

WHAT THE GOSPEL ABROGATED.

BY ELD. D. M. CANRIGHT.

TEXTS: "Do we, then, make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." Rom. 3:31.

"Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances." Eph. 2:15.

BOTH these texts are in the New Testament, and both were written by the same apostle; yet one asserts that the law has not been abolished by Christ, and the other declares as positively that the law has been abolished. How is this seeming contradiction to be reconciled? By the simple fact that Paul is speaking of two entirely different laws. The first text relates to the decalogue; the second, to the typical law.

Numerous passages in the New Testament clearly speak of the abolition of a law at the death of Christ. If there were not two laws, then not only the ceremonial law but the ten commandments and all the moral precepts of the Old Testament were done away by Christ. But is it reasonable that God should abolish such precepts as these: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart," "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," "Thou shalt not kill," etc.?

We will now show that there were two systems of law running parallel from the fall of Adam to the death of Christ, at which time one expired, while the other was confirmed.

In the beginning, man was placed upon probation under such conditions that he could have secured eternal life by

simple obedience to God. Adam was given free access to the tree of life and all the trees, except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Gen. 2:8-17. As long as he could continue to eat of the tree of life, just so long he would live. Gen. 3:22. The day of his death would not come till the day that he ate of the forbidden fruit. Had he never disobeyed God, he never would have died. But death came in consequence of sin. Rom. 5:12.

If, therefore, man had been obedient to his Creator, he would have secured eternal life by that obedience. Then Christ need not have died to save men; and none of the types and sacrifices of the Old Testament, pointing to the death of Christ, would ever have been instituted. But men having become sinners, it thereby became necessary that Christ should die to redeem them; and as it was to be many ages before the Saviour would come, it became necessary to offer sacrifices as types and shadows of the death of Christ, thereby to show their faith in the coming Redeemer. To offer a sacrifice they must have an altar upon which to offer it, and a priest properly set apart to officiate at the altar; this priest must be supported; and, finally, a temple with all its ceremonies became necessary. To regulate all these, a law was needed. Hence the introduction of the law relating to types and shadows, commonly called the ceremonial law.

The least reflection will show that this law never would have existed if man had not previously transgressed the other, the moral law. Many references to both these laws may be found even in Genesis. Abel offered sacrifices. Gen. 4:4. Noah built an altar and offered upon it burnt-offerings. Gen. 8:20. So did Abraham. Gen. 12:7, 8. Melchizedek "was the priest of the most high God," Gen. 14:18, whom Abraham honored, and to whom he paid tithes. Verse 20. This shows that at an early day the Lord had regularly ordained priests and a law for their proper maintenance.

References to the moral law, the ten commandments, are also found in Genesis. See chap. 2:1-3; 4:8-11; 9:22-25; 20:6-9; 31:30-32; 35:1, 2; 39:17-20, etc.

DISTINCTION IN THE GIVING OF THE TWO LAWS.

Evidently, the Lord designed to mark a plain distinction between the two laws by the very manner in which he gave them to the people. The decalogue was given in the following manner: 1. God himself spoke it from Heaven with his own voice. Deut. 4:12, 13. 2. He wrote it twice with his own finger. Ex. 31:18; 34:1. 3. He engraved it upon stone. Ex. 32:16. 4. It was placed in the ark in the most holy place. Ex. 25:16, 22; Deut. 10:1-5.

Now notice how differently the other law was given: 1. Moses wrote it out with his own hand. See Ex. 24:15-18; Deut. 31:9, 24. 2. Moses wrote it in a book of parchment. Deut. 31:24. 3. Moses spoke this law to the people. Deut. 1:3-5. 4. This book of the law was then put in the side of the ark. Deut. 31:24-26.

Thus we see that there was one law in the ark, and another outside the ark; one law on the tables of stone, another in the book; one law written by God, another by Moses; one law spoken by God, another by Moses; one law relating to moral duties, and another to ceremonial ordinances. Who will deny the existence of two laws when the distinction is so plain? And this distinction is everywhere kept up, both in the Old and in the New Testament. Thus, in 2 Kings 21:8, the Lord says, I will establish them "if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them,"—a plain distinction between the two. So Neh. 9:13, 14, says that God spoke from Heaven "right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments." Then the prophet adds, "and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses, thy servant." Here we have, first, one set of laws, spoken by the voice of God; then, secondly, another set of laws by the hand of Moses. This makes it certain that there were two laws given to the people.

In the New Testament the same distinction is always recognized. When circumcision is spoken of, it is called "the law of Moses;" Acts 15 : 5; but when the decalogue is spoken of, it is called "the law of God." Rom. 7 : 7, 22. Every passage which speaks of a law being done away refers to the typical law, never to the ten commandments. The whole typical system pointed directly to Christ. Col. 2 : 14-17. When he came, in the very nature of things it must cease. But why should any moral precept be done away there?

