

A BROTHER, who does not desire his name to appear, asks for something on the subject of our obligation or otherwise to keep the Ten Commandments, especially as bearing on the observance of the seventh day. His desire appears to be met in the subjoined communication from

Brother F. CHESTER, Kankakee, (Ill., U.S.A.): "Having been in contact with seventh-day adventism for two or three years last passed, and knowing that the brethren in England will many of them soon (if not already) be in contact with them, as they have put up a 100,000 dols. printing establishment in London, within the last 18 months,—I have thought it advisable to write an article upon the question, which would save the brethren wading through a mass of rubbish in order to get at S. D. A.'s views upon certain texts. We have had various articles put forward upon the question of the Sabbath, but there has been no formal systematized answer to the seventh day adventist's arguments. Of course the arguments are often even foolish, yet the how to answer does not readily be within everybody's power."

Are Believers Under the Dominion of the Law Given from Sinai?

Some say, yes, with regard to the ten commandments. They rely upon the fact that the Lord blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it after resting upon it. Without doubt Adam kept a seventh day, for Jesus says: "the Sabbath was made for the man;" yet there was no command concerning it in the law which Adam transgressed, nor is there any authority for believing that the Sabbath was in any way incorporated in a law until the promulgation of the law to the children of Israel. The testimony of Paul makes it clear that there was no law from Adam to Moses. He says: "*until the law*, sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed *where there is no law*." Here is a period which Paul defines as a time when *there was no law*. He speaks of it as a period previous to the law. It is not a question of the law not having been written, because he says sin was in the world but it could not be imputed because there was *no law*. But, says the objector, sin is defined as "the transgression of the law" (1 Jno. 3:4). How could sin, or transgression of law be in the world when there was no law; especially as Paul says "where there is no law there is no transgression." The answer is that although Jehovah had made known to mankind what He required to constitute righteousness, there was no law to punish wrong doing, and transgression was therefore not sin after the similitude of Adam's transgression. Paul says: "the law entered that the offence might abound." Now we know that law was given to Israel and to no other nation; Paul states this fact in Rom. 9:4, "Who are Israelites to whom pertaineth the adoption and the glory, and the covenants and the giving of the law, and the service and the promises." This is still more evident from the history of the matter as recorded (Neh 9:13, 14): "Thou camest down upon Mount Sinai and spake with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgment and true laws, good statutes and commandments, and made known unto them Thy holy Sabbath; and commanded them precepts, statutes and laws, by the hand of Moses Thy servant." Here is a distinct identification of the commencing point of the law, as including the Sabbath. But it may be said, is it not written that Abraham "kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws?" Yes, but this was not the law of Sinai. We are not left in the dark as to what was commanded Abraham, who received circumcision as a statute binding upon future generations and with a penalty affixed.—(Gen. 17:9–14). He also obeyed in other recorded particulars. It is argued from Exodus 16. that the law (declogue) was in existence previous to Mount Sinai, but more especially the fourth commandment. We read at verse 4: "Then saith the Lord unto Moses: Behold I will rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them whether they will walk in My law or no."

Upon this it is contended that there was a test turning upon the fourth commandment which must have been already in existence. But this argument ignores the nature of the transaction. The very fact that God was going to prove them whether they would walk in His law or no, is evidence that they had not as yet received the law concerning which He speaks, but that a law was about to be given. If they had it before they certainly had time to be proved during the preceding three months. It is evident that the preparing for the seventh day was not a previous custom at all. God said to Moses: "And it shall come to pass that in the sixth day, they shall prepare that which they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily." And verse 17 shows that the apportionment was of God: for "some gathered more and some less, yet when they came to measure it with an homer he that had gathered much had nothing over and he that had gathered little had no lack."—(verse 18). Our seventh day friends hold that the first covenant was made concerning the ten commandments and nothing else. In illustrating the subject they read down to verse 18 of chapter 20., then pass over to chapter 24., where Moses took the blood and sprinkled it over the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." They understand that "all these words" mean the ten commandments. It must be evident however, that "all these words" include that which was spoken to Moses after the people drew back in terror, when the Lord spoke to them out of the midst of the cloud enveloping Mount Sinai. It is evident it is so from the allusion to the first covenant in the prophetic promise of the new covenant: "Behold the days come when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, . . . for this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord—I will put My laws into their mind, and in their hearts will I write them, and I will be to them a God and they shall be to Me a people."—(Jer. 31:33–34; Heb. 8:12). There is no room left for doubt as to the basis of the first covenant which is to be done away. Exodus 24. tells us that "Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and all the judgments, and all the people answered with one voice, and said: all the words which the Lord hath said will we do." Did they mean all the ten commandments but not the others? Unquestionably, "all the words" mentioned in the answer of the people, necessarily includes all the commandments and judgments, as Jehovah bears witness, in Ezekiel, "I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which, if a man do he shall even live them."—(Ezekiel 20:11).

