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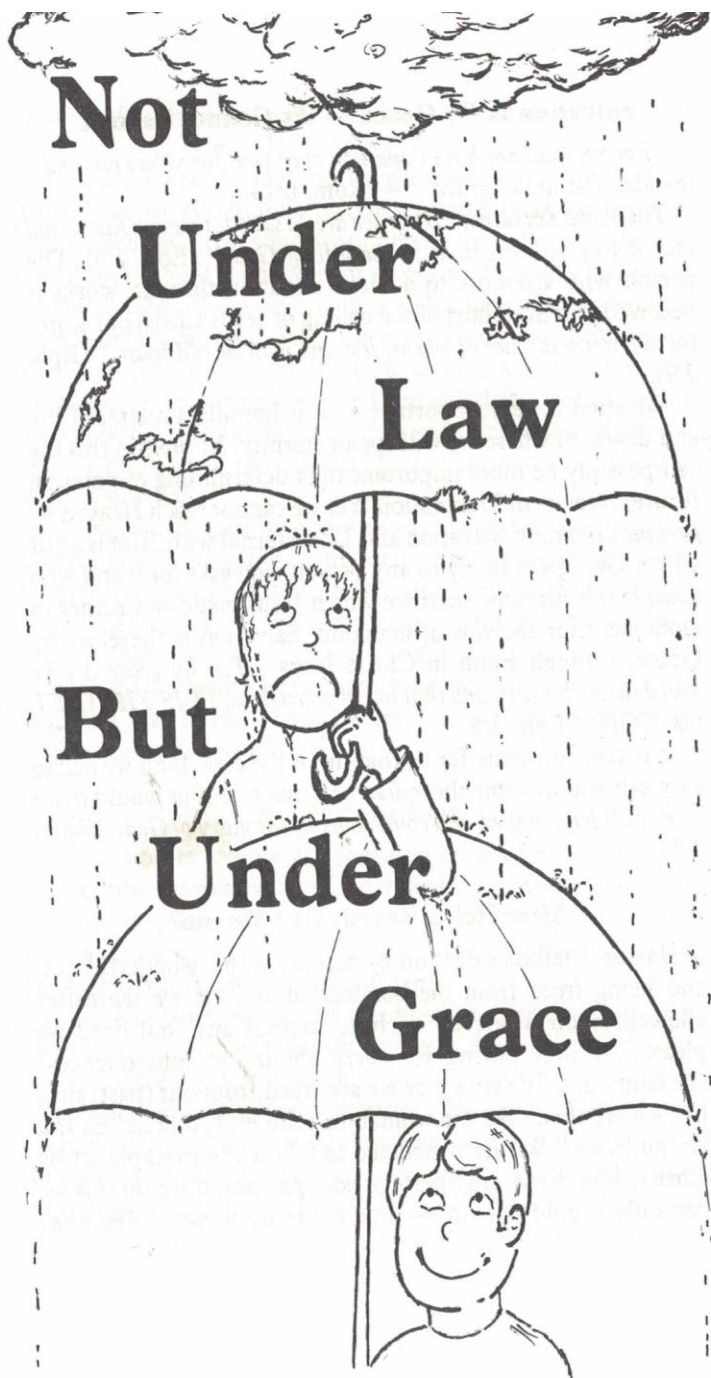
Under

Law

But

Under

Grace



Salvation Is By Grace — We Cannot Earn It

“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace,” — Rom. 6:14.

The Lord declares, *“By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God,”* (Eph. 2:8). The person who attempts to achieve salvation through works is deceived, coming short of the calling of Jesus Christ our Lord, for salvation is *“not of works, lest any man should boast,”* (Eph. 2:9).

Salvation is very important — it is literally a matter of life and death, of where we will spend eternity. *Nothing* in this life can possibly be more important than determining our eternal future: Heaven or Damnation. Yet we cannot reach Heaven by *earning* salvation. Salvation and Life Eternal with Him is a gift which God gives freely to any person who asks for it and who accepts the supreme sacrifice which Jesus made on Calvary in atonement for the sins of mankind. Salvation is therefore by Grace, through Faith in Christ Jesus. *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD.”* Eph. 2:8.

