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## GRACE.

(Concluded.)

We have, as it were, taken a distant view and a general survey of the holy mountains, where lie our foundations,<sup>1)</sup> and whence comes our help.<sup>2)</sup> We have picked out, for our bearings, the most prominent peaks of the range. We shall now penetrate the range and study at close quarters its heights and depths. It cannot but enhance the value of saving grace to us, if we follow the pointed finger of the Holy Spirit from page to page of the Scriptures, and note how He speaks of grace, of whom He predicates grace, what He ascribes to grace; and if we study, in particular, the operations of grace, as they are revealed.

Grace is presented to our view in a great many and varying aspects. There is a "manifold grace,"<sup>3)</sup> due, not indeed to differences in its quality, or to a variable attitude of the divine will, but to the various acts which the divine favor considered necessary for man's salvation, and to its application to the many needs of the human race and to individuals. The manner in which the term "grace" is predicated may cause us to understand it in a wide or narrow sense, and to assume for it a general or a special meaning. In itself, however, and as to its essence, grace must always be understood to be the free inclination and spontaneous

1) Ps. 87, 1.

2) Ps. 121, 1.

3) 1 Pet. 4, 10: ποικίλης χάριτος θεοῦ.

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MISSIVE AGAINST THE SABBATARIANS ADDRESSED  
TO A GOOD FRIEND.

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By DR. MARTIN LUTHER. A. D. 1538.

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*(Concluded.)*

SECOND PART.

With reference to your mention that the Jews boast their Law is intended to abide forever, and we Gentiles shall all have to become Jews, I would say that you ought to reply thus: In the first place, they are aware themselves that, if it is true that Messiah is come, their Law is de-

funct; for Moses was to abide only until the coming of Messiah; for he states, Deut. 18, 15, that they are to hear that prophet whom God shall raise up after him. Moreover, among their own teachers this saying is current: Cum venerit Sanctus Sanctorum, cessabit unctio vestra, *i. e.*, when the Holy of Holies is come, your unction shall cease. Unction signifies the priesthood and kingship, which Moses set up for and among them. For Messiah shall ordain something new and better for the people of Israel and the throne of David.

In the second place, how does their boast that their Law is to abide forever harmonize with the fact, that for the past fifteen hundred years it is in ruins, together with their priesthood, temple, throne, and worship? It seems to me that this signifies, indeed, the ceasing of the Law; for they cannot observe the ordinances and laws of Moses outside of the Holy Land and Jerusalem, a fact which they know well enough and will not deny. Surely, God would not have allowed this Law to fall into disuse, nor have suffered it to remain so for such a long time, if He meant to have it observed forever and aye. Accordingly, you ought to answer them that they must first begin to keep the Law of Moses themselves, and to become Jews; for they are Jews no longer, since they do not keep the Law. When they shall have done so, we shall speedily follow them and also turn Jews; provided, however, that they have made a beginning fifteen hundred years ago, when they were still in the Holy Land and Jerusalem, when they still had their temple, their priesthood, and their government; provided also, that they have been busy and solicitous at that time to prevent the Law from falling into disuse and ceasing these fifteen hundred years, and thus forfeiting its everlasting character, and themselves, from becoming such miserable non-Jews and devoid of their Moses.

Or, since they have neglected and not done this, let them still journey to the Holy Land and to Jerusalem; let

them build temples, establish their priesthood, royalty, and their Moses with his Law, and thus become Jews themselves again, and occupy the land. When they shall have done this, they shall soon see us coming after them on their heels, and also turning Jews. If they will not do this, it is extremely ridiculous that they should endeavor to persuade us Gentiles to embrace their decrepit Law, which is decayed these fifteen hundred years, and has no longer been a law; and to urge us to keep what they themselves do not and cannot keep, as long as they do not hold possession of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. As regards their dreamy notions, however, that they are going to keep the Law in the course of time, when Messiah shall have come, we desire meanwhile to remain unencumbered with them, and refuse to believe their dreams, until they shall have become true.

