

The Perpetuity of the Royal Law

Or, The Ten Commandments Not Abolished.
Advent and Sabbath Tract, No. 4.

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IT is painful to witness the various inconsistent and self-contradictory positions resorted to by those who reject the Sabbath of the Lord. But of all the positions adopted, none seem so dangerous, or fraught with such alarming consequences, as the view that the law of God, by which the Sabbath is enforced, has been abolished, and that we are, therefore, under no obligation to remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy. The question whether God has abolished his law or not, is, indeed, the main point at issue in the Sabbath controversy; for when it is shown that law still exists, and that its perpetuity is clearly taught in the New Testament, the question is most conclusively settled, that the Sabbath is binding on us, and upon all men.

The Sabbath of the Lord is embodied in the fourth commandment of the Decalogue. This commandment

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stands in the midst of nine moral precepts which Jehovah, after uttering with his own voice, wrote with his own finger on the tables of stone. These nine commandments stand around the Sabbath of the Lord, an impregnable bulwark, which all the enemies of that sacred institution in vain attempt to destroy. It is evident that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment cannot be set aside unless the Decalogue can be destroyed. Hence the enemies of the Sabbatic institution have brought their heaviest artillery to bear upon the law of the Most High: calculating that when they had destroyed this strong hold, the Sabbath would fall an easy prey to their attack. We invite attention then to the law and to the testimony. By the unerring word of God we wish to settle this question; and this we believe can be done in the most satisfactory manner.

That the hand-writing of ordinances containing the feasts, new moons and the associated annual sabbaths of the Jews, has been abolished and taken out of the way, we do not doubt. This was not the moral law of God; but was merely the shadow of good things to come. But the royal law in which are the ten commandments of God is the subject of this investigation, and it is the perpetuity and immutability of this law that we affirm. If the law of God has been destroyed, the act must have been accomplished by one of three things; viz., 1. By the teachings of the Lord Jesus;

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or 2. By his death; or 3. By the apostles. We believe that all will agree to this statement.

1. Was the law of God abolished by the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ? Let us listen to his own words.

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. 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. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do, and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 5:17-19.

Our Lord here testifies that he did not come to destroy the law or the prophets. Then it is a fact that he did not destroy either. But what is it to destroy the law? We answer, that it can only signify to abolish, or to annul it. And thus Campbell renders the word:- "Think not that I am come to subvert the law." Whiting renders it:- "Think not that I am come to annul the law." It is therefore certain that our Lord did not come to subvert, annul, or destroy, the law of God. Hence it follows that the law of God was not annulled or abrogated by him. He adds, that instead of coming to destroy, he came to fulfill. If this was the object of the Saviour's mission, did he not by this act do away the law, set

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is aside, and relieve us from obligation to keep its precepts? Let us see. As Campbell renders the text, it reads, "I am not come to subvert, but to ratify." That is, I am not come to abolish the law, but to confirm, and render still more sacred, its just demands. If that was the object of our Lord's mission, it follows that he did not lessen our obligation to obey the law of his Father.

But let us return to the word "fulfill." Christ came to fulfill the law, hence he did fulfill it. What is it to fulfill a law? Let the apostle James answer: "If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor 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. It is evident that James here places the transgression of the law in contrast with, or in opposition to, the fulfillment of the law; therefore it follows that the fulfillment of the law is the reverse of its violation. In other words, it is its observance. To fulfill the law in the manner that James enjoins, is to render complete obedience to its divine requirements.

But it may be contended that to fulfill the law in the sense of our Lord's declaration, accomplishes its purpose, and takes it out of the way. To show the absurdity of this view, let us take another of Christ's sayings which is of the same character, precisely. When John refused to baptize the Saviour, Jesus

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said, "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." Matt. 3:15. Did the Saviour, by fulfilling all righteousness, weaken, take out of the way, or destroy all righteousness? Certainly not. No one will claim that he lessened our obligation to fulfill all righteousness also.

But how did Christ fulfill the law of his Father? There is but one way in which this could be accomplished, and that is to answer its just demands. What were

those demands? We answer: first, the law of God demands perfect obedience. The justice of this, none will deny. But when the law has been violated, it demands the death of the transgressor. Sin is the transgression of the law." 1John3:4. "The wages of sin is death." Rom.6:23. "The soul that sinneth it shall die. Eze.18:4. When Christ came to fulfill the law, he came to do this, not for himself, but in behalf of our race. He came to fulfill the law as the Messiah: an office or character which no other being ever possessed. He came to undertake for fallen men, and in a certain sense placed himself in their situation. What then was the relation which our race sustained to the law of God? We answer: all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. The law of God stopped every mouth, and showed all men sinners in the sight of God. Rom.3.

