

Refuting Sunday-Keeping XII

Administration of Death vs Administration of the Spirit

Fred R. Coulter—May 12, 2001

This one is perhaps one of the most important that we have covered. Every one of them have been important, this one will give us a greater understanding concerning the Word of God, the commandments of God, and the complete total misunderstanding of Protestantism.

The Protestants are stuck. They hate to admit that they're following the edicts of the Catholic Church in keeping Sunday, so they've gone to the Scriptures to try and find a justification for keeping Sunday, and they have ended up being against all the laws and commandments of God. They come to a point where they totally misinterpret the Scriptures in many, many different ways, and to them having the laws of God in your heart is just a feel good kind of thing within you. When we come to this one, which is entitled—out of this book *Sunday Facts & Sabbath Fiction* by Russell K. Tardo—

Sabbath-Keeping is the Ministration of Death

We will see that this title reveals his complete and absolute ignorance concerning the Word of God. His conclusions and reasons are therefore, in the same category. He doesn't understand

1. concerning the Old Testament
2. concerning what was written in 2-Cor. 3 where it talks about the ministration of death

So let's read some of his comments here:

These verses in 2-Cor. 3 devastate Sabbatarian arguments and strip them of all New Testament validity.... [not so] ...No one who reads and understands this passage of Scripture could possibly believe that God wants Christians to observe the Jewish Sabbath or any other part of the law.

Now first of all lets understand—the Sabbath is not Jewish. *The Sabbath was given to man.* God made it at creation. This is all a part of a psychological propaganda way of putting down the Sabbath by calling it the *Jewish Sabbath*. It is not so. *It is the Lord's Sabbath.* God says it's His.

Incredibly some Sabbatarians look these verses in the face and seem to deny what they see. Walker, for example, says that Paul has no reference to the Ten Commandments here at all.

Yes, there is a reference to the Ten Commandments. But it is the administration of the violation of the Ten Commandments that it's referring to, not to the Ten Commandments themselves.

Tables of stone and tables of the heart contrasted: The Apostle Paul speaks of the superiority of his epistles, written with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart.

He even misunderstands this. Paul is not talking about the superiority of his epistles, he's talking about the superiority of having the laws of God in your heart and mind, instead of just written on tables of stone.

The meaning is obvious. Paul is contrasting the Old Testament law represented in its entirety by the Ten Commandments...

Not so! We will see it has to do with the administration.

...and compare that with the New Covenant of Christ.

Then we'll look at the Scriptures where God gave Moses the Ten Commandments and the tables of stone, and so forth.

Warren Worsby explains the law is an external thing and people need an internal power if their lives are to be transformed.

That is a true statement. That's the whole basis of the New Covenant.

The legalist can admonish us with his 'do this or don't do that,' but he cannot give us the power to obey.

That's precisely, exactly what God said of the children of Israel after He gave the Ten Commandments. He said, 'Oh, that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep My commandments always.' So that's why we have the New Covenant and the power of the Holy Spirit.

If they do obey, often it is not from the heart and we end up worse than before. The superiority of the New Covenant is affirmed in that the Spirit of God applies the Word of God to the hearts of men.

Now that's almost a true statement, but kind of a strange way to put it. The Holy Spirit will inscribe them in our hearts and in our minds *if* we study the Word, *if* we know the commandments, *if* we understand the meaning behind it.

The danger of legalism is that it implies that by practicing mere external observances a person becomes spiritual.

Not so! We don't imply that at all.

Such ideas produce the very evil fruit of spiritual pride and exclusivism...

Now let's just say something about exclusivism. Christ is a total 'exclusivist.' He says He is '*the Way, the Truth, and the Life,*' and 'no one can come to the Father except through Him.' Now that's as exclusive as you can be.

...exclusivism that characterizes most legalistic groups. Remember that Paul's message of grace produced the opposite fruit, that of repentance, brokenness, and humility.

Repentance of what? *Sin!* And sin is what? *The transgression of the law!* ***If there is no law to be kept, then there is no need of repentance.*** So you see, you can't have it both ways and talk out of both sides of your mouth. You have to look into the Word of God with singleness of mind and heart and purpose to understand it.

The gospel of grace tells us we are lost sinners who cannot save ourselves.

That's true. We understand that.

And no amount of work we may undertake changes the fact that we are sinners in need of salvation.

That is also a true statement. However, Sabbath-keepers are not keeping the Sabbath as *a work* to earn salvation. We

- keep the Sabbath
- believe in the grace of God
- believe in the forgiveness of sin
- believe in the love of God
- and standing in the grace of God

We keep the Sabbath because God says so. Now let's understand something very clearly concerning the Sabbath:

It takes *faith* to keep the Sabbath. It takes no faith to keep Sunday. All you have to do is just go down the road and find the corner where the churches are and you can just pick out which ones you want. It's almost like auto row anymore. You don't to exercise any faith. You just go do it at your own time and your own leisure and your own way. Whereas, if you love God and fear Him and keep His commandments, you know that ***God has set aside the Sabbath as the Holy Day, which is His, as an appointed time when you cease from your work and you come together and study God's Word, and you ask God to bless you with His grace and His Spirit and to fellowship with you.*** Now that's what the Sabbath Day is all about. Sunday has nothing to

do with that, because God never said keep Sunday. So, therefore, they're only fellowshiping with themselves. And Sunday when you come to really understand it is actually *a work prescribed by men* to obtain salvation. So as you go through this book, nearly everything that they accuse Sabbath keepers of, you just turn the coin over to the other side and lo and behold it says Sunday.

