

AN INTERESTING QUESTION ANSWERED.

WHY ARE WE NOT SUBJECT TO THE LAW?

Question.--Please make some further comments on the relationship of the Jewish Law Covenant to the Israelites, and explain why you assert that we are not subject to its provisions.

Answer.--The Law given by Moses was good in every sense of the word, but the Covenant to which it was attached was one which was insufficient to meet the necessities of mankind, weak through the fall and incompetent to keep the perfect Law. The original law given was written in man's very nature when he was created perfect, in the image of God, and when his conscience was a sufficient criterion of judgment as respects the right and wrong of any matter. God's Covenant with Adam was one of eternal life based on continued obedience, and any infraction of that Covenant meant death. God's law to Israel, under the Mosaic covenant, implied that all who were thus in Moses as the mediator of that covenant, were reckoned as lifted out from the remainder of mankind, and as separated from the sentence of death upon the race in general through Adam. This was to the intent that Israel might have a fresh trial. But because of the imperfections of their flesh, Israel was unable to keep the Law of their Covenant, and hence unable to keep their share of the covenant and thus came under a special sentence of death-- for that Law Covenant, which they thought would be unto life, they found worked death.

The New Covenant differs from the Mosaic Covenant specially in its provision that God will be merciful to those under it, whereas under the Mosaic Covenant he proposed simply to be just. Israel could not gain any special blessing under a covenant of justice, but whoever comes under the New Covenant of mercy obtains a great favor.

The New Covenant, as we have seen, differs from the Mosaic Covenant in placing its subjects under mercy instead of under justice. It has also a higher Mediator, one who was able to compensate justice and thus to extend mercy without infracting the Law. It was also established by better sacrifices--by the antitypes of bulls and goats, which were the sacrifices which sealed the New Covenant. While the Law of the New Covenant is in many respects the same in substance as the Law of Moses' Covenant, it nevertheless is a higher statement of that Law, and in full harmony with all the other higher features of the New Covenant. The highest statement of the New Covenant is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, strength and being, and thy neighbor as thyself," and although this highest statement of the divine Law was made known to Israel under Moses, they could not from their standpoint comprehend that statement of the Law, and a lower statement of the same Law was given them as a part of the Law of their Covenant, namely, the Ten Commandments.

Those Ten Commandments have nothing whatever to do with the New Covenant, sealed with the precious blood of Christ, nor with the spiritual Israel accepted of God under that New Covenant. Indeed we may properly say that although the Ten Commandments were suitable enough to the House of Servants, our heavenly Father would not insult any of his children by addressing to them the language of the Ten Commandments. When we remember that the New Covenant and its Law applies only at the present time to the new creatures in Christ Jesus, who know that they have passed from death unto life because they love the brethren, and who know that they are the children of God because they have received his spirit of adoption, then we are prepared to see that it would be wholly incongruous for the heavenly Father, who has already accepted them in the Beloved One, to address to these the language of the decalogue.

How hurt the consecrated people of God might properly feel to have the heavenly Father address them, saying, "Thou shalt not kill!" They would look up to the Father in sorrow, saying, "Dear heavenly Father, we have received of your spirit of love and have no longer the spirit of hatred and murder." Similarly with all the various charges of the decalogue, proper to the House of Servants: they would all be insulting to the House of Sons, implying that they were not sons and had not received of the Father's spirit and were not accepted of him in the [R3722 : page 47] Beloved, for Love worketh no ill to his neighbor.

The fourth commandment is no different from the others of the ten. It is on a lower plane than would be proper for the House of Sons, and consequently was never given to them. It merely commands rest from labor, but under the comprehensive law of love to God and man, and through the possession of the Father's Spirit, the new creatures in Christ Jesus have a higher rest than had the natural Israelites. Ours is a rest of faith and trust in God, and in Christ our Lord through whom he is working all things according to the counsel of his own will. Ever since Pentecost this rest of the people of God, as it pertains even to the present life, is perpetual, and not merely one day out of seven.