

Introduction

In this article we discuss the Law of Moses and the Gospel of Christ.



The following sermon, by **Dr John Gill**, is the subject under discussion.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Gill_%28theologian%29

Comments and Responses Welcome

It is my desire that my understanding will help any who have found this subject entreging as I believe I have a good understanding of this subject. (Not compete, but very clear views) . It is my observation that most Calvinists are wrong on subject and I would like to help them understand the subject. If I have misquoted any one then please correct me.

Comments and Responses Welcome

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The Law Established By The Gospel

Romans 3:31

by Dr John Gill

Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law.

THAT vice and immorality, disobedience to the laws of God and men, prevail among us; and that practical religion and powerful godliness greatly decline, will he acknowledged by every serious, thoughtful, and considering Christian; but what are the springs and sources of this sad scene of things, or to what all this is to be ascribed, is not so generally agreed; in this men differ.

The opposers of the doctrines of grace attribute it, at least, in part, to that scheme of truths which we justly esteem the gospel of Christ; nor can they think there is any reason to expect, that moral virtue and practical religion will rise and gain ground among us, so long as this is the subject of our ministrations. “They spare not to charge the whole with a tendency to licentiousness, to open the door to libertinism, and give men a loose to live at pleasure, in all manner of impiety. Particularly the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, imputed by God the Father, and received by faith, is branded with this infamous character. It is suggested, that if this doctrine is true, the law is made void, obedience to it becomes unnecessary, and good works are insignificant things; and that it can be of no other use than to discourage good men in the performance of duty, and to encourage bad men in a course of wickedness.” To remove this charge and imputation is my view in reading these words unto you.

The design of the apostle, in this epistle, is to set in a full and clear

light, the doctrine of justification; in which he first proves that all mankind, Jews and Gentiles, are sinners, are under sin, Romans 3:9 the pollution, guilt and power of it; and so are arraigned, accused and convicted by the law, as transgressors; which law pronounces the whole world guilty before God, stops the mouth of every man, and puts all to silence; so that they have nothing to say in vindication of themselves, or why judgment should not be given against them, and be executed on them: whence it must most clearly follow, That no man can be justified in the sight of God by the law, by the deeds of it, or by any obedience of sinful man unto it. The apostle goes on to shew, that the matter of justification, or that by which a sinner is justified, is the righteousness of God; (Romans 3:21, 22) a righteousness in which Jehovah, Father, Son and Spirit, are concerned. God the Father sent his Son to work it out, and bring it in; he has approved and accepted of it, and graciously imputes it to all the elect. The Son of God is the author of it; who is our Immanuel, God with us, God in our nature, God and man in one Person, God over all, blessed for ever. Hence it has that fulness, sufficiency, and virtue to justify all to whose account it is placed; which the righteousness of a mere creature could never do. The holy Spirit of God discovers this righteousness to a poor, sensible sinner, brings it near to him; sets it before him; works faith in him to lay hold upon it, and receive it, and pronounces him justified by it in the court of conscience. This righteousness, the apostle says, (Romans 3:21) is manifested without the law, that is, in the gospel; in which it is revealed from faith to faith; though it is witnessed, a testimony is bore to it, both by the law and the prophets; and that it is unto all, applied unto all, and upon all, put upon all as a robe of righteousness, even upon all that believe; for there is no difference; (Romans 3:22) that is among men, among Jews or Gentiles; no distinction made between righteous men and sinners, or between some, being greater, others lesser sinners; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (Romans 3:23) are through sin depraved, and are destitute of the glorious image of God, that rectitude and uprightness of nature, in

which man was created; and therefore stand in need of the justifying righteousness of Christ, by which they must be justified, if at all. The same inspired writer proceeds to observe, that the impulsive and moving cause of justification, is the free grace of God, being justified freely by his grace. (Romans 3:24) Grace moved Jehovah, the Father, to resolve upon the justification of his elect. Grace set his thoughts at work; employed his infinite wisdom to find out a way whereby these, though they should fall into sin, might be just with God. Grace put him upon ordaining, calling, engaging, and sending his Son to fulfil all righteousness in their room and stead; and it was grace in him to accept of it, for and on the behalf of them; and to impute it to them, who, in themselves, were sinners and ungodly. The grace and love of the Son greatly appear in his voluntary engagement to be the surety and substitute of his people, in his readiness to do the will of God, in his cheerful coming down from heaven about this work, and in the gracious manner in which he wrought out and brought in an everlasting righteousness. The grace of the Spirit is abundantly manifest in the revelation and application of the justifying righteousness of Christ, to a poor, sinful, unworthy creature, and in bestowing faith as a free gift upon him, to apprehend and embrace it as his own. The meritorious or procuring cause of justification, is placed in the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God, in his infinite wisdom, and of his free rich grace, hath set forth or fore-ordained, to be a propitiation, to satisfy divine justice, by being an expiatory sacrifice for sin, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, adds the apostle, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just; that is, appear to be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. (Romans 3:25, 26)

So that by this wise and happy scheme, both the grace and justice of God wonderfully agree in the justification of a poor sinner, and are thereby greatly glorified. From the whole, the apostle deduces

several inferences and conclusions; as that upon this scheme, there is no room nor reason for boasting in the creature; and asks, (Romans 3:27) “Where is boasting then? it is excluded; by what law? of works? nay, but by the law of faith; that is, the doctrine of faith, and particularly the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ’s righteousness; also that a man is justified, or whoever is 5 justified, is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law; that God is the God both of Jews and Gentiles; and that there is but one way and method he makes use of in justifying of either, and that is, by faith and through faith; phrases which are synonymous, and expressive of one and the same thing; and then, in the words of our text, removes an objection which he easily saw would be raised against the doctrine he had advanced, Do we then make void the law through faith?