It is very fortunate for us that this is the case, for if we had to earn salvation, or somehow *deserve* it, not one of us would make it. *“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”* Rom. 3:23.

After Being Saved, Can We Sin?

Having attained salvation by accepting this wonderful gift, and being freed from the bondage of sin, are we thereafter allowed to do whatever we like, commit any foul deed we please, without having to worry about the consequences? Certainly not! It's true that we are freed from our (past) sins, but we are then, like the woman in John 8: 11, told to “go and sin no more.” We are instructed to follow the example set by Christ, who is our only perfect example; and if we do this we certainly should not sin —

or even desire to sin. *"And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him."* Heb. 5:9.

Of course, even though we have become a "new person" in Christ, we are still human, with the usual human weaknesses, and we can easily fall short from time to time. Yes, even in our saved condition it is possible for us to sin. We are free from the condemnation of sin, and if, when this happens, we express true repentance, God will forgive us these shortcomings or sins. However, we must strive to do our best, and not abuse this privilege. If we do our best, the Lord will do the rest. It won't always be easy — we may face trials and temptations along the way — but we will have Christ by our side, and with His help we can prevail!

Living a righteous life requires earnest and fervent prayer. Unless people pray for divine help, they cannot stand aloof from this world of pleasure and sin and live that life pleasing to the Father in heaven. We must remain connected by heaven's radio to that power system above, so that divine virtue can flow into us, giving heavenly strength to overcome, power to resist evil, and love in our hearts to find real joy in service and in obedience to divine Will.

Sin and the Law

Often sincere people are confused concerning sin and the law because they know that Christ died to free them from their sins and they know that by His sacrifice on Golgotha the old Levitical Law, or Law of Moses, with its ordinances and penalties, was rendered null and void.

This does not need to cause confusion. Christ did, by His great sacrifice, free us from sin and from the burden of the law then in force — The Law of Moses — with its ordinances, condemnation, and blood sacrifice. However, He did not change

the basic nature of right and wrong, nor did His coming do away with the unchangeable Law of God. He makes this quite plain in Matt. 5:17, when He says: *“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”*

We are told, in 1 John 3:4, that “sin is the transgression of the Law” so it is again evident that there is still a law to transgress or “sin” against, and that even in our saved condition we are expected to obey some divine code of law. This Law is embodied in the Ten Commandments, given by God on Mt. Sinai (unlike the Laws of Moses, which were not), and is well summed up in the two greater laws on which Christ said rested all the laws and all the prophets: **“Love God with all your heart”** and **“Love your neighbor as yourself.”** Matt. 22:37-40. See also James, 1st chapter, and especially chapter 2:8-11. Also 1 John 5:3, 4; Rev. 14:12; 22:14.

Paul's Writings and the Law

Peter says of Paul's writings: *“In all of his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also THE OTHER SCRIPTURES, unto their own destruction,”* (2 Peter 3:16).

Let us therefore take the warning of Peter to heart and not “wrest” the writings of our beloved Paul to our own destruction. Paul says, *“Ye are not under the law but under grace.”* Let us be careful not to wrest this to mean that we do not need to keep the commandments in this age. Just because we are free from the

condemnation of death, this does not give us liberty to break the law of God, and again sin, any more than a pardon from the Governor of the state gives the holder the right to again commit the crime for which he was sentenced.

Paul says, *“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid! Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”* (Rom. 6:14-16).

So, dear reader, let us not wrest Paul's writings to our own destruction: Let us not yield ourselves to law violation, but to obedience through faith. *“Being then made free from sin, ye become the servants of righteousness. But now being made free from sin, and become servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life... For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord,”* (Rom. 6:18, 22, 23).