Hence you can easily gather, my dear friend, that the Jews are employing unsound and lame jests, when they boast that the Law of Moses shall abide forever, while it is fallen into desuetude, and has not remained these fifteen hundred years, and they still do not know how long this state of affairs is to endure. However, we Christians do know that it shall forever remain out of use, and that it has been wholly abrogated by Messiah, also with reference to the true Jews and descendants of David, to say nothing of us Gentiles to whom such Law of Moses never was given, commanded, or issued. For, since God Himself has dropped it fifteen hundred years ago, the conclusion is valid, that He has put it out of His mind, and that He no longer heeds men's obedience and service performed under the Law. Else He would not have dropped it, or, at least, would have fixed a time, and would have given assurance by new promises and by appointing new prophets and persons, to declare how long He desired the Law to be in disuse (as was stated above regarding other points),— all of which He has not done. Accordingly, the Law of Moses

is utterly defunct, and was not set up as a law abiding forever, but has henceforth become a law forever forsaken.

However, as regards the Jews' contention concerning the word "leolam" in the statement of Moses, that such and such laws, which he had given them, should be kept by them "leolam," *i. e.*, forever, the knaves know well enough themselves that they are practicing jugglery, to fool people ignorant of the Hebrew language. For in my presence, or in the presence of one who also knows some Hebrew, they would not attempt such jugglery, except in jest or to cause laughter. Moses himself writes, Ex. 21, 5, that if a servant, after serving his time, is unwilling to leave his master, and chooses to remain with him forever, the master shall pierce the servant's ear with an awl against the doorpost, thus signifying that the servant shall forever remain attached to the house; and the servant shall belong to his master "leolam," *i. e.*, forever. In this instance the Jews know very well that neither the master, nor the servant, nor the house shall remain forever, but must die and perish in the universal decay. Still Moses employs the term "leolam" in this instance, which according to their own interpretation signifies unceasingly, without a fixed termination in the course of human affairs. Examples like this of the use of "leolam" in the Scriptures could be multiplied.

However, if I were Moses, I would give my scholars, the Jews, a pretty penny. For I would say to them: Have I not often used, not the simple word "leolam" only, but also these words "ledoroatham," "bevothechem," "ledorothechem," "moschvethechem," *i. e.*, as long as you shall subsist or remain in your dwellings; all which terms cannot be understood in any other sense than that the Law is to be observed by you forever, as long as you endure or abide in your dwellings. Now, they are out of their dwellings nigh fifteen hundred years, *i. e.*, they are exiles from the land of their abode, and have not remained the people

which they had been appointed to be by Moses, and have not had, these fifteen hundred years, an abode of their own, nor a promise fixing a definite time how long they must still be in exile and aimless wanderers without a home. Moses, then, has very well secured himself, inasmuch as he would have his ordinances and laws to abide forever in no other sense than this: as long as the Jews would remain God's people and retain their abode. In view of this modification, therefore, "leolam" cannot mean forever in the same sense as elsewhere, when it signifies forever without any modification, as in the promises of God and in reference to God Himself.

We Germans use the word forever in like manner, when we say: Must I forever suffer, or do this? *i. e.*, as long as I live. And under the papacy many appointments were made in behalf of the dead to last forever, *i. e.*, as long as they might endure. And fiefs are granted to be inherited forever, *i. e.*, as long as the possessions remain and there are heirs for them. However, when God, who is truly eternal, speaks of everlasting things without qualifications, the things designated are everlasting indeed; for He can make them to last forever, as, *e. g.*, the throne of David, the Messiah, and the everlasting blessing which He has brought to us lost creatures. For He does not change like the dwellings of the Jews, or the fiefs of the Gentiles, which are changed, as a garment is changed, Ps. 102, 27.

Accordingly, Scripture usually distinguishes the "leolam," as used by men, from the "leolam," as used by God, by adding a "non," *i. e.*, it is not to be altered. *E. g.*, when we are told in Daniel, ch. 6, 26, regarding the Messiah: "His kingdom is that which shall not be destroyed, and His dominion shall be even unto the end," here the word "forever" occurs; however, lest it be understood to be the human forever, instead of the divine, the negative has been added, "shall not be destroyed," "shall have no end." In like manner David prophesies concerning the everlasting

priest Messiah in Ps. 110, 4: "The Lord hath sworn." Such statement being an oath of the Lord, it should have sufficed; however, lest the remark be understood as a temporal oath, this further remark is added: "and will not repent," *i. e.*, this Priest shall remain forever in such a manner that His everlasting character shall not be after the manner of Moses or any man, but so as to be without end, hence, truly everlasting.