One cannot help but see Paul's stark contrast in 2-Cor. 3...

Now we'll get there and we'll understand it in a little bit.

...between law and grace, death and life. He reminds the church constantly that the Old Testament law did not give life because it could not.

There's another true statement. Law cannot give life. Law only defines sin. Life comes from God. Life comes from the Spirit of God.

Instead, it [the law] brought death.

Yes, when the laws were transgressed, because 'the wages of sin is death.' And 'sin is the transgression of the law.' That is Old Testament and New Testament doctrine.

Not that the law had been unnecessary or unimportant...

Well, that's a strange one for him to say because he says that it is not important.

What it purported to do, it did well, exposing the utter sinfulness and helplessness of man. Since the law ministers death, why would anyone want to retrogress by retreating under it?

Now let's understand something very clearly. You don't retrogress to retreat under it. If you are not keeping the commandments of God, you are not even under the grace of God. You are living out there in the world on your own. It takes faith to keep the commandments of God. If you keep the commandments of God, and through repentance and baptism and the receiving of the Holy Spirit are under the grace of God, then through grace you establish law just as Paul said, and just as Jesus Christ taught. You then are able to keep the law in the spirit of the law and not in the letter. That's the whole substance of true Christianity.

However, though the Protestants define some of those things that way, they do not act upon them because they reject the laws and commandments of God.

Friend, not life but death is the result of Sabbath-keeping.

- Did you know that?
- Are Sabbatarians the only ones that die?

- Do Sunday keepers live perpetually?
- Is Sunday keeping able to keep them from death?

I say, no! That's a stupid statement! Think about it.

Friend, not life but death is the result of Sabbath keeping.

I've been keeping the Sabbath well over forty years now. I'm still alive. Many other people are still alive. As a matter of fact, *you find life in Sabbath-keeping through the grace of God and His Spirit*. The truth is, *Sunday-keeping is death*, because Sunday-keeping is a dead work of a commandment of men superimposed on the Word of God. Which means that those who do so put themselves in the seat of God and make themselves a greater lawgiver than God. Now they better hear and fear and tremble, because God's judgment is coming upon them. Sunday-keeping is going to result in *spiritual death*. Sabbath-keeping won't.

He says concerning the law, which we'll talk about, the Ten Commandments, and the tables of stone in just a minute.

First, that if the law, the Ten Commandments, which was written and engraven in stones that brought death was glorious, the New Covenant that ministers life has to exceed it in glory.

Well, of course, we'll see that in just a little bit here. Let's finish this off here.

In the light of these Scriptures, how can anyone insist upon feeding at the very table labeled by the New Testament itself as the ministration of death, the ministration of condemnation, the written letter that kills, the glory that was to be done away, and that which was abolished.

Now let's go back and understand something here. He's talking about the Ten Commandments and he's saying all of them are abolished—is he not? You need to think about it. Part of the problem is with some of these slick, twisted religious arguments is that they don't even comprehend what is being said or done. Now let's begin in 2-Corinthians 3. Let's begin to read it and let's begin to understand it.

We're going to have to understand that. Later we'll come back and survey 2-Cor. 2, 3 and the first part of 4 because all of them fit into one package to understand exactly what he's talking about. Part of the *Fourteen Rules of Bible Study* is to ask

- What does it say?
- What does it not say?
- What is the context?
- What is the verse before; the verse after?

- What is the chapter before; the chapter after?
- What is it really talking about?

Find out what it says in the Scriptures so that you know. Not an emotional diatribe such as Tardo gives here and threatening of death.

2-Corinthians 3:1: "Do we again to commend ourselves? Or do we, as some, need *epistles* of commendation to you, or *epistles* of commendation from you? You are our *epistle*, and are inscribed in our hearts... [that is through the love of God] ...being known and read by all men; *for* it is manifest that you are Christ's *epistle*, ministered by us; you were not inscribed with *pen and ink*... [on paper] ...but with *the Spirit of the living God*; not on tablets of stone... [Such as were the Ten Commandments.] ...but on *fleshly tablets of the heart*. Now we have this confidence through Christ toward God; not that we are competent of ourselves, or credit anything to our own abilities: rather, our competency is from God; Who also made us competent as ministers of the New Covenant; not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (vs 1-6). Now what is he talking about here? Well, we'll answer that.

"Now if the ministry of death... [Now it could be translated ministration or ministry of death.] ...which was engraven in stones, came into being with glory... [And we'll go back and we'll see how it came into being with glory.] ...so that the children of Israel were not able to gaze upon Moses' face because of the glory of his face, which *glory* is being set aside" (v 7). Which ministry or *administration of death* is being set aside? Now why is it being set aside? What is the *administration of death*? Is the law per se itself an instrumentality of death? *No, it's not!* The transgression of the law brings death, but what is the *administration of death*? And there is a difference.

Now we need to clearly understand that. So let's do so. Let's go back and let's look at some Scriptures in the Old Testament and understand concerning the *administration of death*. The place to begin is Genesis 9, not with Moses. Moses comes later. Gen. 9 is very important, because this is where the *administration of death* is given to every sovereign nation. God gave it to them. Now a sovereign nation is a group of people that have

- a territory
- laws
- administration of those laws
- judgments of those laws
- commerce
- a money supply

That is a *sovereign* nation. God has given to every sovereign nation the *ministration of death*, so that their societies will be able to control evil.

We find that here in Genesis 9:1: “And God blessed Noah and his sons, and He said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth... [this is after the Flood] ...And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every bird of the air, upon all that moves on the earth, and upon all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you, even as the green herb I have given you all things” (vs 1-3).