The first verse of the next chapter of Romans, viz. 7: 1, shows conclusively that the law of God was not abolished, but at that time, 66 A.D., was binding. It says, *“Know ye not, brethren, for I speak to them that know the law, how that the law hath (not 'had' but 'hath') dominion over a man as long as he liveth.”* The law of God was binding then, in 66 A.D. — after Christ's return to heaven, and this law is still in force today. Verse 7 mentions one commandment of the ten, showing that it is the Ten Commandments to which these scriptures refer. Then the conclusion of the first part of this chapter, whatever some may wrongly wrest it to mean, is summed up in verse 12, as follows:

“Wherefore the law IS holy, and the commandments holy, and just, and good.” In verse 22, he says, *“For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.”*

In the old dispensation, people were justified by the works of the sacrificial law. They brought an offering for their sin, and had a blood atonement made, but now in the gospel dispensation, we are not justified by the works of any law, but by faith in the blood that was shed on Calvary. There can be no justification (pardon) granted in this age by the works of any law — a diligent observance of every one of the Ten Commandments will not give us a decree of pardon for breaking them, nor will it bring Salvation. Pardon and forgiveness of sin comes through repentance and asking the Father for it in prayer. Salvation is by grace and through faith in Christ Jesus alone.

An Illustration

When a man violates the civil law of his country or state by committing first degree murder, and is convicted of the crime, he is sentenced to either imprisonment or death. His liberty is taken away and at once he comes under the power of the law that forbids the taking of human life. He is bound over to the executioner or prison authorities to pay the penalty for his crime.

This man, being condemned, now has but one recourse, there is but one way of escape: he may be given a decree of pardon by the Governor of the state and, if so, his liberty is granted. This man is set free, and no longer remains under the condemnation of the law that forbade murder, but is under the grace or favor of the Governor. The Governor has issued him a pardon for his sin and he is free. He has his liberty, but he is not free to again break the civil law without fear of its consequence and the penalty being again enforced. He now stands, "not under the law but under grace." Grace means favor, and the Governor has granted him the great favor of life and liberty, and has released him from the condemnation of the law.

Application

The Lord says, “*All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,*” (Rom. 3:23). Also, “*The wages of sin is death,*” (Rom. 6:23). Therefore, everyone stands in the position before God, corresponding to the foregoing figure, for ALL have sinned. Then the penalty of death hangs upon every soul. We are ALL bound over to the executioner to pay the penalty of death. There is but one recourse; there is but one hope of release, and that is to have issued to us a decree of pardon, from the Lord Jesus Christ. He stands in the position toward us as did the Governor toward the criminal, and He is the One who has the power to set free and release us from the penalty of death.

Those who believe in the power of the blood of Jesus to forgive and grant pardon to them for their sins, come humbly beseeching that mercy may be extended and pardon granted. It is done, it is freely given, to the truly repentant sinner; and while this sets us free from the condemnation already on every head, it takes something outside and separate from this. It requires an acceptance of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and it is by faith in this great transaction in which Jesus gave His life for our sins, that we ask for and receive our pardon or justification. Not by works, but by grace are we saved through faith. But this does not grant us the privilege of law violation, which is sin.

Neither can we today be justified or pardoned as in the old dispensation by offering up animal sacrifices. The work of this ordinance law will no longer grant pardon or justification, but we must come boldly to the throne of grace through faith in the blood shed on Calvary. We are ALL accounted under sin, and a careful observance of the commandments of God henceforth will not give pardon or justification, any more than the murderer bound over to pay the penalty for law violation can get pardon by law observance.

It takes something separate and apart from that. It requires a pardon from the Governor to obtain freedom, and so with us — we must come to God through Jesus Christ, and through faith receive forgiveness, pardon, and justification; but not for the purpose of law violation, but obedience unto righteousness (Rom. 6:16-18).

Sin is the transgression of the law. See also James, 1st chapter, and especially chapter 2:8-11. Also 1 John 5:3, 4; Rev. 14:12; 22:14.

The Ten Commandments are also spoken of in James, 1st chapter, and elsewhere in the Scriptures, as being the "law of liberty", because their violation forfeits liberty. Every criminal confined in the penitentiary has lost his liberty because of having violated one of the Ten Commandments. Jesus declares, "*Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,*" (John 8:32) — not free to become violent and do as you please, but free from sin and death, with a full guarantee of liberty forever.

Instead of seeking an easy way and finding excuses for walking with the world, let us seek earnestly for God's holy presence, and live an overcoming life. The sacrifices we must make in doing His Will are for our own benefit, and the rewards are certainly worthwhile! "*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have Everlasting Life.*"

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