Then, when the Saviour took upon himself our nature, and came to fulfill the law of his Father, that

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law not only demanded perfect obedience; but it also justly demanded the death of our race; for all were its transgressors. The work of the Saviour, therefore, in fulfilling the law of his Father, was of a twofold character. He must first render perfect obedience to all its precepts, and then offer up his own life as a ransom for guilty man. To fulfill the law *as the Messiah*, Christ must perform all this. Did he thus do? He kept his Father's commandments. John15:10. In him there was no transgression of the law. 1John3:4,5. He was the Lamb of God without spot, [1Pet.1:19.] in whom the Father was well pleased. Matt.3:17. And this was not all; he took upon himself the sin of the world. Isa.3:6; John1:29. He bore our sin in his own body upon the tree. 1Pet.2:24. He died the just for the unjust, giving his own life a ransom for many. 1Pet.3:18; Matt.20:28. God can now be just, and yet justify him that believeth in Jesus. Rom.3:25,26. Thus Christ lived our example and died our sacrifice.

Did this work of the Messiah, in rendering perfect obedience to all the law of God, and then offering up himself as a ransom for its transgressors, weaken that law, or lessen our obligation to obey it? Never. It shows in the most striking light, its perpetuity and immutability. The law of God condemned our race. Jehovah would open the way for man's salvation. He could not destroy his own moral

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law; but he could give his own beloved and only Son to die for its transgressors. This evinces the estimate which the Father placed upon his own law. Isaiah predicted that Christ should magnify the law, and make it honorable. Isa.42:21. The record of Christ's life and death shows the fulfillment of this prediction.

But Christ adds a solemn affirmation. "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. What is a jot and a tittle? A jot is the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet. A tittle is a small point by which some of those letters are distinguished from others. Our Lord therefore solemnly affirms that the minutest point shall not pass from the law till all be fulfilled. Then it is certain that a part will not be destroyed and the remainder of the law be left in force. Consequently as long as a part of the *original* precepts continue, all of them abide without one jot or tittle being destroyed. Further than this, Christ has plainly marked the point of time

before which no part of the law of God shall pass. "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Has heaven and earth passed away? Let those answer who teach the abolition of the law of God. When will heaven and earth pass? Let the beloved disciple answer: "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat

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on it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them." If the fulfillment of the law of God destroys it, that destruction cannot take place before the final conflagration of the heavens and the earth. 2.Pet.3. Prior to that time the minutest point shall not be destroyed. If therefore one jot or one tittle shall on *no account* pass from the law, till all be fulfilled; and if the point before which this shall not be accomplished is the passing of the heavens and the earth, it follows that the Lord Jesus not only designed that the law should be fulfilled by himself for the brief period of his sojourn on earth, but also, that the righteousness of the law should be fulfilled in his church; or as Whiting renders Rom.8:4, "that the *precept* of the law might be fulfilled by us, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." The next verse establishes this view.

"Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do, and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Let us carefully consider this verse. The word "whosoever" takes up all persons through all coming time. The word "therefore" shows that this verse is the conclusion drawn from the premises which the Saviour had just laid down, which were these: 1. "Think not that I am come to destroy

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the law." 2. "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." As not a single particle of this holy law was to be destroyed, it was fitting that the Lord Jesus should speak with distinctness respecting its observance and its violation. This is what he now utters.

"Shall break one of these least commandments." Then we have here the opposite of fulfilling the law; viz. the breaking of the commandments. We may also learn that the law in verses 17,18, means the commandments.

"One of these least." Christ had said that not one jot or one tittle should pass from the law till all be fulfilled, so that there could be no excuse for those who teach that a part of the law has been destroyed, and that the remainder is yet in force. But Christ did not leave the subject thus. He now tells what shall be the fate of those who violate the least of the commandments. Those who select nine of them, and omit one of the commandments, which they think not worth their notice, are the very persons that Christ here reproveth.

"And shall teach men so." Who are they that teach men to violate the commandments? Those who teach men that they have all been abolished go far beyond the crime that Christ has here noted. The Saviour spoke of those who should violate the least one. Some at the present day teach men that

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all of them are abolished. This is the grand and effectual method to teach men to violate the law of God. But those who make any one of the commandments void, that they may keep in its place a tradition of the elders, are doing exactly the work that our Lord has here solemnly warned men against.

"He shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven;" or, as Campbell renders, "shall be of no esteem in the reign of heaven." This is, doubtless, the idea of the Saviour. This is the penalty of a violation of the least precept of the law of God. But how much more fearful must it be to break the commandments and to teach men that they have all been abolished!

"But whosoever shall do and teach them." Here we may learn what it is to fulfill the law of God. It is to do and to teach the commandments. "The same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Or, as rendered by Campbell, "shall be highly esteemed in the reign of heaven." Here is the ample commission; here is the vast reward of those who teach and keep the commandments of God. Surely, no man ever enjoined obedience to the law of God with such force as did our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us hear his words again:-

"But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded saying, Honor thy father and mother; and, He that curseth father

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or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; and honor not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." Matt. 15:3-6.

