

# The Law is Not Made for A Righteous Man

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*Introductory remark.* In the next issues of this periodical, we intend, from time to time, to treat those portions of the Pastoral Letters which are of particular importance for our brethren in the ministry at this time. In this issue we shall treat I Timothy 1, which treats a question often aired, but never, at any time, treated exhaustively among us. This question concerns the meaning of the Law for the Christian. This chapter, besides the letter to the Galatians and Romans 7, is one of the chief passages for this doctrine. In order to set forth the sense of the Apostle sharply, we not only present its phrases in the German wording but also, in several instances, resolve its sentence structures, as, for example, in the case of the anacoluthon which is found at the very beginning of the passage. As for the rest, each reader may satisfy himself whether or not our translation is faithfully accurate.

## Translation

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the command of God our Savior and Jesus Christ our hope, to Timothy, my true child in faith, grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. At the time of my departure into Macedonia, I urged you to stay at Ephesus in order that you might forbid certain people the teaching of false doctrine and the occupying of themselves with myths and endless genealogies, which only give rise to disputes instead of godly edification in the faith. But the purpose of the Commandment (of God) is love out of a pure heart, a good conscience, and an unfeigned (sincere, genuine) faith. Some have failed in this and have turned to vain talk; they want to be teachers of the law and do not understand either what they are saying or what they confidently claim.

Now we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully and is clear on this point that no law has been laid down for the just, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for such who lay violent hands on their fathers and mothers, for murderers, adulterers, sodomites, kidnappers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.

And I thank our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given me strength and judged me faithful to appoint me to his service, who before blasphemed, persecuted, and proudly scoffed at him. But I received mercy, because I did it in the ignorance of unbelief. The grace of our Lord together with faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus, overflowed upon me. It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am the foremost. But I was shown mercy for this reason that in me Jesus Christ might first of all display his perfect patience for an example to those who were to believe in him unto eternal life. Now to the eternal King, to the immortal, invisible, and only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

This charge I commit to you, my son Timothy, in accordance with the prophecies made as to you, that you might wage a good fight through them, keeping the faith and a good conscience. That conscience some have rejected and their faith has foundered, among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered up to Satan that they be disciplined to blaspheme no more.

It is our chief concern to bring about a right understanding of the *one* great sentence (vs. 9) “that no law has been laid down for the just, but for the lawless and disobedient.” Naturally the whole context will be drawn into the discussion.

Immediately preceding the passage in question, we find the sentence: “Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully.” And a few verses farther back, in verse 5, we find the assertion: “The purpose of the commandment is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and an unfeigned faith.” All three of these statements find their directive in the viewpoint of the very first sentence, which forbids the teaching of false doctrine by those who occupy themselves with myths and genealogies.

First of all, the particles *μη-μηδέ*, which introduce the forbidden terms, show that false teaching and the occupation with myths and genealogies are not one and the same thing. They are two entirely different things. The false doctrine, which Timothy was to forbid, did not consist of occupying oneself with myths and genealogies; it was something apart from this. But it was found in the same people. What the false doctrine really was we learn from the above-mentioned passages (vss. 5, 8, and 9), in which Paul makes (definite) statements about the “law” in antithesis to the false teachers. They taught falsely concerning the Law.

If we consider everything Paul says about these false teachers in the letter to the Colossians and in the three Pastoral Epistles, we find that occupying oneself with myths and genealogies was closely connected with false doctrine about the Law. In the Epistle to Titus, which was written at the same time as the first letter to Timothy and which is also closely related to it in content, Paul expressly designates those myths as Jewish (1:14), “Not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men.” In the true sense of the word, however, Israel of old had no myths. Israel had the revelation of the *one* true and living God. This revelation sharply excluded every assumption of idols and all myths about gods and made them impossible as long as any trace or form of the theocracy survived. But surely, after the destruction of the temple and, with it, of the worship of God, and after the dispersion of the people, the last trace of the theocratic state and the hope for a Messiah was lost among the masses of the people. In consequence, every form of heathen superstition and idolatry forced itself upon the remainder of the Jewish people. That horrible mixture of Alexandrian reform-Judaism, Persio-Indian mythology, and Platonic-Stoic philosophy had arisen in the time of the Ptolemies, calling itself Gnosticism; and it had gained a foothold in the cultural world of that day. This movement had intrigued many educated Jews, and it also sought to incorporate some Christian ideas and to penetrate the Christian churches. It is probable that Paul understood the mythology of incipient Gnosticism to be the afore-mentioned myths, even though Gnosticism had not developed into any definite form at this time. Later, in chapter 4:7, the Apostle calls these myths godless (*βεβήλους*; Luther: *ungeistliche*) and old-womanish (Luther: *altvettelische*), that is, absurd; and at the close (6:20f.) he expressly places this unholy, loose chatter together with the antitheses, the counterclaims of Gnosis, falsely so called. (Luther: *der falschberuehmten Kunst*). In the second letter to Timothy, he once more (2:16) belays this false doctrine, which he had called a false course in verse 18, with the expression “unholy, loose chatter” (KJV: profane and vain babblings) and predicts in 4:4 that in the near future men would turn away their ears from the truth and turn to vain fables. And this happened soon afterward.

It is quite doubtful whether or not Paul identified the genealogies he mentioned in connection with the myths with the Gnostic emanations of sub-gods, which, according to later Gnostic systems, came forth in pairs out of the unchangeable Eon or Protogod. For, aside from the fact that the emanation of the Eons from the Propator seems to be a later development in Gnosticism, it is hardly probable that Paul would have called the Gnostic emanations genealogies. On the other hand, neither can one establish whether Paul speaks of biblical, that is, Old Testament genealogies or of extra-biblical genealogies, which were developed by the Jewish craze for fables. The former are not endless *per se*, as he describes them (this would rather be true of the Gnostic generations of gods). However, the false scholarship of the Jews was such as inevitably determined to make them endless.

By the way, that Paul is occupied with a form of Gnostic heresy in these letters is perfectly clear from the letter to the Colossians. There he sets forth the *one* great assertion: “In Christ, that is, by faith in Christ, you are perfect.” And he urges this assertion polemically in opposition to people who denied it. These were Gnostics

who wanted to be Christian. For their first broad claim stated: Faith alone is not yet perfection; perfection is realized in the deeper knowledge of the supernatural, in immediate, inner contemplation and intellectual penetration of the same. Gnosticism was theosophy, it was mystical philosophy. And Paul so denotes the heresy against which he is warring, when he warns in 2:8: “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”

And in the three Pastoral Letters Paul fights against nothing else than the heresies of Jewish Gnosticism, as we find them present in sharper outline at a later date. The two great anti-Christian climaxes are the denial of the true Godhead of Christ and the insistence on the need for self-sanctification, or spiritualization, through a strict observance not only of the moral, but also of the Jewish ceremonial law, and through self-chosen physical continence. This explains why Paul, in I Tim. 1, calls the same people, whom he accuses of occupying themselves with myths and genealogies, νομοδιδάσκαλοι, teachers of the Law. They desired not only to be Christians, but intelligent, educated Christians. They permitted Christ to stand in name. But, having the appearance of godliness and pretending to have a deeper knowledge of the godly mysteries and a greater learning in regard to the Law, they insisted with great force on the necessity of keeping the Law.

