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OUR KINSMAN-REDEEMER

By: C. D. Cole

“For I know that my redeemer liveth...” Job 19:25.

The law of Moses may be divided into three parts. First, the decalogue or ten commandments. This is the moral law and is for individuals for all time. It is the eternal standard of right and wrong and will never be repealed. It did not begin with Moses (it has always been wrong to kill and steal and lie and etc.). But was incorporated into the laws given to Moses. The heathen who have never heard of Moses have this law stamped on their very constitution, and show the work of the law written on their hearts, by which they have a sense of right and wrong. Romans 2:14-15, *“...these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.”* The believer is also under the moral law, not as a way of salvation, but as a righteous rule of conduct.

Second, in the law of Moses we have the civil statutes which were to govern the Israelites as a theocratic nation. These laws covered every phase of the social life of Israel, and were the best laws ever devised for a nation. If Israel had kept these statutes the nation would still be standing and rooted in their own land and blessed of God.

The third section of the law of

Moses is the ceremonial law, or the law of the altar. This was their religious law. It was the provision of grace for them as sinners. It governed their approach to God as sinners, and embraced all their religious rites and contained the new covenant in types and shadows. The priests were the rulers and leaders under the ceremonial law, which was a temporary arrangement imposed until the time of reformation when the Messiah would come and supersede the priests of the Aaronic order. When Christ came and gave Himself a ransom for many the old covenant was done away with. When He died on Calvary the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom, indicating that there were to be no more lambs on Jewish altars. The one sacrifice that puts away the guilt of sin for ever was the sacrifice of the lamb of God whose blood cleanseth us from all sin.

PROVISION FOR REDEMPTION

Under the civil statutes governing the social life of Israel, provision was made for redemption. Under the law the land could not be sold for ever. The land belonged to God and the people were God’s tenants. Leviticus 25:23-28, *“The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye*

are strangers and sojourners with me. And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land. If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold. And if the man have none to redeem it, and himself be able to redeem it; Then let him count the years of the sale thereof, and restore the overplus unto the man to whom he sold it; that he may return unto his possession. But if he be not able to restore it to him, then that which is sold shall remain in the hand of him that hath bought it until the year of jubilee: and in the jubilee it shall go out, and he shall return unto his possession.”

YEAR OF JUBILEE

Leviticus 25:8-17, *“And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto*

The perfect fulfillment of this divine office is in Jesus Christ. Job anticipated this office of Kinsman-Redeemer on the part of God. *“I know that my redeemer liveth...”*

you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed. For it is the jubilee; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field. In the year of this jubilee ye shall return every man unto his possession. And if thou sell aught unto thy neighbour, or buyest aught of thy neighbour's hand, ye shall not oppress one another: According to the number of years after the jubilee thou shalt buy of thy neighbour, and according unto the number of years of the fruits he shall sell unto thee: According to the multitude of years thou shalt increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of years thou shalt diminish the price of it: for according to the number of the years of the fruits doth he sell unto thee. Ye shall not therefore oppress one another; but thou shalt fear thy God: for I am the LORD your God."

Every fiftieth year was the year of jubilee in which all the land automatically went back to the original possessor, or to his heirs. Under the law an estate could not be alienated beyond the year of jubilee. The value of real estate depended on how many years till the year of jubilee. In our deeds we say, "To a man and his heirs for ever," but their deeds could assign property only to the year of jubilee. Their deeds were more like our leases, the title remaining with the owner, which was God. Psalm 24:1, "*The earth is the LORD's and the fulness thereof...*" God has never deeded this earth to any man. And there is a very practical sense in which all property holders are but God's sharecroppers and tenants.

This law was to prevent extremes of poverty and wealth. With such a law in force there could hardly be either millionaires or paupers. It discouraged a land-owning class with its consequent landless class. The Mosaic law was jealous of large estates, and a woe was pronounced on those who joined land to land and field to field.

Isaiah 5:8, "*Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!*"

Along with this law of jubilee there was another law which gave the right of redemption, so that a man might not have to wait till jubilee to get his property back. Under this law a man's kinsman was under obligation to help him in adverse circumstances. The nearest kin, brother or uncle, had the right and obligation to step in and redeem the lost property and give it back to the unfortunate man. And such a brother or uncle was called the Goel or kinsman-redeemer.

QUALIFICATIONS AND OBLIGATIONS

The qualifications and obligations of the kinsman-redeemer:

He must be the nearest blood relative of the poor man whose property was to be redeemed. Leviticus 25:48-49, "*After that he is sold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him: Either his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him, or any that is nigh of kin unto him of his family may redeem him; or if he be able, he may redeem himself.*" This duty first fell upon the brother, and then upon the uncle. But it must be the nearest blood relative able to perform the task.