There are restrictions with the green herb, it has to have the seed within it. There are restrictions with the things concerning meats, because even right here in chapter eight it shows there was the law of the clean and unclean meats. So it’s not a question of eating everything that crawls, but it’s a question of everything that is legal to eat that God gave them to eat.

“But you shall not eat of flesh with the life in it—*which is its blood*” (v 4). You’re not going to eat flesh that has blood impacted in it. That’s what it’s talking about. Therefore, to kill animals which are proper to eat, they should have their throats slashed and bled thoroughly, not strangled to diffuse the blood into the body.

Now v 5 begins the *administration of death* that God gave to all sovereign nations of the descendants of Noah and Shem, Ham and Japheth. “And surely the blood of your lives will I require. At the hand of every animal will I require it, and at the hand of man. At the hand of every man’s brother will I require the life of man.” That means in the justice systems that these nations set up they were to have the authority of execution of those who transgressed in serious crimes. Now we’ll see the same thing applied to the nation of Israel.

Verse 6: “Whoever shed man’s blood, his blood shall be shed by man... [His life will be taken, life for life.] ...for He made man in the image of God. And you, be fruitful and multiply. Bring forth abundantly in the earth, and increase in it” (vs 6-7). Then right after that it’s no coincidence that in chapters nine and ten we have the table of the nations and the establishing of the nations from the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth and spread over all of the earth. Now they had the laws of God, they had the commandments of God, they understood the basic principles of everything that God had given them. God made them responsible. That is the *administration of death*.

Now, let’s come to the children of Israel. We know that in Exodus 20 the Ten Commandments

were given. As you read those, even one of them, the fifth commandment of honoring your father and mother guarantees long life. Now how do you square that with saying that the Ten Commandments bring death? I mean, **think!** We need to understand these things. These are ridiculous statements that these people make.

Exodus 21:1: “And these *are* the judgments which you shall set before them.” Then down through v 11 he talks about how to handle Hebrew slaves. Yes, they had slavery; and, yes, God approved of it; and, yes, God gave them laws so it would be humane.

Verse 12: “He that strikes a man, so that he dies, shall be surely put to death.” That is the *administration of death*. Now what do we have here? The same thing that God gave to the sovereign nations after the Flood of Noah. Israel is a complete sovereign nation—with people, with territory, with laws, with a currency, and with the religious system of the Old Testament. Yes, it was in the letter of the law; and, yes, for certain crimes the judges gave the death penalty. That’s what it’s all about.

Verse 13: “And if a man does not lie in wait, but God delivers *him* into his hand, then I will appoint you a place where he shall flee.... [Now this is the authorization of a refuge city, where if someone inadvertently committed manslaughter, which is not direct murder.] ...But if a man comes presumptuously upon his neighbor to slay him with guile, you shall take him from My altar so that he may die” (vs 13-14). He’s not even going to go up and hold onto the horns of the altar and say, ‘Spare me.’ God says take him from there and execute him. That is the *administration of death* for violating the commandment concerning murder by the sovereign nation of Israel. Now we will understand something concerning the Church and its relationship to other nations, in a little bit.

Verse 15: “And he that strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. And he that steals a man and sells him, or if he is found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death. And he that curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. And if men strive together, and one strikes another with a stone, or with *his* fist, and he does not die, but is confined to his bed; if he rises again and walks abroad upon his staff, then he that struck him shall be set free.... [from the death penalty.] ...Only he shall pay...” (vs 15-19).

Now we come into the judgment of monetary things. So the *administration of death is the ultimate judgment to carry out the penalty for what we would call ‘capital crimes.’* I just read them to you: murder, kidnapping, and here in this case now we don’t have a capital crime. It may be a

grievous one, but it's not a capital crime, he lived. So he's going to pay. Now we have the same thing in our court system today—don't we? What we're reading here are the instructions that the judges of Israel were to use in judging and administering the *letter of the law* of the commandments of God within the communities within the sovereign nation of Israel.

Verse 22: "If men strive and strike a pregnant woman, so that there is a miscarriage, and no harm follows... [that is the woman lives] ...he shall surely be punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him. And he shall pay as the judges *determine*." So we're talking about a legal system. Now would Mr. Tardo like us to do away with the *administration of death* in the United States of America? Or Any country in the world, and just let anarchy reign? and Murder become the thing that you just do with no crime or punishment? and Kidnapping and adultery? and All of those things that are punishable by death?

There's a reason for the *administration of death*. There is the purpose for the administration of death. Sabbath-keepers are not under the *administration of death*; we are doing no murder; we are doing no kidnapping. As a matter of fact, we are keeping the laws and commandments of God through the Spirit of God, written in our hearts and in our minds and through the grace of God, that we can love God with our heart and mind and soul and being. So his claims are totally the opposite. This shows he has not a clue as to what he's talking about concerning 2-Cor. 3. Just an emotional diatribe against the commandments and laws of God. Whereas, Paul is talking about the administration of *the penalty*. Now we're going to see when we get to 2-Cor. 2 & 4 that that fits right in with this.

Verse 23: "And if *any* injury occurs... [Concerning if she lose the fruit of her womb, that is the child dies or the mother dies.] ...then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe" (vs 23-25). Does this mean that if a person lost an eye, you would take and have the judges take the man who caused the person to have his eye lost, line him up on the wall and gouge out his eye? or Knock out his tooth? or Cut off his hand or foot? or Burn him? or Wound him? *No, the judge would give a monetary value* for those things: eye for eye, tooth for tooth, foot for foot, burning for burning, and so forth. He would give a monetary fine equivalent of that.