With clear perception, the Apostle recognized the irreconcilable contradiction between this doctrine and the Gospel, which had been committed to him. In I Tim. 1:4 he says only that, by occupying oneself with myths and genealogies, one caused controversy and not edification in faith. In 6:5 he already speaks more sharply and imputes these controversies to those who are “men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth.” In 6:20 he avers that those err concerning the faith who occupy themselves with the questions and objections of the falsely so-called Gnosis. In the second letter to Timothy we read (2:14) that these bickerings only confuse the listeners and advance godlessness. In verse 18 we read that Philetus and Hymenaeus, who spiritualized the resurrection, had perverted the faith of some (Luther: *verkehrt*). In the letter to Titus, he pictures the adherents of these errors as people, who turn entire households into turmoil with their vain doctrines (1:11) and remove the truth (14). And when he speaks of heretical people (3:10), he is thinking of the same people, if we understand the context correctly. For him the entire tendency toward Gnosticism is a heresy which is faith-destroying. And it is also clear to him that their word eats about itself like gangrene (Luther: *Krebs*), that the ears of the people are itching for this witches’ brew, that they turn away from the truth to myths, and that the coming times will be awful. In other words, Paul is dealing in this text with Jewish false teachers, who had become devotees of that fad of the times called Gnosticism, which was just beginning to arise. They also combined their Jewish conception of the Law, and their insistence upon the keeping of the Law with it and opposed the Gospel with the assertion that Jesus Christ and his salvation are not enough to save man.

And now the Apostle begins: “But”—namely, in opposition to the one occupied with myths and genealogies—“the aim of the commandment is love, etc.” We must stop at once and examine the word “commandment.” Paul does not say “the aim of the law” because he does not equate the word “commandment” with the word “law.” Here is no careless exchange of concepts; rather, the Apostle has chosen these terms quite naturally, perhaps quite unconsciously; but his choice of words was essentially necessary, intended and guided by the Holy Ghost. Commandment is something entirely apart from the law, which he sets forth in verses 8 and 9. It is clear that in the present instance the content of the commandment and of the law are one and the same, because he describes the former as love, which the Scriptures otherwise declare to be the true demand and fulfillment of the Law. Nevertheless, he does not speak of the Law as such, but from an entirely different viewpoint. This is already apparent inasmuch as he characterizes the love at which the Law aims as flowing from an unfeigned faith (in Christ, of course). Of such a definition the “law” as law knows nothing.

How then do the concepts “commandment” and “law” differ from one another? The latter, ὁ νόμος, or sometimes only νόμος,—apart from various *special* uses of the word—is used in the whole Scriptures, and particularly in the New Testament, and very especially by Paul, as that known quantity (*Groesze*) which reveals what inward and outward attitudes God, in accordance with His glory, unconditionally demands of man, who is created in His image, so that it might be well with him here in time and hereafter in eternity.

First of all, this is an entirely abstract and formal definition of the concept νόμος. It does not yet consider concrete situations. The Law belongs under the genus of regulations, decrees, commandments, commands. Every law is command, commandment, decree, regulation; but not vice versa. There are regulations, decrees, etc., that are not law. They may be the exact opposite. The law regulates the attitude of man toward God. It is based on the natural relationship of man to God. God is the God of men. He is the absolute majesty; He exists in Himself. He is the eternal one, the omnipotent one, etc., the perfect, the holy, good, truthful one. He created man and sustains him. And man is God's creation, absolutely dependent on God for all that he is and has and does. From this relationship, it does not yet follow that the Law is a precept for man. Rather, the same relationship exists also between God and all other creatures: animals, stones, flowers, and stars, for whom God has ordained "laws" (of nature), which determine their existence, life, and movement; but he did not give them the Law which pertains to man. Among all creatures, man's relation to God is an exception, which no other creature—not even an angel—shares with him. He is created in the image of God; he is a likeness, a copy of God, a little god; he is God's offspring. Man possesses a shadow of God's majesty and perfection, of His everlasting being, wisdom, justice, goodness, truthfulness, and of His dominion over all remaining creation. To use a common expression, he is a moral, ethical, creature; and he is that in essence. The term man and image of God are expressions, conditioned by each other. Where one is in place, the other also is true. And if the one is no longer applicable, neither is the other. If man has completely lost the image of God, he has ceased to be man.\*

Man is an autonomous spiritual and moral being beside and under God, created to remain in communion with God, blissfully to enjoy God and His gifts, and to glorify Him. This relationship of man to God predicates a corresponding attitude toward Him. We call it moral conduct. What this conduct must be cannot be determined *a priori* either from the nature of God or from the nature of man, or even from the natural relationship between the two. This is true both as to detail and the overall picture. Nor is this determination necessary. God Himself has freely determined and written into man's heart not only *how* he should conduct himself toward God but also that he must so conduct himself. Man has fallen into sin and lost the knowledge of God's moral law and, even more so, the desire to fulfill the same. But he has retained a conscience. Therefore God gave him the Law, written on tables of stone, delivered it, and thoroughly explained it to him through Moses. He taught man *what kind of* moral conduct He wanted and how, with what emphasis, He wanted it. This conduct is conditioned by the natural relationship obtaining between man and God and between man and man. The *what* of the moral law of God for man is applied concretely, i.e., to the normal relations of all men, in the Ten Commandments. For Israel it was expressed also in other regulations, which applied to its own peculiar conditions. But in essence it is actually love; love above all things for God, and love for our neighbor as for ourselves. The *how* of His will is the absolute necessity for man's blessedness. Man *must* do God's will, if he desires to live and be happy. If he does not do God's will, eternal disaster results unfailingly.

What has been said was said abstractly and absolutely. It is a picture of the Law entirely apart from sin and Christ. But now sin has actually stepped into the picture. Nevertheless, the moral Will of God with respect to man does not change either in its *what* or its *how*. But man's sin has moved the Will of God into an entirely different perspective for man. Originally this Will was written into man's heart in such a way that he not only knew it perfectly (according to his bounds), but he also lived, fulfilling it spontaneously and perfectly. He did this quite naturally and out of his own free will. His created likeness to God, his true righteousness and holiness, was instinctively busy in coordinating his own will, which was of godly origin, with the Will of God; and that in every area of living. To do the Will of God was his very nature and delight. Therefore he did not feel God's Will to be "law." But when man fell into sin, he cast God's Will out of his inner nature, out of his desires and wishes; and he placed this Will in opposition to himself, as being no longer his own but a strange will. He was

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\* This statement naturally does not deny the doctrine of total spiritual corruption of fallen, natural man. That which our dogmatists call *imagine Dei stricte sic dictam*, the knowledge of God, righteousness and holiness (Col. 3, Eph. 4), fallen man does not possess any longer; but that sinful man still possesses the image of God in a wider sense, is clear from Gen. 9:6 and James 3:9. Of course, this is not the place for entering upon broader discussions. Our dogmatics also says much here that cannot be justified before God.—  
Author's note.

not able completely to erase the Will of God from his knowledge and conscience—he would have liked to do that—for God did not permit this. But he opposed this Will to his own preferences and his own will. He made it his enemy, of whom he could not be rid. And so he made it into the “law” for himself, i.e., into a strict, unrelenting demand, coming from the outside; into a merciless coercion, an inescapable, destructive curse.