There were some who thought they did make void the law by the doctrine of faith: This was an objection common in the mouths of the Jews, and had been often leveled against the ministry of Christ and his apostles; and therefore the apostle Paul could be no stranger to it. Our Lord himself was traduced by the ignorant and ill-natured men of that generation in which he lived, as an Antinomian, both in doctrine and practice: as one in doctrine, which is evident, from those words of his in his own defence;

Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. (Matthew 5:17) Whence it is clear, that some had entertained such thoughts of him, that he came to destroy the law, and imagined that he did make it null and void by his doctrine and ministry: and that they charged him with being one in practice, is certain from the account he gives of their calumny and detraction when he says, The Son of man came eating and drinking; and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners; but wisdom is justified of her children. (Matthew 11:19) Now if they called the Master of the household so, it is no wonder that they of his household, his disciples and followers,

should be treated in the same opprobrious manner. Accordingly, when Stephen, being filled with the holy Ghost, disputed with the Jews concerning the Messiah and the gospel-state, and they were not able to resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spake; they suborned, and set up false witnesses, who said and swore, that he ceased not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law. (Acts 6:13)

When the apostle Paul returned unto Jerusalem, after he had travelled over a large part of the Gentile world, preaching the gospel of the grace of God with great success; James, a fellow-apostle, observed to him how many thousands of the Jews there were which believed in Jesus, and yet were all zealous of the law, and strenuous advocates for it; who had been informed that he had said many things among the Gentiles, contrary to Moses and his law, which were highly displeasing to them; and therefore he put him upon a method to conciliate himself to their affections; which method did not succeed according to desire and expectation: for the Jews having observed one Trophimus, an Ephesian, with him, whom they supposed he brought into the temple; they cried out, Men of Israel, help, this is the man that teacheth all men every where, against the people, and the law, and this place. (Acts 21:8)

From all which it is most manifest, that the apostle must be fully acquainted with, and he aware of this popular objection to his doctrine; and which he here makes answer to; partly by way of detestation and abhorrence, God forbid; a way of speaking he often makes use of, when vile objections were made to his doctrine, or such wicked consequences drawn from it, as were abominable to him; as when he observes, What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid: How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? (<450601>Romans 6:1, 2)

Again

What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid Nay, I had not known sin But by the law. (Romans 7:7) Once more; If while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, Is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid : (Galatians 2:17) and partly he replies to this objection, by asserting the contrary, yea, we establish the law; in like manner as Christ had done before in a passage already referred to, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil; and indeed, he is not destroying, but the fulfilling end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes. (Romans 10:4)

By faith here we are to understand either the grace or the doctrine of faith, or both. Faith may be considered as a grace; which by an inspired writer is defined to be the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen: (Hebrews 11:1) It is a grace peculiar to the chosen of God, and precious; it is a fruit and effect of electing love, and so an evidence of it; and is therefore styled The faith of God's elect. (Titus 1:1)

It is a gift of God, (Ephesians 2:8) an instance of his grace; and a special blessing of the everlasting covenant; it is not obtained by the industry, power and will of man; it is implanted in the heart by the Spirit of God, and the power of his grace; whence it is said to be the faith of the operation of God. (Colossians 2:12) This grace has a considerable place and concern in the justification of a poor sinner before God, in the court of conscience. This is the eye of the soul, by which it sees and looks unto the righteousness of Christ for justification; for that in the gospel is revealed from faith to faith; (Romans 1:17) it is the hand of the soul, by which it receives the blessing from the Lord, even righteousness from the God of its salvation; (Psalm 24:5) or in other words, by which it receives abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness. (Romans 5:17) Hence such as are possessed of it, are said to be justified by it; not by it as an habit implanted in them by the Spirit of God; for, as such,

it is a branch of sanctification; nor as an act performed by them; for as such, it is their act and deed, under the influence of the Spirit of God; but relatively, organically, or objectively considered; that is, as it relates to, and is concerned with, or has for its object Christ's righteousness; or as it is a means of apprehending and receiving that as its justifying one; for faith itself doth not make us righteous; it is not our righteousness, nor does it give us one; no, nor an interest in Christ's; but it is that grace by which we claim our interest in Christ's righteousness; by which we have the knowledge and perception of it, and possess that spiritual peace, joy and pleasure which arise from it: it is that grace by which we live on Christ as the Lord our righteousness; who was delivered into the hands of justice and death for our offences; and was raised again for our justification. (Romans 4:25)

Now faith considered as having such an hand in this affair, is no way contrary to the law of God; that is not made void by it; nor is obedience to it, on the account of faiths rendered unnecessary and insignificant, as will be shewn hereafter.

Again; By faith may be meant the doctrine of faith; and that either as it may intend in general the whole gospel, or in particular, the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ's righteousness. The whole gospel sometimes goes by the name of faith, and is called, The faith once delivered to the saints; our most holy faith; and the faith of the gospel; (Jude 3) because it contains things to be believed at once, upon the credit of the revealer, and not to be disputed by carnal reason: it proposes, and points out the great object of faith, Jesus Christ; its language is, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved:

(Acts 14:31) it is the means, in the Spirit's hands, of begetting and implanting the grace of faith in the hearts of God's elect: Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:7)