In today's society we even have insurance policies based upon the very thing. You could have a life insurance policy, which has sub-sections in it, which covers the loss of a limb, the loss of a hand, the loss of an eye, the loss of a leg, etc. And they

will pay so much for that. Right in your auto insurance you have that. If you have three hundred thousand dollar liability insurance on your car, if you run into someone and they lose their life, then you will pay out of the insurance company will pay \$300,000. If they live, but have their legs broken or whatever, they will pay the medical expenses and loss of time on the job, etc. So what we have in the United States today is exactly the same system of judges that God had given Israel.

The United States is a sovereign nation. Israel was a sovereign nation. The judges were to administer the *administration of death* for the capital crimes, plus all the lesser crimes would be meted out with different punishments according to the severity of the crime. You can go through and you can read all the rest of Exodus 22 & 23.

Now let's come here to Exodus 22:1: "If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep." An interesting point which is very good that God makes very clear: *There were no jails in Israel*. If they stole, they made restitution. Don't box them up so they don't learn a thing. Make them go work and pay back so they will never do it again.

Verse 2: "If a thief is found breaking in, and is struck so that he dies, no blood *shall be* shed for him.... [That is, there is no sacrifice for a sin offering to justify his death.] ...If the sun is risen upon him *and he lives*... [if it's in the daytime] ...*there shall be* blood *shed* for him. He shall make full restitution.... [Now then, if he's caught in the daytime, then there will be a sin offering offered for him and he's going to make full restitution.] ...If he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft" (vs 2-3).

Now let's come over here and let's see some other things of the death penalty, v 18: "You shall not allow a sorceress [witch] to live. Anyone lying with an animal shall surely be put to death. Anyone sacrificing to a god, except it is unto the LORD only, he shall be utterly destroyed" (vs 18-20). Now that is the *administration of death*. There are many other sections we can read where it talks about many of the same things, just reiterating it a little bit differently.

Let's come to Deuteronomy 17. Let's just finalize this part of the *administration of death* to see exactly how it was administered. Remember, Sabbath-keeping or law-keeping is not the administration of death. The *administration of death* is exercised by the officers of the sovereign nation that God has given that sovereign nation, so that they can have control of their society. Those people who commit capital crimes will be put to death. Those who commit lesser crimes will pay according as the judge determines.

Deuteronomy 17:8: “If a matter *is* too hard for you in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, *being* matters of strife within your gates...” Now this is what you call *an appeal*. If it was not possible to make the decision in the local jurisdiction of the judge, then they had appeal. Do we have the same thing today? *Yes!* So Mr. Tardo, listen carefully: ***The United States and its system of judges is under the sovereign system that God gave to Israel.*** The United States is a sovereign modern nation of the ten tribes of Israel, being of the tribe of Manasseh. You need to think on that!

“...then you shall arise and go up to the place which the LORD your God shall choose. And you shall come to the priests, the Levites, and to the judge that shall be in those days, and ask. And they shall declare to you the sentence of judgment. And you shall do according to the sentence, which they declare to you from that place which the LORD shall choose. And you shall be careful to do according to all that they tell you.... [Just like today, the Supreme Court judgment *is final and you will do it because it is the law of the land.* Is that not correct? *Yes!*] ...According to the sentence of the law, which they shall teach you, and according to the judgment which they shall tell you, you shall do. You shall not turn aside from the sentence, which they shall show you, to the right hand or the left. And the man that acts presumptuously and will not hearken to the priest who stands to minister there before the LORD your God, or to the judge, even that man shall die. And you shall put away the evil from Israel. And all the people shall hear and fear, and do no more presumptuously” (vs 8-13).

I just read to you a precise summary of the judicial system with the laws of the land of America today. Only instead of the priest it is the Supreme Court. That is the administration of death. And we need to understand that’s what Paul is talking about.

You can read that in Exo. 31 & 34 about Moses getting the Ten Commandments written by the ‘finger of God.’ How he came down off the mountain because the children of Israel were sinning and he cast the tables of stone down and broke them. Then in Exo. 34 God told him hew two more stones and God wrote on them again. But also there was the book of the law, or the covenant that went along with it, which had all the statutes and judgments, which I just read you. So it includes the whole package.

And all of those subordinate judgments and statutes were based upon the Ten Commandments. That’s why Paul refers to the tables of stone in 2-Cor. 3, showing that it was a glorious administration that was given. So glorious that even Moses when he was in the presence of God, absorbed some of the

glory of God, so much so when he was there on mount forty days and forty nights, he didn’t eat anything or drink anything, and when he came down off the mountain his face glowed with the glory of God. So he had to put a veil over his face, because the children of Israel could not look upon him. But when he went to talk to God, he took the veil off.

(go to the next track)

Let’s understand the difference between the Church and the sovereign nation of Israel. Let’s read the commission and we’re going to see that God never gave to the Church the *administration of death*. Matthew 28:19: “Therefore, go *and* make disciples in all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, *even* until the completion of the age” (vs 19-20). They were to go into all nations, very important thing to remember.

Let’s come to Acts 1 and let’s see where He repeats it again. Let’s understand something very important concerning God and the way that He has done things, and why the Church was not given the *administration of death*. I think you’ll understand it here in just a little bit. Acts 1:8: “But you yourselves shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto *the* ends of the earth” So the Church was to go into all nations. Is the Church a sovereign nation? *No!* It is a spiritual organization and the states in which the Church is looks upon it as an organization of people under the jurisdiction of the state.

