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## The Attitude of Paul toward the Law.

The attitude of the Apostle Paul toward the legalism under which he received his early training is a question of vital importance to the Bible student of today. Upon this depends to a very large degree the correct interpretation of the epistles of the great apostle to the Gentiles. If we can see the place and position of the law and ceremonies of Israel in the economy of human training as Paul saw it, we can hope to reproduce in a measure his motives and thoughts while writing the letters, which for nearly two thousand years have played so prominent a part in Christian history, and which have impressed all

Christian literature with the individuality of  
 one man, even making Theology in a  
 great measure Paulocentric. If we fail  
 to discover Pauls attitude toward the  
 law the things which were "hard to  
 be understood" even to Peter (2Pet. 3:16)  
 cannot fail to be to us a source of  
 constant stumbling and continuing  
 error. Just in proportion as we see  
 as he saw and feel as he felt will  
 we be able to understand his epistles  
 and interpret his gospel in har-  
 mony with that of Christ, as reveal-  
 ed in the writings of the evangelists.

Naturally, the first question to  
 be settled is, How does Paul use the  
 term "law"? Does it refer to the  
 whole body of Mosaic institutions or  
 only to the decologue, the moral law  
 of Israel? It is quite evident that  
 Paul referred to the whole law. ὁ νόμος  
 including everything given for the

religious instruction of Israel. In Romans II 13 it is the doers of the law who are justified. Under the law all the world becomes guilty before God. (Rom. III-19) The law is spiritual, (Rom. VII-14), is good (Rom VII-16), and he who is under the law is a debtor to do the whole law. (Gal I, 3) These and other references show that the term is applied to the ceremonial and moral requirements of the Israelites.

Not are the instances where Paul refers to the decalogue exceptions to this rule. Though he makes specific references to certain crimes as proof that "the law" had been broken, and that its condemnation was upon the transgressor, yet he never destructively separates the moral and ceremonial in the law into two parts ~~or~~ teaches that the one remains while the other has passed away. Christ is the end of the

whole law, and not of any parts of it. The follower of Christ is "free" from the whole law, whether given in the moral or ceremonial enactments.

Next we notice the purpose of the law. Here the change between Saul the Pharasee, and Paul the Apostle is greatest. In youth Saul saw in the law salvation. It contained all things necessary to give the favor of God both for time and eternity. The son of Israel was saved because of his relationship to Abraham, whose covenant with God secured salvation for his descendants, and gave them certain priveleges to them through the Mosaic law.

But in the height of his zeal for Pharasaic traditions Paul meets Christ on the Damascus road and as the scales drop from his eyes giving him physical sight again,

so the scales drop from his spiritual eyes giving him spiritual vision. He now sees that he, and with him all Israel, has misconceived the purpose of the law. ~~Paul~~ <sup>Paul</sup> had believed that the law had been given to Israel, he discovers that it was given to educate Israel and the world. Paul had believed that the law had come to make the seed of Abraham righteous, he now discovers that its purpose was to prove that they were sinners and to stand as a mediator between their ignorance and their realization of sin, and finally to prove that both Jew and Greek were helplessly bound in the prison house of sin, where they must "grind at the mill" or "suffer in the stocks" until the penalty had been exacted in full, or until the prisoner had received a pardon from God for the sins of life.

6

We can therefore assert that Paul discovered this threefold purpose in the law.

(I) It was to be the mediator between the condition of ignorance and the realization of sin.

II It was to be the pedagogos of the child, who was yet in his period of growth and education.

III It was to prove that all were sinners living under condemnation, and, bound and helpless, were held in the pitiless grasp of sin.

IV This purpose being accomplished the law was to be again superseded by the covenant of promise which was both its predecessor and successor.