He must be able to redeem the property. He must be a man of sufficient wealth to pay cash for it. If a man lost his property and had no relative able to redeem it and give it to him, he could not recover it until the year of jubilee unless he himself got able to redeem it. Leviticus 25:54, "*And if he be not redeemed in these years, then he shall go out in the year of jubilee, both he, and his children with him.*"

The duties of the Goel were mainly three: (1) To redeem a piece of property lost through adverse circum-

stances; (2) To redeem a man who had sold himself into slavery. Nobody could sell a man into slavery but himself. The law allowed no slave traders, but it was so just that if a man could not pay his debts with money he would pay them with his labor—he became the slave of his creditor; (3) To avenge the blood of a murdered relative. When a man was killed by another man, the brother or other nearest kin of the slain man became, under law, the sheriff to hunt down the slayer and take his life.

STRICT JUSTICE

Remember that under the law of Moses it was tooth for tooth, eye for eye, and life for life; that is strict justice. And that is what we need today; capital punishment. This law of judicial retaliation ought to be upon our statute books and impartially and firmly enforced by our courts. Nothing would so effectually check the rapid rising tide of crimes. But alas, so foolish and effeminate is the present generation that an ever increasing number are agitating for the abolition of capital punishment, and this is the face of the fact that in countries where capital punishment is most loosely administered or abolished altogether there is the highest percentage of murders and other capital crimes. Those who have no regard for the persons of others are very tender of their own skins, and therefore the best deterrent is to let them know that the law will exact from them eye for eye and a tooth for a tooth.

DUTY OF THE MAGISTRATE

Romans 13:1-4, "*Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:*

For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." Not to reform the criminal, but to be an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. The courts were never ordained of God for the purpose of reforming reprobates, nor to pamper degenerates, but to be His instruments for preserving law and order, and that by being a terror to the evil. Our Lord, in the sermon on the mount, did not repeal a judicial statute, but warned against private revenge by taking the law into one's own hands.

CITIES OF REFUGE

Under the law by which the blood of a murdered relative might be avenged there were cities of refuge to which the slayer might flee and get a trial to determine whether he was guilty of murder or whether what he did was accidental. If it was murder, he was put to death by the Goel who would be the lawful and official executioner. If accidental, he could stay in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest and then return home in safety. Numbers 35:11-12, *"Then ye shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares. And they shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger; that the manslayer die not, until he stand before the congregation in judgment."*

JEHOVAH AS REDEEMER

In the latter portions of the Old Testament God begins to be spoken of as the Goel or Kinsman-Redeemer. He is represented eighteen times in Isaiah as the redeemer of Israel. God was the nearest relative Israel had. He had chosen them to be His people—His peculiar possession. Deuteronomy 32:9, *"For the LORD's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance."* God was their Father. He looked upon them in Egypt with an eye of pity and with a purpose to redeem.

He did not mean to leave His chosen as slaves in the brick kilns of Pharaoh.

God has the will and ability to redeem Israel. He is called their Redeemer and the mighty one of Jacob. Jacob has a mighty relative, and this was Israel's only hope of redemption.

PERFECT FULFILMENT

The perfect fulfillment of this divine office in Jesus Christ. Job anticipated this office of Kinsman-Redeemer on the part of God. *"I know that my redeemer liveth..."* Job is the oldest book of the Bible. He lived before the days of Moses; before there was a nation of Israel; before there was such a law of redemption among men.

Job looked beyond the nation of Israel and her law of redemption. He saw this office of redemption fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He was speaking of God in Christ in Job 19:25-27, *"I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another..."* Job saw Jesus Christ as his nearest relative redeeming him from sin and the grave.

Job saw the very truth that we have so abundantly taught in the New Testament. The New Testament sets forth Jesus Christ as our Kinsman-Redeemer. Ephesians 1:7, *"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."* Galatians 3:13, *"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us..."* Jesus of Nazareth possesses every qualification as our Kinsman-Redeemer:

He is the nearest of kin. Hebrews 2:14, *"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."* He is our elder brother. Hebrews 2:9-12, *"But we see*

Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man: For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." Some people are ashamed of their poor or trashy relatives. We were poor and trashy but He was not ashamed to claim us as brethren and perform the work of the Goel. We were stricken with the foul leprosy of sin but it did not defile Him to touch us with His healing hand.

He is able. Isaiah calls Christ the One mighty to save. No case too hard for Christ; no sinner too much for Him. His blood can take out "the damned spot." When sin had given us the knock-out punch, He came and brought us to life. When others had passed us by on the other side, as we lay in our own blood, He was the good Samaritan who came to where we were and gave us first aid and put us in Grace Hospital, paying all expenses until we are completely recovered and ready for our heavenly home. Psalm 107:2, *"Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy."* Hebrews 13:15, *"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."*



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