Let’s come to Romans 13; let’s show you that. Not that the state tells the Church what to believe, or what to do, but the Church and all the brethren in the Church are to be subject to the laws of the land in which they live. Paul makes this very clear, which means that we cannot administer the death penalty. Why? *Because God gave that to the sovereign nations, wherever the Church would be.* The sovereign nation has the *administration of death*, which through its judicial system, it’s legal judicial system and law enforcement has the power of the *administration of death*.

Understand something else very important, too. No separate organization can be within a sovereign nation and be sovereign unto itself, meaning that no group, no organization, no church can take upon itself to set up its own laws and administer the death penalty to its members. The Church cannot do that. God never gave that ability to the Church. Now when Christ returns, then all the nations will be under the sovereignty of the Kingdom of God and the *administration of death* for those who sin without repentance, will be

administered. Do you understand that? No organization within a sovereign nation has the same power of the *administration of death* as the sovereign nation. Because if that were the case then, if the Church had that, then God would be going contrary to His own laws and His own covenant that He made with all nations back in Gen. 9.

Now here Romans 13:1 shows very clearly that we are to be subject to the higher powers. “Let everyone be subject to the high authorities because there is no authority except from God; and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God.... [God gave the sovereign nations those rights.] ...So then, the one who sets himself against the authority is resisting the ordinance of God...” (vs 1-2). God is not double minded. He’s not going to give the Church that authority. Now we’ll examine what authority that the Church has and how that is administered and, voila! it’s all going to become clear.

“...and those who resist shall receive judgment to themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil *works*. Do you desire not to be afraid of the authority? *Then* practice good, and you will have praise from it; For he is a servant of God to you for good.... [To keep peace and law and order within the land.] ...But if you are practicing evil.... [You go out and sin against the law of the land and you are hauled to justice] ...But if you are practicing evil, have fear! For he does not wear the sword in vain because he is a servant of God... [God put him there. The Church has no right and no authority to usurp the duties of a sovereign nation that God has established and those people in authority are doing the service of God, whether it is in conformity to all the laws and commandments of God or not. They are there.] ...he is a servant of God, an avenger for wrath to the one who is practicing evil. Consequently, it is necessary to be subject *to authority*, not only because of wrath, but also because of conscience” (vs 2-5).

We need to understand that. There’s a sovereignist movement among some of the Churches of God today and they need to listen and hear and fear. If you don’t have the sermon *God’s Answer to the Freeman*, you write in for it. It explains all about that. Now remember, also, before we continue on here, let’s remember something very important here. Jesus said if you’re arrested, ‘agree with your adversary while you are in the way, lest you be brought before the judge ‘and the judge put you in the ‘clink’—I’m just sort of summarizing it here in modern terminology—and you stay there until you have paid the last penny. So Christ even in the Sermon on the Mount upheld the authority of the sovereignty of the nations with their systems of law and judgment. Let’s understand: What are the

powers of the Church? *It does not have the administration of death!* So anything that we do has nothing to do with the *administration of death*. Do you understand that?

Let’s see the ultimate power that the Church has; let’s go to Matthew 18; let’s see the process and you will understand it completely. Now remember, Paul excoriated those in Corinth because they went to law, to the judges of the land, a brother against brother. They were not using what Christ instructed here in Matt. 18. We are not to go before the judges of this world. *We are to solve our own internal problems with the Spirit of God*, with the means that God has given. Let’s see what that is.

Matthew 18:15: “So then, if your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault between you and him alone....” That is violated by most people, most of the time, because they go tell someone else first.

Step 1: Go to the person

Your first responsibility before God is to go to the person. “...If he is willing to hear you, you have gained your brother.” (v 15) Very important thing. Solve all problems at the very lowest level. That is how the Church Government is to work beginning with each one of us.

Step 2: If he will not listen, take with you one or two others.

“...But if he will not listen, take with you one or two others, so that in *the* mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established” (v 16).

Step 3: Tell it to the Church

“And if he fails to listen to them, tell *it* to the Church...” (v 17). Which then is the assembly of the congregation. The minister will call a meeting of the Church and the whole matter will be discussed, and the Church body will make the judgment. That’s what it’s talking about.

Now I’ve gone through step one and two. I have never seen a step three used properly, yet. There’s a very important thing to understand with this: If steps one and two are done properly there will be no need for step three, telling it to the Church. But Christ has put it here for those rare cases when it’s necessary to do so. And we’ll see an instance in 1-Co. where it was necessary to do so. “...But if he also fails to listen to the Church, let him be to you as the heathen and the tax collector” (v 17).

Let’s understand, very important: The greatest power of administration for punishment that the Church has is *disfellowshipment*. That should be properly done. We’ve seen it abused. That is not of

God. It should be properly done following these steps.

Verse 18, very important: “Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on the earth... [**concerning the solution to this problem.** That’s what it’s talking about.] ...will have already been bound in heaven; and whatever you shall loose on the earth... [concerning this problem] ...will have already been loosed in heaven.” For example, if someone owed you \$1,000 and you couldn’t get him to make any payments about anything of it. You got together, it finally came all the way to the Church and the judgment was because of the poverty of the one who owed the thousand and your need to get some money back, it was decided that if you would be willing to loose \$500 of that, that he could pay the \$500. There are two things involved here:

1. The judgment was made to loose \$500; not have to pay that.
2. The judgment was made to pay \$500 and that would resolve the problem.

That is bound in heaven in both cases. If he pays the \$500, the debt is settled. And the one who holds the claim settles for the \$500. He cannot come back and ask for the \$500 which was loosed. Please understand, the binding and loosing was done on earth and in heaven concerning the decision.