These words disclose to us the sacredness of God's commandments in the mind of the Lord Jesus. He did not deny that he violated the traditions of the Jews, but he boldly arraigned their traditions, and condemned them as worthless in the sight of God. And not only as worthless, but also as sinful, inasmuch as they contradict and make void the commandments of God. The tradition in question was very venerable with the Jews, inasmuch as they supposed that it had been handed down from Moses; thus being equally ancient and sacred in their estimation with the commandment which it so effectually made void. On such authority the Jews thought themselves fully justified in an open violation of the fifth commandment. Nay, they even supposed that the observance of this tradition was more acceptable to God than the observance of the commandment itself.

At the present time we have a case precisely parallel. The professed church of this day hold a tradition which they say came from Christ and his apostles. On the authority of this tradition they

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suppose that they are amply justified in violating the fourth commandment. Like the Jews they even think that they are serving God more acceptably by keeping a tradition that contradicts his commandment, than they would be in keeping the commandment itself. The rebuke which Christ applied to the Jews, falls with all its force upon the heads of such: "Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you,

saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Verses 6-9.

"And behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God; but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Matt. 19:16-19.

Let us carefully consider these words of our Lord. The young man came to him with the most important question that he could ask. The Saviour returned

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to him the most simple, direct and appropriate answer. Jesus said to him, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." The young man, who, it is evident from the narrative, thought himself already observing them all, asked Jesus, Which? In answer, Jesus quotes from the second table, five of the ten commandments; and to this list he adds the second of the two great commandments on which hang all the rest. It is often said by our opponents that if we would name only those precepts which our Lord enjoined upon the young man, they would be happy to agree with us; that Christ did not name the fourth commandment, which is not therefore obligatory upon us. We reply that the fourth commandment is no more omitted than is the first, the second, the third and the tenth, and also the first of the two great commandments on which hang all the rest! Does any one believe that the young man might violate all these and yet enter life eternal?

There can be but one of two positions taken with respect to this text: 1. When the Saviour said, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," he named all the commandments which the young man should keep; or 2. When the Saviour said "keep the commandments," he enjoined obedience to them all, and then in answer to the young man's inquiry, pointed him to the precepts of the second

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table, namely, his duty to his fellow-men, as that in which he was most deficient.

If the first position be correct, it follows that the young man could enter into life in the character of an idolater, a blasphemer, a Sabbath-breaker, and with an heart full of covetousness; for our Lord omitted to specify any of those precepts which define our duty to God, and he also omitted the tenth commandment: "Thou shalt not covet." This position needs no refutation, and we turn from it to the other.

That the second position is correct, namely, that Christ enjoined obedience to all the commandments, and then in answer to the young man's request, pointed him to the second table, and to the second of the two great commandments - his duty to his fellow man - the following facts plainly evince:-

1. This is exactly what is recorded in the text. 2. The view that Christ specified all the precepts which the young man should observe has been shown to be

false and unreasonable. 3. When the young man insisted that he was blameless in regard to his duty to his fellow men, our Lord applied a test to him which undeceived him at once. 4. When Christ said, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," he spoke in harmony with his own words in Matt.5:17-19. There he had declared that not even the minutest particle should pass from the commandments till the heavens and the earth

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should flee away, and that whosoever should violate one of the least of them, should be of no esteem in the reign of heaven. Then, our Lord being allowed to explain his own words, it follows that to keep the commandments, is to observe every one of them; and that the willful violator of the least one, shall have no part in the kingdom of God. And the apostle James, as we shall thereafter see, establishes in the clearest manner the fact that whoever understandingly violates one of the ten commandments is guilty of breaking them all. What will those say to this who affirm that the young man could keep the commandments, and yet violate every one that defines our duty to God the great Law-giver?

"Then one of them which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Matt.22:35-40.

Many mistake the question here proposed to Jesus, and read this text as though the lawyer had said, Master what is the great commandment which you will give to take the place of the ten commandments? The question was not asked on that wise;

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and those who present this scripture as evidence that Christ gave a new code to take the place of his Father's law, labor under a serious mistake. The question related to the original law of God; what is the great commandment in that?

Christ answered this question by pointing out the two great immutable first principles on which hang all the law and the prophets: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." This is the sum of our duty to God: on this hang all those precepts which define our duty to him. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." On this precept hang all those commandments which contain our duty to our fellow men. This is the sum of them, and out of this they all grow.

