

Original Contributions.

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

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

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"For we know that the law is good (not weak and beggarly, nor a miserable failure) if a man use it lawfully, as knowing this, that law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and unruly," &c. Thus writes Paul in I Tim. 1, and a part of it is quoted to prove that godly men are not under law. I ask in all seriousness what could I not prove if allowed to use the Scriptures in this way? A study of the context will, I think, satisfy every one that Paul's meaning is found in this, that the penalties for violation of the law prescribed in it are not for the righteous man but for the character that he mentions in the list given immediately after the statement. When Paul declares, as he does in Rom. 13, that the State and its law is a minister of God to the Christian for good, and Peter says that they are for praise of them that do well, *i. e.*, Christians, and for vengeance on evil doers, we can see that these statements are in harmony with the statement in Timothy, only in the way that I have stated, and that it is a wresting of Scripture to quote the language to prove that godly men are not under the law of God and Christ.

Another of the great evils of our day is the prevalent spirit of lawlessness. It is manifested in an unwillingness to submit to whole some restraint. The authority of fathers and mothers, of the State and the church, is contemned and despised. Unbelievers and godless men say that for a man to submit to and obey any law that comes from outside of himself, that he does not find in his own heart and mind, is to make himself a mere slave, and to yield to tyranny. There is only this difference between this teaching and that of the articles under review. Its advocates make it universal, ignoring God, and recognizing no difference between men. He, acknowledging God, and recognizing the fact that there are godly and ungodly men applies the same teaching to the godly man while he holds the ungodly man to the restraints of law. As I have before said, this is sophistical and fallacious. The fact that a man is a godly man, so far from freeing him from any moral obliga-

tions, really intensifies every one of them. The idea that it is morally right for a godly man to do anything that would be morally wrong for an ungodly one, is so manifestly false and absurd, that it seems to me only necessary to state it, to secure its condemnation. And yet the writer of these articles has taught that the Christian or godly man is free to contract an adulterous marriage, provided only that he does so "in the Lord." Out upon such an idea. I am heart sick to think that it was allowed to appear in one of our papers. I know that it has injured our cause. And because I have undertaken to counteract its influence, by a fair, courteous and respectful argument and presentation of the truth, I am subjected to a personal attack, to ridicule, misrepresentation and abuse, and under my earnest protest it is repeated in the columns of the HERALD. A month has passed and not a word of apology from the editor, not even the true statement that it gained admission to his columns because it was under a false heading and over a false date. Not one word of sympathy or encouragement has appeared. I have been left to bear the whole burden of a gross outrage all these weary weeks, and I can stand it no longer. I say emphatically that such teaching and such attacks must be kept out of the paper in the future. The teaching I am opposing is in effect infidelity. It is advocated by the various so-called philosophical societies of the day. It is taught in and by the liberal clubs. It is the foundation of Nihilism, Communism, Agrarianism, Spiritualism, and all such abominations. It made a Booth and a Guitteau. It murdered our Presidents Lincoln and Garfield. All must remember the impudent and blasphemous claim of Guitteau, that he was God's man, and that he had a law in his mind and heart, that compelled him to remove Garfield, and that hence it was not murder for him to do it. It is because men have imbibed such teaching, and are hence unwilling to submit to the wholesome restraints of law, that our jails and prisons are occupied. It makes men unfaithful to private and public trusts. It opens the way for pleasure, revelry and folly, for vice, immorality and crime, to be followed just as far as a man's inclinations may lead him. I do not say that it was the inten-

tion of him who wrote such teaching, to encourage and uphold such things, for I have not thought that it was, but I do say, that his intention, however good it may have been, will not and cannot affect the result. In view of the fearful and terrible tendency here pointed out, I must again protest against the appearance of any more of it through the same medium. I have no sympathy or accord with the idea of belittling any part of the law of God. There is more virtue and purity in the law of God than can be found in the laws of men. To say that "the real power and purifying virtue" of the law of God is no greater or better than that of the law of men, seems to me much out of place and away from the truth. Our efforts should be to exalt the law of God in the convictions and hearts of men. Apart from its connection, I would heartily approve of much that he has said about the law of love. But when the effort is made to place it in antithesis to what God has commanded, I cannot resist the conviction that great violence is done to the entire law of God, since we are clearly told that we manifest our love to God and man, by keeping his commandments. And now I pray God that we all, writers and readers, may be enabled to realize in our lives here, and the happy fruitions of heaven hereafter, the hope inspiring words of the Holy Spirit in Rev. 22: 14, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life; and may enter in through the gates into the city."

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Religious Liberalism.

The tendency of our age is unmistakably to liberalism in religion and theology. On all sides this current of thought reveals itself. It is one of the legitimate and direct fruits of the general, all-characterizing, all-pervading spirit of freedom of our times. Religion, theology, the Church, can never remain unaffected by the tide of human thought and life that sweeps over everything around them. The objective in the Christian religion, as God has fixed it in the Holy Scriptures, must ever remain the same; but the human conception and formulation of it, that is, religion, theology, the Church, in their subjective forms, are subject to change, for the better or the worse. Man can claim no right to change or deform

the religious truth objectively revealed and established in his word; God has given man no such right. But man may and should make constant progress in understanding this truth; his conception of it can daily become clearer and fuller, so removing previous errors. Thus there may be, and we believe must be, constant progress and growth in the development of the divine truth in the human mind. Because the religion of Christ, in all its respects, is perfect in the revealed word, it does not follow that it is so in the minds of men. We mortals have to learn this revealed religion, as we learn everything else; and our attainments in this learning, for many reasons may be exceedingly slow and imperfect, as we are not infallible, and countless difficulties often lie in our way to embarrass and mislead us; difficulties, too not too seldom of a very serious character.

The kingdom of God in its development in the intelligence and the heart of man, just as in its general historical growth on the earth, as declared by Jesus, is like a "seed-grain cast in the ground" in its progress; it does not reach at once an infallibly perfect expansion and maturity. God, who knows all the infirmity of our nature and of our lot on earth, waits with mercy and charity on this slow and imperfect growth of the divine truth in us; and man should be also merciful and charitable in his judgment of his fellow-beings in this regard. But how often, alas, are we, poor mortals, cruelly intolerant where God is mercifully long suffering and forbearing? This important truth as regards the subjective development of the truth of God within us, should also make us less confident in ourselves. Spiritual pride as to knowledge or perfection of life, is always rebuked in the word of God. The recognition of these two sides of Christianity, the objective and the subjective—the first, the perfect divine form, as given in the New Testament; the second, the human conception of this, often so very defective, as we see it in the history of the church in its forms of doctrines, ordinances and life; the distinction between these two, and their mutual relation, we must regard as of the utmost importance to us to guide us in our efforts after "the truth as it is in Jesus;" to enable us to form a correct judgment of others and ourselves in religious matters; to give us alike wisdom, confidence and charity in regard to