Yea, the word preached is unprofitable, unless it be mixed with

faith by them that hear it. (Hebrews 4:2) Now there is an entire harmony and consistency between this doctrine of faith and the law of God. The law is so far from being made void by it, that whatsoever is against that, is also contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, committed to the trust of his servants. (1 Timothy 1:9-11) Moreover, since the apostle is manifestly insisting, in the context, upon the doctrine of a sinner's justification before God, it is reasonable to suppose, that this is what he principally designs by faith; and it is not to be wondered at, that this should be so called; since the grace of faith is of so much use in it, to the apprehension, knowledge and comfort of it and since it is so fundamental an article of faith, that he that goes off from it, is said to be removed unto another gospel; Christ is become of no effect unto him: and whosoever seeks to be justified by the law, is fallen from grace; (Galatians 1:4, 6) that is, from the doctrine of it. Now by this particular doctrine also, the law is not made null and void; nor are good works, done in obedience to it, useless and unprofitable. By the law, I apprehend, we are to understand not the ceremonial law, that law which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances imposed on them, the Jews, until the time of reformation; (Hebrews 9:1) that is, the gospel dispensation, or times of the Messiah; which law only had a shadow of good things to come, but not the very image of the things; and could never, by its daily or yearly sacrifices, make the comers thereunto perfect; (Hebrew 10:1) and therefore there was a disannulling of the commandment, for the weakness and unprofitableness of it. (Hebrews 7:18) This law is indeed made void and useless; Christ has broken down the middle wall of partition which stood between, separated and distinguished between Jew and Gentile; he has abolished in his flesh the enmity, that which was the cause of so much enmity between the people of Israel and the nations of the world, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; (Ephesians 2:14, 15) wherefore no man should now judge or condemn Christians in respect of meat or drink, or of an

holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath-days, which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ; (Colossians 2:16, 17) he is the sum and substance of all these ceremonies: nor was this law abolished and made void until it was fulfilled in and by Christ; for every type and figure, every shadow and sacrifice, every office and ordinance pertaining to that dispensation, had their entire accomplishment in him. But by the law in this our text, I judge, the moral law is intended; that law which was written in Adam's heart in innocence; some remains of which are to be observed in fallen man, and even among the Gentiles, destitute of a divine revelation; and because of the depravity of human nature, and the treachery of human memory, and because this law was so much obliterated, and almost erased out of the hearts of men; a new edition of it was delivered to Moses in writing, calculated particularly for the people of the Jews; and which is opposed unto, and contradistinguished from the gospel of Christ; the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. (John 1:17)

The sum of this law is love to God and to our neighbour; and is established by sanctions of rewards and punishments, promising life in case of obedience, and threatening with death in case of disobedience. Now to make void the law, according to the import of the word here used, is to destroy and abolish it, to render it idle, inactive, weak, useless, and insignificant;^{f1} and to establish it, according to the notation of the word in the text, is to make it stand, to place it upon a sure basis and firm foundation, or to make it effectual to answer the ends and purposes for which it is designed.^{f2} Upon the whole, the observation on the text, or the doctrine of it, is this; that the moral law is not made null and void, but is established both by the grace and doctrine of faith. The proposition consists of two parts, a negative and an affirmative, I shall first consider the one, and then the other.

First, The negative part of the proposition is, That the law of God is not made void either by the grace or doctrine of faith.

1. Not by the grace of faith. It is certain, indeed, that believing and working, or faith and works, are continually opposed to, and contradistinguished from each other in the business of justification; every one that has read his Bible, with any care, will be able to observe this. How often does the apostle say, that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law; (Romans 3:28) and that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ? Even we, says he, have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. (Galatians 2:16)

And again;

To him that worketh not, but believeth, on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. (Romans 4:5) But then it should be known, that faith is not opposed to the doing of good works, in obedience to the law of God, from right principles, and with right views; but to trusting to, and depending upon them, and glorying in them, as the matter of justification before God, and acceptance with him; for that there is an entire agreement and consistency between faith in Christ, and works done in obedience to the law upon gospel principles, will clearly appear from the following hints. Let be observed then, That that faith, only is right, which looks to and lays hold upon Christ's righteousness for justification, that is attended with good works, as fruits of righteousness; for as the apostle James says, What doth it profit, my brethren. though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? Faith if it hath not works, is dead being alone: (James 2:14, 17) and such a faith can never be true and genuine, nor of any use and advantage; though good works do not, and cannot justify a man's person before God; yet they justify a man's faith or evidence the truth of it before men; they are fruits of faith, and so testimonies of the reality of it. A man may say, adds the same apostle, thou hast faith and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee

my faith by my works (James 2:18) Yea, he further observes, that by works faith is made perfect; and that, as the body without the spirit is dead; so faith without works is dead also. Not that the essence, perfection, and life of faith lie in, or flow from works; but because, as one rightly judges, works are second acts, necessarily flowing from the life of faith; and faith is said to be perfected by them, not with an essential perfection, as the effect is perfected by the cause; but with a complementary one, as the cause is made perfect, or rendered actually complete in the production of the effect. Faith is not an idle, inactive, inoperative grace but a very industrious, active, and working one; it works by love to God and Christ, to fellow-Christians and fellow-creatures; and love, by which faith works, takes a large compass of operation; it is very extensive, both as to its objects and its acts. Hence that which is perfect, as it is in Christ, is the fulfilling of the law; and though love is imperfect in the saints, yet so far as it acts aright, it acts in agreement with the law; and therefore the law can never be made void by that faith which operates by it. Owe no man any thing, saith the apostle, but to love one another; for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery; Thou shalt not kill; Thou shalt not steal; Thou shalt not bear false Witness; Thou shalt not Covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying; namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 8:8-10)