In Acts 15 it is plainly taught that there was a certain "law" abolished by the gospel. But it is just as plainly declared to be "the law of Moses" relating to circumcision. Verse 5. The book of Galatians also teaches the abrogation of a law. Here again it is the one touching circumcision; chap. 2 : 1-3; 5 : 2, 3, 11; the one relating to eating; chap. 2 : 11-14; and that which "was added because of transgressions, till the seed [Christ] should come." Chap. 3 : 19. Eph. 2 : 15, says that Christ abolished the law of "ordinances." Col. 2 : 14-17, speaks of "blotting out the handwriting of ordinances," "which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." It is the typical law, then, that was abolished. All the items mentioned, the meat, drink, the feast days, the new moons, and the yearly sabbaths, are found in the ceremonial law. See Lev. 23. Paul, in Hebrews, plainly tells us what law was done away. It was the law relating to the priesthood; chap. 7 : 12; to the temple; chap. 9 : 1-8; to the sacrifices, chap. 10 : 1-5; and to "meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances." Chap. 9 : 10.

That the reader may appreciate more fully the contrast between the two laws, I have drawn up the following table of comparison between what is said of the moral law of God, the ten commandments, and what is said of the law of types. The moral law we will call No. 1, and the ceremonial law No. 2.

THE TWO LAWS COMPARED.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1 | { | No. 1—Existed in Eden, before the fall.
No. 2—Was given after the fall. |
| 2 | { | No. 1—Was broken in the first transgression.
No. 2—Was given in consequence of that transgression of No. 1. Gal. 3 : 19. |
| 3 | { | No. 1—Relates only to moral duties. Ex. 20.
No. 2—Is wholly ceremonial. Heb. 9 : 10. |
| 4 | { | No. 1—Was spoken by God. Deut. 4 : 12.
No. 2—Spoken by Moses. Deut. 1 : 1-6. |
| 5 | { | No. 1—Was written by God. Ex. 31 : 18.
No. 2—Was written by Moses. Deut. 31 : 9. |
| 6 | { | No. 1—Was engraved upon stone. Deut. 4 : 13.
No. 2—Was written in a book. Deut. 31 : 24. |
| 7 | { | No. 1—Was placed in the ark. Deut. 10 : 5.
No. 2—Was put in the side of the ark. Deut. 31 : 26. |
| 8 | { | No. 1—Was "right," "true," and "good."
Neh. 9 : 13.
No. 2—Was "not good." Eze. 20 : 25. |
| 9 | { | No. 1—Was a law "which if a man do, he shall even live in" it. Eze. 20 : 11.
No. 2—Was a law whereby they should "not live." Eze. 20 : 25. |
| How could these possibly be the same law ? | | |
| 10 | { | No. 1—Was perfect. Ps. 19 : 7.
No. 2—Made nothing perfect. Heb. 7 : 19. |

- 11 { No. 1—Christ did not come to destroy. Matt. 5:17.
No. 2—He abolished. Eph. 2:15.
- 12 { No. 1—Is to endure while heaven and earth stand. Matt. 5:18.
No. 2—Passed away when the seed came. Gal. 3:19.
- 13 { Of No. 1 Christ said, Whoever shall break the least one of its precepts shall be condemned. Matt. 5:19.
Of No. 2 the apostle said, "We gave no such commandment" that "ye should keep the law." Acts 15:24.
- 14 { No. 1—Is "the law of liberty." Jas. 2:12.
No. 2—Is a "yoke of bondage." Gal. 5:1.
- 15 { No. 1—The apostle delighted in. Rom. 7:22.
No. 2—Was a yoke which could not be borne. Acts 15:10.
- 16 { No. 1—Is established by faith. Rom. 3:31.
No. 2—Was abolished by the cross. Eph. 2:15.

How could the same law be abolished, and not abolished, at the same time?

- 17 { No. 1—Is "spiritual." Rom. 7:14.
No. 2—Is "carnal." Heb. 7:16.

Can the same law be both spiritual and carnal at the same time? Yes; if white is black, and black is white.

- 18 { No. 1—Is holy, just, and good. Rom. 7:12.
No. 2—Is called "the enmity," "that was against us, which was contrary to us." Col. 2:14.

- 19 { No. 1—Contains the whole duty of man. Eccl. 12:13.
No. 2—"Stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances." Heb. 9:10.
- 20 { No. 1—Was written by nature in the heart of the Gentiles. Rom. 2:14.
No. 2—Was a wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles. Eph. 2:14, 15.
- 21 { No. 1—Was "the royal law." Jas. 2:8.
No. 2—Was the law of Moses. Acts 15:10.
- 22 { No. 1—Jesus came to magnify and make honorable. Isa. 42:21.
No. 2—He disannulled. Heb. 7:18.
- 23 { No. 1—Is to be kept with the faith of Jesus. Rev. 14:12.
No. 2—Is superseded by the faith of Jesus. Gal. 3:19-25.
- 24 { No. 1—Must be kept as a condition of eternal life. Matt. 19:16-19.
No. 2—Is not a standard of character. Rom. 2:25-27.
- 25 { No. 1—Is the law by which the world will be judged. Jas. 2:12.
No. 2—Will judge no man. Col. 2:16.

This list might be greatly extended, but the above points of contrast are sufficient to show that all inspired writers have recognized and noted the distinction between the two laws, the moral and ceremonial. The gospel, then, abrogated only the typical law.

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