Therefore it is sin which changed God’s moral will into *law*. This must be kept in mind, first of all. Sin created the concept of law and that thing which is designated by it in Scripture; naturally, not *that which* the Law demands, but the *manner* in which it demands: the demand from without, the coercion, and the curse.—We do not read that God gave man the law in an outward way at the time of creation. We find only *this* that God made man in His own image; that, according to Col. 3 and Eph. 4, He created man in possession of the knowledge of His Will, of complete righteousness, and of holiness, i.e., of complete agreement with His holy will. Nor does Scripture say elsewhere that God gave man, in his state of innocence, “a law” or “the law.” The concept “law” did not exist *prior to sin*, because that thing did not exist which confronted man with demands *from without*, with threats, and with destruction by God’s moral Will.

Men blithely inject the commandment, not to eat of the tree of knowledge, at this point. But it is wrong to do so, because in the first place, this prohibition did not at all belong to the moral Will of God, written into man’s heart. By creating man in His image, God had given him rule over all creatures and thus also over the fruit of all trees. Thus man on his own could not know that the tree of knowledge was not for him, unless God told him. This prohibition was a commandment to make an exception, given to man as something special, coming from outside. Its content and form had nothing in common with the moral will implanted in man, nor with the “law,” as it was created by sin; and in form it belonged, at best, to the same logical *genus proximum* of commandment and threat. But it was no demand, made on unwilling persons, as the law is since sin entered the world. It was a special commandment, given to willing observers; and combined with it was the “threat” for persons who possessed a completely free moral will.

One may not draw conclusions from the nature of this special commandment and apply them to the general and eternal moral Will of God, which became “law” through sin. One must determine this nature from the statements of Scripture, regarding its character before and after the Fall.

It is significant that the term “law” does not occur from the time of creation until Moses. One finds it for the first time in Ex. 12:49; or in reality in 13:9. Abraham keeps the *משמרת*, the *מצות*, the *תקוה* and *תורה* of the Lord; but not the *תורה*, *תורה יהוה*, *τὸν νόμον*, i.e., *the Law of God*. This is proclaimed for the first time at Sinai through Moses. Paul points to this in Romans 5:13: “For until the law sin was in the world,” i.e., until the time, when the Law was proclaimed by Moses; but the Law as such had not yet been given or proclaimed formally, even though virtually it was also there before the time of Moses, and that so effectively that it produced death. But, because it had not yet been couched in formal human speech, the concept “law,” “the law,” “the law of the Lord,” “the law of God,” was not to be found. This concept was formed when Moses revealed the Law by the outward giving, by the engraving of the Law on the tables of stone. “The law was given *by Moses*”—this historical, concrete fact gives to the term “the law,” “the law of the Lord,” to the very thing that Paul consistently places in opposition to the Gospel, as also in I Tim. 1, an unchangeable connotation, even where it is not expressly mentioned. The “law,” or “the law of the Lord,” and the other “the law of Moses,” are equivalent expressions; they have the same rank. Essentially, the Law is *something* God imposes on sinners from without; something given, proclaimed, commanded, prescribed. It is not something inherent in man. The works of the Law are indeed written into the heart of the sinner; he still retains something of it in his knowledge and feeling, the consciousness of being bound by it. But he does not possess it anymore, as before, in his *inclinations, his desires, his will*. He is carnally minded; he is unable inwardly, i.e., with his spirit and will, to place himself under the Law; he cannot any longer identify himself with the “Thou shalt” and “Thou shalt not” of the Law. The Law remains something that has been forced and imposed upon him—of course, by God.

If we inquire about the content of the Law, Scripture answers: love. That is its real and also complete sense, no less. But, because the sinner has removed himself so far from the knowledge of God that he no longer knows how love exercises itself in the many relations of life, therefore God has spelled out the Law for him in

commandments and ordinances (Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14), as we find them in Exodus 20:2, and for Israel also in the following chapters of Exodus and the other books of Moses, especially given to Israel for its own peculiar purposes. And this whole legislation to Israel, not only the so-called moral Law, but also the civil and ceremonial Law, is, for Israel, *the* Law of the Lord, תּוֹרַת יְהוָה, תּוֹרַת הַיְהוָה, ὁ νόμος, and is *one* great undivided, homogeneous thing, equally binding in all its parts. It is an error, which will confuse the entire doctrine of the Law, if anyone understands the Law to be only the moral Law so-called and if he excludes the ceremonial and civil Law from it, assigning an entirely different value to the latter. What “the law” means, we see most clearly from Deut. 1:5 and 27:26. In the former passage we read, “On this side ... Moses began to declare this law” (הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת, τὸν νόμον τοῦτον, LXX); and in the latter, “Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them” (הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת, τοῦ νόμου τούτου). The content of the chapters between these two passages is merely a repetition of the moral, ceremonial, and civil ordinances of the preceding books. Moses reviews not only the Ten Commandments (chap. 5), but also a great number of other commandments (beginning in chap. 14). He even expands the latter. Yes, Moses expressly includes all הַקִּיּוֹם and מִשְׁפָּטִים (chap. 4:1, 2)—statutes and judgments, pertaining to home life, to neighborly relations, to ceremonial observances, and to civil practice—under the term הַתּוֹרָה, תּוֹרַת יְהוָה and says, “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it.” And Paul writes in the same way. He does not distinguish between ceremonial and moral Law. He speaks of the Law as a *unit*, whether it refers to circumcision and the sabbath or to stealing, lying, etc. For the Jews, who based their interpretation of the Law on the language of Moses and also of the entire Old Testament, all permanent laws, commandments, commands, ordinances, and regulations were one single, great entity--תּוֹרַת אֱלֹהִים, הַתּוֹרָה תּוֹרַת יְהוָה, ὁ νόμος, νόμος, τοῦ θεοῦ, τοῦ κυρίου—the Law. Therefore Paul uses the term “law” without limiting it in any way, even when he discusses purely Jewish ceremonial regulations, as he does in the letter to the Galatians and elsewhere. But it is an all-confusing error to think that, because Paul first of all and directly applies what he says about the abrogation of the Law to the ceremonial Law, therefore he would not want it applied to the Law as such, to the moral Law. It is just as confusing to say that the moral Law still applies today to every Christian as the other essential part of Christian doctrine and that only the Jewish ceremonial Law has been abolished. For example, Romans 2 clearly shows that this would be a gross error. Beginning with verse 12, Paul speaks of the law and says in verse 13, “For not the hearers of the law are justified before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.” Then he continues, “For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, etc.” A brief glance shows clearly that the word “law” is used four times in the same sense. But the law, whose works the heathen do and whose work is written in their hearts, is not the Jewish ceremonial Law, but the general moral Law. Then Paul continues in verse 17, “Thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law.... Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God?” Which law? Verses 21 and 22 tell us: “Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?” In other words, Paul is speaking of parts of the moral Law. But immediately following he mentions the circumcision and places it, an external thing, in opposition to the keeping of the Law, through which the foreskin of the Gentile would judge the circumcision of the Jew. In the same manner, the Law, through whose works no man living is justified, through which comes only the knowledge of sin, and without whose help the righteousness of God unto salvation is revealed and attested (Romans 3:20,21,28), is not only the Jewish ceremonial Law, but above all, the moral Law, even as the sins recounted above (3:9–19) are not transgressions of the former, but of the latter, cf. verse 23. In 4:2–16 the word “law” sometimes means the one, sometimes the other, and sometimes both. (Compare also Romans 6:14,15; chapter 7–8; 9:12; 10:2ff.)—By comparison, the term “law” when used in the letter to the Galatians, usually applies, first of all, to the ceremonial Law; but where it is used in contrast to the righteousness by faith, it applies not only to ceremonial Law but always, in connection with the moral Law, to

the *whole* Law. (See Gal. 2:16,18,19,21; 3:2,5,10,11,12,13,17–25.) And so throughout the letter, even though the moral Law is usually meant in the last chapters (5:18,23). The oneness of moral and ceremonial Law is especially clear in chapter 5:1–4.