And Is. 9, 7, where the Messiah is spoken of, as the Jews readily concede, it is said: "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end upon the throne of David and upon His kingdom," etc. Here the prophet is not content with stating the increase of the kingdom of Messiah, the Prince of Peace (as he has called Him in the same connection), but states that of His peace there shall be no end, as if to say: "He shall not only remain forever, but without opposition forever." And who knows (for I am not greatly learned in Hebrew), but what the closed Mem, which, as is supposed, reveals to hebraists many ingenious things in this place, may not signify that the increase of Messiah's kingdom shall be eternal in the manner aforestated; and that, hence, there is here not an open Mem, which might signify eternal in a temporal sense, but a closed Mem, signifying that there shall be no change, but that it must be truly eternal.

However, as regards the pretense of the Jews that they are still observing the Law up to our time, *e. g.*, by practicing circumcision, likewise by abstaining from certain fish and meats, etc., and that, hence, the Law is not fallen into disuse, that is no argument. For we are speaking of the entire Law of Moses, which they are obliged to keep, especially the really great matters in it, the body of it, such as those relating to the priesthood, the royal dignity, the temple, worship, Jerusalem, and the entire land, to which the Law of Moses refers, and with reference to which he has appointed these laws. For whoever would observe the

Law of Moses, must observe it entire, or his observation amounts to nothing, especially as regards the important matters; and their contention has the same force as when I demand the pot and they show me the potsherds and fragments of the shattered pot, which simile Isaiah employs against them, ch. 30, 14, *viz.*, that they shall be broken in pieces like a potter's vessel, that in the bursting of it there shall not remain a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal from the pit.

In like manner we, too, now put the question to them: What has become of their entire Law respecting their priesthood, temple, city, country, and the civil power of their nation? In reply they show us the shattered fragments and small potsherds of their ordinances concerning the use of fish and meats, etc. Where was there ever a city or country destroyed, without some charred remains, stumps, and pieces of it being found remaining? Where is there a house consumed by fire so utterly as not to leave some pieces of mortar, stone, charred wood, nails, iron, and glass remaining in the ashes? Now, if I were to inquire after the house, and somebody were to show me a charred beam or two, or a nail in the ashes, endeavoring to convince me that these things are the house after which I am inquiring, tell me, pray, with what eyes I should scan him? Either I should have to consider him an insolent knave who means to mock my question, or if I chose to consider him an idiot, I should say, "My friend, these remains indicate, indeed, that there has been a house at this place; but it is gone, and exists no longer."

Thus, the Jews with their remaining fragmentary debris of ordinances concerning the eating of fish and meats, etc., reveal to us, indeed, the fact that they have had the Law, but that it exists no longer because their house, government, country, city, temple, and the real chief matters, the body of the Law, is gone and has been destroyed these fifteen hundred years. If they still refuse to believe that their Law



is temporary and not everlasting, they must grasp with their hands that their country, Jerusalem, the temple, the institutions and Law of Moses have been destroyed, and in addition, they themselves have been ruined and scattered, regardless of their claims that these things are to last forever. We see, however, that they have fallen, ceased, and terminated fifteen hundred years ago, and shall never rise again. For there is no prophet, no promise predicting their reestablishment, as was the case at Babylon and in Egypt. Hence, the Jews' is a lost hope, having no foundation in the Word of God.

Circumcision too, is not Moses' law, but had been appointed for Abraham a long time before, as also our Lord testifies, John 7, 22: "Circumcision is not of Moses, but of the fathers," which fact the Jews cannot gainsay. Nor has this rite been everlasting; it did not exist since Abraham, and pointed altogether to Messiah, the coming Seed of Abraham, whom they should have heard. Circumcision was ordained no further than to Abraham and his seed. For there are found in Scripture many instances of great kings and nations among the Gentiles whom God received without compelling them to be circumcised, much less to submit to any ordinance of Moses. In the first place, there was King Pharaoh, and his princes and priests, and, no doubt, many of his people, who were taught by Joseph to know the true God, as Ps. 105, 22 testifies: "To instruct his (the King's) princes in his ways; and teach his senators wisdom;<sup>1)</sup> and

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1) We have reproduced Luthers' rendering: "auf dass er seine (des Koenigs) Fuersten unterweisetete nach seiner Weise." The Authorized Version renders: "To bind his princes at his pleasure." The original reads: לְאַהֲרֵ שָׂרֵי כְּנַפְשׁוֹ, literally, "to bind his princes with his mind," *i. e.*, to coerce them with his superior spirit, to force them with his high and noble mind to quit the indolence and wantonness of Egyptian court-life and learn to deport themselves as would become true noblemen. The authority of Moses may easily have included both, *viz.*, to instruct the nobles and to incarcerate such as disobeyed his teaching or refused to submit to his regulations. It is possible that Luther followed the Septuagint rendering: τῷ παιδεύσαι. The observation of Tarnov, however, deserves to be noted,

thus the Egyptians through Joseph obtained the knowledge of God, and yet were not burdened with circumcision, because they were not the seed of Abraham, much less with the Law of Moses, which at that time had not been given.

