

THE BEREAN

"...EXAMINING THE SCRIPTURES DAILY..." (Acts 17:11)

THE PERFECT LAW

*A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES
PART EIGHTEEN OF SIXTY FOUR*

Many are the descriptions of God's word that reveal different aspects of its nature. James calls it "the perfect law" and "the law of liberty" which brings a blessing to the one who obeys it (James 1:25).

The law of God must be a perfect law because God is a perfect God. Being perfect the New Testament is the final and complete revelation of God's will (Jude 3). We need not expect another revelation from God. We should oppose anyone claiming to speak for God who does not agree with the gospel (Gal. 1:6-9). Any changes in God's Word is to destroy its perfection. To reject one part or to add to it is to mar its completeness (Rev. 22:18,19). We need no other religious guide but "the law of the Lord" which "is perfect, converting the soul" (Psm. 19:7). Who dares to put his feelings or ideas up as a guide in place of "the perfect law"?

To some minds the term "law of liberty" is contradictory. Their concept of liberty is to be completely free from all law or restraint. Such a life would not be freedom, but slavery to one's lusts and sins. There can be no real

freedom without law. The word of Christ is a law since it is His will and commandment for us. James shows clearly that the "law of liberty" does not mean that we are free to do as we please (James 4:4,8). The gospel is an expression of the Father's love and not the announcement of a despot. While unchangeable righteousness is still His demand, the law speaks to our hearts. To it we yield willingly to wear His yoke which is easy (Mt. 11:30). It is not a code of external rules but a living power which enables man to find his true freedom from earthly control in the service of God.

The gospel is the "law of liberty" since it gives us freedom from our sins (Rom. 6:17,18,22). Jesus came to earth "to preach deliverance to the captives" (Luke 4:18) which is to say "He shall save His people from their sins" (Mt. 1:21). The gospel is "the law of liberty" in that the believer accepts it without being forced. Willingly he "continueth therein...being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work" (James 1:25). This is the man blessed of God.

(B. G. Echols)

CHURCH OF CHRIST

412 East King Street
Shippensburg, Pa. 17257