After this preliminary work, we can now begin the study of our text. “Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it rightly.” This truth Paul states thus in Romans 7:12: “The law is holy and the commandment holy, and just, and good;” and in verse 16: “I consent unto the law that it is good;” and in verse 14: “The law is spiritual.”—First of all, the Law is good in its character; and therefore it generates only good through itself. But this latter result comes only from its “lawful” use, (*νομίμως*—a play on words), that is, if one uses it for the purpose for which God gave it. It follows that it does not have a salutary result for man, if it is perverted, i.e., used for such purposes for which it was not given. In that case it will work death, as the Apostle explains in Romans 7. The law kills, it works wrath. As our translation shows, the next verse (9), which contains the great and chief statement about the Law, is so connected grammatically with the words of verse 8, which pertain to the goodness and salutary use of the Law, that the *εἰδώς* belongs to the *τίς*, someone. So then, the Law is good, if used rightly, if “one is clear”—as we translated—or if one weighs, considers that no law has been laid down on the just. For our purposes, it makes no difference whether we follow Bengel and others in interpreting the *τίς* as being a teacher; or follow the greater number of exegetes and interpret it to be a non-teacher. We hold that the *τίς* is to be understood in a very general way—as it sounds—and that it is accurately expressed by our impersonal “one.” The important thing here is the assertion that one can use the Law rightly only then if one knows and remembers that no law has been laid down on the just. Whoever does not know and remember this cannot use the Law rightly; he must always use it *wrongly*. The chief factor, involved in understanding this verse, lies in the recognition of these words as a motto, an abstract truth of absolutely general, self-evident validity. The Greek phrase reads as follows: *ὅτι δικαίῳ νόμος οὐ κεῖται*, literally, “on the just no law lies”; i.e., that there is no law whatsoever for a just man. Neither the *δίκαιος* nor the *νόμος* has an article; both are used in a general way and are generic, for their *kind*; they are generic expressions. There is nothing like a law for anyone who possesses the characteristic of righteousness. This is similar to Romans 5:7 where Paul declares, “For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.” The article is not used with “the righteous man,” because the passage stresses the genus, the characteristic of righteousness. But the “good man” has the article, either because he is considered concretely as a personal benefactor, or because the article also expresses the genus “good man.” Thus the Lord also speaks in Matthew 9, Mark 2, and Luke 5. “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.”—This is an abstract maxim, which does not in any case refer to individuals, but, in every case, to a class of people. In the case of “the whole and the sick” the plural, and in the case of “physician” the lack of the article express merely a characteristic. The sentence wants to state: Not what is whole, but whatever is sick, needs the doctor’s help. It is an abstract and objective rather than a concrete, individualizing manner of expression, which wants to stress the absolutely general validity of the sentence. Thus the Apostle declares here: For men that are just there is no such thing as a law. Therefore there can be no question about the meaning here, namely, that *δίκαιος* in our passage is a generic concept. Only in this do the opinions differ, whether the term describes the most general genus of the just or the narrower genus of those who are just by faith.—For us this finally means the same thing, since we deal only with the latter. But the word *νόμος* is debatable; is it law as such, or the Mosaic Law? Now, it is true that the use of the article in Greek, as in German, does not absolutely indicate a definite individual, and that the omission of it is not in itself proof of the indefiniteness of the noun. Usage is so variable that *ὁ νόμος* may be an undefined law and *νόμος* at times definitely may be the one Law of God. And it would also be possible here; but first of all, the contrast which Paul uses contradicts this: “but for the lawless and disobedient” (*ἀνόμοις δὲ καὶ ἀνυποτάκτοις*). This is the generic plural and would remain so, even *if the article were used*. But without the article this is the more sure. Nor may one gainsay that it must be so understood, because the genus of lawless

and disobedient is then particularized and made concrete by the following expressions (godless, sinners, etc.). Finally, the term *κεῖται* also denotes the sentence as an abstract statement. *κεῖται* is in the absolute present tense, translate it any way you wish. But one cannot translate: The law has not *been* given to the just, as though an historical process were to be denied. There is no historical development involved here. Rather, it is exclusively a state of being in the present. It has only static meaning. Therefore one must translate with Luther: *Dem Gerechten ist kein Gesetz gegeben*. And that in this sense: For the just there is no law. And the contrast, employed by the Apostle, but “upon the lawless and disobedient,” is exclusive. Not for the righteous, but only for the lawless is there a law.

Of course, one must concede, as was done above, that Paul when he wrote this in itself completely general, abstract observation—naturally this is still a generic use—did not only conceive the just to be the man, or a man who is just by faith (verse 11 “according to my Gospel” indicates this implication), but he also considered *νόμος* to be *the* well-known Law of God. Yes, he could not avoid this, because, in the main clause (verse 8), he had spoken of the Law, *ὁ νόμος*, namely the well-known Law of God. He also wants this general observation that “there is no law laid upon the just” applied to that Law of which he had said that it was good. But Paul is a deep and thorough man. As such he likes to base his specific and concrete doctrinal statements on universally accepted statements of principle (eg. Romans 4:4; 6:16; 3:19; Gal. 2:18), in order to present his proofs as convincingly as possible.

Thus here also. The Apostle expresses a general truth, which at once must strike every understanding man as being absolutely unchangeable. Law is there for unjust, not for just men. This tenet presents itself to every reasonable man as absolute truth, as soon as he understands the terms, as soon as he knows what law is and what a just and an unjust man are. It involves an essential untruth and is unthinkable to connect the term law with the term just as though the former was given for the just, is present, commanded, established, revealed, or prescribed as a rule for his conduct. For that is what men mean when they say: “The law is given for the just.” Essentially, the law is a precept for man’s conduct, for his inner attitudes, and for his outward actions. It teaches and reveals righteousness; it is a norm, rule, and guideline for conduct. Whatever is true, honorable, just, chaste, lovely, whatever sounds pleasing, whatever may be virtuous or praiseworthy,—that the law teaches. It therefore presupposes a man who does not know and understand all this, a man not versed in righteousness; a man to whom one must say and explain what righteousness is. But that very thought cancels the concept of a “just man.” The knowledge of righteousness is an essential consideration in the term a “just man.” A really just man knows and understands righteousness to its last tittle. Were it not so, how could he be able to perform and do it inwardly and outwardly? If it were not so, he would cease to be a just person. Because it is an essential contradiction, it is also a logical contradiction to say that the law lies upon the just. It would be a contradiction of the same kind, as if we were to say: A guardian has been imposed on an adult, a teacher upon a learned man, and a guide upon one who knows the way. To the contrary: the guide is given to the stranger, the teacher to the ignorant, and the guardian to the child. So the Law is not put upon the just, who knows the Law perfectly, both inwardly and outwardly, that it be his teacher and guide, that it be a norm, rule, and guideline for righteousness. But it lies upon the unjust, the lawless, who knows nothing about the Law. For such a one it is in place, for the former absolutely out of place.

