

The Law of God by Gilbert Cranmer

“The Law of God. Synopsis of a Sermon, Delivered at Brandawine Conference,” *The Hope of Israel, 16 May 1864, p. 3*

I have been requested, by some of the world's people, to tell why we differ from the rest of mankind, in keeping sacred the Seventh day, instead of the First. But one discourse is not sufficient to give all the reasons. Volumes might be written, and yet the subject not be exhausted. And why? Because it is a Bible subject. It has been written about by men instructed in the school of heaven, for thousands of years. I can therefore only glance at it today.

I am sorry matters stand in the world as they do. No doubt angels in heaven feel to weep because God's people are not united. That his disciples might be one, was the burden of the teachings and prayers of Jesus. Division causes faith to leave the earth, and Infidelity to abound. But the cause is not in the Bible. Infidels have compared it to an old fiddle upon which we can play any tune we please. But the old fiddle is in man's head, not in God's Book. The God of the Bible is a God of order, and he cannot repeal his Law.

No matter where we choose a starting point on this subject, as the Bible is full of it. But we will take the language of Paul, Acts 24:14.

„But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.”

This was spoken at least 27 years after Christ. The Jews claimed that Paul was opposing, and trying to overthrow the doctrines of their fathers. But, Paul is pleading his own case, and denies the charge. They claimed that the doctrine of Christ and the resurrection was also a heresy. But Paul was worshipping the same God Abraham worshiped; the God of Sinai, who gave the law. And he gave them to understand that he believed 'all the law and the prophets'.

Jesus was also accused of the same thing that Paul was. But he says, Luke 16:17, “It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.” And God says, “My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.” He never speaks at random; and never has to take back his word. And Paul declares that he taught no new doctrine. But he bore witness to both small and great, saying none other things than those which Moses and the prophets did say should come to pass. He was introduction no new theory.

The New Testament is not a new code of laws. It only magnifies the Old, and makes it plain. Remember the words of our text were spoken 27 years after Christ. Many say the law was done away. Yet Paul is here advocating 'the law and the prophets.'

Some claim that they keep the first day because the Apostles kept it. But this is not true. We find but one instance on record where they met on the first day of the week. And as we have a full history of their ministry, if it was their custom to meet for worship on that day, we certainly should have some account of it. But the Apostles have given none. Only the one instance has come down to us. And then Paul was about to leave for a far country. He was about to part with his brethren, and to be

exposed to dangers and death. He was called to break bread with them for the last time. But we have not a hint given that that day was a Sabbath.

But, now, we enquire, WHAT WAS THEIR CUSTOM? They did meet for worship. But, on what day? We see that it was not on the first day. God has not left us to guess at this, nor at any other point of doctrine. But faith rests on infallible testimony. And now, we enquire, What was Paul's manner? And we find that it was his manner, or custom, on the Sabbath to teach, and reason out of the Scriptures - Acts 17:1, 2. Now, turn to Acts, 18:1. Here he was among Gentiles. He found two Gentile believers, and abode with them. And while with them he worked at tent making. But he did not stop preaching. He preached every Sabbath, for 34 years, to Jews and Greeks. If the first day of the week was sacred, why did not Paul preach at least once on that day? But, we do not find that he did. Paul worked on that day. Among Jews and Gentiles, wherever he went, the Sabbath was his day for worship. And this was the custom of the primitive Church.

Many positions are taken with regard to the Law. Some claim that the sanctity of the seventh day was removed to the first day. Others claim that the entire law of Ten Commandments is abolished. I heard one minister say, "We have no Sabbath. The typical law, and the Ten Commandments were all done away at the crucifixion." "But," said he farther, "If you can establish the position that there are TWO LAWS, separate and distinct from each other, you establish the Sabbath; for, only one law was done away at the crucifixion."

Now, I can prove there are two laws. The Law of 'Ten Commandments' are the great moral standard of truth. Nations have tried to frame their constitutions after that law. It is the only code of morality man ever had. It is the root and ground of all morality. No sin is committed that is not a violation of that law. All admit that no man could be a moral man, who did not keep at least nine of these Commandments.

[Here Br. C. read and commented on each of the 'Ten Commandments,' separately].

All agree on nine of these of these precepts. But, can we not be Christians and not keep the tenth? James says, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." He don't say which. But if we offend in one point, all are broken. Suppose I keep all the laws of the State of Michigan for 30 years, and then steal a horse? I have broken the law, and must pay the penalty in State's Prison. But, God does not so. He does not send men to purgatory. No. But, sin is a transgression of the law"; and, the wages of sin is death".

Concluded in our next.