

ARTICLES

GRACE AND LAW

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The relationship between grace and law in the Bible is an old theological question. Various theories have been proposed to elucidate this relationship. One of the more popular positions, that of modern Dispensationalism, emphasizes the sharp antithesis between grace and law, and applies this sharp antithesis to the successive dispensations, that of law and that of grace. This position interprets the dispensation of law (also called Mosaic dispensation) as exemplifying the principle of law in contrast to that of grace and the dispensation of grace (also called dispensation of gospel) as exemplifying the principle of grace in sharp contrast to that of law. It appeals to Paul's statement "you are not under law but under grace" (Rom. 6:14) to claim that law plays no role in Christian living. Not only dispensationalists, many other evangelicals are of this opinion also. Murray observes that

It is symptomatic of a pattern of thought current in many evangelical circles that the idea of keeping the commandments of God is not consonant with the liberty and spontaneity of the Christian man, that *keeping* the law has its affinities with legalism and with the principle of works rather than with the principle of grace.¹

Yet the same Paul who writes "you are not under the law but under grace" (Rom. 6:14) also exhorts the Christians to serve one another through love and gives as the basis for this "for the whole law is fulfilled in one word, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'" (Gal. 5:14). This indicates that the law does have some role to play in the life of the Christian who is under grace. After all, the law may be complementary to grace rather than in sharp antithesis to it.

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1. John Murray, *Principles of Conduct* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957, 2nd print, 1964), p. 182. italic his.

This article studies the relationship between grace and law in the Old Testament (particularly in the Pentateuch), in the teachings of Jesus and in the Pauline epistles. In conclusion finding of this study will be brought to bear upon the contemporary issues of civil rights and civil disobedience.

I.

Recent Old Testament scholarship points out the close structural similarities between some legislative sections of the Hexateuch and Hittite suzerainty treaties. Von Rad writes

Comparison of ancient Near Eastern treaties, especially those made by the Hittites in the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B.C., with passages in the Old Testament has revealed so many things in common between the two, particularly in the matter of the form, that there must be some connection between these suzerainty treaties and the exposition of the details of Jahweh's covenant with Israel given in certain passages in the Old Testament. As a result, with particular passages and groups of passages, we may speak of a "covenantal formulation," in which the various formal elements found in the treaties recur feature for feature, though sometimes freely adapted to suit the conditions obtaining in Israel.²

Mendenhall summarizes the scheme of the suzerainty treaties imposed on a vassal by an overlord as consisting of the following six main elements.³

1. The Preamble or title. 2. Historical prologue or retrospect, mentioning previous relations between the two parties involved. Past benefactions by the suzerain are the basis for the vassal's gratitude and future obedience, in other words, the basis of the treaty. 3. Stipulations—the obligations laid upon the vassal by the suzerain. 4. (a) Deposition of a copy of the covenant in the vassal's sanctuary and (b) Periodic public reading of the covenant terms to the people. 5. Witness, a long list of gods invoked to witness the covenant. 6. (a) Curses, invoked upon the vassal if he breaks the covenant and (b) Blessings, invoked, upon the vassal if he keeps the covenant.

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2. Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. I, trans by D.M.G. Stalker (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 132.
 3. George E. Mendenhall, "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition", in *Biblical Archaeologist*, Vol. 17 (1954), pp. 58-61.

Many Old Testament scholars recognize that the record of the Sinai event in Ex. 20-31, that of the episode which took place on the plains of Moab in Deut. 1-32 and that of the event under the leadership of Joshua at Shechem in Josh. 24 all follow this covenant scheme. Kitchen analyses these passages, lettered A, B, C respectively for clarity, into the following scheme.⁴