The Saviour did not abolish the law of his Father by these two precepts; for they were as ancient as any part of the law of God. Deut.6:5; Lev.19:18. He did not then hang the law and the prophets upon them; for they had ever hung there; nor did Christ teach that on these two precepts all the law and the prophets were abolished. Nay, he showed by this the immutable basis on which the law of Jehovah rests. These two great precepts are, as all admit, unabolished. And the law of God which hangs upon them is like them, immutable, and, must abide as long as they endure.

"And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass

than one tittle of the law to fail." Luke 16:17. Then it is easier for heaven and earth to pass than for one of the commandments of God. How hard then must it be for every precept of the law of God to be abolished and a new law of God enacted to take its place. Easier could heaven and earth be destroyed and new heavens and a new earth be created! Should God abolish his great constitution and establish another in its stead, that event would not only be marked as distinctly as the establishment of the original constitution by himself at Sinai, in person, but it would present even a more extraordinary spectacle than for heaven and earth to flee from the presence of him that sits upon the throne!

It is an important fact that our Lord in presenting portions of the law of God, always brought them forward as such; that is, he appealed to the law of his Father, as a living authority, and quoted from it, not as giving authority to what he quoted, but presenting those quotations as the authority for his statements. This fact evinces that Christ was not engaged in re-enacting a part of his Father's law, as some are ready to affirm. Our Lord did not act in the capacity of legislator with his Father's law. He was its expositor; and as such he laid open its length and breadth and spirituality. Even the golden rule, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," our Saviour bases

on the fact that this was the law and the prophets. Matt. 7:12. So that this most admirable saying was not given to take the place of the law of God and the prophets, but as a precious truth resting on their authority.

The scriptures which we have quoted must suffice to show the nature of Christ's teachings respecting the law of God. It shows that by his teaching he did not abolish the commandments of God. It also evinces that Christ not only taught that it was *easier* for heaven and earth to pass than for one tittle of the law to fail, but that he also taught, *until* heaven and earth pass a single tittle shall not pass from the law of God; and that whosoever would enter into everlasting life must keep the commandments of God, even the least of them. We will now consider the second question.

2. Was the law of God abolished by the death of Christ?

That we may answer this question in a proper manner, let us carefully consider Rom. 3. We will first examine that portion of the chapter which presents the human family as condemned by the law of God and speechless in his sight.

"Now we know that what things so ever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds

of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. Rom. 3:19,20.

This portion of scripture presents in a striking light the state of mankind without a Saviour. The Apostle had been presenting in the previous verses numerous quotations from the Old Testament, showing the fearful state of fallen man. The verses which we have quoted, present us with the holy standard of rectitude by which the unrighteousness of men is made manifest, and their fearful

crimes left without excuse. "What things so ever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law." How many, then, are under the law? The remainder of the verse determines this with certainty. "That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." This fact then is plainly stated: that the whole human family are addressed by the law of God; that all of its members without distinction of rank, or order, share in one general condemnation; and that condemnation is so just, that every mouth is shut, and all the world stands speechless before the bar of God. The twenty-third verse explains the cause of this: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

The law of God can justify no flesh in his sight. But why cannot the law justify sinful man? Because by the law is the knowledge of sin. Man is

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guilty of transgression, and the law of God discovers and manifests this fact. The law is God's great rule of right; and as such, it shows every departure from rectitude and holiness. We have thus seen the sad state of fallen men. Let us now consider what God does for their salvation. If he takes back his law, one of two things must be true:-

1. He takes back an *unjust* law, and thus acknowledges that he was the cause of man's condemnation. But this is false; for we have seen that the law is so just that none can plead against its righteous sentence. Hence if God has taken back his law we shall be compelled to adopt the second position; namely,

2. He takes back a just law, thus denying his own moral character as expressed in that law, and overthrowing his own moral government. God cannot lie; and it is manifestly absurd to teach that God has abolished the principles of his own moral government. Hence we conclude that God did not, and could not overthrow his own moral law, in order to save its transgressors.

We inquire again, What did the great Law-giver do in order to save men? If he did not take back his law, and abolish his own moral government, what did he do? It would seem that but one other thing could be done; namely, to put the law in force upon its transgressors. In other words, to execute its

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penalty upon the human race. If this were done, all must be destroyed; for all were its transgressors; and the wages of sin is death. Let us now with gratitude and adoration look at the wondrous plan which God has devised for man's redemption: a plan in which justice and mercy meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other: [Ps.85:8-13:] a system of redemption by which God can be just and yet can justify him that believeth in Jesus. It is set forth by Paul in the following language:-

"Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom.3:24-26.

In these words the great plan of redemption is set forth; but oh! what has it not cost! Man had broken the law of Jehovah and fallen under its awful and yet just condemnation. God could not reverse his holy law without destroying the

moral government of the universe; but he so loved our race that he gave his only Son to die for perishing man. John3:14-17. He sent his Son to be the propitiation or offering for the sins of men. 1John4:10.

