in Exodus 3:14-15. Third, that this proclamation was given *after* the nation had been guilty of the terrible sin of high treason, but restored to God’s favour through the intervention and intercession of the typical mediator. Oh, “the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering” (Rom. 2:4)! “And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped” (Exod. 34:8): well he might at such a discovery of the divine magnanimity. Fourth, that this grand exposition of the divine Name became henceforth the ground of Israel’s confidence and their refuge in the darkest hours of their history. Well did T. Goodwin declare: “This proclamation of grace, being a *magna charta* of the Old Testament, was so highly valued by the prophets and saints of those times, that ever after it had been proclaimed to Moses, they had, throughout all ages, free recourse thereto.”

“And the LORD...proclaimed, The JEHOVAH, the JEHOVAH El:” that is, The Immutable, the Immutable Mighty One. First, “merciful.” How unspeakably blessed it is to observe that *this* is placed in the fore! It is, we might say, the fountain from which the others flow: because God is merciful, He is “gracious, longsuffering,” etc. *Mercy* was the hope of David when he had

sinned so grievously: “According unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions” (Psa. 51:1). Jehoshaphat appointed singers to go before the army and to say, “Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever” (2 Chron. 20:21). Hezekiah reminded Israel in his day, “The LORD your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him” (2 Chron. 30:9). Nehemiah, at a still later date, when supplicating God, made mention of His “manifold mercies” (Neh. 9:19, 27). Even in the dark days of Jeremiah, that prophet was bidden to proclaim these words, “Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am *merciful*, saith the LORD” (Jer. 3:12). A captive in Babylon, Daniel acknowledged, “To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him” (Dan. 9:9).

Second, “and gracious.” This tells us *the ground* on which God bestows His mercy: it is not for anything in man or from man, but solely of His own benignity. All of God’s mercies are gifts to those who are entirely devoid of merit, and therefore, each must say with Jacob of old: “I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant” (Gen. 32:10). Many are the appeals to the *grace* of God recorded in the Old Testament. David cried, “But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious” (Psa. 86:15a). Isaiah assured the people of his day: “And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you” (Isa. 30:18). When Joel called upon his generation to “rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God,” he used the inducement, “for he is *gracious*” (Joel 2:13). While in the last book of the Old Testament, the prophet bade the people to “beseech God that he will be gracious unto us” (Mal. 1:9).

Third, “longsuffering.” How strikingly did the whole history of Israel furnish witness to the wondrous patience of God! The word for longsuffering here means “slow to anger.” It was to this divine perfection that Moses first appealed when the nation had sinned so terribly at Kadesh-Barnea (Num. 14:18). It was the realization of God’s great forbearance which stayed David’s heart (Psa. 145:8). When reviewing Israel’s history and God’s patience with them,

Nehemiah said: “But thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, *slow to anger*” (Neh. 9:17). In Nahum’s brief but powerful message, we read, “The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power” (Nahum 1:3). The Lord Jesus pointed to this same perfection when He said to the Jews, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, *how often* would I have gathered thy children together!” (Matt. 23:37).

Fourth, “abundant in goodness.” The Hebrew word is generally rendered “kindness.” David acknowledged this attribute of the divine character when he said, “Blessed be the LORD: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city” (Psa. 31:21). The Hebrew word is also rendered “lovingkindness,” frequent mention of the same being made in the Psalms. “For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes” (Psa. 26:3). “How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God!” (Psa. 36:7). “We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple” (Psa. 48:9). Isaiah declared: “I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD” (Isa. 63:7). Through Jeremiah, God said: “But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD” (Jer. 9:24). Let dispensationalists take note that the “lovingkindness” of God is mentioned far more frequently under the Mosaic economy than it is in the New Testament!

Fifth, “and truth.” The Hebrew word signifies “steadfastness.” “All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth” (Psa. 25:10). “His truth shall be thy shield and buckler” (Psa. 91:4). “For thy mercy is great above the heavens: and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds” (Psa. 108:4). “The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it” (Psa. 132:11). In Psalm 111:7, the word is rendered, “The works of his hands are *verity* and judgment;” and in Nehemiah 7:2, it is translated “faithful.” God is faithful to His covenant engagements and true to both His promises and His threatenings. How highly should we value this divine perfection: that our God “cannot lie” (Tit. 1:2)!

Sixth, “keeping mercy for thousands, *forgiving* iniquity and transgression and sin” (Exod. 34:7). How often God pardoned

Israel's sins! "For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant. *But he*, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, *many a time* turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath" (Psa. 78:37-38). How different is the God of Judaism from the dispensationalists' perverted portrayal of Him! "Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption" (Psa. 130:7). That was spoken to the nation which was under the Sinaitic covenant! "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins" (Isa. 43:25). "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy" (Micah 7:18). Such, my reader, is the God of the Old Testament. Such was the blessed discovery which He made of Himself unto His people at *Sinai*.

Seventh, "and that will by no means clear the guilty." Carnal reason will deem this a contradiction: for God to announce that He will pardon sin, and yet in the same breath declare He will not acquit the guilty—for what is pardon but an acquittal of those who are guilty? But there is no contradiction here: the guilty whom God pardoneth are penitent and believing sinners (Isa. 55:7; Acts 3:19); the ones He acquits not are the finally impenitent, who are found under guilt in the day of judgment (Psa. 9:17; Rev. 21:8). Let it not be forgotten that as the Law threatens death to the impenitent transgressor, so the Gospel proclaims damnation unto those who comply not with its terms (Mark 16:16). The Saviour presented both sides of the truth when He declared: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). Thus the God of the Old and the New Testaments is one and the same, and deals with men in precisely the same way!

It should be carefully noted that punitive justice is a branch of the divine "goodness" and was proclaimed here under that very notion, for when Moses had prayed so earnestly, "Shew me thy glory," the LORD responded, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee" (Exod. 33:18-19); and here in Exodus 34:6-7, He expounded the fullness of

His glorious name. Thus, not only is justice an essential part of God's character, but it is here included under the general notion of His *goodness*! Yet it must not be overlooked that God here spoke far more of His mercy than He did of His justice, and that it was mentioned before the other: "For justice is only added to invite men to take hold of His mercy, and to show that justice is never executed but in avenging the quarrel of abused mercy"—T. Manton. Mercy is what God delights in and judgment is His "strange work" (Isa. 28:21); nevertheless, He here warns men not to presume upon His clemency—yea, declares that the hopes of those who do will certainly be dashed. In like manner, *in the Gospel* are revealed both the righteousness and the "wrath of God" (Rom. 1:16-18).