1. Preamble: A. Exod. 20:1. B. Deut. 1:1-5. C. Josh. 24:2
2. Historical Prologue: A. Exod. 20:2. B. Deut. 1:6-3:29. C. Josh. 24:2-13.
3. Stipulation: A. Exod. 20:3-17, 22-26 (Basic);⁵ Exod. 21-23; 25-31 (detailed), plus Lev. 1-25; B. Deut. 4; 5-11 (basic); 12-26 (detailed). c. Josh. 24:14-15.
4. (a) Deposition of Texts: A. Exod. 25:16; 34:1, 28, 29; cf. Deut. 10:1-5 (retropect). B. Deut. 31:9, 24-26. C. Josh. 24:26 (written in the book of the law).
(b) Public Reading: B. Deut. 31:10-13.
5. Witnesses: Instead of pagan deities, memorial-stones (A. Exod. 24:4; cf. C. Josh. 24:27), or Moses' Song (B. Deut. 31:16-30; 32:1-47), or the law-book itself (B. Deut. 31; 26) or even the people as participants (C. Josh. 24:22) serve as witnesses.
6. Curses and Blessings:⁶ A. Perhaps, cf. Lev. 26:3-13 (blessings), 14-20 (curses; with more for repeated disobedience, 21-33). B. Deut. 28:1-14 (blessings), 15-68 (curses). C. Implicit in Josh. 24:19-20.

This analysis demonstrates that the Sinai event was the making of a covenant between Yahweh as the "suzerain" and Israel as the "vassal", and that those episodes on the plains of Moab and at Shechem were renewals of the covenant.

Not only do the structural outlines of these passages fit well into the structural pattern of the Hittite suzerainty treaties, the Pentateuch itself frequently specifically mentions that Yahweh made a covenant with Israel (e.g., Exod. 24:7, 8; 34:10, 27, 28; Lev. 2:13; 24:8; 26:9, 15, 25; Deut. 4:13, 23; 5:2, 8:18; 29:1 etc.). Further it is explicitly stated in Exod. 24:8 that the law codes are the words (or terms) in accordance

4. K. A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1966), pp. 96f.

5. For a distinction between basic and detailed stipulations, cf. Klaus Baltzer, *Das Bundesformular, sein Ursprung und seine Verwendung im Alten-Testament*, (Neukirchen: Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins, 1960), pp. 20, 22-24.

6. In the Old Testament the sequence is Blessings-Curse-Witness (exact reversal). "This would appear to be a specifically OT feature, not unconnected with the difference in kind of witnesses invoked" (*Ibid.*, p. 97, n. 39).

with which Yahweh has made the covenant with Israel. The Decalogue, the law *par excellence*, is twice mentioned specifically as the words (or terms) of the covenant between Yahweh and Israel in Exod. 34:28 and Deut. 4:13. Thus the Old Testament considers the Mosaic law as the "Stipulation" of the covenant between Yahweh as the "suzerain" and Israel as the "vassal." Out of grace Yahweh takes the initiative to deliver Israel from the bondage in the land of Egypt, pledges Himself and enters into covenant with Israel to bring them to the promised land (Exod. 6:8), to do marvels for them (Exod. 34:10), to make them fruitful and to multiply them and bless them (Lev. 26:9), to be their God and to establish them as His people (Deut. 29:13).⁷ As a response to this gracious act of Yahweh, Yahweh demands Israel to keep His ordinances. Therefore the Decalogue is made binding by the sentence "I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Again, in the Holiness Code and in Deuteronomy the ground for a particular law is often linked with the recollection of the delivery out of Egypt or Israel's bondage there (cf. Lev. 18:3; 19:34, 36; 22:32f; 25:38, 42, 55; 26:13, 45; Deut. 13:6, 11; 15:15; 20:1; 23:5; 24:9, 18; 25:17).

As the "Stipulation" of the covenant, by itself (that is, isolated from the covenant) the law cannot be a means to earn God's favor. It cannot be a means of salvation. The covenant does not first come into effect through the keeping of the law, but rather, because the covenant exists, the law is proclaimed as Yahweh's ordinance.⁸ It is the covenant, not the law, which mediates Yahweh's favor, His blessing. This is clearly brought out in Deut. 7:12ff. "And because you hearken to these ordinances, and keep and do them, Yahweh your God will *keep with you the covenant and the steadfast love* which he swore to your fathers to keep; he will love you, bless you, and multiply you . . ." According to this passage, the keeping of the ordinances does not *directly* bring Yahweh's blessing. It only ensures the continuation of *the covenant*, and the covenant, in turn, brings Yahweh's blessing. That Yahweh's favor is not to be earned through keeping the law, but it is Yahweh's free gift is clearly stated in Deut. 9:4f.,