At a later time Jonah was sent to Niniveh to preach repentance, and the text states (ch. 3) that the king and his princes and people accepted faith in God, and were converted, so that God became gracious to them and averted their punishment. These Ninivites, too, were received and kept under grace without circumcision and the Law of Moses, by their faith and good works. This the prophet Jonah clearly indicates.

The wicked king of Babylon, Nebucadnezzar, likewise becomes so completely turned by the preaching of Daniel and the punishment of God as to issue a proclamation in his own name, ordering that the God of Israel should be regarded as the true God, since He, indeed, were the true God. Behold, this king, too, becomes a devout believer in God, and many others in his kingdom with him, no doubt; and yet he is not circumcised nor obliged to keep any law of Moses, which Daniel would not have neglected to enjoin and impose on him, if he had not known that the Law of Moses had been imposed on the Jews only, and circumcision only upon Abraham and his seed, until the true Master, Messiah, should arise from among his posterity.

After him king Darius and Cyrus of Persia were made believers by this same Daniel and other Jews who showed them the prophecy of Isaiah, ch. 45, where God has many years in advance pointed out this very king Kores by name, and has called him His own king and anointed, and has given the glorious prophecy that he would build the city of

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*viz.*, that the fundamental, or root-meaning of  $\text{רָדַף}$  is not destroyed when the word is rendered by "instruct," but that in such a case the word is simply used in a metaphorical sense, instruction being equal to binding by the bonds of rules and laws. (See Geier, *In Psalmos*. 2. ed. Dresd. 1709, p. 1823.)

Jerusalem and release his people from Babylon, etc., all which the king did, and issued his profession to be posted throughout his land, stating that the God of heaven had commanded him. (2 Chron. ult. Ezra 1.) And yet he was not circumcised nor forced to be under the Law of Moses, nor was any person in his Persian kingdom, a thing which Daniel and his associates would not have permitted, if they had considered it necessary to impose the Law of Moses and circumcision upon the Gentiles who were not of the seed of Abraham nor the people of Moses. For if it had been necessary to observe these matters, these kings should not have been sufficiently instructed by Daniel, and should not have become true believers in God, and should not have been saved, and that would have been Daniel's fault.

In like manner, Job and his household and friends were abundantly blessed with the knowledge of God and with faith, and yet were not circumcised nor forced to be under the Law of Moses. And such people there must have been many more in the countries round about, as, *e. g.*, Hiram, the king of Tyre, in the days of Solomon, and others not named in the Scriptures who believed in the true God of Abraham and were saved. And it is surprising that throughout his many laws Moses observes such a profound silence concerning circumcision after the exodus from Egypt, from which event his Law dates, while he urges upon the Jews many lesser laws with much rigor and almost to the degree of tediousness, as if he meant to say: Circumcision is not my law. For even Ex. 12, where he speaks of strangers who desire to eat the Paschal Lamb with the Jews, he goes no further than to say that no uncircumcised person shall eat of the Paschal Lamb, but he does not compel the stranger to eat of the Passover nor to receive circumcision, except if he desired to keep the Passover. Hence, it was an altogether new invention when, later, the Jews made proselytes of the Gentiles and ordered them to be circumcised. Moses does not force the Gentiles to be under any of his laws against

their will, because he was appointed prophet only of that people which was brought out of Egypt, and until the coming of Messiah, who was to become the Prophet, Teacher, and Lord of the world.