Again; As faith without works is dead; so, on the other hand, works without faith, are dead works also; yea, Whatsoever is not of faith is sin: (Romans 14:23) and without faith it is impossible to please God, (Hebrews 11:6) or to perform any duty acceptable unto him. Hence the law, and obedience to it, can never be made void by this grace, and the exercise of it, or its concern in justification: since the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned? (1 Timothy 1:5) Besides,

believers, or such as have true faith in Christ and his righteousness, are the only persons that are capable of yielding spiritual obedience to the law, or of performing good works in a spiritual manner. Men may as soon expect to gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles, as to imagine that good works, such as are in all their circumstances so, can be performed by any evil man. Men must become the workmanship of God, and be created in Christ Jesus, in order to perform good works; which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them; (Ephesians 2:10) they must be made new creatures, and put on the new man; which after God is created in, unto righteousness and true holiness; (Ephesians 4:24) and such as are born again, who have the Spirit of Christ within, them, the grace of Christ bestowed on them, and particularly, have the grace of faith, and that in exercise, are best qualified for doing works of real righteousness, and acts of true holiness: of all men in the world, such as have believed in Christ, as the Lord their righteousness and strength, ought to be careful to maintain good works for necessary uses; and these, indeed, are zealous of them, and are heartily desirous of performing more than they do, to testify their love to Christ, and to adorn his doctrine: which doctrine of grace teaches them, that denying ungodliness and worldly lust, they should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. (Titus 3:8 and 2:11, 12)

Add to these things, that that faith which is concerned in a sinner's justification, looks to Christ as the end, the fulfilling end of the law for righteousness; it lays hold upon a righteousness which is every way commensurate to the Law of God; which answers all its demands, and gives it all it requires; a righteousness with which God is well pleased, justice is satisfied, and by which the law is magnified and made honourable; (Isaiah 42:21) a righteousness that is complete and perfect, pure and spotless; by which all the seed of Israel shall be justified, and in which they shall glory: wherefore that faith which spies this in Christ, looks to him for it, and says, Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength; (Isaiah 45:24,

25) can never be contrary to the law of God, or do any thing by which that is made void and useless.

Nor is the law made void by the doctrine of faith, particularly by the doctrine of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ. Indeed, according to this doctrine, the law does not justify, nor can any man be justified by the deeds of it; the law neither has, nor can it have, any such use, since the fall of man; this makes the righteousness of another necessary, and justification to proceed on another foot;

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us. (Romans 8:34) Man, through sin is dead; and he must be made alive before he is capable of working righteousness, or of yielding obedience to the law: there must be life before there can be righteousness.

Now if there had been a law which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law: (Galatians 3:21) but inasmuch as there never was any such law which could give life to a dead sinner, there can be no justification by it. The argument used by the apostle, is sufficient to give satisfaction to any one that has any regard to Christ or true Christianity; if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain;

(Galatians 2:21) but though this use of the law is set aside by the doctrine of faith, yet all its real and proper uses continue untouched by it, and remain in full force; we know that the law is good if a man use it lawfully. (1 Timothy 1:8)

There is a lawful and there is an unlawful use of the law; the unlawful use of the law is to seek for life, righteousness and salvation by it; the lawful uses of it, and which are not made void by the doctrine of faith, are such as these:

One use of the law is, to inform us of the mind and will of God; it is a transcript of his holy nature and unchangeable will; and therefore is itself holy just and good,(Romans 7:12) as it must needs be, since it comes from him; it teaches us what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God; it points out to us our duty both to God and man; what should be done or not done by us; it directs us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and strength; and to love our neighbour as ourselves; which, in a few words, contain the sum and substance of it.

Another use of the law is, to convince of sin: for by the law is the knowledge of sin; (Romans 3:20) 15 of sin original and actual, of the sin of our hearts and nature, as well as of the sin of our lips, lives and actions: I had not known sin, says the apostle but by the law: for I had not known lust, that is, known it to, be a sin, and sinful, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. (Romans 7:7) Not that the law can or does of itself, really and thoroughly, spiritually and savingly, convince of sin; for this is the work of the Spirit of God: but then the Spirit of God makes use of the law to work in men thorough convictions of their sinful, lost, and miserable condition by nature. Again; Another use of the law, not made void by the doctrine of faith, is, to be as a glass to believers themselves; to behold therein by the light of the divine Spirit, the deformity of their souls by sin, and the imperfection of their obedience; whereby they grow out of love with themselves, and quit all dependence on their own righteousness for justification. So the apostle Paul, comparing himself, his heart and services, with the pure and holy law of God, thus expresses himself;

We know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. (Romans 7:14)

In this view of things the psalmist David was able to make such an observation as this; I have seen an end of all perfection: thy commandment is exceeding broad; (Psalm 119:96) that is “ I see that

the law of God is so large and broad, and my obedience to it so short of it, and so imperfect, that I despair of ever attaining perfection by the deeds of it.” It was, no doubt by the light of the Spirit, and as beholding herself in the glass of the law, that the church saw, and so said, that her righteousness was as filthy rags, and herself as an unclean thing. (Isaiah 64:6) Hence, there is a farther use of the law to believers, and that is, to make the righteousness of Christ more dear and valuable to them for when they see how imperfect their own righteousness is, and how far short of the demands of the righteous law of God their obedience comes; and when they behold what an everlasting righteousness Christ has brought in; how perfect it is in itself, and how agreeable to the law; insomuch that it is not only fulfilled by it, but magnified and made honourable; they are at once delighted with it, fix upon it, and desire to be found in Christ not having their own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ; the righteousness which is of God by faith. (Philippians 3:9) Once more; Another use and office of the law is, that. it is a rule of life, that is, of action, walk and conversation to the saints; who are not without law to God, but under the law to Christ: (1 Corinthians 9:21) and as it in the hands of Christ, and held forth by him, as King of saints, and lawgiver in his church, it is to be observed and attended to by them; and as persons born again, being under the influences of the blessed Spirit, and having his gracious assistance, they delight in the law of God, after the inward man; and though with the flesh, they sometimes, to their great regret and sorrow, serve the law of sin; yet, at other times they are enabled cheerfully, and with the mind, to serve the law of God. (Romans 7:22, 25) To say no more; though God’s justified ones, are as such, delivered from the wrath and condemnation of the law; Christ having redeemed them from thence by being made a curse for them; (Galatians 3:13) and having the sentence of condemnation executed upon him, which their sin deserved, so that there is now no condemnation to them that are in him; (Romans 8:1) they are passed from death to life, and shall never enter into condemnation: yet the