But the Law is more than a mere teacher, guide, rule, and guideline of that which is good. It says: Thou shalt, thou shalt not—at the risk of your life! Its essence—we say its essence—is to demand and threaten. It requires absolute and unconditional fulfillment of its precepts and inconsiderately and unfeelingly avenges the non-fulfillment of the same by the destruction of the evildoer. Thus it reveals itself again as directed toward the unjust one, the lawless, and the disobedient, who, before the existence of the demand and without it, neither is what he should be nor does what the Law demands. The Law’s objective is to compel him to do what it demands. It is addressed to such people as Paul concretely described in verses 9 and 10.

But what purpose or meaning does the demand and the threat serve for the just? He receives his name from the fact that, of himself, he willingly, instinctively, quite naturally, characteristically and by inclination, and out of innate pleasure is exactly that and thinks, meditates, plans, and does that which the Law says. Of

what use is medicine, the means of a cure, to the healthy, or the whip for the willing horse? They could only cause confusion and harm. Does an emperor train his cannons on friend or foe?

And now the curse, the execution of the Law? We need not lose words about that. Summary: *δικαίῳ νόμος οὐ κείται*, no law is laid upon the just, and that in absolutely no manner, neither as doctrine, as to *what* he should do, nor as demand, *that* he should do it, nor as punishment *for that* which he might have broken. Absolutely: *There is no such thing as law for the just.*

Only he, who knows this and holds fast to it, can use the Law, good as it is in itself, rightly and usefully, whether he be teacher or hearer. The Christian teacher, who does not cling to this knowledge, will always corrupt the Gospel and confuse and despoil his hearers.

According to the glorious Gospel of the grace of the blessed God, by faith in Christ we Christians are *just* in the fullest sense of the word: we are truly *δίκαιοι*. *Ergo!*—Thus we really are finished with all argumentation. No law concerns us Christians, not even the Law of God, given by Moses.—And now we say, that is really true. *The Law*, even this Law does not concern us Christians, does not concern us whatsoever either as doctrine, or as demand, or as curse. Paul declares in Romans 3:19: “Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law.” And 6:14: “For ye (Christians, believers) are not under the law, but under grace.” And he repeats this in verse 15. And in chapter 7 he illustrates this truth with the example of the wife who has been freed by the death of her husband from the laws regarding marriage. He says in verse 4: “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead.” And in verse 6 (RSV) we read: “But now we are discharged (*κατηργήθημεν*) from the law, dead to that which held us captive.” (The verb *κατηργήθημεν* is a very expressive, radical expression, which occurs only in the writings of Paul and his pupils Luke and the author of Hebrews. If this expression is used in an absolute sense, it means to destroy or get rid of completely; with *ἀπό* it is used of persons, as Grimm rightly explains: *tollitur omne, quod mihi cure aliquo erat, commercium.*) That is, we are delivered, discharged from, separated from (Luther: *vom Gesetz los*). And what else is the letter to the Galatians, beginning at 2:19 (*For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God—what a contrast!*) and ending at 5:18 (*But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law*), but one great demonstration that we, as believers, are free from all the law of God?

Why are we, as believers, completely free from the Law? Because Christ delivered us from it. John 8:36: “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” He delivered us not only from the slavery of sin, but also from the Law and its dominion. It is of the Law that the Apostle speaks in Galatians 4:31—5:1, saying: “So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman (the Law), but of the free. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.” Through the body of Christ, according to Romans 7:4, i.e., through its dying, its crucifixion, we have died to the Law and have become the bride and spouse of Christ. He was made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons (Gal. 4:4f.).

We are free and released from the Law *as a doctrine and rule of conduct, because we have all been taught by God through faith*. For by faith we are enlightened and know God, not only according to His essence and according to His persons, but also according to His nature (God is love) and according to His gracious and holy will. Jerusalem’s prophecy (31:33–34) is fulfilled in us, written, as it was, of the children of the new covenant: “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord” (Luther omitted the *mehr*, KJV “no more,” though the Hebrew has it in big letters). Isaiah also writes in 54:13: “All thy (the Church’s) children shall be taught of the Lord.” The Lord Jesus declared this prophecy fulfilled in those persons whom the Father gave to him (John 6:45); and in John 17 he demonstrates in detail how it was fulfilled. He has revealed the name of the Father, His divine *δόξα*, to them and has given them the words and glory which the Father had given to him. Through the Gospel God poured out His Spirit into the hearts of the

believers, and thereby there was created in them—also with reference to the *what of God's holy Will*—not only a knowledge, but an understanding which surpasses a thousand times all knowledge of the Will of God obtained from the Law. Yes, only through the Gospel the true knowledge is gained (II Cor. 3:16ff., and 4:6), as also our Confessions remind us (*FC*, S.D., V. p. 951ff.). “For we are his (God's) workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10). Should it be possible that He did not, in that same creation, give us the knowledge of what these good works are? Paul ends the catalog of sins, recorded in our chapter, with the words: “And any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.” This saving, sound doctrine certainly is the Gospel and not, in any case, the condemning Law. And certainly, the knowledge of the Gospel includes also the knowledge of all that is contrary to it—not only knowledge of so-called false doctrine, but also of the sins and vices which war against the Gospel. Paul admonishes again and again that men should “walk worthy of the Gospel.” From what are we to know this walking if not from the Gospel? Does the Law know what is Gospel, or what it means to walk worthy of it? How then could it teach a conduct worthy of the Gospel? Not that the Gospel is the doctrine of man's love. It is the doctrine of God's love toward us. The Law is the doctrine of love. Nor dare we ever lose sight of this difference. Nevertheless, it is and remains true that the Gospel not only incites and urges us toward love; that it not only creates this love in us; but that it also shows, describes, teaches, and makes known to us love and all its works. Yes, the Gospel alone *truly* makes love known to us. Surely, the Law in itself is an absolutely perfect doctrine of love. But in a practical way it is not that for natural man, in that “it was weak through the flesh” (Rom. 8:3), and that also as doctrine. Actually the sinner learns to know aright the *what* and the *how* of the Law through the Spirit, who writes it into his heart and mind. The result will be: the remaining knowledge of the Law in natural man—be it from the weak natural, or a stronger revealed knowledge of the Law, yet hidden by the veil of Moses—is enlightened through and through, is glorified, is illustriert (*FC*) by the love of God, poured out into our hearts, and is transformed into the law of liberty, the Law of Christ.—This is not Antinomianism, but the doctrine of the Scriptures (eg. Jer. 31:33f. 24:7; Isa 54:13; II Cor. 3:13f.). This is true of the Christian in so far as he is a Christian; something entirely different is true of the non-Christian and of the Christian in so far as he is flesh. But more of this later.