Now, if it was not necessary to impose circumcision and the Law of Moses upon the Gentile kings in Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and upon many others, who nevertheless believed in the God of Abraham and were saved, uncircumcised and without the Law of Moses, at a time when it flourished most, and when the people were set up in their government in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, why should we Gentiles now be obliged to observe their circumcision and Law, which has fallen into disuse and which the Jews themselves cannot keep, because they have lost their country, city, government, and all the ordinances of Moses, and have no promise that they shall ever recover them. From all this you can easily gather that the Jews are stricken with blindness, because they pretend to us Gentiles such unwarranted and foolish lies regarding their Law, claiming that it shall last forever and must be imposed on all Gentiles, when, in reality, it has fallen into disuse, has been finally and forever forsaken by God without any promise, and, moreover, has never, even when in force, extended further, nor has been meant by God to extend further, than to the people whom Moses brought out of Egypt, and to the seed of Abraham until the coming of Messiah.

In conclusion, you should cite again the passage Jer. 31, 31. 32: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them," etc. This passage smites the Jews with the burning ague; for it is astonishing how they labor and struggle to prove their covenant to be everlasting. And yet this pas-

sage clearly and plainly states that it is not everlasting, but that an other and new covenant shall be made. Now let them juggle as much as they please, pretending, *e. g.*, that their Law shall be renewed in the days of Messiah, and shall have to be strictly kept by everybody; Jeremiah does not say that the old covenant shall be renewed, but that it shall not be the same covenant which they had received from Moses at the exodus from Egypt; it shall not be that, but an other and new covenant. Now it is well known what kind of a covenant Moses made with them in his time; it is also known what this statement means, that it shall not be the old covenant; for the expression "shall not be" does not signify the renewing of the old, but the abolishing of the old and the instituting of a new covenant. You must take a firm stand on this text and not heed the gibberish that comes out of their own heads. For the text says that it shall not be the old, former covenant, nor that it shall be renewed, but that there shall be an entirely new covenant, and God will have the old covenant no longer.

Let us consider now whom we ought rather to believe, the faithful and true God, or the false and lying Jews? God says: The covenant of Moses shall not endure forever, but shall cease in the times of Messiah. The Jews say: It shall remain forever and never cease. Accordingly, in the Jews' view God must always be a liar, and they even act surprised that they have to suffer such horrible misery, claiming that they are right, and God is wrong.

But if they dodge this point and blaspheme, saying: Did not even your Christ state that He was not come to destroy the Law, not even a tittle or letter of it, etc.? you should reply, that they must stick to the passage in Jeremiah, and make a correct and thorough answer. For, since they do not believe our Jesus at all, they cannot cite Him in their defense; they must make answer to Jeremiah, or defend themselves against him with a good show and thorough arguments. Moreover, it is a lie, too, when they in-

troduce our Jesus as speaking of the Law of Moses, when He says that the Law shall not perish; for in that place our Lord Christ says nothing about circumcision, nor about the Law and ordinances of Moses, as everybody can read, but He treats of the Ten Commandments. And how could they forbear falsifying and corrupting *our* books, when their whole aim is nothing else than how they may corrupt their own prophets and Holy Scriptures by lies and false interpretations? The real meaning, however, of our Lord's remark concerning the fulfillment of the Law, we have not the time nor space to discuss at present, nor would the Jews understand us, and we should deviate from our subject. Christians should discuss these words of Christ, for they understand them and, praise God! know their meaning.

Finally, we wish to speak also of the Ten Commandments; for it is possible that the Jews may also call the Ten Commandments Moses' Law, because they were given on Mount Sinai at a time when there were none but Jews, or children of Abraham, etc. In reply you should say: If the Ten Commandments are to be called the Law of Moses, Moses has been much too tardy in arriving, and has gathered about him far too few people, because the Ten Commandments existed not only before Moses, but also before Abraham and all the patriarchs, and, moreover, embraced the entire world. For, though there should never have been a Moses, nor an Abraham born, still the Ten Commandments must have ruled all men from the beginning, as, indeed, they have done, and are still doing.

For, rightly every creature regards God as God and honors His name, as do also the angels in heaven. In like manner we, who are called men, are in duty bound to hear His Word, to obey father and mother, not to kill, not to commit adultery, not to steal, not to bear false witness, not to covet our neighbor's house or property; to all which duties the Gentiles in their writings, statutes, and governments are witnesses, as can still be seen; though no trace

is found among them of circumcision or the laws which Moses gave to the Jews and for the land of Canaan.