law remains a cursing and damning law to others; it lies against Christless sinners; it pronounces them guilty, and accurses them; it says to them that are of the works of it, and are under it, Cursed is every one that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them; (Galatians 3:10) yea, it is the killing letter, the ministration of condemnation and death unto them. Thus the law, as to these uses of it, both to saints and sinners, is not made void by the doctrine of faith.

Perhaps it will be asked, Is not the law, in some sense, destroyed and abolished? Does not the apostle say to believers, Ye are not under the law, but under grace? (Romans 6:14)

Yea, he affirms that they are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; and that they are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein they were held. (Romans 7:4, 6)

And elsewhere, (2 Corinthians 3:11) he argues from the former glory of the law, to the more excelling glory of the gospel, thus; If that which is done away, that is, the law, was glorious, much more that which remaineth, that is, the everlasting gospel, is glorious. To which I answer, That the law, as a covenant of works, is abolished, and done away; in this sense, it is made void to believers. Adam was a covenant head and representative of all his posterity, in which he was a figure of him that was to come; the law was given to him and to all mankind in him, promising life on condition of obedience, and threatening with death in case of transgression. Adam soon broke this covenant, whereby sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men! for in him all have sinned, (Romans 5:12, 14) God's elect themselves not excepted. These were considered in Adam, their natural and federal head; they sinned in him, and fell with him; the sentence of death passed on them as on others; the reason why it was not, and never will be executed upon them is, because Christ, in the everlasting covenant, became their surety and substitute: engaged to bear the punishment of their sins,

and make satisfaction to the law and justice of God for them; which he has done by his sufferings and death; and so has delivered them from the law, as a covenant of works; and from all that misery, destruction and death, it entailed upon them wherefore they are not under the law, as a covenant of works, but under grace, the covenant of grace.

Again: The law is abolished and done away, as to the form of administration of it by Moses. The whole frame of the Mosaic economy is broke to pieces; which was signified by the two tables of stone being cast out of his hands and broken, when he came down from the mount; which were afterwards renewed, and put into the ark, a type of Christ; in whose hands, and not in the hands of Moses, is the law to be considered. The Jews said to the poor blind man, that was cured by Christ, Thou art his, that is, Christ's disciple; but we are Moses's disciples. (John 9:28) They valued themselves upon the latter; we Christians upon the former.

Moses, indeed, was a faithful servant; but he was only a servant: Christ is a Son over his own house; and it is he that we are to hearken to. When Moses and Elias were with Christ on the mount, at the time of his transfiguration, a voice was heard, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him; (Matthew 17:5) not Moses and Elias, but hear the well-beloved Son. Moreover, the law is destroyed as a yoke of bondage. As it was a covenant of works, and as administered under the former dispensation, it tended to bondage, and induced a servile spirit on those that were under it, It was not. only a rigid schoolmaster, but a severe taskmaster; not only setting hard lessons, but requiring strict and perfect obedience, without giving any strength to perform, or directing where it is to be had; but now, in Christ's hands, it is a perfect law of liberty; (James 1:25) and such as are called by grace, are made a willing people in the day of Christ's power upon them; not only to be saved alone by him, but to yield a cheerful obedience to the law, as given forth by him. In this view of it, its commandments are not grievous; this yoke

is easy, and this burden is light; the saints serve it with pleasure, not in the oldness of the letter, but in newness of spirit! (Romans 7:6)

Likewise, As has been already observed, the people of God are freed from the malediction of it, and condemnation by it, and so from the terror of it; it is a terrifying law, as it is a cursing and damning one; wherefore, to such, who desire to be under it, it may be said, what the apostle did, Do ye not hear the law? (Galatians 4:21) it speaks wrath and vengeance, cursing and bitterness: it is a voice of words, of terrible Words; which they that heard at mount Sinai in treated that the word should not be spoken to them any more; for they could not endure that which was commanded. But now the case is different with us under the gospel-dispensation; the scene is altered; the face of things is changed; we hear a different voice; love, grace and mercy, instead of wrath and vengeance: blessing and salvation, in the room of cursing and condemnation: we are not come unto the mount that might he touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest; but we are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living 19 God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly, and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven; and to God the judge of all; and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. (Hebrews 12:18-20, 22-24) Once more; The law is abrogated and made void, with respect to justification. We are not to seek for, and expect life and righteousness by obedience to it; and should we, our seeking would be in vain, and our expectation would be disappointed.

Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? because they sought it not by faith but as it were by the works of the law. (Romans 9:31, 32)

The same success attends all those who pursue the same scheme; by which they discover their ignorance, vanity and pride; their ignorance of the strictness of the justice of God; their vain opinion and conceit of their own righteousness; and their haughty and contemptuous rejection of the righteousness of Christ; all which is expressed in these few words;

For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish a righteousness of their own, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. (Romans 10:3) This is to act contrary to God's declared way and method of justifying sinners. There can be no justification by the deeds of the law; this use of the law is entirely abolished; we are not to obey it with any such view, or for such a purpose; no, we are to yield obedience to it, as in the hands of Christ from a principle of love to him; and to express our gratitude for the numerous mercies we receive from him, and through him; and to testify our professed subjection, and our sense of obligation to him. But now, though the law is made void as a covenant of works, it still continues a rule of action, walk and conversation; though it is done away as to the form of the administration of it by Moses, the matter, the sum and substance of it remains firm, unalterable, and unchangeable in the hands of Christ; though it is destroyed as a yoke of bondage, it is in being as a perfect law of liberty; and though believers are delivered from the curse and condemnation of it, they are not exempted from obedience to it; and though they are not to seek for justification by it, they are under the greatest obligations, by the strongest ties of love, to have a regard to all its commands. So much for the negative part of the proposition. I proceed, Secondly, To consider the affirmative, and to shew that the law is established by the grace and doctrine of faith.

The perpetuity of the law is maintained hereby. The race of faith always views the law in the hands of Christ, looks to him as the fulfilling end of it, and is attended with works done in obedience

to it. According to the doctrine of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ, all the precepts of the law are fulfilled, its penalty endured, and itself continued as a rule of righteousness. The Law, upon the gospel-scheme, is as unchangeable, and more so than the laws of the Medes and Persians; not one jot or tittle of it has passed away, nor shall ever pass away; for all is fulfilled, and will be preserved.

The spirituality of the law is asserted and secured upon the foot of faith, and the doctrine of it. The Pharisees of old, as much as in them lay, made void the law, as to the spirituality of it, at the same time they pretended to be advocates for it; by insinuating as though the law only regarded the external actions of life, and was not concerned about the secret motions, inward thoughts and lusts of the heart: whereas, such as have believed in Christ, and understand his gospel, have other notions of the law; and know that it is spiritual. (Romans 7:14) A true believer, in the exercise of the grace of faith, beholds the inward corruption of his heart and nature; and mourns over it, as contrary to the pure and holy law of God; and at the same time, according to the doctrine of faith, with pleasure views, that he is justified by the blood of Christ, even by that blood which cleanseth from all sin, (Romans 5:9; 1 John 1:7) of heart, lip, and life. The perfect righteousness of the law is established by faith, and the doctrine of it. Whatever the law requires, according to this doctrine is given it. Does it require pure and spotless holiness of nature? There is in Christ an entire conformity to it in this respect; who is holy, harmless, and undefiled; and as such, is an high priest that becomes us, is suitable to us, as being our sanctification and our righteousness. Does the law require sinless and perfect obedience to all its commands? Christ has always done the things that pleased his Father, and done all things that are pleasing to him; he has perfectly obeyed the whole preceptive part of the law. Does the law require of, and threaten transgressors with the penalty of death? Christ being made sin, was made a curse for his people, and became obedient to

death, even the death of the cross. So that the law, in all respects, is magnified, and made honourable by him, according to the doctrine of faith,. We bring to the law in Christ our head, or rather he in our room and stead, a righteousness which answers all the demands of it, and casts a lustre and glory upon it and indeed, all the obedience of angels and men put together, does not, and cannot give the law such glory and honour as the obedience and righteousness of Christ does. Whence it is clear, that the law is so far from being made void, that it is thoroughly established by it.

Obedience to the law by believers, is enforced upon them by the best of motives, and yielded to it by them, under the best of influences; it is enforced on gospel motives and principles. Read over the epistles of the apostle Paul, particularly those to the Ephesians and Colossians, and you will easily see how the saints are exhorted to all the duties of life, incumbent on them in their families, the churches, and the world; and are encouraged to a performance of them upon the principles of grace, and by the doctrines of it; and according to the covenant of grace, they have the best assistance promised, provided and afforded to them. I will put my law in their inward parts, says the Lord, (Jeremiah 31:33) and I will write it in their hearts. And again; I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

Once more; By the doctrine of faith we establish the law, or make it stand; because we place it in the best of hands, and upon the surest foundation. The law was put into the hands of Adam; but it did not long continue there; it was quickly transgressed and broken. The two tables of stone, with the law written on them, were put into Moses's hands; but he, as he came down from the mount, cast them out of his hands, and broke them to pieces beneath it: but now the law, according to the doctrine of faith, is put into the hands of Christ; and there it stands, and will stand firm and sure to all generations; yea, it will stand unchangeable and unalterable to all eternity. We

say, The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, and he will save us. (Isaiah 38:22)

In this view of the law, how amiable and lovely must it look in the eyes of saints; they cannot but delight in it, as satisfied by Christ, and take pleasure in obeying it, as it is in his hands; the language of their souls is that of David's O how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day. (Psalm 119:97)

And as there is a pleasure attends an observance of it, there is peace in it; though it doth not arise from it, nor is founded on it:

Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them. (Psalm 119:165)

Such as are believers in Christ, ought not only to be careful to maintain, but even to excel, to go before others in good works. Let us therefore, by divine assistance, shew by our lives and conversations, the truth of this doctrine, that "the law is not made void, but established by the gospel." Let us, as it is the will of God we should, with well-doing pat to silence the ignorance of foolish men; and shame them who falsely accuse our good conversation in Christ. Let us make it appear, throughout the whole of our conduct, under the gracious influences of the Spirit of God, that we have a proper regard to the unchangeable law of God, as to the everlasting gospel of Christ Jesus.

----- End of sermon

David Clarke's Response

Now to the sermon. It is excellent in terms of Justification but the problem with Dr Gill is that he seeks to align himself with the confessions of faith that are expressed by the Reformed Presbyterian of his time. Most Reformed Theologians have got it wrong in respect to this matter.