Such a view of the purpose of the Sinaiitic revelation is so different from what one naturally expects to find in a man trained from infancy to regard the law as the pride of Israel, and the only means of salvation

that it is almost beyond us to realize the gulf across which the apostle has been carried in such a short a time. Not only has his moral barriers been raised, but he has been carried to a mountain summit in his mental life from which he can view not only the land of spiritual Canaan, but also can trace the route through the desert and through the Red Sea, into the darkness of Egypt from which the race has been led by the pillar of fire and cloud, as represented in the Covenant of Abraham and the Decalogue of Moses. He can also see the time when the promised land has been occupied and all are enjoying the pleasant and healing rays of the "Sun of Righteousness," as the legal darkness of Judaism gives way to the incoming light of Christ.

Let us now take a glance at these

several phases of purpose as shown in the advancing revelation of law.

I The law as a mediator between ignorant sinfulness, and the actual realization of sin.

That man is not what he ought to be is proclaimed by the moral consciousness. Even the Gentile could recognize, by nature, the innate principles of the law, and could obey its requirements though ignorant of them (Rom 2-14). The Jews had passed through the condition in which the apostle found the Gentiles at Athens, where he proclaims that God (Acts 17-29) had overlooked the times of ignorance but that now He commands men everywhere to repent. The ease with which the sons of the patriarchs fell away from the covenant of Abraham indicates a state of moral ignorance in which it was

impossible to give the Covenant of Promise any practical value to a race which had little if any actual realization of the depravity of its own heart. Hence the descendants of him who received the Covenant of Promise are brought under the shadows of Sinai and made to face the terrific storms that shake its rugged rocks, while the law is thundered into their ears and they are forced to feel that it is a terrible thing to fall into the hand of Jehovah. Following this comes the fearful punishments inflicted by the law upon those who dared its wrath until finally they discover that sin against God brings upon them his wrath. They look into the law as a mirror and discover what sin is; they look into their own natures and discover that they are, and have been, sinners. Through the law their ig-

vorant sinfulness has become a realized sinfulness, which cannot be excused, but which must be punished with many stripes.

(2) Standing in this condition of realized sinfulness the law mediates still further. Now it takes the place of Nathan the prophet and it describes and catalogues the various offenses against which the wrath of Jehovah has been revealed. The listening David responds: "The law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good. (Rom 7-12) "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this shall surely die" (II Sam. 12: 5) Then Nathan says to David: "Thou art the man." David can only exclaim, "I have sinned against the Lord," for in consenting unto the law that it is good (Rom 7-16) he has convicted himself and stands trembling before the judgement seat of God. He no longer

has any excuse. The law has brought the knowledge of the actual condition of the sinful heart.

## II The Law as a Pedagogos.

Again we discover that the Apostle looked upon the law as the guardian, the pedagogos of those whom its commands had led from ignorant sinfulness to actual transgression. Sin is revealed. Its darkness covers the soul. The wrath of God can alone be discovered. The law now takes the transgressor by the hand and endeavors to lead him out of the gloom, out of the shadow of Divine wrath into the light of faith. Wherefore the law is become our pedagogos to lead us to Christ.

The law resembles the pedagogos,

(1) In its preparatory work.

The slave who constantly attended the Greek child had authority over him in order that he might be prepared for

the position which should be revealed for  
 him as he entered manhood. This slave  
 was expected to so instruct the boy under  
 his charge that his mind and body  
 would be prepared to enter his inheritance  
 and keep up the honor and fortunes of  
 his family. In regard to the Jews, the law  
 held a similar relation. The law was  
 intended to prepare the nation for the  
 revelations of God's mercy which should  
 be shown them in Christ. It was  
 expected to so train them that they  
 should be prepared to enter at once the  
 inheritance of faith in Christ. The  
 ethical training the pedagogue gave  
 the heir was small in compar-  
 ison to that which the law gave  
 the Jew, yet the preparatory work was  
 similar in both. The one prepared  
 the young Greek, body and mind,  
 for his inheritance, - Greek citizenship;  
 the other prepared Israel and the world

for their inheritance, — adoption into the family of the redeemed sons of God.

(2) The law resembled the pedagogue in its irksomeness.