Do not say in your heart, after Yahweh your God has thrust them out before you, 'It is because of my righteousness that

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7. In some passages Yahweh's promise to, His covenant with the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is stated as the basis for Yahweh's gracious act to Israel. Yahweh's promise to Abraham is Yahweh's sole gracious act. Abraham did not do anything to earn it (cf. Gen. 12:1ff).
 8. Walther Zimmerli, *The Law and the Prophet, A Study of the Meaning of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965), p. 47.

Yahweh has brought me in to possess this land . . . ' Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land . . . that he may confirm the work which Yahweh swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob.

The Deuteronomic law itself (Deut. 12-26) occasionally speaks of the "blessing of Yahweh" which will fall to the lot of Israel as of something to be taken for granted, without the condition of keeping the law (12:15; 16:17). It is also several times stated without any proviso "when Yahweh your God shall bless you" (12:7; 14:24; 15:4, 6, 14; 16:10, 15).

The "blessing and curse" section of the Deuteronomic covenant (Deut. 28:1-68) is also very illuminative on this point. The first glance at the chapter will strike one with the external inequality between the comparatively short section on the blessing (vss. 1-14), and the significantly more extensive details about the curse (vss. 15-68), even though each of the two sections begins in exactly the same way, even to the actual form of words. This indicates that at the end of the covenant, the curse is more strongly emphasized than the blessing. Curse is presented as a *direct* result of the transgression of the law but the blessing is presented as a result of the covenant, which Yahweh will keep if the people keep the law (Deut. 28:9). Thus as the "Stipulation" of the covenant, the law must require the fulfilling of its provisions. Whosoever keeps the law does no more than his duty, and can make no claim to a reward. But whosoever violates the law breaks the covenant and incurs the curse. The structure of the book of Deuteronomy sheds more light on this point. Noth writes.

We may briefly summarize the arrangement of material to be found in the *Book of Deuteronomy* as follows. At the beginning we have the promise of Yahweh, made to "the fathers" and covering the occupation of the promised land and the divine blessing therein. In the course of its realization we come to the making of the covenant between God and people at Sinai at whose conclusion that law was delivered whose observance Yahweh (as the legitimate law-giver) must demand as the self-evident sequel to mutual loyalty to the covenant. The content of the law is intended to ensure first and foremost loyalty to God in every walk of life. Transgression of the law—even though it be in only one particular—implies forsaking of covenant-loyalty, and consequently covenant-breaking and defection; and for all defections the curse attached to the law comes into operation, executed by Yahweh himself. The blessing which is also pronounced in *Deut.* XXVII for fulfilling the law can then basically have only the negative im-

plication that non-transgression of the law permits Yahweh's ordained order, and therewith also his promised blessing, to operate.⁹

The chapter of blessing and curse which concludes the Holiness Code (Lev. 26) has a structure similar to Deut. 28. A comparatively short section of blessing (vss. 4-13) is followed by a considerably longer section of curse (vss. 14-39). Again, the emphasis is placed on the curse, which is the direct result of the transgression of the law. Again, according to Lev. 26:9 keeping the law only allows the covenant to continue, which in turn brings about the blessing, but the keeping of the law itself does not directly bring blessing. Thus the law is not an absolute entity with regard to which two possibilities are equally available—fulfillment and transgression, good works and bad ones, reward and punishment, blessing and curse.

The law, rather, presupposes the view which calls the Old Testament the covenant between God and people, which was established by Yahweh on his own initiative and which is bound up with the promise freely made by Yahweh. On the basis of this law, which can and does demand fulfillment, there is no place for the idea of good, meritorious works and a reward which may be earned thereby; the blessing is not earned, but freely promised. On the basis of this law there is only one possibility for man of having his own independent activity: that is transgression, defection, followed by curse and judgment.¹⁰

As the "Stipulation" of the covenant, the law is to bind Israel closely to the gracious Yahweh in love. In Deuteronomy, after the repeating of the Decalogue, the first commandment is specially elaborated in Deut. 6-11 by emphasizing wholehearted love toward Yahweh. Deuteronomy 11:13 "And if you will obey my commandments which I command you this day, to love Yahweh your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul . . ." and Deut. 11:22 "For if you will be careful to do all this commandment which I command you to do, loving Yahweh your God, walking in all his ways, and cleaving to him . . ." indicate that keeping the law is very closely connected with loving Yahweh.