"This emphatic proclamation of the divine name, or description of the character in which God wished to be known by His people, is in principle the same as that which heads the Ten Words: but it is of greater compass, and remarkable chiefly for the copious and prominent exhibition it gives of the gracious, tender, and benignant character of God as the Redeemer of Israel, that they might know how thoroughly they could trust in His goodness, and what ample encouragement they had to serve Him. It intimates indeed that obstinate transgressors should meet their desert, but gives this only the subordinate and secondary place, while *grace* occupies the foreground. Was this, we ask, to act like one who was more anxious to inspire terror than win affection from men? Did it seem as if He would have His revelation of Law associated in their minds with the demands of a rigid service, such as only an imperious sense of duty or a dread of consequences might constrain them to render? Assuredly not, and we know that the words of the Memorial Name, which He so closely linked with the restored tables of the Law, did take an abiding hold of the more earnest and thoughtful spirits of the nation, and ever and anon, amid the seasons of greater darkness and despondency, came up with a joyous and reassuring effect into their hearts (Psa. 103:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2, etc.)"—Patrick Fairbairn (1805-1874).

It was this glorious discovery of His benign character, which Jehovah made to Israel at the giving of the Law, that made David to exclaim: "But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth" (Psa.

86:15). Abundant proof had He given of the same during the time which had elapsed since the days of Moses. Read through the book of Judges and mark how often, after the LORD had righteously chastened Israel for their grievous backslidings, it is recorded that “when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer” (Judges 3:9, 15; 6:7, etc.)! It was on the basis of the same that Samuel urged Israel to walk worthily of such a God: “Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: *for* consider how great things he hath done for you” (1 Sam. 12:24)—there is no more *evangelical motive* than that employed in the New Testament when exhorting the saints to the performance of duty. So far from being under a harsh regime, they were taught “but he *giveth grace* unto the lowly” (Prov. 3:34). It only remains for us now to add that, inasmuch as He “changeth not” (Psa. 15:4), the same seven perfections of the divine character which we have contemplated above are exercised by God in His government of Christendom corporately, and of the Christian individually. With the Father of lights, there is “*no* variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17); and therefore, no change of dispensation can possibly effect any change in the manner in which He deals with His people.

We must now consider more definitely the *ceremonial* law, which was also given at Sinai by Jehovah unto Moses, and which consisted of the rites and ritual which were to govern Israel’s religious life—or, as it is often designated, the Levitical code of worship. In the statutory “Judgments” of Exodus 21 to 23, very little mention was made of religious ordinances and ceremonies. The erecting of the altar (Exod. 20:24-26) signified that sacrifices would form an essential part of their worship; and the appointing of the three great annual feasts, when all of Israel’s males must appear before the LORD (Exod. 13:14-16), announced God’s claims upon them—but nothing more was said about the moral and spiritual side of life. Not until *after* the national covenant had been formally confirmed were instructions given concerning the tabernacle and all that pertained to its services. It is essential that *this* should be duly noted, for therein was a plain intimation given that the Levitical system was only of *secondary* importance in the theocracy. It had indeed a real and necessary place in connection with the

constitution of the divine kingdom in Israel, yet certainly not that foremost and paramount one which many have erroneously supposed.

“God had already redeemed Israel for His peculiar people, called them to occupy a near relation to Himself, and proclaimed to them the great principles of truth and duty which were to regulate their procedure, so that they might be the true witnesses of His glory and the inheritors of His blessing. And for the purpose of enabling them more readily to apprehend the nature of this relation, and more distinctly realize the things belonging to it, the LORD instituted a visible bond of fellowship by planting in the midst of their dwellings a dwelling for Himself, and ordering everything in the structure of the dwelling, the services to be performed at it, and the access of the people to its courts, after such a manner as to keep up right impressions in their minds of the character of their divine Head, and of what became them as sojourners with Him in the land that was to be emphatically His own. In such a case, it was indispensable that all should be done under the express directions of God’s hand; for it was as truly a revelation of His will to the members of the covenant as the direct utterances of His mouth: it must be made and ordered throughout according to the view of Moses; while the people, on their part, were to show their disposition to fall in with the design by contributing the requisite materials”—Patrick Fairbairn (1805-1874).

As the most helpful, Fairbairn went on to show the relation of the ceremonial law to the moral, or of the use of the tabernacle in connection with the prior revelation of law in its strictest sense, which appears clearly in Exodus 25. After mentioning the different kinds of materials to be provided, instructions were given for the making of *the ark of the covenant*—it taking precedence over all the holy vessels. It was to be the depository of the Decalogue, being a coffer in which were placed the two tables of the Law. Upon it Jehovah took His seat or Throne, there manifesting His presence and glory in Israel’s midst (Exod. 25:21- 22). It was therefore the most important and the most sacred piece of furniture in the house of the LORD. It was the centre from which all relating to Israel’s fellowship with God was to proceed, and from which it derived its essential character. Those who, in a practical way, refused

subjection to the duties which the Decalogue enjoined, at the same time repudiated Jehovah's kingship, and cut themselves off from all communion with Him—His law being the foundation of His Throne. Those who rendered submission to that Law could own no other throne, no other God.

The institutions and services of the tabernacle supplied further proof not only of the intimate relation which existed between the Decalogue and the Levitical code, but also of the dependence of the latter upon the former, being a consequence of the Sinaitic covenant. It was on the basis thereof that Jehovah took up His abode in Israel's midst, and the central design of the ceremonial law was to make known what was necessary in order for Israel's intercourse with Him. Since sin indwelt them, and was constantly producing its defiling effects and works, they could not have immediate access to or direct fellowship with the Holy One; and therefore, what took place at Sinai must be ever repeating itself. First, in order to meet with Jehovah, Israel must sanctify themselves (Exod. 19:10-11)—provision for which was made in the ceremonial of purifications. Second, when ceremonially clean, they could not approach unto God in any manner *they* pleased, but only as He ordered (Exod. 19:17)—inculcated in the limitation unto “the outer court.” Third, approach unto Him, whose very glory is “like [a] devouring [consuming] fire” (Exod. 24:17), could only be through those representatives selected by Himself (Exod. 19:24)—hence, the appointment of the priesthood.

The great truth borne witness to by the Levitical rites was that only the clean and righteous could have fellowship with the LORD and enjoy His blessing; all others being excluded therefrom. But if that code be examined in order to find out *who* pertained to that class, disappointing will be the result, for it treats only of the natural and external, and tells us not what is good or evil essentially and spiritually. Nor should we be surprised at this: rather should it be expected, since the ceremonial law was only of secondary importance. Israel must look to the character of God as revealed in the Ten Commandments if they would ascertain the vital distinctions of right and wrong, and learn their moral duty. The divers washings and ever-recurring atonements by the blood of the Levitical code testified to existing impurities, which were such

because they were at variance with the law of righteousness promulgated in the Decalogue. It was *there* God had made known what was holy and unholy in His sight, and the ceremonial institutions presupposed that standard and ever called Israel's attention thereto by its numerous prescriptions of defilement and purification, and emphasized the solemn fact that corruptions still cleaved to them and that they fell far short of God's holy demands.