Obedience laid a heavy hand upon the young Greek heir. His father's slave gave him commands which must be obeyed. Obeying these commands forced upon him an activity, which caused a fatigue often bordering upon exhaustion. The same was true of the law. Its exactions were burdensome. It caused war to be declared in the soul of man. It found "another law in his members warring against the law of his mind and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin" (Rom 7-21) It demanded sacrifices, and tithes and harvest offerings and redemption fees until the Israelite was overburdened with its demands. Yet even when he discovered — that "neither he nor his fathers were able

to bear its yoke, he could not escape. No wonder he could exclaim: O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver from this body of death Rom 7:25.

(3) Yet in another respect the law resembled the pedagogue. Its authority was temporary. The authority of the pedagogue ended as the youth assumed the toga, the authority of the law ended with the revelation of righteousness by faith in Christ. The work is finished. The law has led the nation to the Christ. The heir entering his inheritance exclaims: I through the law am dead to the law that I might live unto God. (Gal 2:19).

III. It was to prove that all were sinners living under condemnation, and bound and helpless, were held in the pitiless grasp of sin.

Here again the purpose of the

law as seen by the Apostle differed from that of the Jews. The Israelite, boasting of his relation to Abraham, had taught himself to believe that the possession of the law made him a better man than the Gentile, who had not the law. In his mind to be an Israelite was equivalent to being a son of God, and to be a Gentile was to be a sinner. The Apostle discovers that the law does not give the Jew an advantage over the Gentile without cooperation on his part, but was designed to show him his sinfulness; to give him a clearer view of the consequences of sin than it was possible for the Gentile to have. The law was the mirror in which sin could be seen in all its hideousness, and which revealed to all who looked there-in that this moral plague was upon the whole race.

Not only so, but Paul asserted

that the law, by proclaiming what God required of man, became an occasion of sin. It stirred up the pool of humanity and all the dregs of man's rebellious nature came to the surface in actual transgression. He says: "Sin taking occasion by the commandment wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me (Rom 7: 7-11). Thus the very thing which the Jew thought was the seal of his purity became the proof of his condemnation, as it increased actual transgression. And not only increased

it, but showed him that there was no escape from its curse. Standing before him he saw as it were in letters of fire; "Cursed is every one that con-  
 sumeth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them. Thus as Sabbatier says: "Actual realization of sin is the primary end of the law. It is an essential factor in the development of the plan of sal-  
 vation. The law was designed to car-  
 ry sin to the height of its power and its extreme consequences. It had this function to fulfil up till the time of the coming of the seed of Abraham, - viz. Christ.

Such being the Apostle's conception of the design of the law, we do not wonder that he should say: "It gendereth bondage" (Gal 4:23). It was added because of transgression, (Gal 3-19). And that he should call it "the works and beggarly

elements" when reproaching the dissenting  
 Galatians. Gal. 4-9.

#### IV The law transitory.

With the coming of Christ the mission of the law ceased. Its prisoners were handed over to Him to be pardoned. Christ by removing the curse was to make salvation possible, not through the law but in spite of it. Hence while Paul nowhere teaches that the law has been an injury to the race, he does teach that "holy" though the law is, man is better off when its mission has been accomplished and the dispensation of grace begun. Hence he places in contrast the results of the law of Israel and the law of grace. The former produces bondage, the latter freedom. The former, transgression, the latter, obedience. The former, cursing, the latter, blessing. The former, condemnation, the latter jus-

tification. The former, death, the latter life. The law stirring up the carnal nature increases the works of the flesh, but grace walking in the Spirit produces the fruit against which there is no law.

We conclude, therefore, that the Apostle Paul believed that the Gospel of Christ had succeeded the law of Israel. That both Jew and Gentile were now to be led and to be judged, not by that legal code of Moses, but by the law of Christ. Law was no longer to stir up rebellion in human hearts, but love and mercy were to remove them, and implant the Spirit of Christ instead. The law of Moses is not to be looked upon as opposing the gospel, but rather as the voice in the wilderness crying: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord and his paths"

straight.

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