

Logical Antinomianism *

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*(**Antinomianism** is a term used to describe the view of some Christians who believe that since they are saved by grace, they have been released from any obligation to observe God's law.)

A writer for a paper in the East, in an article against Sabbath-keeping, says of the Ten Commandments: "Paul tells those who keep this law that they are 'fallen from grace,' which is equivalent to saying that there is no salvation in keeping the Ten Commandments." We never yet came across any such statement in any of Paul's writings, but we know that there are many people who, in their hatred of the Sabbath, teach just such stuff. There are people organized into churches, whose chief article of faith is that the law of God is abolished, although it is seldom that one is found bold enough to declare that all who keep the law of God are worthy of death. But this is the inevitable conclusion; for if God's law has been abolished, then it must now be sin to follow the injunctions of that law.

Let us suppose that we have the records of a church whose foundation is built on the belief that God's law has been abolished, in which discipline is rigidly enforced. We should read something like this: "Brother A was charged with a crime of not having taken the name of God in vain for three months. A committee was appointed to labor with him, but he acknowledged the truth of the charge, and stubbornly refused to change his course, stating that he was determined always to hold the name of his Creator in reverence. Accordingly he was disfellowshipped as one irrevocably fallen from grace.

"Deacon B had in early life been well known as a horse jockey. After he joined the church his natural ability was exerted with tenfold diligence for the edifying of the body of Christ. So skillful had he become by long practice in chicanery, that no man could by any means get even with him in a bargain. He could cheat and lie with unblushing countenance. In short, he was an ornament to the church. But in an evil day he fell in with a traveling preacher, who persuaded him that the law of God is binding upon Christians, and from that time he became a different man. He began at once to restore to those whom he had defrauded. This caused suspicion in the minds of his brethren. Finally suspicion became certainty, when Brother X overheard him tell the truth in regard to an old horse that he was selling to one who was no judge of animals. By this unwarranted act, he actually lost the opportunity of cheating the poor man out of fifty dollars! In another instance, he could easily have extorted one hundred per cent interest from a brother who was forced to borrow a sum of money for three months. Instead of doing so, however, he loaned the brother the money without interest. Patient labor was bestowed upon him, but to all entreaties he turned a deaf ear, perversely repeating the words, "Thou shalt not steal", and saying that henceforth he should abide by that rule.

He even expressed extreme sorrow that he ever violated it. He was decided to be an incorrigible observer of the old ten-commandment law, and was accordingly disfellowshipped by unanimous vote.

“Mr. C had gained a wide notoriety as a ‘bruiser’ and cut-throat. He had ‘killed his man’ many times, and was so expert with the pistol that his bullet never failed to reach the heart. It was his delight to lie in wait for unsuspecting and inoffensive persons, and kill them without any warning. He was so skillful, that the officers of the law had never been able to catch him in these acts. He had never read the Bible, nor heard of the Ten Commandments. He was finally arrested for a petty crime, and while lying in jail he was visited by a clergyman, who read the Bible to him. For the first time in his life he heard the obsolete commandment, “Thou shalt not kill”. When he learned that the great Jehovah, amid the thunders of Sinai, spoke this he was struck with terror and remorse. With trembling lips he confessed all his past course, and was assured by the minister that God would pardon. Accordingly, as soon as he was released, he applied for admission to the church; but he was told that he had now fallen from grace, —that the Ten Commandments were abolished; that no man who professed a desire to keep them could become a member of the church of Belial. After a short talk with the committee, he seemed to see the matter clearly. Drawing a revolver, he shot the chairman through the heart, and with a club he knocked down two of the deacons, all the time using the most violent oaths. Upon this clear evidence of his fitness for church membership, he was at once received into full fellowship.

“Brother D was turned out of the church in disgrace. Cause: A rigid observance of the old seventh commandment. At the same time, Mr. F and Mrs. G. on profession of having lived in open adultery for a year, were admitted into the church.”

And thus we might read on for pages. Does it seem irreverent to write in such a strain? It is only what would actually be done if antinomian Christians always lived up to their profession. People have actually been turned out of churches simply because they kept the fourth commandment; and if people are disfellowshipped for keeping the fourth commandment, why not for keeping any other? And when men say that it is sin to keep the Ten Commandments, who shall say what abominable things they do not do in secret?

Why is it that professed Christians speak with such contempt of the law of God? It is because they hate the fourth commandment, which enjoins the observance of the Sabbath. Primarily, however, it is because of the hatred of all law and restraint. No doubt they would repudiate the picture, which we have portrayed. They would profess abhorrence of murder, adultery, and theft. But if it is a sin to keep the fourth commandment, it is also wrong to keep the sixth, seventh and eighth. If they teach that the law of God is not in force, that those who keep it have fallen from grace, they necessarily teach that it is no sin to swear, lie, steal, kill, and commit adultery! Nay, more, they actually teach people that they must do those things in order to secure the favor of God! A more horrible doctrine could not be imagined. To teachers of such

doctrines we commend a careful consideration of the following texts, the application of which is obvious: —

“Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit. Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know, and then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, ‘We are delivered to do all these abominations’?” Jeremiah 7:8-10

“Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” “Therefore, as the fire devours the stubble, and the flame consumes the chaff, so their root will be as rottenness, and their blossom will ascend like dust; because they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.” Isaiah 5:20, 24