“The law of fleshly ordinances was a great teaching institution—not by itself, but when taken (according to its true intent) as an auxiliary of the Law of the two tables. Isolated from *those*, and placed in an independent position, as having an end of its own to reach, its teaching would have been at variance with the truth of things; for it would have led men to make account of mere outward distinctions, and rest in corporeal observances. In such a case, it would have been the antithesis rather than the complement of the Law from Sinai, which gave to the *moral* element the supreme place, alike in God's character and the homage and obedience He requires from His people. But, kept in its proper relation to that Law, the Levitical code was for the members of the old covenant an important means of instruction. It plied them with warnings and admonitions respecting sin as being defilement in the sight of God, and thereby excluding from His fellowship. That such, however, was the real design of this class of Levitical ordinances—that they had such a subsidiary aim, and derived all their importance and value from the connection in which they stood with the moral precepts of the Decalogue—is evident”—P. Fairbairn.

The relative importance of the Decalogue and the ceremonial law comes out plainly in such passages as these: “Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD?” (1 Sam. 15:22). “To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice” (Prov. 21:3). “For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: But *this* thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people” (Jer. 7:22-23). “For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings” (Hosea 6:6). “Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall

I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?"—No, rather, "he hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:6-8).

Further proof of the subordination of the ceremonial law to the moral is seen in the fact that whenever the LORD denounced special judgments upon the covenant people, it was never for their neglect of the ceremonial observances, but always for palpable breaches of the precepts of the Decalogue. "He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol." Why so?—Because "they have chosen their *own* ways...because when I called, none did answer" (Isa. 66:3-4). "Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it...your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me" (Jer. 6:19-20). "Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have despised the law of the LORD" (Amos 2:4). Because Israel's magistrates were unjust in the discharge of their duties, Jehovah declared, "I hate, I despise your feast days...Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them" (Amos 5:12, 21-22).

There was a threefold failure of Israel in connection with the Law: First—and worst of all—those who were disloyal to Jehovah, forsaking Him and paying homage to the false gods of the Gentiles. *That* was a violation of the most fundamental part of the Decalogue and a horrible repudiation of the covenant relationship. The devout and pure worship of Jehovah lay at the very foundation of Judaism, and any flagrant departure from it was a sin which He ever visited with sore judgment. A man who truly loves his wife will bear with her infirmities, but infidelity he will not tolerate. So with Jehovah: He was longsuffering unto many things in Israel, but when their hearts lusted after the idols of the heathen, His wrath waxed hot against them. The idolatry of the surrounding nations possessed an

attraction for their corrupt hearts, being less exacting and more sensuous. It pandered to the proclivities of fallen human nature and gratified its depraved inclinations. What the worship of Jehovah repressed and condemned, that of heathendom fostered and indulged. Much of the earlier history of Israel consisted of such apostatizings from the LORD.

Second, an exalting of the ceremonial law above the moral. This was far more insidious than open idolatry, yet none the less fatal in its outcome; for while there were those who abandoned the vanities of the heathen and kept solely to the worship of God, yet He had not their hearts, and their ways were a reproach unto Him. Though they were strict and zealous in worshipping the true God, their minds were occupied only with outward forms and ceremonies, and those they esteemed far more highly than the precepts of the Law—and thereby the grand purpose of the covenant was despised by them. When we are not surrendered to God’s authority and our lives are not ordered by His statutes, our attachment to external ordinances is only a species of “will worship,” and means are given the place of those ends they are intended to promote. This grievous failure became characteristic of the great bulk of the nation in its later generations, so that while they were very punctilious in the ceremonial washing of pots and pans, and the tithing of mint, anise, and cumin, yet they “have omitted the weightier matters of the law:” that is, “judgment [righteousness], mercy, and faith” (Matt. 23:23)—whom our Lord denounced as hypocrites.

The writings of Israel’s prophets contain many passages in which the LORD took the people to task for their lamentable failure to put first things first, and because they supposed they had discharged their full duty by observing the ceremonial ordinances, and presenting the appointed offerings. Isaiah was particularly severe in reproof and denouncing such a state of affairs in his day. While oppressing the widows and fatherless, they nevertheless frequented the courts of the temple and heaped sacrifices upon the altar, but the servant of the LORD told them that their oblations were “vain”—or, literally, “lying sacrifices.” Though their hands were stained with blood, yet they spread them forth unto the LORD—but He would not hear their prayers (Isa. 1:10-17). Though they sought God daily and took “delight in approaching [him]”—yea, “fasted” and

“afflicted” their souls—God bade Isaiah, “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression” (Isa. 58:1-7). Unto those who entered the sacred courts to worship Jehovah, Jeremiah cried, “Amend your ways” (Jer. 7:3). Ezekiel, too, sternly condemned the hypocrisy which so widely obtained in his generation (Ezek. 33:30-33).

At a later date, a third evil became prevalent among the covenant people. When the fires of divine judgment had at last purged out from among them the more heinous and abominable forms of transgression, Israel abandoned their previous idolatries and, after their return from the Babylonian captivity, rigidly maintained the worship of the one true and living God. But soon they went to another extreme: instead of using the Decalogue for the grand purpose for which it was designed, they perverted it into the means of life and salvation. From dislike for the Law, they now exalted it into a place it was never intended to occupy—a place completely at variance with both the revealed character of God and their own sinful condition. Though corrupt in nature, depraved in their conduct, unregenerate, and unholy, yet they trusted in their own endeavours to keep the Law for their acceptance with God—making their good works the ground of their justification before Him. It was among such a people that the Saviour was born, and by whom He was despised and rejected. It was against this flagrant and fatal error that His apostles had chiefly to contend.

Such a fundamental error consisted in isolating the covenant of *Law* at Sinai from the prior covenant of *promise* with Abraham, and in elevating the ceremonial law to the same level as the moral. This necessarily involved a *lowering* of the strictness and spirituality of the Decalogue, a closing of their eyes to both its depth and breadth, a substituting of external compliance with its precepts in the stead of that heart conformity which it required. We say “necessarily,” for it is only when men lose sight of the fact that the holy standard demands nothing less than perfect and perpetual obedience in thought, word, and deed, that they can entertain any hope of winning the favour of its Author by their vain attempts to measure up to it. The consequence of giving place to this error was the production of a spirit of bondage, for such an obedience could be only a servile one—instead of being prompted by love and

gratitude. And the inevitable outcome of the same was that those who succumbed thereto were utterly deceived as to their real condition before God, and ignorant of their dire need of a Saviour. Fancying that they had already attained to righteousness, they perceived not the necessity of looking for righteousness unto Another.