This study demonstrates that in the Old Testament view, the Mosaic law is not an absolute entity by keeping of which one can earn Yahweh's

9. Martin Noth, *The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Studies*, trans. by D. R. Ap-Thomas (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967), p. 128.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

blessing. The law, rather, is an element of the covenant freely and graciously granted by Yahweh to Israel. The covenant is a free gift of Yahweh, and thus is grace. The law is the "Stipulation" of the covenant. It represents demanded response from the people who receive grace through the covenant. Thus, in the Old Testament view, law is not antithetical to grace but is complementary to grace.

II.

In the Synoptic Gospels Jesus does not make any explicit statement concerning the relationship between grace and law. His view on this matter, however, can be deduced from his teachings in general. According to the Synoptic Gospels Jesus brings the gospel of the kingdom of God. In the person of Jesus the kingdom of God invades this present evil aeon. Since the kingdom of God stands as a comprehensive term for all that messianic salvation includes,¹¹ Jesus embodies God's grace. Jesus himself declares, "For the son of man came to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10); "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick . . . For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners" (Matt. 9:12-13); "For the son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

Yet the One in whom God's grace is embodied does not repudiate the law. He declares that "Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:19f). The context makes it clear that "these commandments" refers to some commandments in the Mosaic law.¹² Whatever precise meaning this statement may have, one thing is clear. According to Jesus the law does have some role to play in the kingdom, even though "The law and prophets were until John" (Luke 16:16). Thus there is some continuity and discontinuity between the Mosaic law and Christian life in the kingdom. Grace and law are not antithetical. They are rather complementary.

11. George E. Ladd, *Jesus and the Kingdom* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 201.

12. Walter Gutbrod states "There is thus a direct and positive relation between the Law on the one side and Jesus as the Christ on the others" ("*nomos*, etc.", in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. IV, p. 1063).

In the Johannine Gospel Jesus offers grace to His disciples, yet He also gives them a new commandment (John 13:34). In Chapters 14 and 15 He repeatedly emphasizes that "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."¹³ To love Jesus and to keep His commandments are closely related, just as to love Yahweh and to keep His commandments are closely related in Deut. 11:13, 22.

Thus according to the teachings of Jesus there is a proper place for keeping God's commandments in the life of the Christian who lives under grace. In other words, grace and law are not antithetical. Rather, they are complementary.

III.

According to Paul the law is not a means to obtain God's blessing, (justification) even in the Old Testament era. He also teaches that the law does have some role to play in the life of Christians who are under grace. This indicates that, for him, grace and law are not antithetical but complementary.

In Rom. 9:31 Paul states "Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness (*nomon dikaiosunēs*), did not attain to the law (*eis nomon ouk ephthasen*)."¹⁴ Several English versions and some commentaries translate *nomon dikaiosunēs* as "the righteousness which is based on law." But in the Greek original Paul does not say *dikaionunēn nomou* (which can be translated as the righteousness which is based on the law), but *nomon dikaiosunēs* (law of righteousness). What Israel pursues is the law, not righteousness itself directly. Israel pursues directly after the law in her quest for righteousness. She pursues the law as the means to obtain righteousness. This effort of the Israelites is further explained as "not through faith, but as if it were based on works" in Rom. 9:32 and characterized as seeking to establish their own righteousness in 10:3. Thus in Rom. 9:31 Paul says that in the very act¹⁴ of pursuing the law in the quest for righteousness on the basis of works, in other words, in seeking to establish their own merit before God by keeping the law, Israel did not attain to the law. Paul does not say here that Israel has not attained to righteousness, but that Israel has not attained to the law. The point he makes is not that Israel has not been able to keep the law perfectly but that she has missed the law completely. Concerning this pursuit of Israelites Paul