The Ten Commandments

The 10 Commandments are not the eternal, perpetual, moral, rule of life for all mankind. The Law (1st Covenant of works) was not given to Adam at a law of works; had it been the case he would have been bound by the law of the Sabbath day (1st day of the week) to keep it holy. Gill treats this subject under the day of worship in his Body of Practical Divinity In which he which shews he has thought about it.

We do not establish the Law as a means of justification before God but as a true accurate rule for those to who it was give. until the time of reformation.

That is the New Covenant where by both believing Jew and Gentile are brought into union with Christ and are under Christ's Rule and Law. They are delivered from the Law of bondage that only promised natural blessings to those who were under it. The everlasting gospel speaks and brings eternal blessings of grace to which the spiritual aspects of the law of Moses only pointed too.

Yes the Law and the Prophets spoke of Christ and all the spiritual blessings that were in Him and the Law and then Prophets all point to Christ. The law therefore is not void but useful to teach us the things of God and Christ. The need for justification by faith and not by works etc.

-- end.

Fulfilling End of The Law

Some talk in terms of fulfilling the law and bring it to a fulfilling end.

I say , by The Law is meant the whole law of Moses not just the 10 commandments.

The Sabbath was one of the 10 commands but if you need to

divide The Law into two branches, that the scripture does not do so , then the Sabbath is ceremonial not moral.

The Moral Law

is not The 10 Commandments

To use the term moral law one need to define it. I agree the Law of Moses does reflect the moral aspects of what God requires of mankind as a whole but we need the gospel to clearly and define the moral law. It is the Law of Christ and not the Law of Moses that is our rule of life and is a moral law.

For example

Deuteronomy 22, “You shall not see your brother’s ox or his sheep going astray and ignore them. You shall take them back to your brother. This is moral and gospel endorses this.

The Severity Of The Law

The first covenant (10 commandments and Levitical rule) were hard for all men.

As far as the believer was concerned the Sabbath was binding but relatively easy to keep as the whole nation kept it. Not so today. The Jew still seek to keep it. A believer today would find it extremely hard to keep the Sabbath (last day of the week). Remember the Law cannot change or be altered. A Jew needs to die with Christ to be free from the bondage and damning power of law of Moses.

The Righteousness of Christ

Jesus did not become righteous by his obedience to the Law. He always was righteous. Our righteousness is above the Law of Moses. It is the rightness of Christ. A righteousness that he had and was declared to be the righteous one by God the Father on many occasions.

Here Gill Starts To Go Wrong

To quote:

One use of the law is, to inform us of the mind and will of God; it is a transcript of his holy nature and unchangeable will; and therefore is itself holy just and good,(Romans 7:12) as it must needs be, since it comes from him; it teaches us what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God; it points out to us our duty both to God and man; what should be done or not done by us; it directs us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and strength; and to love our neighbour as ourselves; which, in a few words, contain the sum and substance of it.

The Sabbath Day

Gill is wrong and the Reformed Presbyterians. The Sabbath is not binding upon all men only those under the Law. That is the Jew.

Conviction of sin was experience by Abraham before the Law of the 10 commandment were given were given.

Had the Law been the reflection of the moral requirement of God for man to fulfil Abraham would have been convicted of Sabbath breaking along with the Jews in bondage in Egypt had they kept the Sabbath.

The 10 commandments do not reflect the perfect moral character of God but rather His will, demands and expectations of those who entered into covenant with Him to keep them.

Sabbath a Reflection

To a believer the Sabbath reflects the rest that is to be found in Christ and all men are not commanded to rest in Him in this way. As only the elect who are chosen and justified in him.

Not all Men Are Chosen In Christ

Not all men were elected in him. Only those who have the grace of faith are commanded to rest in Him.

A man who is under condemnation is not able to rest in Christ. He needs to be justified in order for the sentence of justification to terminate in his conscience to give him rest.

The Ten Commands given to Regenerate and Unregenerate Men

The 10 commands were given to regenerate and unregenerate men alike. Given it a chosen people, to those who were outwardly, by the command of God to be circumcised in the flesh. All men are not commanded to be circumcised in this way. Only those who wished to be part of Israel such as slaves, and they were never counted as the children of God.

Abraham Justified before Circumcision

Abraham was not circumcised when he was justified by faith.

Was Adam Under A Covenant Of Works ?

I ask the question. Was Adam under a covenant of work as mapped out in the 10 commands, as Gill and most Puritans say ?

I say no.

But he was the head and representative of all mankind all mankind did fall in Adam all men derive their sinful nature from this relationship to Adam.

The Problem With Dr Gill

Gill is seeking to keep as close as he can to the Reformed view of predestination and not to upset the Presbyterians. There views are expressed in the great confessions.

The Best Confession

The best confession, in my view, that breaks away from the Reformed Presbyterian view is the **1646 2nd London Baptist Confession**, which has been lost sight of, or never seen by many of our day.

The law of Moses (10 Commandments) was never in the hands of Adam.

Gill Is Wrong Here Again

Here view this link. This confession take you away for the Law as a rule of life.

The Law and Experience

The Law will bring the experience of bondage to those who believe and put themselves under it.

See the article I include below

1 The Christian Relationship To Mosaic Law

By Philip Mauro

2 The Gentile Believer and The Law.

The Gospel The Perfect Rule

I say The Law of the Gospel is the Perfect law of liberty that James speaks of.

Condemnation under the Law

The Jews are still under the damming power and condemnation of the Law, as a people and nation even today still today. They are not ruled by Christ or under his rule. They rejected his rule. They remain this way until called by grace to believe and trust him.

The Law to the Jew could, and will to the elect, will bring them to a felt sense of their need to be justified by faith, and not their

deeds according to it.