We well understand our catechisms, our dogmatics texts, and our confessional writings, when they teach that the Law is a rule also for us Christians—a rule by which to judge our good works. Whoever teaches in this way can rightly do so only in such a way that he begins with the *abstract* definition of the Law. Such a definition the *Formula of Concord* proposes as its criterion, when it says, “that the Law is properly a divine doctrine, in which the righteous, immutable will of God is revealed, what is the quality of man in his nature, thoughts, words, and works, in order that he may be pleasing and acceptable to God” (*Trigl.* p. 957); or, “then the Law has only one sense, namely, the immutable will of God, according to which men are to conduct themselves in their lives” (*Trigl.* p. 967). These definitions ignore the *characteristics* which the Law without exception possesses over against the *sinner* in all his activities and accomplishments. For it confronts him as an alien will, coming from without. It is an absolute demand and pronounces an unconditional curse on the transgressor. And all this is true even though the *Formula of Concord* adds these words to its first definition: “And it threatens its transgressors with God's wrath and temporal and eternal punishments.” This addition the Confession drops entirely in its second definition, because it is not essential for its purposes. The “Thou shalt” is concerned only with the *what* or content of the Law and not with the *how* or form of the Law. The usage is also Scriptural. Paul accurately calls this τὸ ἔργον, τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου (Rom. 2:15 and 8:4). And our Confession reminds us most earnestly that *all* application of the Law to the Christian must be understood only *secundum quid*. This matter we shall discuss later. Here we must say this concerning the definition of the Law given above, that it will contribute more to clearness and a more precise understanding of the difference between Law and Gospel, if one takes the term Law in the sense we outlined above, according to which the “Thou shalt” belongs to the essence of the Law. Only in this way do the declarations of Paul regarding the liberty of the Christian from the Law retain their full force; for they have meaning only for law so qualified.

We Christians as such are free from the Law, free from every tutorage of the Law; we are dead to the Law, separated from it just as fully as a wife is separated from her dead husband. We are not under the

direction, guidance, and leadership of the Law, but under that of grace and the Spirit of the Lord (II Cor. 3:16–18). But where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; there one finds not only a deep understanding of the *δικαίωμα* of the Law, a conduct worthy of the Gospel, but *also the doing* of the Law. The demand, requirement, pressure, and force of the Law is of no concern to the Christian, because he no longer is a servant. He is a child with a childlike mind, born anew by the Holy Spirit, renewed, driven (Rom. 8:14), led (Gal. 5:18), a new creature (II Cor. 5:17), and one who brings forth the fruits of the *Spirit* before and without the demands of the Law (Gal. 5:22). But we need not say much about this. The Scripture is full of it: Romans 7–8, the Letter to the Galatians. Nor is there any controversy over it, just as there is none about the Christian’s freedom from the curse of the Law (Gal. 3:13). For this reason we shall not expand on this point at this time. But we want to point briefly to the Letter to the Colossians. By leaning toward Gnosticism, the false teachers denied the complete sufficiency of Paul’s Gospel. They contended that faith in Christ alone could not make men perfect. The entire letter to the Colossians is directed against this contention. It stresses the *one* great thought: *In Christ you are perfect*. And Paul sets this forth in three major expositions: In 1:13–29 he shows that in Christ we Christians possess deliverance from the kingdom of Satan, salvation, forgiveness, reconciliation, and freedom from all accusations (vs. 22)—in other words, the complete righteousness by faith is ours, because all fullness, height, and greatness dwells in Christ, who accomplished all this for us. In 2:1–10 Paul then shows that in Christ we have all knowledge (vs. 2), because all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Him and the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily. And in 2:11–23 he points out that in Christ we also possess all regeneration and sanctification (“the circumcision made without hands”) and a new life; and that for the same reasons. In Christ you are perfect—this is a bold statement and we would call it heretical if a Paul had not said it. But now we should let it stand, for the Scriptures speak thus. And this sentence is the complete motivation for the statement of I Timothy 1. But the Apostle also offers this same motivation in the broad discussion, beginning with verse 11 of this very chapter. No law has been laid upon the just, it does not apply to him; even *the Law*, the Law given by Moses, does not apply to him “according to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust” (vs. 11), i.e., according to and on the strength of it. Not without reason does Paul turn toward the Gospel and his own person. It is the Gospel of the glory of God’s grace, which has removed all law, also the Law of God, from the just man. Because this Gospel is God’s economy of salvation, therefore Timothy must oppose the inventors of fables and the taskmasters of the Law. And the Apostle himself is example and proof for Timothy and all Christians of the sufficiency of the saving and sanctifying power of the Gospel, also for the truth that no law has been laid upon the Christian. This Gospel proved itself powerful through grace in the person of Paul, “the chief of sinners,” not only to create faith but also love, which has its origin in Christ Jesus. It changed him, who was a scoffer, a persecutor, and a blasphemer, into a most active and faithful laborer for Christ. And the Law did not contribute anything to this change.

Is our church then wrong when she teaches in great detail the third use of the law for Christians, as in the *Formula of Concord*, Article 6? No, the church is right. The Confession teaches that not only the “third,” but all “uses” of the Law are still needed by the Christian: the Law as mirror, rule, coercion and punishment. And that also is right. The church teaches the use of the Law by the *Christian because of the flesh which still adheres to him* and is applicable to it. This is the *secundum quid* use of the law, of which we spoke above. The classic chapter for this use is Romans 7, beginning at verse 14. Here Paul speaks of converted, not unconverted man. He is carnal by nature, sold under sin, in his flesh dwells no good thing. And so the Christian, who as Christian would do what is good, finds a law (the word here means a principle, a power, a firm natural disposition) in himself, according to which, in spite of all, evil adheres to him; it will not leave him. According to the inner, i.e., according to the new, spiritual man, his delight is in the law of the Lord. But in his members, i.e., in the instruments of his body and soul, another force is asserting itself, which wars against the law of his mind, i.e., against that new power implanted in him by the Holy Ghost, bringing him into captivity unto itself. From this power of death there is no complete delivery here; but thanks be to God that even here we have the beginning of it through Jesus Christ, there its consummation. Thus the Christian willingly serves the Law of God according to the new, the inner man; but according to the flesh he serves the power of sin.

So then, because the Christian shall not be free from the law of sin until he dies, therefore the Law also applies to him. It applies because and in so far as this is true. And it applies in every way: as mirror, rule, curb; as the definition of right and wrong, as motive and driving force, as pressure and compulsion, as punishment, chastisement, wrath, and as curse. The Old Adam is always, wherever he is found, in Christian and un-Christian, “the untamed, obstinate mule, *asinus indomitus et contumax*.” He is not obedient to the Law and therefore must be forced into the obedience to Christ, not only by the doctrine of the Law and its warning, its coercion, and its threat, but often also with the club of punishment and plagues, until the flesh of sin has been removed completely. Thus, in so far as the Christian still has the Old Adam in him, he is *under* the Law, completely and absolutely under it. But only to that extent. In so far as he is spirit, he is absolutely, completely, in every way free from the Law. “But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law” (Gal. 5:18). As part unbeliever, the Christian is truly under the Law, but as Christian not at all. In as much as he is still *unrighteous*, unholy, ungodly, etc., he is and remains a slave and captive of the Law, and is cursed and condemned. But in as much as he is righteous, renewed, sanctified, he is free from all law, blessed, and saved. Therefore it is false in every way and contrary to the clear word of Scripture and also of our Confession, to say: The Christian *as* Christian, as a believer, is still under the Law, at least in its use as a rule of conduct. We must not form the habit of using this manner of speech, not even if it were found in some explanation of the catechism, in a schoolbook, a synodical report, a volume of dogmatics, or elsewhere. Such talk not only diametrically opposes our chapter but the entire Scripture, creating confusion and wavering in regard to the whole doctrine of grace, the “glorious Gospel of the grace of the blessed God.” It mixes Law and Gospel, falsifies the Gospel, and again makes it to be law. It rocks the sureness of faith of Christians and finally removes it entirely. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. “No law is laid upon the just (as such),” and that “according to the glorious Gospel of the grace of the blessed God,” which made even a Paul into a most faithful tool of God and—more important—made him blessed.