“Again I say to you, that if two of you on earth shall agree concerning any matter that they wish to request... [Now this is just between brethren. If you agree to do something that you ask or that you agree to do or work, or whatever:] ...it shall be done for them by Father, Who *is* in heaven.... [Now that is concerning praying for one another, and all of that sort of thing.] ...For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there, I am in *the* midst of them” (vs 19-20). For what? Now we’ve applied this many times to meeting in small groups. *True!* But this is where two or three are gathered together to make a judgment because someone has sinned or transgressed against a brother, then what you agree upon is bound in heaven and Christ is in the midst there.

Now notice v 21, because then this gets into the *administration of the spirit*: “Then Peter came to Him and said, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Until seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you until seven times, but until seventy times seven’” (vs 21-22). ***The administration of spirit is through forgiveness, mercy.*** That’s the *administration of the spirit*. And who is the one that administers that the most? *God the Father through Jesus Christ!* Every day—correct? And stop and think of this: How many times has God forgiven you in your lifetime? That’s the *administration of the spirit*.

Let’s come to 1-Corinthians 5 and we will see the background for 2-Cor. 3. Now here we have a capital sin. Here we have a sin that under the Old Covenant would require the death penalty. The Church did not have the power for the administration of the death penalty. Remember we saw the highest power that the Church has, because it’s a separate organization within a sovereign nation, is disfellowshipment. It cannot administrator the *administration of death*.

1-Corinthians 5:1: “It is commonly reported *that there is* sexual immortality [‘pornea’] among you, and such immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—*allowing* one to have *his own* father’s wife.... [Apparently this was his father’s second wife, so it would be incest with his stepmother. That is punishable under the Old Covenant *by death*.] ...You are puffed up and did not grieve instead, so that he who did this deed might be taken out of your midst” (vs 1-2). That is disfellowshipped, because of his sin.

“For I indeed, being absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged *concerning* him... [So we already saw there had to be judgments in Matt. 18—correct?] ...who has so *shamelessly* committed this *evil deed* as if I were present; in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, and my spirit, together with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ to deliver such a one to Satan for *the* destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (vs 3-5). Expelling from the fellowship of the Church in Corinth.

When that happens, and it has to be for the just reason, here is a just reason, here is a capital crime worthy of death under the Old Covenant, but the greatest administration that can be done by the Church is expelling from the group, called *disfellowshipment*. Now when that happens, they’re turned back into the world and in some cases over to Satan the devil, that through the trials and difficulties that they would go through, perhaps they would repent and be able to come back and be reinstated. Or that maybe if it came to the point that the person died, that they were able to repent just before they died, they could still receive salvation. And that’s what it means for ‘the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.’ That’s what took place.

Now come over here to 1-Corinthians 6:1. Here’s something that I just eluded to, but let’s read it about going to the world’s courts, brother against brother. Paul says it shouldn’t be done. “Does anyone among you who has a matter against another dare to go to *a court of law* before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?.... [as per Matt. 18] ...Don’t you know that the saints shall judge the

world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you unworthy of the most trivial of judgments?” (vs 1-2).

Paul is saying, ‘Look, can’t you even put your minds to resolve even just the littlest matters?’ He had to come in and tell them how to handle the big matter with the man who committed incest with his stepmother, and now he’s coming to the smaller matters and saying, ‘Look, you need to realize you’re going to judge the world. We are going to be kings and priests in the Kingdom of God and we are going to judge.’ Now if you don’t have the booklet or the sermons, *Judge Righteous Judgment*, write in for it. That’ll give you a good insight as to what we need to be learning now in this life concerning judgment.

“Don’t you know that we shall judge angels? How much more then *the* things of this life? So then, if you have judgments *concerning the* things of this life, *why* do you appoint *as judges* those who have no standing in the Church?... [In other words he’s staying, ‘Now when you have these,’ and he’s sort of chiding them. It’s not a clear translation in the *King James*, but he’s saying, ‘You set the ones who are least esteemed, the ones who are least qualified to make judgments.’ So even in that they were doing wrong.] ...Now I say *this* to your shame. *Is it* because there is not a wise *man* among you, not even one, who is able to decide between his brothers? Instead, brother goes to *a court of law* with brother, and this before unbelievers. Now therefore, there is altogether an utter fault among you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? Instead, you are doing wrong and defrauding, and you are doing these things to *your brethren*” (vs 3-8).

So he’s saying, even all the brethren from the least to the greatest within the Church have to have the functioning of the *administration of the spirit* beginning with Matt. 18. That’s what he’s saying. Now then, this man was put out of the Church. That’s the whole background for 2-Cor. 3. We have to understand what we’re talking about. We cannot go off half-cocked with lame-brain doctrines and not understand what is going on. We should not be put down by men such as Russell Tardo, who say that if we keep the Sabbath then we are under the *administration of death*. Nothing could be further from the truth! He does not have a clue as to what the Bible really is saying.

Now let’s deal with the problem of the one who was put out because of incest with his stepmother. 2-Corinthians 2:1: “Now I am resolved within myself not to come to you again in sorrow. For if I make you sorrowful, who is it that makes me glad, if it is not the one who has been made

sorrowful by me?... [He made them sorrowful concerning what he did in telling them to expel this man from the Church.] ...And I wrote this same *thing* to you, lest when I come, I might have sorrow from *those* in whom I ought to rejoice; *for* I have confidence in all of you, that my joy is *the joy* of you all.... [In other words, when there is repentance there’s the peaceable fruits of righteousness.] ...For out of much distress and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears—not that you might be sorrowful, but that you might know the overflowing love which I have for you” (vs 1-4).