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13. In John 14:15, 21; 15:10 "my commandments" is in plural. Even though John does not spell out what these commandments are, "my commandments" includes more than the new commandment referred to in John 13:34.
14. *diōkōn nomon dikaiosunēs* is a present participial phrase of identical action.

says in Rom. 10:2 that they have zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. They have misunderstood the nature and function of the law. Israel uses the law in a way which is not in accord with the purpose of the law. Israel seeks to obtain "life," blessing, justification by means of works of the law, but the law is not to serve this purpose. This view of Paul concerning the essence of the law corresponds to that in the Old Testament discussed above, under I.

In Rom. 3:31 Paul affirms that faith does not make the law non-effective, but rather establishes the law. Some commentators consider Rom. 3:31 to belong to Rom. 4 and interpret "the law" as Pentateuch. For example, Sanday and Headlam say "If, as we must needs think, ch. iv contains the proof of the proposition laid down in this verse, *nomos* must=ultimately and virtually [be] the Pentateuch."¹⁵ However, the following considerations indicate that Rom. 3:31 belongs to the preceding context. It stands in logical relation to what precedes. It raises a question which is natural and inevitable. Paul has argued that "from works of the law" no flesh can be justified (3:20), that a righteousness of God has been manifested "without the law" (3:21), that the principle of the gospel is that of faith, not that of works (3:27), that a man is justified by faith "without works of the law" (3:28). This reiterated negation of works of the law irresistibly raises the question "Do we then make the law non-effective through faith?" The "therefore" (*oun*) at the beginning of Rom. 3:31 suggests that the inference supposed follows from what has been said. Furthermore, if 3:31 is attached to 4:1, the question of 4:1 does not appear to be in suitable relation to the categorical declaration of 3:31b.¹⁶ Therefore, 3:31 is the conclusion of the argument of Rom. 3:21 ff., and "the law" in Rom. 3:31 is the Mosaic law. According to Paul the principle of faith does not use the Mosaic law as a means to obtain justification before God. Faith presupposes God's grace. Faith also includes an element of faithfulness.¹⁷ Rightly understood in the Old Testament view, in the context of covenant, the Mosaic law also presupposes a gracious covenant relationship which the keeping of the law cannot create, but can only maintain as an expression of faithfulness to the benefactor. Therefore, Paul can affirm that faith does not set aside the Mosaic

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15. William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5th ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902), p. 96.
 16. John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, Vol. I (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), p. 125.
 17. Rudolf Bultmann, "*pisteuo*, etc.," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. VI, p. 208.

law but, rather, upholds it. This indicates that Paul understands the Mosaic law in the context of the covenant as the Old Testament does.

In Gal. 3 Paul maintains that the principle of Justification by faith was introduced to Abraham. In 3:17 he affirms that "the law, which came four hundred and thirty years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void." On this basis he argues that the Mosaic law is not a means to obtain justification. In this context he states that "All who rely on works of the law are under a curse" (Gal. 3:10). In the context of the covenant, the law just does that. As it is discussed above, the law as the "Stipulation" of the covenant cannot directly bring blessing but can directly bring curse.¹⁸ Here is another indication that Paul understands the Mosaic law in the context of covenant as the Old Testament does.¹⁹

According to Paul Jesus came to initiate a new aeon and establish a new covenant. As the "Stipulation" of the old covenant, the validity of the Mosaic law expires when the new aeon arrives and the new covenant replaces the old covenant. Since Christ came, the Mosaic law has been put out of service (II Cor. 3:11, 14), and the Jewish Christians are not under the pedagogue, the Mosaic law, any more (Gal. 3:25). Those who have died with Christ have died to the law (Rom. 7:4, 6). Christ has redeemed the Jewish Christians from under the law and set them free (Gal. 4:5; 5:1). If one is led by the Spirit, he belongs to the new aeon and therefore is not under the law any more (Rom. 6:14; Gal. 5:18). Therefore even though a Jew, Paul declares that he is not under the law (I Cor. 9:20).²⁰