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Christ came to take the curse of the law upon himself, and to offer his life as a ransom for its transgressors. Gal.3:13; 1Tim.2:5,6.

The Father had two objects of the dearest affection: his own perfect law, and his only Son. He would save man who had revolted from allegiance to that law, and openly set it at naught. To do this, the great Law-giver must sacrifice either his perfect law, or his beloved and only Son. The first he could not do; for God cannot deny himself; and he hath in all ages ever magnified his word above all his name; [Ps.138:2;] but he could give his only Son to die, that revolted man might have a sacrifice to bring to God that could avail to take away sin.

Jesus was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification. He ascended into the true Tabernacle in heaven, the new covenant Sanctuary, where the ark of God stands, containing his holy law - as a great High Priest, to plead the merits of his blood in behalf of penitent men. Heb.9; Rev.11:19. As the ancient high priest entered the typical tabernacle to sprinkle the ark of the testament with blood even thus was it necessary that our great High Priest should act. The earthly high priest did not sprinkle the blood of sin-offering upon the ark that he might blot out the ten commandments which it contained, or that he might

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lessen the obligation of men to observe them. On the contrary, he entered the tabernacle with blood, because man had violated that holy law, and could not be pardoned without the offering of blood to take away sin.

Even thus did our Lord. By his own blood he entered the true Tabernacle, and presented himself before the Father on our account. In fulfilling the ministration of the true holy places, the two dearest objects of affection to the great Law-giver are again united. But how wondrous the union! Jesus, who has died for the transgressors of that sacred law, now stands as a great High Priest before the ark containing the law of God, pleading in behalf of men, the merits of his own sacrificial death. The Law-giver can accept the offering, and man, who has broken the law of God, can be pardoned.

It is evident, therefore, that the death of our Saviour sustains the same relation to the law of God, that the death of the victim in the ancient typical system sustained to that law. The design of either was not that man should have liberty to violate the law of God, but that man who had violated that law, might have the offer of pardon. The typical system could not, indeed, take away sin; but it pointed out the fact that without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sins, and clearly

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pointed forward to the great Sacrifice which should be offered for the sin of the world.

If it were possible for God to give men an adequate idea of the immutability of his sacred law, he has given it in the spectacle of his Son dying upon the cross

for us. Those who think that the death of the Son of God abolished the very law which made that death necessary, are requested to consider the following points:-

1. If the law that condemned man could have been abolished, it would not have been necessary that the blood of Christ should be shed, that atonement might be made for its transgressors. But the Son of God died because the law which man had broken could not be taken back. 2. But if the death of Christ destroyed the law which condemned men, then they are delivered from its just sentence, whether they repent or not: in other words, Universalism is true. 3. But this view makes the law of God, and the Son of God, both fall beneath the same blow, and without honoring God, or leading man to repentance: it destroys both the cherished objects of Jehovah's affection: subjecting the Son of God to a shameful death, and overturning the moral government of the great Law-giver. 4. But the *conditional* offer of pardon made to man through the gospel of the Son of God, plainly evinces that the law of God still exists, and that men can only be delivered

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from it, on condition of repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hence the law of the Most High is not abolished by the death of the Son of God. His death indeed permits mercy to enter and offer pardon to guilty man; but the law of God abides all the while; and when the work of mercy is accomplished, our great High Priest will leave the tabernacle of God, no more to plead for sinful man, and the penalty of the law, the second death, will be awarded to its transgressors.

It is clearly established, therefore, that the death of the Son of God did not blot out the law of God the Father. On the contrary, his death is that fact which, above all others, testifies to its immutability. But we cannot employ so strong language on this point as that which Paul has used in summing up this very argument. He says: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." Rom.3:31. Having shown conclusively that the law of God was neither abolished by the teaching nor by the death of the Son of God, we will now examine the third question:-

3. Was the law of God abolished by the apostles?

It may seem to some individuals that this last question is propounded in a singular form. But if the law of God was not abolished by the teaching nor yet by the death of the Son of God, it follows

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that if abolished at all, it must have been by the apostles. Many have asserted that the apostles re-enacted nine of the ten commandments, to take the place of the ten which ceased at Christ's death: but as we have shown that the Son of God offered himself up as the great Propitiation for the transgression of the law, and not as the means of its abolition, it follows that the ten commandments must be abolished by the apostles, before they could re-enact one of them. It is no more absurd to speak of the apostles' abolishing the ten commandments than it is to speak of their re-enacting nine of them. And if it seem absurd to any

individual to believe that the apostles abolished the ten commandments and then re-enacted nine of them, we ask them to consider whether the doctrine which represents the infinite Law-giver as doing this very thing, is not a still greater absurdity?