Several other points must be noted, however, if we are to understand this matter aright. The Old Adam of the Christian also is fully and completely under the Law. He should and must have this club. But what does it accomplish in and for him? There is still much unclarity on this question. It is often thought that the Old Adam is made better by the Law. But that is an obvious error. The Law does not make the Old Adam better by one iota; rather, it only makes him the more obstinate, Romans 7. Even the knowledge of sin, which the unregenerate gains from the Law, is not yet—as the case of Judas shows—a moral improvement. Without the Law, sin is dead. As soon as the Law appears, the sinful lusts, aroused by the Law, begin to become active. They bring forth sin and fruit unto *death* (vs. 5). Sin (the Old Adam), taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence (vs. 8). 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 (vss. 9–11). That is the effect of the Law, holy and good though it is, on the Old Adam. That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful (vs. 13). The Law does not improve, humble, crucify, or kill the Old Adam. It makes him alive, proud, greater, worse, in order that the measure of sin might be tilled completely (5:20). The Law does not bring death to the Old Adam, but through the Old Adam it brings man death of the soul, i.e., eternal damnation—as in the case of Judas—unless the Gospel enters into the picture. Through the Old Adam the Law makes man to be an arch-criminal or a hypocrite, or a desperate Judas (*Art. Smalc. III, II p 479*). Or is the Old Adam of Christians of better nature, habits, and behavior than the Old Adam of the unbeliever? No, there is only *one* thing to be claimed about the effect of the Law on the Old Adam: It is able somewhat outwardly to control him, entirely outwardly, by means of threat and punishment through fear, as one keeps a criminal behind locked doors, or as the *Formula of Concord, VI, 24, Trigl. p. 969*, has it: He also oftentimes must be coerced to the obedience of Christ by the club of punishments and troubles. For, as Luther says at the beginning of the *Smalcald Articles, Art. III, II*, the Law is also given for this purpose: “to restrain sin by threats and the dread of punishment, and by the promise and offer of grace and benefit.”—But even this went awry, as Luther further explains there. The Law alone is unable to accomplish this goal in anyone except Christians. Nor does it accomplish it in them by its own power. The *Spirit* in them for Christ’s sake outwardly subjugates the

incorrigible Old Adam to the Law. It puts him into the prisonhouse of the Law by constantly remonstrating with him that the seed of the flesh can produce only damnation. The crucifixion of the flesh of Galatians 5, i.e., the killing off, the gradual mortification of the Old Adam, the bringing into captivity of every thought to the obedience of Christ, the continued subjection of the body, according to I Corinthians 9:27, is not effected by the law but by the Spirit (Rom. 8:12, 13ff.).

Only through daily contrition and repentance of the Christian will the Old Adam be drowned; not by contrition caused by the Law, which is the beginning of the eternal death of the soul. In this connection we must be well aware of the fact that everything which the Christian may pressure and force the Old Adam to do by means of the Law—be it the avoiding of sin or doing a so-called good deed—is not a truly God-pleasing obedience, but a work wrung from the flesh and therefore damned. If the pressure ceases, greed, cheating, thieving, hatred, murder, and villainy begin anew. Thus, flesh remains flesh, it will not change for the better. Joseph indeed says, “How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” But this is not obedience to the Law, but a fruit of the Spirit, childlike obedience, which has its source in the Gospel (Rom. 8:15).

Thirdly, we must also remember what the dynamic relationship between the new and the old man in the Christian is. We Christians know and daily bewail the fact that the flesh is still very strong in us, and we groan with Paul, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom. 7:24). Before we know it, the Old Adam in us again has led us into evil. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Nevertheless, not the flesh, but the spirit governs the Christian. We are called Christians, believers, saints, spiritual people, etc. because the Spirit rules us. Whosoever has not Christ’s Spirit is not His. But we have His Spirit. We are truly God’s temple. The Triune God dwells and walks in us. The Spirit rules over our *person*. The flesh does not have power over us. It is ruled by the Spirit and led captive as a slave. At the very moment when the flesh again gains rule over us, faith and Christianity, grace and the adoption of sons, holiness and regeneration cease. So powerfully does the Spirit of Christ rule over the person of the Christian, over his real center and ego, that Paul speaks thus of evil, Romans 7:17: “Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.” The opposite, viz., that the Christian’s ego does evil, cannot be said. It would be a contradiction, since the ego would then cease to be Christian. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin for the very reason that he is born of God. He cannot sin, i.e., not consciously and willingly, as long as the Spirit rules him. And so again: If the Spirit *rules* you, then, according to your person, you are *not* under the Law. Whatever in the Christian still can be subjected to the Law through the Spirit, as described above, is the flesh, which still “adheres” to his person. The Christian is not yet spiritually perfect. And in so far as, and only in so far as this is true, he is in the manner just described under the Law. In I Corinthians 9:21 the Apostle declares: “To them that are without law, as without law (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ), that I might gain them that are without law” (μη ὦν ἄνομος θεοῦ, ἀλλ’ ἔννομος Χριστοῦ). Thus the *textus receptus*, while the Nestle text has θεοῦ and Χριστοῦ, which amounts to the same thing. In the main clause Paul is speaking of the revealed Law, especially of the ceremonial Law. But the subordinate clause is all-important. Both parts of it are actually coordinate and want to say that the same Paul, who knows himself to be free from the Jewish ceremonial Law and who uses or does not use this liberty, as the circumstances may demand, is really not without law, in so far as his relation to God comes into question. Rather, he is under the Law of Christ. According to Gal. 6:2; John 13:34; 15:12; I John 4:21, and according to verse 5 of our chapter this means that he is filled with that *love* which the Holy Spirit creates in the Christian by means of the Gospel, as promised in Jeremiah 31. This is *not* the Law of Moses, be it moral or ceremonial Law, which Paul places in opposition to the Gospel and to grace. Grace has freed us from that Law. *No, it is an essentially different thing.* Surely, it agrees with the Law of Sinai in this that it has the *δικαίωμα* of that Law, the love, righteousness, truthfulness, and chastity as its content. But that which is characteristic of Sinai’s Law is missing. There is no “Thou shalt,” no peremptory demand, no either-or, no unconditional threat or curse. Neither does it approach man from without, as an alien will. It is given into his heart, as Jeremiah puts it, and written into his mind by and with the act of the forgiveness of sins, which becomes active in him through faith. This Law is just as much *God’s will* as the Law of Sinai. It is just as earnestly the *holy Will* of God, and is in no way more lax than the