He was saying that in administering this judgment against this man, it was done in love for the love of the whole congregation, that the whole congregation does not become polluted and contaminated by this. That’s why he said, ‘Know you not that a little leaven leavens the whole lump,’ and if you let this thing continue in the Church. Whether it be incest or adultery or thievery, or whatever it may be. Then the whole Church is going to be affected and the whole Church is going to be sorrowful. So Paul said, ‘Hey, I wrote this, yes I did you make you sorrowful, but for a good cause because I love you.

Verse 5: “But if anyone has caused sorrow, he has not grieved me, but you all, *at least* in part (in order that I may not overcharge him). To such a one this punishment, which *was inflicted* by the majority of you, *is* sufficient... [He’s saying to the one who was expelled this punishment is sufficient, but it was inflicted by the many, *the whole church* made the decision.] ...So that on the contrary, you should rather forgive and encourage him... [because he repented. If someone repents you are bound to forgive—is that not correct? *Yes!* That is the *administration of the spirit* on your part with the Spirit of God being in you.] ...So that on the contrary, you should rather forgive and encourage *him*, lest such a one be swallowed up with overwhelming sorrow” (vs 5-7).

Because if he’s truly repented and he hasn’t been received back, then you’re creating a greater problem—are you not? *Yes, you are!* I’ve seen situations like that happen, and I’ve been able to help people be restored so they’re not consumed with overmuch sorrow. I know one man that was so grieved on how he was handled and what happened in his particular case that he had bleeding bowels and couldn’t sleep at night. Paul is saying here to the same thing, ‘I don’t want this to happen.’

Verse 8: “For this reason, I exhort you to confirm *your* love toward him.... [By forgiveness and receiving and welcoming him back, and so forth.] ...Now for this *cause* I wrote *to you*, that I might know by testing you whether you are obedient in everything.... [Meaning if you were obedient in

carrying out Matthew 18 and handling this problem with the church.] ...But to whom you forgive anything... [That is this man who committed the incest.] ...I also *forgive*; and if I also have forgiven anything, to whomever I have forgiven *it*, for your sakes *I forgave it in the person of Christ*" (vs 8-10).

This is so that we can all be in right standing with Christ. Here's why: we're dealing in very deep and emotional things when we're talking about actually disfellowshipping someone, publicly shaming him, like he was there in the Church at Corinth. His sin and what he did was grievous and terrible. Now then, once someone has repented, he needs to be restored and to be restored with love and understanding.

Verse 11: "So that we may not be outwitted by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes." Because he will come in with some self-righteous person and say, 'Well, I don't know if this person has repented or not, so I don't know if I ought to forgive him and you people that forgive him you know you're just sorry saps.' That is not the *administration of the spirit*.

"Now when I came to Troas *to preach* the gospel of Christ, and a door was opened to me by *the Lord*, I had no rest in my spirit because I *was not able* to find Titus, my brother; then I left them *and* went into Macedonia. But thanks *be* to God, Who always leads us triumphant in Christ, and manifests the fragrance of His knowledge through us in every place. For we are Christ's sweet perfume to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to those *who are perishing*, *we are* a stench of death unto death; but to those *who are being saved*, *we are* a fragrance of life unto life. And who *is* qualified for such things? For we are not like the many, who for *their own* profit are corrupting the Word of God; but we speak with sincerity, as from God, *and* before God, *and* in Christ" (vs 12-17).

Now you're ready to understand the *administration of the spirit*, because this man was worthy of the *administration of death*, because of the crime that he committed. He repented and was brought back into the Church, re-instated properly. So Paul starts out, 2-Corinthians 3:1: "Do we again begin to commend ourselves? Or do we, as some, need epistles of commendation to you, or *epistles* of commendation from you?... [Showing how great we are or how great you are.] ...You are our epistle, and are inscribed in our hearts, being known and read by all men; *for* it is manifest that you are Christ's epistle, ministered by us; you were not inscribed with *pen and ink*, but with *the Spirit of the living God*; not on tablets of stone, but on fleshly tablets of *the heart*.... [*Conversion!* That's what it's talking about here.] ...Now we have this confidence through

Christ toward God; Not that we are competent of ourselves... [So this is what we're talking about—a judgment. Don't use your own rationale; you have to use the Spirit of God and the Word of God.] ...Not that we are competent of ourselves, *or* credit anything to our own *abilities*: rather, our competency *is* from God" (vs 1-5). Paul said that he thanked God that he counted him competent to be in the ministry. He thanked God because he knew that he had everything that came from God.

"Who also made us competent *as* ministers of *the* New Covenant; not of *the* letter, but of *the* Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (v 6). That's the example that he's talking about. This man should have been executed for his crime, according to the *letter of the law*. He wasn't, he repented, and was restored back and he has now life, so that he can progress to the full spiritual life.

Now then he makes the comparison, because this was just done in the congregation. "Now if the ministry of death, which was engraved in stones, came into being with glory, so that the children of Israel were not able to gaze upon Moses' face because of the glory of his face, which *glory* is being set aside" (v 7). Which *administration of death* is being set aside; that is for the operation of the Church it's being set aside; and for the nation of Israel it's being set aside. When the destruction of Jerusalem and Judea took place in 70_{A.D.}, there was no more *administration of death* that was authorized by God anywhere in the world, except the sovereign nations that God had already given it to. Not in the Church, and never in the Church.

So how can Russell Tardo say we are under the *administration of death*, because we keep the Sabbath. You see, this has nothing to do with Sabbath-keeping. This has to do with the administration of the Word of God *for sin*, whether it be the death penalty under the Old Covenant where the Old Covenant and the Ten Commandments were written in the tables of stone OR mercy and forgiveness upon repentance under the New Covenant.