If the apostles abolished the law of God, who gave them authority? The Son of God indeed commissioned them to teach all things whatsoever he had commanded them; but we have seen, in all his teaching to them, that he maintained the immutability of his Father's law, so that from their divine Master they never received such a commission. If they taught as he taught, we shall find them setting forth the perpetuity and immutability of the law of God. And that they did speak the same doctrine

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which their Lord had taught them, we have divine assurance. John 14:26. If the apostles abolished the law, they must have done it in the very epistles in which, according to some of our opponents, they re-enacted nine of the commandments for the gospel dispensation. These epistles were written not far from A. D. 60; so that if the law of God was abolished by the apostles, it was abolished about thirty years after the crucifixion.

We have presented the question in this form, that attention might be called to the folly of those teachers who represent the apostles as legislating upon the law of God. A single testimony from the apostle James ought to make those blush for shame who represent the apostles as abolishing the law of God, or as re-enacting a part of it, to take the place of the original code. "There is *one* Law-giver who is able to save and to destroy." James 4:12. From the preceding verse it is certain that James thus designates Him who gave the law in person at the first; that law, the authority of which he so distinctly recognizes in chapter 1:25; 2:8-12. According to James, there is but one such being in the universe; namely, the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God. It is therefore the height of absurdity to represent the apostles as amending, abolishing, or re-enacting the law of God. The twelve apostles never yet attempted to dethrone the

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one Law-giver, or to usurp any of his prerogatives.

We shall now present the plain and explicit testimony of the apostles relative to the perpetuity of the law of God, and thus allow them to speak on this subject in their own behalf. The limits of this tract will not admit an extended notice of objections. For this part of the subject the reader is referred to larger works published at *Review* Office. The word of God is not yea and nay; therefore the plain statements of our Lord and his apostles must forever vindicate the immutability of the divine law.

"If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well: but if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." James 2:8-12.

Several important facts are clearly set forth in this quotation. That the royal law to which James refers is the original law, is certain from the fact that he quotes it from the Scripture, the Old Testament. This is further evident from the fact that James in citing two of the ten commandments, presents them

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on their original authority; that is, as spoken by God in person. Or if we adopt the marginal reading of verse 11, he expressly acknowledges the authority of that law which contains the sixth and seventh commandments. That law is not abolished: on the contrary, it still stands ready to convince of sin every one who dares to violate it. Verse 9. While those who fulfill it, instead of falling from grace, are said to do well.

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." This verse furnished a perfect parallel to Matt.5:19. "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven," ["shall be in no esteem in the reign of heaven." Campbell's Translation.] Each of these texts distinctly announce the doctrine that the willful violation of a single precept of the law of God, is sufficient to exclude the transgressor from the kingdom of God. But it may be denied that this language of James refers to the ten commandments. Those who attempt to maintain such a position would do well to read the next verse, in which he brings the whole force of his argument to bear upon the ten commandments. He that violates one of these precepts is guilty of all. Let those consider this who lightly esteem the fourth commandment. Even were it the least precept in the

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Decalogue, those who willfully violate it, and teach men so, shall be of no esteem in the reign of heaven.

The "ALL" here referred to, means one of two things. 1. It means only those precepts which James has quoted, which makes "the whole law" to consist of the three precepts here cited, and leaves us at liberty to violate the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, eighth, ninth and tenth commandments, and also the first of the two great precepts from which James quotes - and those who think this tenable ground must occupy it at their own peril; or 2. The "ALL" to which James refers, includes the ten precepts from which he quotes; and he that violates one, has transgressed them all. By this law of liberty, or royal law, men will be judged in the day of God.

"Honor thy father and mother, (which is the first commandment with promise,) that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." Eph.6:2,3. There is an important argument contained in this text, which has been generally overlooked. Paul would enforce upon children their duty to their parents. For this purpose he appeals to the fifth commandment for authority. Some have attempted to evade this argument by saying that Paul quoted this precept from the new law which Christ established, by quoting a part of the commandments to take the place of the original code as

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given by the voice of God at Sinai. To answer the assertion from which this inference is drawn, we present the fact that there is no intimation in the New Testament that Christ, by quoting a part of the ten commandments, established a new law in the place of the original code. But those who insist on the idea that Christ by quoting a part of the ten commandments established a new code, would do well to ask themselves the question, why Christ never quoted one of the first four commandments. This imaginary new law is no great improvement on the original, when the fact appears that the first four commandments are not quoted by Christ, and consequently on its advocates' own showing, do not form a part of this law.