Space will not allow us to elaborate, nor should that be necessary, for it ought to be quite apparent to any discerning eye that those three principal failures of Israel under Judaism are, alas, exactly duplicated in the outstanding anomalies which characterize a corrupt Christendom today. In some quarters, there has been a grievous disloyalty both to God and His Christ, by a setting up of imaginary gods and unscriptural "saviours." In others, there has been a woeful displacement of the spiritual and practical by an undue prominence and fictitious value being accorded to rites and ceremonies. There has also been a fatal rejection of the Gospel and a supplanting of it by a perversion of the moral law, so that human merits are substituted for divine grace, and salvation by works is openly taught rather than justification by faith.

The fatal mistake of the Jews in looking to their imperfect obedience of the terms of the Sinaitic covenant lay in their regarding that august transaction as a thing apart, instead of as a wise and necessary supplement to the prior covenant with Abraham. This is evident from the line of Paul's reasoning in Galatians 3 and 4, where he was contending with those who trusted to their righteousness for acceptance with God, and as giving title to an eternal inheritance. First, he lays down the general principle in "Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto" (Gal. 3:15). That is to say, where a definite agreement has been entered into by two parties and has been solemnly sworn to and ratified, it is held to be sacred and inviolable. How much more so must that obtain in regard to a divine compact! Next, Paul appealed to the covenant promises which God made unto Abraham: "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" (verse 16). Though those promises received an earthly and temporary accomplishment to his natural descendants, yet the ultimate fulfilment was to be a heavenly

and eternal one unto his spiritual seed (see verses 7, 9, 29).

The force of the term “seed” is not to be sought in its dictionary meaning, but rather in the scriptural *idea* which it embodies; in the spiritual concept, and not merely its literal signification; in an individual person who should sum up in Himself the covenant people, as well as (for them) the covenant blessings— just as the term ‘Christ’ means an anointed one, but is employed as the special title of the Saviour; and is given to Him not as a private, but as a public person, including both the Head and the members of His Church (see 1 Corinthians 12:12). Abraham had two entirely different “seeds”—one by human procreation, the other by divine regeneration—and the promises made to him respecting his “seed” (in the primary and ultimate reference) regarded the latter, namely the mystical “Christ”—the Redeemer—and all who were federally and vitally united to Him. Thus the antithesis drawn in Galatians 3:16 is between the *unity* of the “seed” and the diversity of the “seeds.” This had been strikingly shadowed forth on the earth plane. Abraham had two sons, but Ishmael was excluded from the highest privileges: “In Isaac shall thy seed be called” (Gen. 21:12; Rom. 9:7)—not all of *his* natural descendants, for Esau and his line were also debarred; but the Messiah Himself and all the Father had given Him in the everlasting covenant.

“To thy seed, which is Christ” (Gal. 3:16)—i.e. Christ *mystical*, as in 1 Corinthians 12:12; and Colossians 1:24—Christ and all who are one with Him by faith. To them alone did the *spiritual* contents of the promises (recorded in Genesis 12:2-3, 7, etc.) pertain, the carnal seed being expressly excluded in the “He saith not, And to seeds, as of many.” Then the apostle went on to point out, “And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect” (Gal. 3:17). God’s covenant with Abraham was permanent and immutable, and none of His subsequent acts set it aside, but rather subserved and promoted it; nor will that covenant ever expire through want of a “seed.” Therefore, the Law given at Sinai must be regarded as subordinate to the Abrahamic promises and interpreted consistently therewith. The “four hundred and thirty years” preclude any reference to God’s *eternal* covenant with Christ; and the *eis*

Christion signifies “concerning Christ” as in Ephesians 5:32, and “concerning him” as the *eis auton* of Acts 2:25: a further proof that God’s covenant with Abraham concerned Christ, that is, Christ *mystical*—Abraham’s “seed.”

The special point which the apostle was labouring in Galatians 3 was that the promises given by God to Abraham (solemnly “confirmed” by His covenant oath—Genesis 26:3) were made centuries before the Sinaitic economy was established; and that, inasmuch as God is faithful so that His Word cannot be broken (verse 15), there could not possibly be anything in connection with the Law which would in the least neutralize or set aside that which He had pledged Himself freely to bestow: “The law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect” (verse 17). Had the later generations of the Jews but clearly grasped that self-evident fact, they had not fallen into such grievous error; and had many Christian expositors apprehended the same, they too had not been guilty of such glaring mistakes when they sought the antitypical signification and application. It is to be noted that Paul changed from the plural number in verse 16 to the singular in verse 17, because he was about to confine himself to one particular “promise,” namely that which respected the *Inheritance*.

“For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise” (verse 18). If due attention be paid to the whole of the context, there will be no difficulty in determining exactly what is here meant by “the inheritance,” though it may be expressed in more ways than one. In the foregoing verses, the apostle was treating of the grand truth of justification by faith (verses 6-9, 11-14), and concludes the chapter by saying, “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (verse 29). Thus the “inheritance” here is the same as “the blessing of Abraham” in verse 14, namely the blessing of *justification*, promised in the covenant to Abraham and his spiritual seed, even the Gentiles, and which is inherited by them; that justification which consists of being pronounced righteous by God and entitled to the reward or the spiritual and heavenly blessings connected therewith, and of which Israel’s possession of Canaan was the type. The “covenant,” the “promise,” and the “inheritance”

of verses 17 and 18 all point to substantially the same thing. It is termed “the inheritance,” because it is as the spiritual descendants or children of Abraham that believers come to enjoy it. It would be equally correct to say “the inheritance” is our everlasting bliss in heaven, of which Canaan was a figure, and was known to be such by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the heirs with him of the same promise (see Hebrews 11:8-11, 13-16).

“For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise” (verse 18). The Jews insisted that the favour of God was obtained by works of righteousness, and the Judaizers of the apostle’s day were contending that justification and salvation could only be attained by a strict observance of the Mosaic Law, telling the Gentiles, “Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1); and let it not be overlooked that anyone thus circumcised became “a debtor to do the whole law” (Gal. 5:3). Paul here shows how absurd and unscriptural such teaching was, being at complete variance with God’s dealings with their forebears from the beginning. The earthly Canaan was not conveyed to Israel in return for their law-keeping, but rather as a free donation from their gracious God; and so it is with the heavenly inheritance. Paul’s argument was irrefutable: if the inheritance was obtained on the ground of obedience to the Mosaic Law, then it could not become theirs by virtue of the Abrahamic promise; it could not be secured by two totally different methods—it could not be by merit and by mercy, or by works and by grace too. “But God gave it to Abraham by promise” (verse 18): that settled the matter—both the temporal and the eternal inheritance, the earthly and the heavenly Canaan, proceeded from God’s free favour and not as a bargain whose terms men must meet, as a gratuity and not as something earned by law-obedience.

