

Original Contributions.

"Ye Are Not Under Law, But Under Grace."

REPLY TO ELDER S. C. ADAMS BY R. H. MOSS.

NUMBER III.

The next misapplication that I notice is in his heading, Paul does not say statutory or commanded law. It is evident that Paul speaks of the law of Moses, and the laws of the Gospel or of grace, and contrasts them very frequently, in the Roman letter, as in other of his epistles. Had there not been a law of grace there could not have been any contrast. Paul means by law in Romans sixth chapter the law of Moses, for in the seventh chapter sixth verse he says, "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held," and I unhesitatingly affirm that that is the only kind of law that God has given to man, from which Christians are said, by an inspired utterance, to be free.

Under the heading "Mistakes will Happen," Bro. Adams has put in quotation marks what he calls Paul's "scriptural statement," that Christians are not under commandatory or statutory law. I think it is not usual for writers to put their own propositions in quotation marks, and then say they are another's. If Paul had made such a statement Bro. Adams would not have to prove it to a Christian. His series of articles are conclusive against his proposition. I have noticed enough of his quotations and applications of Scripture to show that the articles under review are not reliable in these respects. I now proceed to call attention to other particulars in which they are at fault.

I never yet read an author, or conversed with a man, who held that men could be "made good by law." This looks like a man of straw. The nearest I have come to reading it is in No. 4, "A perfect law will certainly make a perfect man." I very much doubt it. I am certain that law will never punish anyone. If there is no power behind the law to enforce it no one will be punished. It is true that men cannot be made good by law alone. It is also true that "statutory and commanded law" cannot produce all the effects in men's hearts needed to make them good. But so far are they from being "weak and beggarly," that they are very powerful and indis-

pensable adjuncts in the work. God has ever so used them. Christ, the great head of the church, so uses them. They must be so used in all successful family government.

I do not think that a good, true character can be formed without them. When good, devoted, earnest Christians, called by their brethren to the responsible position of the eldership, and believing that Christ has given laws for the government of Christians, in the fear of God, and the love of humanity, enforce those laws; I do not think they ought to be stigmatized as "foolish and carnal men," and be falsely accused of "trying to obtain righteousness by law" and to "keep the church pure and godly by law." I affirm that Christians are under both statutory and commanded law. I shall not affirm as to the intelligence of this contradiction of Bro. Adams' proposition I prefer that our readers should as to that, but I shall try to show that it is Scriptural. I suppose that by statutory law is meant the civil law, or law of the State. I shall show by two clear and distinct statements from Scripture, that Christians are under such law. I ask the reader to turn to Rom. 13, and read while I note, "He," or it, (the civil power and its law) "is a minister of God to thee for good," and, "Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection (under the law) not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience sake." Here the State or civil power is declared to be a minister of God to the Christian for good, and he is expressly enjoined to be in subjection to it. This clearly places them under the law of the State or statutory law. The second is also very clear from 1 Peter 2: 13-17, "Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors as sent by him for vengeance on evil doers; and for praise to them that do well. For so is the will of God that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; as free, and not using your freedom for a cloak of wickedness, but as bondservants of God. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king." This is in clear unmistakable language, and direct and explicit contradiction of the proposition of the articles under review. Both the law making and law executing of civil governments are specified, and they are said to be

for the praise of them that do well, *i. e.*, Christians. The will and wisdom of God is, that Christians, by well-doing, (acknowledging their obligation and yielding a willing obedience, to the laws of the State or statutory and commanded law) should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, and that while they claim to be God's free men, they should not use their freedom for a cloak, (to cover the wickedness of adultery or other sin), but as bondservants of God obey also the laws of Christ. This is in sharp contrast to the apparent intention and wisdom of the articles under review. I may say, indeed that it is in "eternal antithesis" to it, "as much unlike it as light and darkness or good and evil."

I shall next show that Christ and the apostles gave commandments to Christians, and that they are hence under commanded law. "For I spake not from myself; but the Father who sent me, he hath given me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life eternal." John 12: 49. This is a very different estimate of the power and virtue of commanded law, from the one I am opposing, and, I think, vastly preferable to it. I do not think that its force can be turned by calling it an antithesis. John 17: 8, shows that Jesus gave this commandment to his apostles, "For the words which thou gavest me I have given unto them." Matt. 28: 20, teaches that this commanded law was to be taught to Christians in order that they might obey it, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The following quotations prove that the apostles obeyed this instruction: 2 Thess. 3: 4, "And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command;" verse 6, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;" verse 12 "Now them that are such we command and exhort." 1 Tim. 4: 11, "These things command and teach." Also 6: 12, "I charge thee in the sight of God * * * that thou keep the commandments without spot, without reproach." Titus 2: 15, "These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority." 2 Peter 2: 21, "To turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them." Also 3: 2, "That ye should remember the words which were spoken be-

fore by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles." I might multiply quotation. I could take other lines of argument and prove as incontestably as these quotations do that Christians are under commanded law. I ask pardon of the reader, for adducing Scripture in proof of so self evident a proposition. I would not have deemed it necessary had not Bro. Adams so repeatedly affirmed the contrary. We are told that Christ by antithesis or opposition said, "If ye love me keep my commandments;" and again, "A new commandment give I unto you that ye love one another." I believe that I know what an antithesis is, and I confess I cannot see anything like one in these expressions. Is it the love and the keeping that are in opposition? Are the new commandments and brotherly love in opposition to each other? Emphatically, no. Where then is the antithesis? There is an antithesis in the expressions, "The law of sin and death," and "The law of the Spirit of life." And the fact is fatal to Bro. Adams' position, for if one was not just as much law as the other, the antithesis could not exist. The commandments of Christ bear their penalties, to be met not in this world only, but also in the next. He is unfortunate in his selection of an illustration, on this point, for it is the entire, and complete significance of the first tabernacle, that it is a figure of the true tabernacle, or church of God. Solomon's temple was gloriously burnished and garnished that it might faintly represent the glory and garniture of the church. Paul says in Hebrews that the holy place made with hands was like in pattern to the true. How can they then be called unlike. This mistake made several times in his articles shows very clearly their weakness and fallacy.

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Foolish Preaching.

I sometimes fear that there are too many who see no difference between foolish preaching, and "the foolishness of preaching" the truth, as a means of redeeming men from commanded law and bringing them under the spiritual law of God.

And I often wonder that more intelligent men are not driven into infidelity by such foolish preaching. The "foolish Galatians" were not