But there is direct evidence that Paul quotes from the Decalogue. By a word of comment inserted in the parenthesis, he identifies this as the first commandment with promise. It is a fact that though Christ has quoted this commandment, he has never appended any promise to it whatever; much less has he added the one here quoted by Paul. It is also a fact that this commandment does stand in the Decalogue, not only as its first commandment with promise, but with the very promise in question annexed! Hence it is a fact that Paul quotes from the Decalogue, and this too for the purpose of enforcing one of the clearest duties in the word of God: thus distinctly acknowledging the fifth

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commandment as the fountain head of all authority on this subject. With this important fact before us, we can judge whether those do not wrest the words of Paul, who represent him as teaching the abolition of all the ten commandments. Paul tells the Ephesians that he had kept back nothing that was profitable to them. Acts.20:20. If therefore the moral law had been abolished, Paul must have revealed this important fact to them. What then must the Ephesians have thought when Paul wrote them four years later, appealing to the Decalogue, and not to his apostolic authority, to enforce the duty of children to their parents? Paul was never guilty of such inconsistency; it belongs only to those who teach the abolition of the ten commandments.

"Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." Rom.3:31. This text has been already quoted as concluding Paul's argument on redemption through the death of Christ. We quote it again to give Paul an opportunity to speak explicitly on the question before us. No one of the apostles has treated so largely upon the doctrine of justification by faith as the apostle Paul. But lest any should conclude from the earnest manner in which he insists upon this doctrine that he believed the law of God abolished, he asks this very question that he may answer it in the most definite manner. His answer should put to the blush those teachers who represent Paul as

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setting aside, or teaching the abolition of the moral law. "God forbid," says the Apostle, "yea, we establish the law." Nor can an exception be taken to the form of the Apostle's question; for the same word that is rendered "make void" in this verse, is in 2Cor.3:13; Eph.2:15; 2Tim.1:10, rendered "abolished." Paul has therefore rendered a definite answer to the question under consideration. And the

strong language he uses in denying that he taught the abolition of that sacred law, should forever silence those who lay such an accusation against him.

Paul will understand the fact, that, though men now have the offer of pardon through the blood of Christ, the time will arrive when this work of mercy will be finished, and the just penalty of the law of God be inflicted upon all who are then in their sins. Knowing the terror of the Lord, he labored night and day to persuade men to become reconciled unto God, and thus escape the penalty of the law - the second death. Paul affirms that he did not teach the abolition of the law. Who dare affirm that he did? Yes, said he, we establish the law. Who dare deny it?

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, "Thou shalt not covet." Rom.7:7. The conversion of Paul took place some years after the crucifixion of Christ; so that what he says relative to the law of God has direct bearing upon this subject.

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The experience of the Apostle, as here narrated by himself, is a proper example of sound conversion to God. The law of God struck the first blow in Paul's religious experience; and thus it is with all others. The tenth commandment of the decalogue convinced Paul that he was a sinner; and he testifies that had it not been for that precept of the law, he had not known himself a sinner: thus exemplifying his own statement that "by the law is the knowledge of sin," showing that the law is God's great standard of right.

The remainder of chapter 7 exhibits the powerful struggle of Paul, as an awakened sinner, to keep the law of God. He is constrained to call the law holy, and the commandment holy and just and good; and he testifies that it is by the commandment that sin becomes exceeding sinful. He adds that the law is spiritual, but that he is carnal, sold under sin. His language depicts in the most striking manner the power of the carnal mind. Notwithstanding he approved the holiness and excellence of the law of God, he was earned, sold under sin, and unable to render acceptable obedience to its precepts. The other law of sin in his members baffled all his efforts to keep the law of God. In despair he flies to Christ for refuge and help. He obtains forgiveness of his past transgression of the law of God, through faith in the great propitiation for sin; he is delivered from the carnal mind - that other law of sin in the members - and grace is given

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him, that he may hereafter render acceptable obedience to the law of God. Rom. 8:1-4.

The guilt of transgression, and the just condemnation of the law, are now gone; Paul is under grace; the law of God is now placed in his heart; and he manifests his love to God by keeping his commandments. The first part of Romans 8, presents this happy change. This narration of the Apostle's experience strikingly illustrates the word of David: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." Several important truths are clearly brought to view by this portion of scripture.

1. The law of God has not been abolished; for here is direct testimony that it existed in its full strength, several years after the crucifixion.

2. The law here referred to is the decalogue; for Paul quotes its tenth precept. Nor can this be evaded by saying that Paul quoted from the law of Christ. (1.) The words purport to come from "the law:" an expression never used with reference to the words of Christ. (2.) The words in verse 7 are a *literal quotation* from the decalogue; but as Christ never used the expression, they are not a quotation from his words. (3.) There is direct proof in verses 22 and 25 that Paul quotes from "the law of God."

3. The law of God is his standard of holy principles; if these were abolished, sin could not be known.

4. The law of God began Paul's experience. If that were abolished, there could be no Christian experience, for there could be no knowledge of sin,

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the Apostle being judge. Rom.3:20; 4:15; 7:7.