“Wherefore then serveth the law?” (verse 19). The apostle now anticipated and answered an objection. “The law” here is to be limited to neither the moral nor the ceremonial, but understood as including the Sinaitic constitution as a whole, the entire order of things under which the nation of Israel was there placed. The objection amounts to this: If the Law could not be the means of admission into the favour and blessing of God, then why was it given—what purpose was it intended to serve? That question is not

to be regarded as an inquiry into the designs and uses of the Mosaic Law generally, but (as the answer intimates) with particular reference to the ordination of God that justification was to be by faith through the Messiah, and especially that such justification was to be extended to the Gentiles. *History* itself supplied a clear and full answer to the question. God had announced in Eden that deliverance from the serpent was to be secured by the promised “seed” (Gen. 3:15), and made known the way of a sinner’s acceptance by Him as far back as the days of Abel (Heb. 11:4). But through the prevalence of human depravity, during the course of time, those divine revelations were almost entirely forgotten: “For all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth” (Gen. 6:12), and the deluge swept away all the inhabitants of the ancient world, with the exception of one family, among whom the knowledge of God was to be preserved.

It was not long before the descendants of Noah—the inhabitants of the new world—became idolaters. In order to prevent the utter extinction among mankind of the knowledge of God and the way of reconciliation to Him, God called Abraham, and made to him a plain discovery of the divine designs of mercy; and his descendants by Isaac and Jacob were chosen to be the custodians of the revelation, until He should come to whom those discoveries of mercies chiefly referred. But after the descendants of Jacob had sojourned for some generations in Egypt, they so learned “the [ways] of the heathen” (Jer. 10:2), and became so corrupted by their idolatries that such declension had soon issued in the complete loss of the revelation made to their fathers, and their own assimilation by the Gentiles. To obviate such a calamity, God called Moses, and the need for His doing so is made very evident in the early chapters of Exodus. So sadly had the Hebrews deteriorated religiously, that when Jehovah appeared unto Moses at the burning bush and commissioned him to return to Egypt and lead His people out from that land, he said, “Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, *What is his name?* what shall I say unto them?” (Exod. 3:13)! And so low had they sunk socially, they were in abject slavery, groaning under the lash of their taskmasters.

The land of Canaan had been conferred upon Abraham by free

grant and was secured by divine covenant to his seed, but while they toiled in the Egyptian brick-kilns, the realization of such a promise appeared a hopeless prospect. But their deliverance from the house of bondage and miraculous passage through the Red Sea were a great step forward; yet much more was still needed in order to fit them for their heritage and to occupy it unto the divine glory. They were still very ignorant of the One with whom they had to do and who had wrought so wondrously for them: ignorant of His character, of His claims upon them, and what became of them as His people. A recollection of *these things* should have made it quite unnecessary for the Jews of Paul's day to ask, "Wherefore then serveth the law?" (verse 19), which was only an abbreviated form of inquiring, What was the divine intent of the Sinaitic covenant? What ends were meant to be served by the whole revelation which Jehovah vouchsafed there, with the economy instituted? Nor should we have the slightest difficulty in perceiving what is signified by and included in the brief answer made by the apostle: "It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made."

Note well that "the law" was "added to" the previous covenant of promise, neither cancelling or neutralizing it. The Sinaitic constitution was not set up independently, but brought in to serve as a handmaid. Its design was not to render void or effect any alteration in the earlier revelation, but was an appendage to supplement the same. The revelation of justification by faith made to Abel and renewed to Abraham was to be preserved pure and entire by his descendants, till the appearing of Him who was to put away sin and bring in everlasting righteousness. But "because of transgressions" (verse 19), the Law of Sinai was necessary: First and immediately, because of the criminal conduct of Israel in Egypt; and second, because—though they had been divinely redeemed from the house of bondage—sin still indwelt them; and therefore, it was to curb their lusts, prevent the outbreaking of their corruptions, restrain them from idolatry and wickedness, and preserve the knowledge and worship of God among them, until the time when He should grant mankind a yet fuller and final revelation of Himself in the person of His incarnate Son. The moral Law was necessary to convince them of their sinfulness; the ceremonial to make known

the way of acceptance and holiness, and to move unto a marvelling at the gracious provisions God had made for His wayward people.

Had there been no Law, then Israel had not been accountable for their transgressions; but with a full revelation of the divine will, they were left without excuse. It produced no change in the way of salvation, but it intimated *how* the redeemed were required to walk. The Sinaitic covenant was the charter by which Israel was incorporated as a nation under the immediate and spiritual government of God, for it was at the holy mount that Jehovah took possession of His Throne in their midst (1 Sam. 8:7): God was revealed there both as the Redeemer and Ruler of His people. The design of the mission and *ministry* of Moses (see the whole book of Deuteronomy, where full instructions were given how they were to conduct themselves in Canaan) was not only to bring the heirs of promise into the actual possession of their blessings, but to equip them for occupying the same in a manner worthy of those who were to be Jehovah's witnesses before the surrounding nations. He therefore placed them under a special order of things which was admirably adapted to preserve them as a separate people and safeguard the revelation of His mercy in and through the coming Messiah until His actual appearing.

“It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator” (verse 19). That last clause was added in order to heighten the contrast between the Abrahamic and Sinaitic covenants, and to evince the inferiority of the latter to the former. Though the Law was ordained or established by God as its Author—all its particular injunctions being prefaced with “And the LORD spake unto Moses”—yet it is clear from Acts 7:53 and Hebrews 2:2 that the angels were in some way or other employed in the giving of the Law. That particular detail (see Deuteronomy 33:2; Psalm 68:17) was seized by the apostle, and mentioned here to point a tacit antithesis as to the manner in which the promise was given. In like manner, he specifies the fact that the Law was also “in the hand of a mediator”—the allusion being to Deuteronomy 5:27. In contradistinction thereto, God conversed with Abraham as with a “Friend” (Jam 2:23). It was obviously the apostle's intent to exalt the promise above the Law—that being the principal transaction;

the other, secondary and subservient. The promise was first, the Law came later. The one spoke of nothing but “blessing;” the other was “added because of transgressions” and denounced transgressors. The promise was for ever; the Law, only “till the seed should come” (verse 19).