former. But it is not only the holy Will of God, but it is the holy Will of God comprehended in his *gracious, good Will*, and therefore a truly *Fatherly* will. True, one may not deny to the Law of Sinai in itself this same grace and fatherliness. God introduces the giving of the Law at Sinai with a truly gracious, fatherly word: “I am the Lord (Jehovah—gracious covenant God through Christ), thy God (the ‘thy God’ is materially equivalent to Jehovah), which hath brought thee out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” I have shown you such great goodness, I have made you the nation of the Messiah, I will richly bless you and provide for you, and will protect you from all your foes. And this *bestowal of grace* was to be Israel’s motive for the faithful fulfillment of the moral, civil, and ceremonial Law, which He subsequently gave them. But this characteristic of the giving of the Law in the Old Testament is true only in the ideal sense of the word and under the presupposition of Israel’s adoption as spiritual children and its piety of heart. Really this is found only in the Israel *κατὰ πνεῦμα*. Thus the saints of the Old Testament, under the Law of the Old Testament, had the same relationship to God as we children of the New Testament, with this one difference that they, as minor children, were still “in bondage under the elements of the world” (Gal. 4:1ff.). We, on the other hand, as those who have reached their majority, are free from them. But for the great mass of people, for the unbelieving hordes, the covenant was to be an outward arrangement. It is a covenant with a nation in the purely physical sense, with a people that has one outward physical origin, merely held together by blood relationship. This nation is to be preserved until the fullness of time is come. When Shiloh shall come, the gathering of the people shall be unto Him. And for this nation as a corporate body the Old Testament covenant, “the Law,” was meant purely as a taskmaster. In *this* sense alone the Apostle Paul contrasts the Law with the grace and spiritual majority of the New Testament, as does the entire Bible. Therefore the Law of Christ, the love implanted in us and springing from grace, from the Spirit, and from faith, must not be identified with the Law of Sinai (except, as stated above, as to content). Rather, this love ever must be in contrast to the Law of Sinai, as grace and Spirit themselves are, as the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), who rules us and who has freed us from the Law (vs. 18). It is the fruit of the love of God, which according to Romans 5:5ff., is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. It is the love which God has revealed so powerfully toward us—that Christ died for us, when we were yet sinners.

Now we say: On the clear understanding of the difference between the Law of Christ and that of Sinai, depends the knowledge that no law has been placed upon the just; that we Christians, in no sense whatsoever, are any longer under the Law of Sinai. As children of God we stand free and holy in the Law of Christ. We are ἔννομοι Χριστοῦ or Χριστῶ, and therefore not ἄνομοι θεῶ or θεοῦ. But as Christians we are absolutely free from the Law of Sinai.

Now finally we are able to understand that other expression *commandment* used in our chapter by Paul in addition to νόμος. He says in verse 5: “Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.” God desires love of us Christians as our manner of living. He has the “law of Christ” in mind. This, by the way, is perfectly clear, as we said in the beginning, from the fact that this love is represented as coming from unfeigned faith (in Christ). Why does Paul not call this law “the Law” or “the Law of Christ”? Because he wants to differentiate it clearly from the Law κατ’ ἐξοχήν, wants to set it apart clearly from the Law of Sinai. He would have caused confusion, had he used the term “Law of Christ” here. He could not say that the purpose of the *Law* is love and then continue: “No law is put upon the just” without confusing the terms and his readers. He speaks in verse 5 and in verses 8 and 9 of two entirely *different* things. And so he does not call the *love* which is enjoined upon Christians law, or the law, but the *commandment*. This is done throughout the entire Scriptures, especially in the New Testament. No law, i.e., no Law of Sinai, nor anything similar, has been laid upon the Christians. But they have the Law of Christ, love. This love itself is the commandment of their God. In the thousand and one situations of life it resolves itself into individual *commandments*. Commands, directions, exhortations, warnings, and rules of conduct, in which God, their loving Father, and Christ, their Savior, show and tell them what is acceptable in His sight, what they should and should not do. But he says and “commands” this especially, only because and in so far as they still have the old flesh in them and are not entirely spiritual. Otherwise they would not need even this commandment or these commandments.

Everyone knows that the expression “commandment” is often used in Scripture in a purely legal sense, especially in regard to individual demands of the moral Law, as well as in regard to the civil and ceremonial Law. Yes, just as the whole giving of the Law by God is summed up in the term law, so the word also means: My commandments, statutes, rights, morals, commands. In the Old Testament, the terms used more often are **תּוֹרָה** and **חֻקִּים**, commandments and statutes. In the New Testament, the former is synonymous with *ἐντολή*, the latter with *δικαιώματα* (Luke 1:6), *στοιχεῖα* (Gal. 4:3,9), and *παραδόσεις* (Col. 2:8,20; II Thess. 2:15; 3:6). In the New Testament, these and similar terms denote also those things which God wants his children to do, keep, and observe, the things of the *θέλημα*, the *Will* of God for His saints. As it is the saving Will of the Father that everyone who seeth the Son and believeth on Him should have everlasting life (John 6:40), so it is the good, acceptable, and perfect will of the same Father, morally considered, that we present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, and that we be not conformed to this world, etc. This is His commandment, *that* commandment, as Paul calls it here. And the individual things, attitudes, endeavors, and accomplishments, which are summarized in this holy Will of God and which follow from it—all these the New Testament also calls God’s Will, commandments, commands, statutes, or similar names for His believers, His beloved children. “This is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication.” And again, “For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.” Especially John speaks again and again of “his commandments.” Yes, it is not only God, the loving Father, who commands, directs, and ordains for His children in this evangelical sense, but the Apostles, especially Paul, say in this spirit: I will, I command, I ordain. And he does this everywhere, not only with reference to Christians in general, but especially also with respect to his assistants and co-workers; and he does it even in the most trivial, external matters. The same Apostle does this who says, II Corinthians 1:24, “Not that we have dominion over your faith.” Yet he commands Timothy: “These things command and teach” and “these things give in charge, that they may be blameless.” In short, the entire Word of God, in both the Old and New Testaments, is full of such *commandments, commands, exhortations, charges*, and the like; but none of these is *law, the Law*, which Paul places in contrast to grace and faith, the Gospel and the righteousness of God. It is not the law of works, but of Christ, of grace, of the Gospel, of the Spirit, and of liberty. God poured this law into our hearts (Jer. 31), because the Law from Sinai could not compel us either to piety or to a keeping of itself. It is—speaking abstractly—one and the same thing as the Law in content, it is love. In its spirit it is the direct opposite. It is not the Law, given through Moses, but the commandment given by the Lord Jesus Christ (I Thess. 4:2). It is that which we sometimes call evangelical exhortation, guidance, and warning (one also may calmly say evangelical or fatherly threat, as was the threat in Paradise), because the Scriptures use the terms commandments and exhortation promiscuously in this sense. Its content is a part of the holy Will of God, its motive the grace imparted to us. “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:2ff.). Sinai has no further claim on such people. They walk in a new spirit.

Summary: In so far as we Christians still have the flesh in us, we are under the Law in *every* way. In so far as we do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit, we are *in no way* under the Law. The new obedience of the Christian is a purely evangelical thing.