However, the point in which Moses excels all other writers of laws is this, that by his histories he has revealed the beginning of all creatures, and the fact that by the fall or sin of Adam death has entered the whole world; and not until afterward, when he desires to make a particular law and to create a peculiar people, as he was commanded to do, he introduces God Himself, who as a common God of all Gentiles orally gives to this peculiar people the ten common commandments, which had before been planted in the hearts of all men at the creation, and adorns them to suit his times far more properly and better than anybody else could have arranged them. Circumcision, however, and the ordinances of Moses have not been planted in the hearts of men, but have been appointed later by Abraham and Moses for their people.

For, the first commandment we and all Gentiles, just as well as the Jews, are bound to keep, *viz.*, not to have any other gods but the One God. However, the second part by which he adorns this commandment and by which he refers it to the Jews alone, namely these words: "which have brought thee out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage," we Gentiles must not and cannot apply to ourselves. For if I should approach God and say: "Lord God, who hast brought me out of exile in Egypt," etc., I should enter a Jewish synagogue a very hog; for God never did such a work for me, hence, God would give me the lie, or I should make Him a fictitious God. Nevertheless, I am bound to repeat and to keep all the other contents of the first commandment, and I have a right to say: Thou art my God, and the God of us all, and at the same time our Creator, who has, indeed, brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, but not me; still Thou hast brought me out of my Egypt, namely out of my misery. Thus the first commandment remains the common property of Jews and Gentiles.

But for the Jews' sake is given a peculiar ornament in the mention of the exodus from Egypt; and thereby is indicated how every one may and shall, according to his own need, call upon and praise the God of all as His God and Helper.

I must bring in an instance: Suppose a ruler or the head of a family desires to set up a certain regulation for his country or house, for this reason, because God has helped him out of great trouble, in return for which he desires to show his gratitude, as, *e. g.*, Naaman the Syrian did, or might have done; he would begin in the same manner, firstly, to teach regarding God, that He alone is to be worshiped and regarded as the true God, because He is able and willing to help all out of their trouble who trust and believe in Him, no matter of what nation they are; even as the first commandment teaches and states, without making a distinction, that God will punish or help all who hate or love Him, etc. And suppose that after such a statement the ruler or head of a family should proceed with the regulation for his country or house.

By so doing the ruler should not have imposed the ordinance affecting his country upon all other countries, who have not experienced such assistance, nor should he have had authority to impose it, though at the outset he directs, in the first place, that all countries should worship and honor the true God. In like manner Moses acts when he is about to devise order for his people rescued out of Egypt: he introduces, in the first place, God Himself as issuing His Ten Commandments which obligate the entire world. Next he gives to his people, though by the command of God, a special ordinance suited to their country, which does not concern other people. And just as Moses' people is bound to obey his ordinance, because God commanded him to issue it, so every country and household is bound to keep the ordinance of its ruler, or head. For the latter, too, are commanded by God, who has founded all governments in the world.



In like manner the third commandment regarding the sabbath, which the Jews greatly emphasize, is in itself a general commandment issued to the whole world; the finery, however, with which Moses has invested it, and with which he has appropriated it to his people, is not specially binding upon any one but the Jews alone; even as in the first commandment none but the Jews are to believe and profess in particular that the God whom all the world owns has brought them out of Egypt. For the real meaning of the third commandment is that on that day we should learn and hear the Word of God, so as to sanctify both the day and ourselves. Therefore, Moses and the prophets are ever since unto this day read and preached to the Jews on the sabbath. Now, whenever the Word of God is being preached, it is quite natural that people must stop their work during that hour or time, and remain idle, and, without engaging in any other work, only speak and listen to what God says or teaches or speaks to us.

Accordingly, the paramount importance of the day lies in its sanctification, rather than in quitting work. For God does not say: Thou shalt quit working, or take a rest on the holyday;—that would require no injunction, to be sure!—but He says: Thou shalt sanctify the rest-day, or sabbath, thus showing that He is far more concerned about the sanctification than about the rest. And if either of the two had to be or could be omitted, it would be better to omit resting than sanctification, inasmuch as the commandment chiefly urges sanctification, and does not enjoin the sabbath for its own sake, but for the sake of its sanctification. The Jews, however, have by their own additions laid greater stress on the duty of resting on that day than on sanctifying it, a thing which God and Moses are not doing.