However, to be set free from the law, to be not under the law does not mean that one can do as he wishes. Paul says in Rom. 7:6 "But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we *serve* not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit." Having been discharged from the law, we still have to serve some one. In I Cor. 9:20f. right after he declares that he is not under the law, Paul adds "not being without law toward God but under the law of

18. See pp. 6ff. above.

19. There are many more Pauline passages which indicate that Paul understands the Mosaic law in the context of covenant as the Old Testament does. Due to the limitation of space, they cannot be treated here. They are treated in the present writer's Ph. D. dissertation "Pauline Doctrine of Law," deposited in the main library of Emory University. The passages mentioned here receive fuller treatment in the dissertation. The dissertation also treats those Pauline passages which seem to be contrary to this view.

20. The "law" in these passages refers to the Mosaic law.

Christ.” Therefore freedom from the law does not mean absolute lawlessness.²¹ Freedom, according to Paul, is not absolute independence of any lordship, but change of lordship.²² Paul does not see freedom in terms of an independently acting subject, but in terms of relationship.²³ It is the deliverance from the dominion of sin, law and death and the realization of Christ’s lordship.²⁴ Under the lordship of Christ Christians are to keep the commandments of God (I Cor. 7:19). In I Cor. 9:21 Paul states that he is under the law of Christ (*ennomos christou*). The law of Christ here does not mean simply the principle of Christ, but means the legislation of Christ just as the law of Moses means the legislation of Moses. The context makes this clear. The phrase “being under the law of Christ” is the explanation of the phrase “not being without the law of God. The phrase “not being without the law of God” is to prevent the misunderstanding which the clause “to those without the law I became as one without the law” may cause. The phrase “those without the law” refers to the Gentiles who do not have the Mosaic legislation. Therefore the “law” in all these phrases has to homologously mean legislation.²⁵ The phrase “the law of Christ” occurs also in Gal. 6:2. This is embedded in a series of moral injunctions forming part of the “ethical section” of the epistle. The implication is that in obeying these injunctions one will be fulfilling the law of Christ. Therefore the “law” in the phrase “the law of Christ” means injunction or command.²⁶ This indicates that, according to Paul, there is a body of commandments which are binding on Christians. Paul calls this body of commandments the law of Christ (I Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2).

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21. Edgar Krentz, “Freedom in Christ—Gift and Demand,” in *Concordia Theological Monthly*, Vol. 40 (1969), p. 362.
 22. Müller states that behind Paul’s exposition of freedom stand not philosophical speculation of the doctrine of freedom, but the proclamation of our master, Lord Christ (Mich Müller, “Freiheit,” in *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde des Urchristentums*, Vol. 25 [1926], p. 182).
 23. Krentz, *op. cit.*, p. 363.
 24. Ernest Käsemann, *Der Ruf der Freiheit*, 3. Auf. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1968), p. 93.
 25. Alford understands the law of Christ as “God’s law revealed by Christ” (Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament*, Vol. II, p. 549).
 26. Burton says “By ‘the law of the Christ’ Paul undoubtedly means the law of God as enunciated by the Christ; just as the law of Moses (Lk. 2:23; Acts 13: 39) is the law of God as put forth by Moses” (Ernest De Witt Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Epistle to the Galatians* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921], p. 329). Ridderbos understands “the law of Christ” as what Christ by work and deed taught (Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953] p. 213).

In I Cor. 9:20 f. Paul says "to the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win the Jew; to those under the law I became as one under the law—though not being myself under the law—that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law." According to this statement, the law of Christ is different from the law of Moses. It, however, is the law of God. In Rom. 7:7-8:10 Paul also calls the Mosaic law the law of God. This indicates that, for Paul, the concept of the law of God is wider than the Mosaic law. At one stage and on one level, this law of God expresses itself in the form of the Mosaic law. On that level a man's response to the Mosaic law is genuinely a response to the law of God. At another state and on a different level the law of God may be expressed in some other form, in the law of Christ. Therefore a man may be free from the Mosaic law but because he is under the law of Christ, he is still under the law of God.²⁷