5. "Sin by the commandment" becomes exceeding sinful." Verse 13. The reference to the law and the commandment, in this chapter cannot be mistaken. No one will attempt to deny that Paul refers directly to the decalogue, using the tenth commandment as a representative of all the rest. The sin forbidden by each of the commandments, becomes "exceeding sinful" when viewed in their holy light. How great, then, must be the guilt of those who openly desecrate the fourth commandment, after they have once been enlightened respecting it by the word of God!

Finally, the great design of the gospel is to deliver fallen man from the just condemnation of the law of God, and to place him where he may fulfill the righteousness of the law. "The Law reveals and makes us know What duties to our God we owe; But 'tis the Gospel must reveal Where lies our strength to do his will."

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil." 1John3:4-8.

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This text is worthy of careful examination. Let us notice some important truths here presented.

1. The New Testament definition of sin is here given: "Sin is the transgression of the law." Every sinner is a transgressor of the law of God.

2. John establishes the fact that this is the original law of God, by the statement that Christ was "manifested to take away our sins;" (transgressions of the law;) thus showing that it was a law which existed, and was transgressed prior to the first advent.

3. In Christ there was no sin; no transgression of the law. This ought forever to silence those who affirm that Christ broke the fourth commandment.

4. "Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins." Those who think that Christ was manifested to take away the law of his Father, would do well to consider this verse. He was manifested to take away (not the law of God, but)

sin, the transgression of law. If Christ was manifested to take away the law, it follows that to remove our transgression, he took away the law which he had transgressed: thus showing that he had a greater dislike to the law of his Father than he had to sin, the transgression of that law! But how did Christ take away sins? "He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Heb.9:26. He shed his own blood as a propitiation for the sins of men: thus honoring the law of God, and opening to guilty man a way of escape.

5. "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not;" that

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is, whosoever abideth in Christ, doth not transgress the law. This is a truth of the deepest importance to those who think that the law is made void by faith, or done away by the gospel. Not a few who understandingly break the fourth commandment, quiet their consciences with the thought that Christ is their Saviour. Let such remember that none abide in Christ, who understandingly transgress the law of God. In this matter of vital importance, the Apostle utters a solemn warning: "Let no man deceive you: he that *doeth* righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin (transgresseth the law of God) is of the devil; "All thy commandments" says the Psalmist, "are righteousness." Ps.119:172. Every violation of the law is sin. Those who understandingly transgress the law of God, to use the severe language of the beloved disciple, are "of the devil." To break any one of the commandments of God constitutes a man a sinner, and exposes him to the penalty of the law - Rom.6:23; Eze.18:4,20;Rev.20:14,15.

"My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only but for the sins of the whole world." 1John2:1,2. We have already listened to John's definition of sin, and have learned that it is the "transgression of the law." Many affirm that this is the law of Christ. In the text before us we have

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the means of deciding this point. John begins by exhorting those to whom he writes, not to sin; that is, not to transgress the law. He adds, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Then it is God the Father whose law is broken, and with whom an advocate is needed, by the sinner. There is one Law-giver, whose holy law has been broken by all mankind; and there is one Mediator between that Law-giver and the transgressor. James4:12; Rom.3:19,23; 1Tim.2:5,6. The *one* Law-giver is God the Father; the *one* Mediator is our Lord Jesus Christ. If Christ were the Law-giver, then our mediator must be between Christ and us. But instead of this, God the Father is the being whose law has been transgressed, and Jesus is the great High Priest between that broken law and its guilty transgressors. And this fact is confirmed by the next sentence: "He is the propitiation of our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Then Jesus stands between the Law-giver and the sinner, not only as an advocate, mediator and High Priest, but also as the propitiation for the sins of men. In other words, he is the great Sacrifice offered for man's transgression of the law of God.

How deeply interesting is the thought that in the temple of God in heaven, where the ark containing the law of God abides, we have a great High Priest, who has once offered himself for our transgression of that

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free pardon of all our transgressions. Rev.11:19; Heb.8:1-3.

To the professed people of God who still violate his law, we would address a word of exhortation and entreaty. "As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God." The carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to his law. Pray that God may deliver you from it. Would you possess that charity or perfect love, so fully described in 1Cor.13, which is the fulfilling of the law? Then heed the words of the apostle John: "This is the love of God that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous." 1John5:3.

The fourth commandment has long been trodden down, but under the latest message of mercy to men, the people of God are seen keeping all his commandments and the faith or testimony of Jesus Christ. Rev.14:9-12. Will you not be of this number? The dragon is yet to make war upon this remnant of the church; but he shall not prevail. Rev.12:17. The last testimony respecting the commandment-keepers is given by the Son of God in Rev.22:14. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." This is the fruition of our blessed hope, shortly to be realized.