Now, as regards the fact that Moses mentions the seventh day, and that, as God has created the world in six days, they must for that reason not labor (on that day), that is the temporal finery with which Moses has invested

this commandment for his people at that time in particular. For, prior to him, there is no such record, neither of the time of Abraham nor of the old fathers; but it is a temporal addition and finery, designed solely for this people which has been brought up out of Egypt; nor is this finery to remain forever, as little as the entire Law of Moses. However, the duty of sanctifying, *i. e.*, of teaching and preaching the Word of God, which is the true, pure, and sole meaning of this commandment, has existed from the beginning and shall remain forever in all the world. Accordingly, the seventh day does not concern us Gentiles, nor does it concern even the Jews after the coming of Messiah; while nature and necessity compel us, as stated before, to remain quiet, to stop work, and to rest on whatsoever day and at whatsoever hour the Word of God is being preached. For the Word of God cannot be listened to nor taught when people meanwhile have their thoughts on other matters, or do not rest.

Therefore, Isaiah also says, ch. 66, 23, that this seventh day, or finery of Moses, as I call it, is to cease in the days of Messiah, when the true sanctification and the Word of God shall come to us abundantly; "it shall come to pass," he says, "that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another shall all flesh come to worship me," *i. e.*, there shall be nothing but sabbaths, and no particular seventh day with six days intervening; for sanctification and the Word of God shall be engaged in daily and abundantly, and all days shall become sabbaths.

I know very well, however, what rejoinder the Jews make and how they treat this text in Isaiah, only I cannot set down in this letter all that I have in mind against the Jews, who mangle and corrupt the prophets so shamefully. Still, to be brief, no Jew shall be able to explain to me how all flesh can possibly worship the Lord at Jerusalem on every new moon and sabbath-day, as the text reads, interpreted in the strictest and most correct manner in ac-

cordance with their view. For some men, or some flesh, live at such a distance from Jerusalem that they cannot reach it in twenty, thirty, or hundred sabbaths, and the Jews themselves have not worshiped at Jerusalem these fifteen hundred years, that is twelve times fifteen hundred new moons, not mentioning the sabbath-days. But I cannot discuss all these points within the limit of a letter.

Likewise, as regards the ornamental portion of the first commandment, "which have brought you out of Egypt," Jeremiah also says, ch. 23, 5. 7. 8: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise up unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth." And a little further on he says: "Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel" (note that not the entire house of Israel but a seed of the same is here mentioned!) "out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land."

Now, there are in this passage many beautiful points that one might discuss; but in order not to deviate from the subject, the Jews are agreed with us,—provided they adhere to their old doctrine,—that Jeremiah is here speaking of the times of the Messiah. Thus understood, he plainly states that at that time the part of the first commandment expressed by Moses in the words, "which have brought you out of Egypt," should cease. For there is the text which states that people shall no longer swear by the God who has brought them out of Egypt, but by the God who has gathered them out of all countries unto the Root of David. This portion, then, of the first commandment does not extend further than to the days of Messiah; the Law of Moses is not everlasting, but terminates in Messiah,

and there only remains the Law of the Ten Commandments, which has existed before Moses from the beginning of the world among all Gentiles, *viz.*, that we must not acknowledge more than One God, etc. Hence, as regards the Ten Commandments, there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles. For God is not the God of the Jews alone, but also of the Gentiles, as St. Paul states, and the examples of the kings of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, etc., aforecited prove.

Likewise in the fourth commandment we Gentiles cannot recite this part: "That thou mayest live long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee;" and yet we are all obliged to keep the first part, *viz.*, "Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother." For Moses, or, rather, God Himself here speaks to the people of Israel, which He is bringing out of Egypt into the land of Canaan, and it is this land of Canaan that He refers to in the fourth commandment and that He gave to them, that they should live there a long time and enjoy peaceful times, provided they would keep the fourth commandment regarding the obedience due their parents. And in this instance again the common fourth commandment which has been grafted into the hearts of all Gentiles, is dressed out, for the Jews' sake, with the special finery of the promise of the land of Canaan. But we Gentiles cannot say, and God cannot permit us to say or to believe, that He led us out of Egypt and into Canaan with the promise that we should succeed in that country if we would honor father and mother, but we must let the commandment stand in its common meaning, *viz.*, that God will bestow success and blessing in his own country on every person who shall honor father and mother. And for this cause we notice how countries and governments, yea, also the houses and possessions of (individuals), either remain firmly established or undergo remarkable changes, according as people have been obedient or disobedient. And it has always been observed that a per-

son who dishonors father and mother does not meet with success and does not die a happy death.