The record continues, that Moses wrote all the words of the Lord in a book, and he took the book of the covenant and read in the audience of the people, and they said all that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient; then, after sprinkling the people, Moses said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words."—(Ex. 24:3–8). Paul, in Heb. 9., refers to this very matter and quotes as follows: "For when Moses had spoken *every precept to the people according to the law*, he took the blood of calves and of goats with water and scarlet wool and with hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people." He also says, "and almost all things are by the law purged with blood." Now it cannot be shown that the ten commandments purge or purged anything with blood. But Paul shows that this law had reference to sacrifices; and a little farther on in his epistle says concerning this same law, that "the law was a shadow of good things to come," showing when he spoke of "the law," he did not mean the ten commandments, but the whole system delivered by Moses. The covenant included more than the ten commandments; but as these commandments, written on stone, were to be placed in the ark of the covenant as a testimony to future generations of the fact that God had spoken with their fathers—the same as the pot of manna and Aaron's rod which budded—they

are termed the tables of the covenant, and the tables of testimony, and the words thereon engraven were the words of the covenant, the ten words (Ex. 34:28); that is upon the tables was written the ten commandments of the covenant, not that the ten words were all the words, for we have shown otherwise; but as all the commandments, in one way or another, were connected with the ten, the ten are emphatically the words of the covenant as representing the whole.

James 2:8.—“But if ye have respect to persons ye commit sin, and are convicted of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” Now the interdict against having certain persons in respect to the detriment of others, is found in Lev. 19:15—not in the ten commandments; and as James refers also to two commands found in the ten, we can but conclude that “the law” referred to, includes all the commands delivered by Moses.

Paul enquires: “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid! yea, we establish the law.”—(Rom. 3:31). This text is the ultimatum of the seventh day people—they say there certainly was a law abolished (Eph. 2:15), and a law cannot be at the same time abolished and established, and therefore there must be a law not done away, viz., say they, the ten commandments. But a law which represents something in figure, is abolished by the substance which it represents when the substance is come, and yet the substance would establish the figure, although it would render the figure valueless. Hence, we do, through faith in the substance and love to one another, establish the whole law. But if the S. D. Adventists’ position on this text is correct, we find that the law was not established till “faith came” (Gal. 3:23–24), and then the *we* of Romans 3:31, establishing it. If we establish the law through faith in the substance to which it pointed in shadow, are we still under its shadow? No; having truly come to the substance by faith, we no longer look to the shadow. It is held, however, that the seventh day is not a figure or type of something future, but simply a memorial of God’s rest after the six day’s work of creation. It is said that a type was not admissible till after sin entered the world, and that the seventh day was sanctified after God had rested and before sin had entered. We must in these matters, however, be governed by apostolic usage rather than theological tradition. Paul states plainly in Hebrews 4:4–5, that the seventh day is the rest which remains for the people of God. Now, he can only have meant that the seventh day was so in type. Mark, he says: “He spake in a certain place of the seventh day, on this wise, and God did rest the seventh day from all His works,” “and in this place again,” which shows he was speaking of the seventh day in both places, for he speaks in one place of the seventh day, and in another place speaks of it again. Now Paul exhorts the brethren to labour to enter the rest spoken of, from which it follows that it is a future rest he is speaking of. The conclusion is therefore forced upon us that the seventh day and “God’s rest” are the same rest in type and antitype. The statement that a type would not be allowable till sin entered the world, is true only so far as a type may be connected with sin. Adam being placed on probation to labour to enter God’s rest, a type in the case is certainly permissible. “Therefore, let no man judge you in meats or drinks, or of the new moon, or in respect of any holy day, or of the Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come.”—(Col. 2:16–17). “What things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law.”—(Rom. 3:19). “And ye are not under the law, but under grace.”—(Rom. 6:4). “Know ye not that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? . . . wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ.”—(Rom. 7:1, 4). The law has no dominion over a dead person, therefore, if we be dead with Christ, the law has no dominion over us. We are under the law to Christ, but not under the law to Moses. Why, then, (it may be asked of some), “why, as though

living in the (Mosaic) world, are ye subject to ordinances?”—(Col. 2:20–23). “Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free.”—(Gal. 5:1).

F. C.¹

¹ (2001). *The Christadelphian*, 17(electronic ed.), 83–86.