On the one hand Paul states that those who are in Christ are free from the Mosaic law (Rom. 7:4, 6; Gal. 5:1, etc.) and not under the Mosaic law (Rom. 6:14; I Cor. 9:20; Gal. 3:25; 5:18, etc.) yet in I Cor. 6:9f. he declares "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor, idolators, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God." Most of the vices in this list are forbidden in the Decalog. In Gal. 5:19ff. Paul lists the works of the flesh, and adds "those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Some of the vices in this list are also explicitly forbidden in the Mosaic law. In Gal. 5:13 Paul exhorts the Christians to serve one another through love "for the whole law is fulfilled in one word 'You shall love your neighbours as yourself.'" He does the similar thing in Rom. 13:8ff. All these indicate that Paul considers at least some part of the Mosaic law as still binding on the Christians.

On the one hand Paul declares that Christians are not under the Mosaic law; on the other hand he considers some part of the Mosaic law to be binding on Christians. Is Paul inconsistent in this? This is most unlikely. Paul must know clearly what he is doing. In Gal. 5:18 he says that if one is led by the Spirit, he is not under the Mosaic law, and immediately in vss. 19ff. he lists the vices, some of which at least, the Mosaic law also explicitly forbids and declares that the doers of such things shall not enter the kingdom of God—implying that some part of the Mosaic law is binding on Christians. This phenomenon can best be explained as follows. The

27. C. H. Dodd, *More New Testament Studies* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), p. 137.

Christians are set free from the Mosaic law. However, they are not entirely without law. They are under the law of Christ. The law of Christ is different from the law of Moses. However, since both the law of Christ and the law of Moses are the law of God, some precepts such as the moral component of the Mosaic law may be included both in the law of Christ and the law of Moses. These precepts are binding on Christians, not as the moral component of the Mosaic law, but as the law of Christ. An example will illustrate this. During the Second World War when France was occupied by Germany, German law was in effect in France. One of the German traffic codes stated that an automobile driver should stop at a red light. At the end of the war when Germany was overthrown and France became an independent country, the French were set free from German law. However, today a French driver still has to stop at a red light. He does so in obedience, not to the German traffic law, but to the French traffic law. Because the code that one should stop at a red light is included in both the German traffic law and the French traffic law, today a French man may still seem to be obeying the German traffic law when he stops at a red light. But in reality, he does that in obedience, not to the German law, but to the French law. So it is with the Christian. He does not kill, does not commit adultery, does not steal, etc., in obedience not to the Mosaic law but to the law of Christ. Thus there is continuity and discontinuity between the Mosaic law and Christian life in Paul as in the teaching of Jesus.

In Paul's understanding even in the Old Testament era, the Mosaic law is not a means to directly obtain God's blessing, justification. Paul considers the Mosaic law as the "Stipulation" of the covenant which presupposes God's grace. Therefore he asserts that the principle of faith-grace does not overthrow the Mosaic law but upholds the Mosaic law. Even though the Mosaic law has no validity for the Christians, the law of Christ is over the Christians who are under grace. Therefore the principle of grace and that of law are not in sharp antithesis, but are compatible and complementary.

IV.

This study indicates that in the Old Testament, and in the teaching of Jesus as well as in Paul, grace and law are not antithetical, but complementary. In the state of grace, Christians are subject to the law of Christ. One of the emphases of the law of Christ is "Love one another as I have loved you" (Jn. 15:12); or "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22:39). On the basis of this, surely we should grant to our fellow citizens the equal civil rights we crave for ourselves.

For Christians the law of Christ is more authoritative than civil laws. Therefore when civil law conflicts with the law of Christ, it is the

Christian duty to obey the law of Christ even if it involves civil disobedience. This is exactly what the apostles did in Acts. They declared “We must obey God rather than man” (Acts 5:29). Yet the responsible civil disobedience is not to defy civil laws as a system, as if the principle of law were incompatible with the principle of grace. According to the Bible, law is indispensable. “God is not a God of confusion but of peace” (I Cor. 14:33). Civil disobedience should be carried out peaceably and only as the last resort, not against law in general, but only against the specific law which contradicts the explicit commandment of Christ.