The Mosaic Law (in its entirety) was not given with hostile designs, but to minister in an inferior—but still necessary—place to the higher ends and purposes which the Abrahamic covenant had in view; and it being published in grace and mercy, not fury and wrath. Had it been expressly designed to curse and slay, it had *not* been “in the hand of a mediator” (verse 19); but rather, of an executioner! The “mediator” imported that God was *at peace* with Israel! Then the apostle added, “Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God *is one*” (verse 20)—immutable. Let both Antinomians and Dispensationalists weigh thoroughly that statement. God is “in one mind” (Job 23:13), and not like the fickle creature: “With whom is no variableness or shadow of turning” (James 1:17). He has precisely the same design in Law and Gospel, namely His own glory and the good of His people. His purpose was identical in both the Abrahamic and Sinaitic covenants, the Law being proclaimed with a benevolent design. Hence the apostle brings his argument to a point by asking, “Is the law then against the promises of God?”—to which he returns the decisive reply, “God forbid” (verse 21). How radically different is *that* answer to the ideas of many today who boast of their light and orthodoxy!

Those who are at all acquainted with Paul’s mode of writing are aware that his “God forbid” is the language he always used to express a very strong negative: most emphatically, “the law then [*is not*] against the promises of God” (verse 21). On the contrary, it was subservient to the Abrahamic covenant, added to secure the fulfilment of its promised good, and proceeding from Him who is “the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb. 13:8). But what a deplorable tendency is there in fallen human nature to misapprehend the design of God in His gifts and works, and to pervert to our destruction what was meant for our good! No more forcible and solemn example of this can be found than in the great error which the majority of the Jews fell into, and which the Judaizers of Paul’s day were seeking to perpetuate and enforce upon

Christians. He therefore continued his expostulation and refutation by pointing out that, “For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law” (verse 21). But this, he meant that if any law had been given which furnished all the means necessary for man’s real and eternal blessing, then in such a case, legal justification—or restoration to the divine favour on the ground of something done by the sinner—*was* possible. Yet in such a case, that had been at direct variance with the gratuitous method of justification by faith, as had been made known in the promises, and exemplified in the case of Abraham himself.

So far from any law being given that men might look to it for “life,” God had “concluded all under sin” (verse 22)—guilt or exposure to punishment—and this, in order that “the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.” Hence, “Before faith [Greek—‘the faith’] came [i.e. before the Christian revelation was given] we [Jews] were kept under the law, shut unto [i.e. until] the faith” (verse 23)—confined by its statutes, preserved as a separate people. “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ” (verse 24), which gives the positive answer to the question of verse 19. Judaism was designed to instruct, constrain and chasten; and thereby, prepare the Jews for a superior order of things. “But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster” (verse 25): the Mosaic economy has served its purpose, and the middle wall of partition may be broken down.

A final word on verse 19. Note its qualifying “till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.” Here, as everywhere, it was *Christ* whom God had before Him—primarily and ultimately—at Sinai! *He* is the grand Centre of all the divine counsels; and the divine providences are ever ordered for His glory. The Mosaic constitution was not only designed for Israel’s good, but there was another and higher end which God had in view therein, namely, that the appointed channel through which the Seed was to come should be *kept pure*. He was to be of the Abrahamic stock and of the tribe of Judah; and therefore, God put Israel under a dispensation by which they were compelled to dwell alone (Lev. 20:26) with their tribal distinctions preserved (Num. 36:7). Despite their sins and failures, God’s purpose was accomplished, for when the Messiah

was born, Israel was still a holy or separate nation, and the tribe of Judah was distinguishable from the others. The Levitical economy had then served its purpose (Heb. 8:13), and the “old covenant” gave way to the “new.”

It is a great mistake to suppose that because the constitution given to the nation of Israel at Sinai is now obsolete, it contains nothing of real value for God’s people in this Christian era. Though the economy there instituted was an introductory and preparatory one—paving the way for something better and eternal—yet its basic principles are enduring and of universal application. While there are hints given in the Old Testament that the order of things established under Moses would pass away, yet plain intimation was also made that its moral elements would continue, yea, come into more effectual and general operation. Thus, when Isaiah made promise of the coming Messiah, it was with the assurance that He would issue from the root of David, and would “*magnify the law*, and make it honourable” (Isa. 42:21); and he informed the nation that it would be in the “*new heavens and a new earth*” that the grand purpose of the LORD would ultimately be realized (Isa. 65:17-18). Jeremiah was even more definite, declaring the LORD would yet make a *new covenant* with the house of Israel, different from the one He made at Sinai—different not in its essential matter, but only in its form and efficient administration—saying: “I will put my law in their *inward* parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jer. 31:33)—the same Law in substance, but transferred from the external sphere to the internal sphere.

Ezekiel foretold a new and wondrous work of divine grace, such as Israel as a nation had never experienced, when the Spirit of God should change hearts of stone into hearts of flesh—thereby imparting to them a disposition and ability to walk in God’s statutes, and keep and do His judgments (Ezek. 36:26-27). Joel announced that a time was coming when JEHOVAH would pour out His Spirit “upon all flesh” (Joel 2:28) in such plenitude that spiritual gifts which hitherto had been confined to the few would be bestowed upon many. Micah announced a day when “the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains” (Micah 4:1)—that is, the seat of the divine kingdom would be morally elevated above all human governments; and that

there should be such a manifestation of the LORD's presence that many nations would say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for *the law* shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Micah 4:1-5)—producing the most beneficent effects which would make themselves felt throughout the whole earth. Thus, Old Testament prophecy made it clear that God purposed to give a far grander manifestation of Himself than any granted previously, yet at the same time, *retain* in its integrity *the Law* of divine righteousness.

When the fullness of time was come, and God sent forth His Son made of a woman, it is expressly declared that He was "made under the law" (Gal. 4:4). He came to introduce nothing that was absolutely new, but rather to produce what had been foretold, and to exhibit the perfect exemplification of what had been required by the previous revelations. Though repudiating the perverted Judaism of the scribes and Pharisees, the Lord Jesus definitely identified Himself with the Judaism of the Law and the Prophets. At the commencement of His public ministry, in His sermon on the mount, He proclaimed unto His disciples— and in the hearing of a great multitude—the fundamental principles of His kingdom. That discourse stood in much the same relationship to the dawning era, as the promulgation of the Decalogue from Sinai did to the then expiring dispensation; and the links between them are definite and plain. Each was published upon a mount. As the former was prefaced with the divine statement, "I [have] brought you unto myself" (Exod. 19:4), and the reminder of His grace in having delivered them from "the house of bondage" (Exod. 20:2), so the latter was introduced by a series of "beatitudes" (Matt. 5:1-12)—"blessing after blessing pouring itself forth as from a full spring of beneficence," as one beautifully expressed it.