This fourth commandment, then, cannot be everlasting and cannot have been imposed on us Gentiles in the sense which the blind Jews attach to it, *viz.*, that we are to possess the land of Canaan and meet with success therein, when they themselves have been compelled to live expatriated and in exile these fifteen hundred years, like people who have despised, mistreated, and persecuted their fathers and prophets, and still have not ceased persecuting them, for which reason neither their punishment ceases. For they refuse to receive Messiah, whom their fathers and prophets have proclaimed and predicted and whom they have commanded and enjoined them to receive; hence, they still remain children disobedient to their fathers.

In this connection I should like to point out the same fact with regard to the ninth and tenth commandments, in which we are forbidden to covet another man's wife or house. For with the Jews the letter of divorce was a legal procedure in a manner impossible with us Gentiles; much less (do we permit) the craft and cunning with which a person's wife was alienated or he himself dispossessed of his house, matters in which great license prevailed among the Jews, as the prophet Malachi complains, etc.

And now, to come to a close with this letter at last, you have, I trust, my dear friend, found in this letter at least this much, that you can defend yourself against the Sabbatarians and hold fast your pure Christian faith. If you cannot convert the Jews, consider that you fare no better than all the prophets, who have at all times been persecuted and put to death by this people, and that, solely because this people boasts that they are the seed of Abraham, although they know that many desperate and abandoned knaves have been among them at all times, and still are, and they might learn from this that to the end of being a child of God something more is required than descent

from Abraham. Nor will the Law of Moses afford them any aid, because they have never yet kept it, as has been shown above from the passage in Jeremiah, ch. 31, where God Himself states and deplors this fact; but their disobedience rather strips them of all aid. Moreover, they do not even keep it this day and cannot keep it, as long as Jerusalem does not become the royal and priestly city of the Jews.

Besides, it is known, and also confessed by them in part, that they no longer understand the Law of Moses, especially in Leviticus and other places; how, then, could they keep it, even if they were at Jerusalem now? To sum up, since during these fifteen hundred years of their exile, the end of which is not yet nor can be, it has been impossible to humble the Jews and lead them to understand their condition, you may with a good conscience despair of them. For it is impossible that God should suffer His people,—if they were such,—to be without comfort and prophecy such a long time; He has never yet acted thus, and has, moreover, promised that He will not do anything without a preceding prophecy, as Amos says, ch. 3, 7: "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets." For all estates, all governments, all occupations of men must proceed, rest upon, and be discharged in obedience to the Word of God, in order that His people may know their relation to Him, and what they must do, suffer, and expect. So He has done from the beginning, and so He does to all eternity.

Now, since God, fifteen hundred years ago, has not dealt with the Jews according to this rule, and suffers them to continue in misery forever, and says not a word to them by way of prophecy concerning their condition, it is manifest that He has forsaken them and they are no longer His people, and that the true Lord Messiah must have come fifteen hundred years ago. Now what can be the sin that causes such horrible punishment and silence on the part of

God, if it is not this, that they have not received and still do not receive the true Seed of Abraham and David, our dear Lord Messiah? Why, before their exile in Babylon they committed far more terrible sins by murdering prophets, than can be mentioned during the time after the exile; and besides, there is no meaning whatever in their claim that they are suffering this misery fifteen hundred years for an unknown sin, which they cannot name, when for much more manifest and horrible sins of murder and idolatry they were not made to suffer longer than seventy years, and in the meantime were not left without prophets and comfort, while in their present affliction not a fly buzzes with one wing for their comfort. If this does not mean that they are forsaken by God, then the devil, too, may claim he is not forsaken by God.

For in a correct count their present exile under the Roman empire has lasted longer than their former rule and government in the land of Canaan. Let whoever will compute the time from the exodus from Egypt to the last destruction of Jerusalem, the effects of which they still feel, and it will be found to foot up about fifteen hundred and ten years, not much less than they have now been in exile, and this state of affairs will endure much longer, because up to the present they have had no prophet to predict the end of it, nor will they henceforth receive a prophecy. Is it credible that God should leave His people out of power longer than in power; without the Law, the temple, their worship, Jerusalem, priesthood, government, and country longer than in possession of them?

This letter has imperceptibly grown under my hand without my becoming aware of it, because the pen had to speed on, as there are more thoughts in my mind regarding this matter than I could set down on paper at such a hurried writing. I ask that you will be satisfied for the present, for the subject is far too great to be comprehended in one mis-sive. I commend you to God. Amen. (Tr.) D.