

What it means to be "under the law"

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of 'the Lord'" (2 Corinthians 3:17, 18).

Before faith came we were confined under the law, "shut up" unto the faith which should afterward be revealed. We know that whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Rom. 14:23). Therefore, to be "under the law" is identical with being under sin.

The grace of God brings salvation from sin, so that when we believe God's grace we are no longer under the law, because we are freed from sin. Those who are under the law therefore are the transgressors of the law.

Christ says, "I am the door" (John 10:9). He is also the sheepfold and the Shepherd. Men fancy that when they are outside the fold they are free, and that to come into the fold would mean a curtailing of their liberty; but exactly the reverse is true. The fold of Christ is "a large place," while unbelief makes a narrow prison. Outside of Christ is bondage. In Him alone there is freedom. Outside of Christ, one is in prison, "caught in the cords of his sin" (prov. 5:22).

It is the law that declares one to be a sinner and makes him conscious of his condition. It forms the sinner's prison walls, making him feel uncomfortable, oppressing him with a sense of sin, as though they would press his life out. While he makes frantic efforts to escape, those commandments stand as firm prison walls. Whichever way he turns he finds a commandment which says to him, "You can find no freedom by me, for you have sinned."

If he promises to keep the law, he is no better

off, for his sin still remains. It goads him and drives him to the only way of escape. In Christ he is made "free indeed," for in Christ he is made the righteousness of God. In Christ is "the perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25)." [1]

Note:

1. The Glad Tidings, pp. 80-82.