But no sooner had *grace* breathed those endearing beatitudes than the inflexible demands of *righteousness* were announced: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. 5:17). Here at the very outset, the Redeemer made known His attitude and relation to the Law of God. Negatively, it was not His design to render it void; positively,

it was the grand purpose of His mission to *substantiate* it—to do what the Law required and to make good what the Prophets had foretold. To leave no room for doubt, our Lord added: “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (verse 18). Nor did He stop short there, going on to declare, “Whosoever therefore shall break [Greek *luo*—dissolve or destroy] one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven” (verse 19). Therein, Christ made it clear that the validity of what was found in the previous communications of God still obtained; and that so far from there being any antagonism between the new order and the old, he who failed to appreciate the righteousness embodied in the minor details of the Law, should be accorded no place of honour in His kingdom.

Finally, He averred with startling plainness, “For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:20). In the previous verse, He had given warning that even a comparatively small antagonism to the righteousness of the Law would involve a lower position in His kingdom; but here, He makes it known that if any would-be followers of *His* adopted such a low standard as that maintained by the official religionists of that day, they should be entirely excluded therefrom. Then, to the close of His sermon, Christ went on to expose the errors of those who had toned down the exacting demands of the divine Law, setting over against “it was said *by them* of old time” (Matt. 5:21, 27) His “But I say unto you,” and restoring the Law to its original purity; and insisting that it required not only external compliance, but *inward* conformity. He so explained and enforced the Ten Commandments as to bring fully under their sway the thoughts and intents of the heart, as well as the actions of the life; and insisted that man’s response to the Decalogue would determine their places and destinies in His kingdom.

It is a serious and horrible mistake to suppose that Christ here enunciated a new and superior Law to that which had been given at Sinai: rather, did He *rescue it* from the rubbish of the traditions of the rabbins beneath which it had long been buried. In Matthew 5:20, He enunciated a general principle; and from verse 21 onward, He

illustrated by various examples *how and wherein* the righteousness of those He would own as His subjects must exceed that of the Pharisees. Let it be particularly noted that the distinctions Christ proceeded to draw did not respect the real and actual teaching of the Law or the Prophets, but instead, human perversions of the same. Not once did He contrast His Word, “But I say unto you” with what “*the LORD* said” at Sinai, but rather, with “It was said by them of old time” (Matt. 5:21, 27). He was refuting the errors the Jews had received from their elders. He pressed upon them the strictness, breadth, and exalted spirituality of the Ten Commandments. All that the Pharisees saw in God’s “Thou shalt not kill” (Exod. 20:13) was the prohibition of the act of murder; whereas, our Lord declared that it forbade every thought and lust which led up thereto. They restricted God’s “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Exod. 20:14) to “Thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour’s wife” (Lev. 18:20); but Christ insisted that commandment condemned lustful desires and glances. It was not the Law *per se* that was under consideration, but the rabbins’ perversion of it. As if to guard against any wrong impression from what He had said, and to show His teaching was but the enforcement of God’s previous revelations, He ended with, “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Matt. 7:12).

Christ was made under the Law, rendered perfect obedience to it in all His actions, and enforced it in His public ministry. We should therefore expect His apostles to honour the same divine standard of righteousness; and they *did*, as an impartial examination of their writings evinces. True, Paul assures the saints they “are not under the law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:14); but he was there treating of the ground of our *acceptance* with God, and not with our walk: “Law” and “grace” there being parallel with “the law of works” and “the law of faith” in Romans 3:27—we are “*not* under the law” for our *justification*, but under God’s gratuitous favour. Romans 6:14 must not be made to clash with Paul’s assertion in Romans 7:25: “I myself *serve* the law of God.” He also told them that they had “become dead to the law” (Rom. 7:4), which is to be understood in precisely the same way as “dead to sin,” *judicially*—dead to its condemning power, having suffered the penalty of the same in their

Substitute. In the same epistle where those misunderstood expressions are found, conformity to the Law's requirements is presented as the sum of excellence (Rom. 13:8-10)—“love is the fulfilling of the law,” because, seeking the good of its object, it *prompts unto* what the Law requires.

In that very epistle, the apostle gives it as the characteristic of the spiritual mind; that it assents to the Law as “holy, and just, and good” (Rom. 7:12)—yea, as delighting in it (verses 21-22)—whereas of the carnal mind, he says, “It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Rom. 8:7). In his next epistle, he declares believers are “not without law to God, but *under* the law to Christ” (1 Cor. 9:21). Though in a special manner, the herald of divine grace, Paul repeatedly maintained the honour of the Law. To the Galatians, he said, “Ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Gal. 5:13-14)—thereby manifestly *identifying* the love binding on Christians with the love enjoined in the Decalogue. When exhorting young Christians, he said, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right,” then enforcing his appeal with “Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)” (Eph. 6:1-2)—he had never appealed to it if the Law had been repealed! James declares, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors” (James 2:8-9)—one who is “dead to the law” (Rom. 7:4) in *every* sense could not be a transgressor of it! John insists Christians should walk “even as he [Christ] walked” (1 John 2:6)—but how could they unless under the same Law?

Returning to our principal design in these articles, let us point out that the history of Israel is full of most important instruction for us today. Nor is that an arbitrary statement of ours. The pen of inspiration declares, “Now these things [Israel's experiences in the wilderness] were *our examples*...Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for *our* admonition” (1 Cor. 10:6, 11). The key to the same is placed in our hands in an earlier chapter: “Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let *us* keep the feast” (1 Cor 5:7-8). He is the antitypical

Lamb whose vicarious blood saves His people and upon whom they are to feed as their spiritual food. Thus, we have divine warrant to regard God's dealings with Israel of old as adumbrating His gracious actings unto the elect in all generations. While there is much in the New Testament which casts light upon the teaching of the Old, it is equally true that much in the antitype is better understood by a study of the types.

In our opening article, we called attention to the *double* appellation given to the Hebrews by God in His opening words to Moses in the mount (Exod. 19:3), and pointed out that it supplies more than a hint of the *twofoldness* of what follows, that the transactions at Sinai need to be viewed in their bearing upon both the national Israel and the spiritual "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16). It is the latter we shall now consider. First, in the grand fact: I have "brought you unto myself" (Exod. 19:4); so Christ "[brought] us to God" (1 Pet. 3:18). "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people...a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Exod. 19:5-6). That is entirely an *evangelical* statement. It was *not* "because ye *have* obeyed my voice" I brought you unto Myself, but instead, *Since* I have done so, realize now your obligation and privilege to be subject to Me; and by your submission, both glorify Me and fulfil the high destiny to which I have called you. The "therefore" of verse 5 is obviously a conclusion drawn from the blessed fact stated in verse 4: because Israel had been taken into a relationship which secured for them an interest in JEHOVAH's faithfulness and love, let them henceforth devote themselves to His honour and service.

