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Takoon Park Station,

August 2, 1908.

Elder R. A. Underwood,
2713 Third Ave., S.,
Minneapolis, Minn.

Dear Brother: - -

I have just taken time to read your pamphlet, "The Law and the Covenants," and in harmony with your suggestion I will write you concerning it.

I cannot take the time, and it probably would not be profitable, to deal with the minor details, but there are some leading propositions to which I will direct attention.

I judge one of the leading propositions to be sustained is that the old covenant and the ceremonial law are identical, but the argument presented does not seem to be to be clear and convincing. Some of the leading features of the ceremonial law, such as sacrifices, etc., were certainly in existence before the more complete ritual was given at Sinai, just as the moral law was in existence and full force before it was drawn out in more particular statements when spoken at Sinai. It does not seem to me that the conclusion which you draw from the quotation from "Patriarchs and Prophets" (page 39) is warranted by the reading of the quotation.

Again, you say: "They were divinely appointed ceremonies, laws, - - Jewish laws, - - that related directly to the Jews and to Israel. They were national, and hence built up a wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles, which God abolished." (page 68). And if I understand you correctly, you use the quotation from the spirit of prophecy (page 53) to show that the "statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live," constituted the ceremonial law. It appears to me that this would involve the idea that God himself built up the wall of partition by giving this ritual law, which you designate as a national law. But in "Patriarchs and Prophets," (The Law and the Covenants) we read, "The opinion is held by many that God placed a separating wall between the Jews and the outside world; that his care and love, withdrawn to a great extent from the rest of mankind, were centered upon Israel. But God did not design that his people should build up a wall of partition between themselves and their fellow men." This extract does not seem to be in harmony with the position which you take on this subject.

In your reasoning concerning the "yoke of bondage," it appears to me you take for granted the very question at issue. You quote from the "Sketches from the Life of Paul," referring to the statement in Acts 15, "This yoke was not the law of ten commandments," etc. And then assuming that the expression "yoke of bondage" in Gal. 3:1 is the same as "this yoke" in the paragraph from "Sketches from the Life of Paul," you assert "We can believe and accept the statements of the Spirit of God that the ceremonial law was a yoke of bondage, and that it was not the good thing it

contained." But the Spirit of God does not say that the ceremonial law was a "yoke of bondage." You have really assumed this. You yourself have quoted in this same pamphlet (page 48) from "Patriarchs and Prophets" to show that "the great apostle pronounces this (ceremonial) law glorious, worthy of its divine originator." Can the same law be both "glorious" and a "yoke of bondage"?

You argue that the reason why it is stated that the new covenant is established upon "better promises" is found in the fact that "in the old covenant Christ promised temporal, national blessings, - - wealth, honor, and earthly glory." It does not appear to me that this conclusion can be drawn from the words of the covenant itself. The promises are, as recorded in Exodus 19:5,6: "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine, and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." Is not this substantially the same as is found in Revelation 1:5,6: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." And do we not find the same statement again in 1 Peter 2:9: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people"? Is it not plain that the same results were promised under both covenants? The promise of the land as made to Abraham, and renewed to Isaac and Jacob, is interpreted in Romans 4:13 as meaning that Abraham "should be the heir of the world," and is not this same inheritance what we look forward to in our time? It does not seem to me that an unprejudiced reader of "Patriarchs and Prophets" would draw the conclusion that the distinction between the two covenants is what you state it to be.

It is certainly a new idea to me that "There are penalties annexed to the gospel as a consequence of sin" (page 8), and I do not see that the texts to which you refer justify this statement. It appears to me that this is an unfortunate way of presenting this matter, and that it is almost sure to invite unfavorable criticism.

In arguing for the continuance of the old covenant, you refer (page 34) to the experience under King Josiah, and say: "This covenant was reread to the people, and 'all the people stood to the covenant' (2 Kings 23:2,3), showing that they understood that it was still binding upon them." A reading of this scripture, however, shows that the covenant to which all the people stood was made at that time by Josiah himself. This is perfectly clear from verse 3.

I note that all through your argument you quote as applying to the ceremonial law of the old covenant texts concerning which there is much diversity of opinion among us. This, of course, will not be convincing to those who hold opposite views as to the application of these texts, since you adduce no proof to justify your use of them.

I am also surprised at the way in which you apply Heb. 10:9, after my plain statement to you in a former letter that it would not do to supply "covenant" in this text. You do not supply the word, but your use of the text implies the same thing.

On page 58 you state that at "Sinai God 'annexed' additional penalties to the Abrahamic covenant, [I do not find in your pamphlet any proof of this assertion], till the seed (Christ) should come," as the means of bringing the people to repentance.

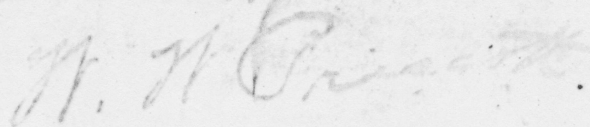
And in the previous paragraph you quote 2 Cor. 4:17 as an instance of the application of the same principle. If this is true, why should these additional penalties cease at the first advent? Would they not be still as useful for this purpose all through the period of probation?

There are various places in the pamphlet where the reasoning seems to be faulty in that you assume the point at issue, ^{really} and make an application of scripture or quotation from the spirit of prophecy which do not appear to me to be warranted. There are strong assertions which are not backed up by proof such as "The Bible plainly places the creation of the old covenant at Sinai and its termination at Calvary."

But I have written much more than I thought of doing concerning this pamphlet, and I fear you will consider me a very harsh critic. I desire, however, that all the literature which we put out should be so prepared that it will stand the test of the criticism which it is sure to meet.

Now that you have gone into print with your views on this subject, would you consider it anyway out of place for me to deal with this subject in the REVIEW. I should not care to do this as a direct criticism on your pamphlet, but as a positive presentation of what I regard to be truth. I shall be glad to hear from you, and remain with kind regards,

Yours faithfully,



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