Under the Old Covenant there was no mercy. They were to be executed. Under the New Covenant, if there is repentance, *there is mercy and forgiveness*. That's why God called Paul. He caused Christians to be executed, he arrested them, he had them beaten and scourged, and *God called him and forgave him*. He should have been executed according to the letter of the law with the *administration of death*, but God gave him mercy through the *administration of the spirit* and through repentance and forgiveness and mercy. That's the administration of the spirit.

Now let's get the comparison again here: "Who also made us competent as ministers of *the* New Covenant; not of *the* letter, but of *the* Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.... [because there is mercy and forgiveness] ...Now if the ministry of death, which was engraved in stones, came into being with glory, so that the children of Israel were not able to gaze upon Moses' face because of the glory of his face, which *glory* is being set aside; shall not the ministry of the Spirit be far more glorious?" (vs 6-8). Which is greater, killing a person or giving forgiveness upon repentance? Which is more glorious before God? ***Giving forgiveness upon repentance***, that's much more glorious. There's nothing glorious about taking someone's life.

Verse 9: "For if *there was* glory in the ministry of condemnation... [condemned for breaking the commandments of God and death] ...to a much greater degree the ministry of righteousness overflows with glory.... [Why? *It says even the angels rejoice over the repentance of a sinner*. So that's glorious before God.] ...And even *the ministry of condemnation*, which had glory, was not glorious in this respect... [In other words, the Old Covenant was given in glory, but it wasn't glorious in the respect that there was forgiveness and mercy.] ...because of the surpassing glory *of the ministry of life*" (vs 9-10). That is, the *administration of life*. It's a surpassing glory.

Verse 11: "For if that which is being set aside... [it says in the *King James* 'done away,' but it's *set aside*] ...*came into being* through glory, to a much greater degree that which remains is glorious.... [That is, the way that the Church is administered when there are problems within the Church, through mercy and forgiveness, that's a greater glory.] ...Now then, because we have such hope... [That people who are put out because of sin repent and come back.] ...we have such hope... [That we can have sins forgiven.] ...we use great plainness *of speech*; For *we are* not like Moses, who put a veil over his face, so that the children of Israel could not gaze to the end upon *the glory* that is *now* being set aside. But their minds were blinded... (vs 11-14).

They never got it. They never understood the intent of the laws and commandments of God. They only had the letter of the law. They only had the administration of death, and their hearts were never opened, because they never had the Holy Spirit to understand and be converted.

"...their minds *were* blinded; for to the present *hour* the same veil *has not been* removed, *but* remains at the reading of the Old Covenant; which *veil* is removed in Christ" (v 14). Which means, we can go back and we can read the Old Testament, the commandments of God. We

understand that all the judges' system up to the death penalty is not administered within the Church. We can go back and look at all the laws and commandments of God and understand the spiritual application of them, how we need to live by every Word of God *in the spirit* and have those written in our hearts and in our minds through the process of the Holy Spirit in the New Covenant. Now that is the glorious thing that God has given.

And what happens with it is this: "But their minds were blinded; for to the present hour the same veil *has not been* removed, *but* remains at the reading of the Old Covenant; **which veil is removed in Christ**.... [Meaning we have a full understanding of the laws and commandments of God.] ...For to this day, when Moses is read, *the veil* lies upon their hearts.... [Mr. Tardo, it's on your heart, because you don't understand Moses.] ...But when *their hearts* turn to *the Lord*... [through repentance] ...the veil is taken away.... [That's called the circumcision of the heart.] ...Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of *the Lord is*, there is freedom.... [from the death penalty upon repentance. That's what it's talking about.] ...But we all, with uncovered faces beholding the glory of *the Lord* as in a mirror... [though looking through a glass darkly] ...are being transformed... [through conversion, the renewing of our minds] ...*into* the same image from glory to glory, even as by *the Spirit of the Lord*" (vs 14-18).

2-Corinthians 4:1: "Therefore... [This completes the thought.] ...having this ministry... [of the administration of the spirit] ...according as we have received mercy... [upon repentance] ...are not fainthearted. For we have personally renounced the hidden things of dishonest gain, not walking in *cunning* craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the Truth, we are commending ourselves to every man's conscience before God" (vs 1-2). So now then, we have a complete free and open relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ, and with each other.

That is the whole message of what we have here in the *administration of death* vs the *administration of the spirit*.

There are some other things that we need to add this. So just going through it one time is not going to be sufficient for a complete understanding.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) 2-Corinthians 3:1-7
- 2) Genesis 9:1-7
- 3) Exodus 21:1, 12-19, 22-25
- 4) Exodus 22: 1-3, 18-20
- 5) Deuteronomy 17:8-13

- 6) Matthew 28:19-20
- 7) Acts 1:8
- 8) Romans 13:1-5
- 9) Matthew 18:15-22
- 10) 1-Corinthians 5:1-5
- 11) 1-Corinthians 6:1-8
- 12) 2-Corinthians 2:1-17
- 13) 2-Corinthians 3:1-18
- 14) 2-Corinthians 4:1-2

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Genesis 10
- Exodus 20
- Exodus 21:2-11; 23; 31, 34

Also referenced:

Sermons:

- *God's Answer to the Freeman*
- *Judge Righteous Judgment*

Book: *Sunday Facts & Sabbath Fiction* by Russell Tardo

Articles:

- *Fourteen Rules of Bible Study*

Booklet: *Judge Righteous Judgment*

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