To call attention to the "if" of Exodus 19:5, and then affirm—as certain "great (?) Bible teachers" have done—that there is *no* "if" in connection with the Christian's blessedness, betrays the grossest ignorance, as a glance at the following passages will show: John 8:31; Romans 8:13 and 11:22; Colossians 1:23; Hebrews 3:6. Moreover, Exodus 19:5 must be interpreted in full harmony with the divine preface to the Ten Commandments: "I *am* the LORD thy God" (Exod. 20:2)—not "I *will be so* if ye obey me." Had it been *that*, it would have been a pure covenant of works—the reward given in a way of pactional debt. But at Sinai, God *inverted* the

order of precept and promise from what obtained in the Adamic covenant, and declared Himself to be, in a way of sovereign grace, JEHOVAH—Israel’s God and Redeemer; and *then* gave them the Law to show “what is good and what the LORD required of them.” Rightly did Ebenezer Erskine (1680-1754) declare in his sermon, “A Treasure of Gospel-Grace Dugged Out of Mount Sinai” (1722): “It was a covenant of *grace* that was proclaimed at mount Sinai: the Law was added to it because of transgression, and grafted upon it as a rule of obedience.”

“I am the LORD thy God” (Exod. 20:2). Thy God on the ground of electing grace. Thy God by redemptive mercy and power. Thy God who hast ransomed thee from the enemy. Thy God who will provide for thee, and defend thee. Thy God to rule over thee—*not* to destroy, but to bless. Thy God “merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth” (Exod. 34:6). As Ebenezer Erskine so well expressed it: “When He says, ‘I am the LORD thy God,’ He in effect says, All that I have I make over to you.” I am thy God for thee to love and trust, to serve and glorify. Since I *am* the LORD thy God, make Me thine everlasting Portion, thy chief Delight, thy sole End. It is *this* which makes My yoke easy. Remember what I have done for thee, and thou wilt find that My commandments “are not grievous” (1 John 5:3). They are the precepts of My *love*, and grateful souls will take pleasure in fulfilling them. As that is the fundamental *blessing* of the covenant, so “Thou shalt have no other gods” (Exod. 20:3) was the leading *duty* devolving upon them; and so it is upon *us*. “I am the LORD thy God” who redeemed thee from bondage is the sum and substance of His *new* covenant with us; and then He writes His Law upon our hearts (Heb. 8:8-10)—i.e. brings our hearts in subjection thereto and causes us to delight therein.

Though Christians are delivered from the curse of the Law, its precepts are still binding upon them. The principle of grace which is communicated to their souls at the new birth inclines them to love God and please Him; but love needs to be *directed*. I may respect and revere my master, but I must know the rules of his house if I am to serve him acceptably. Love is not a “rule,” but a *motive*. Love does not inform me *what* to do, but *how* to do it. Love constrains me to do God’s will; but in order to learn what is His will, I must look

elsewhere. The Law is a necessity both for God's maintenance of His authority over us and as a rule of life for our guidance. Moreover, the servant is not greater than his Lord! Christ did not honour the Law that His people might slight it. There is no higher *privilege* than following the example He has left us. God's covenant in Christ of grace and promise (adumbrated in the Abrahamic) has for its necessary complement a covenant of gratitude and duty (adumbrated at Sinai) on our part. The divine Decalogue was indeed kept perfectly by our justifying Head; yet, as our sanctifying Head, Christ requires that *we* keep it gratefully— not in order to our acceptance by Him, but that we may be conformed to Him and glorify Him in our daily walk.

Superficial dispensationalists, who have a penchant for drawing contrasts (imaginary or real), delight to set over against the *distance* at which Israel were placed from JEHOVAH upon the holy mount (Exod. 19:12) such a verse as, "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:13). But they forget that Exodus 19:12 is preceded by 19:4—"brought you unto myself." Furthermore, they overlook the fact that in the New Testament itself, Deity is represented as "dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto" (1 Tim. 6:16); and that we are bidden to serve Him "with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. 12:28). But, what is yet more reprehensible, these dispensationalists fail to tell their gullible followers that Exodus 24 shows us the representative heads of the nation enjoying the most intimate fellowship with the God of Israel, eating and drinking in His immediate presence (verses 9-11)! Nor have they any understanding of the contrast drawn by the Spirit in 2 Corinthians 3 between Judaism and Christianity, and *not* between "Law and Grace." In Hebrews 12:18, the Judaizers were simply being met on their *own ground* and shown what the Law was when viewed simply in itself, when *detached* from the former covenant of promise—fitted only to inspire terror and horror, and to curse and slay. Not that that was God's *intent*, but rather, the effects attending it, when viewed as a thing apart.

The Law was not given to Israel at Sinai as a bestower of life, nor as a means for procuring God's favour—for Israel already had that. Nor was it given so that by their obedience thereto, Israel might

obtain Canaan—for that inheritance was theirs by sure promise to Abraham. That it was *not* given for their salvation is clear from the *altar* on Sinai (Exod. 20:24; 24:4). Rather was the Law given to a ransomed people: “The LORD thy God *redeemed* thee: *therefore I* command thee this thing to day” (Deut. 15:15). It was given as a revelation of that righteousness which God required from them as His favoured and peculiar people. It was given to enforce His claims upon them as their Lord and Governor. Yea, it was given “in the hand of a *mediator*” (Gal. 3:19)! Moreover, it was accompanied by the ceremonial law, wherein provision was made for their transgressions of the moral. It was also supplemented by the priesthood, so that their fellowship with the Holy One might be maintained. Once again, we quote that admirable summary of St. Augustine’s (354-430): “The Law was given that grace might be sought; grace was given that the Law might be fulfilled.”

Let it not be forgotten that *Moses* wrote of Christ (John 5:46); and that the Law, as well as the Prophets, witnessed to the righteousness which is *by faith* (Rom. 3:21). Glorious Sinai! Where there was such an illustrious display of JEHOVAH’s holiness and majesty. Where He proclaimed Himself as the covenant God of the children of Abraham. Where He gave them that blessed charter and constitution which distinguished them from all other nations. Where He revealed Himself as the Lover and LORD of His people, and their Redeemer and Ruler. Where He promulgated the perfect rule of righteousness for His saints in all generations. Where He published His *Gospel*, as well as His Law. Where He made full provision to maintain His people in communion with Himself. Where He permitted them to eat and drink in His presence.

The second of two booklets.