Law In The Hands Of Christ

The law is in the hands of Christ and was demonstrated to be so when He brought upon the Jews the destruction of their nation, in 70 AD. It was **The Day Of Vengeance of our God**.

Covenantal Eschatology

This, so very few people are aware of. The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD was foretold by Jesus and he warned the people before he died. This destruction was the result of the covenant law suit against the Jews according to the terms of the covenant law of Moses. Deuteronomy 29 Also Moses foretold the destruction of the people and what would happen to them in the latter day in his song. Deuteronomy 32.

The book of Revelation is a prophesy of the destruct of Jerusalem foretold by Jesus in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke.

John's gospel is the only one that does not contain Jesus's prediction as he reserved his take on the subject to the Revelation of Jesus Christ that God gave to him to show to his servants these things that were shortly to come to pass. The book of Revelation is a running commentary of all that took place at the destruction of Jerusalem bringing to an end the rule of the 1st Covenant of the Law of Moses, which by definition excluded gentles from the covenants of promise.

Christ Kept The Law

As far as Jesus Christ is concerned he did keep the law completely and so the blessings that were awarded due to his keeping it are all his.

The Perpetuity of The Law

The perpetuity of the Law- The Law of Moses is not perpetual except in its ability to condemn- however its spirituality continues as light to the regenerate man.

Most Calvinists Are Wrong

This following group of Calvinists are still tied to the Law of Moses, and such reformed confessions teaching their views :

1 Westminster Confession of Faith 1646

2 The Savoy Declaration 1658

3 The Baptists Confession 1689

The Exception: The First London Baptist Confession 1646, 2nd Edition

I have observed that these Calvinistic Confessions leave the believer at the foot of Mount Sinai, except the First London Baptist Confession of 1646, 2nd Edition. It is the first one, at that period, to express the clear distinction of a believers relationship to Christ and not Moses.

Gospel Standard Baptists Were On The Right Track

This can be seen by reading the 1646 confession, that it leaves Moses behind, and points the believer towards Mount Zion and is a better confession. This confession was behind the first Particular baptists in Britain and the likes of Gadsby and they were classified as Antinomians by ignorant men, however they did not go far enough. John Gosden (Pastor Galead Brighton) points out the way but very few saw what he was pointing too. I include a sermon that he delivered at the end of this article.

“The Parousia” , by James Stuart Russell, is another book that has proved a great help to many and I believe that it will be a great help to all serious minded bible students and theologians.

<http://www.biertonparticularbaptists.co.uk/resources/Parousia.html>

The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD and the doing away of that system of religion governing the Old Covenant has been overlooked by many, and this fresh look will give light to the spiritual eye, to behold wonderful things in thy LAW.

Psalm 119:18 Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in thy Law.

Remember the Law is a shadow but the body is Christ

This book, “The Parousia, will help the believer come to a correct understanding of the New and Old Covenants and the believers relationship to Christ.

Further Reading

The Law and Gospel By F.L. Gosden

Preached at Gilead Chapel, Brighton, (This is just an extract from the opening part to his sermon)

One Lord’s Day evening 3 April 1946

“Great peace have they which love thy law: nothing shall offend them.” (Psalm 119:165)

The law in the text is the gospel. The Law of Moses is a good law, holy and just; but it is not a law that sinners love. They reverence it, but it is an authority which can only curse them because they continue not in all things commanded, and shuts them up in prison; it can make nothing perfect; it leaves a sinner where it finds him; it brings him under its condemning power.

But the law of the text is the law of the gospel. The apostle James

speaks of it as ‘the perfect law of liberty.’ It is perfect because it makes the comers thereunto perfect and because the Lord Jesus, Who is the sum and substance of it, is perfect-made perfect through suffering. The Law of Moses was a perfect law of bondage- the perfection of the Mosaic Law is the perfection of the justice of God exercised in the condemnation of sinners. The law of the gospel is the perfection of liberty.

‘Great peace have they which love thy law.’ There is a blessedness in this description of the gospel as being ‘a law’, for where there, is a law there is authority; and Oh, the blessedness of the authority of the gospel as contrasted with the terribleness of the authority of the law. The gospel is greater than the law-not by its abrogation or destruction, but in its fulfilment; its authority abounds over the law, for ‘where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.’ The apostle speaks of it in this way: ‘For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free, from the law of sin and death.’ He then goes on to speak of what the law, could not do. So that we see there are three laws, three authorities, three powers, three dominions spoken of. First, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is the law of the gospel making one free, from the law of sin and death; secondly, the dominion of sin in our members. Then there is thirdly, the Law of Moses that is the Ten Commandments; and what this law could not do, ‘in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.’ That is the authority, the power of the gospel. The apostle -said, ‘I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ’: it is the power or the authority of God in a particular direction and to a blessed end; it is the power of God unto salvation in them that believe.

Therein is the righteousness of God revealed, the righteousness of faith?

The Law and Gospel, by J.C. Philpot

I shall take the occasion to offer my thoughts on these three distinct points:

1 Why the law is not the believer's rule of life.

2 What is the rule?

3 Disprove the objection cast upon us that our views lead to doctrinal or practical antinomianism.

By a believer, I understand one who by faith in Christ is delivered from the curse and bondage of the law, and who knows something experimentally of the life, light, liberty and love of the glorious gospel of the grace of God. By the law I understand chiefly, though not exclusively, the Law of Moses. And by the rule of life I understand and outward and inward guide, by following which a believer directs his walk and conversation before God, the Church and the world.

It is very necessary to bear strictly in mind that we are speaking wholly and solely of a believer. What has the law to do with a believer in Christ Jesus? Is he required by the revealed will of God to take the law as a guiding rule in his life? I answer, No; and for several reasons.

1 God does not leave us at liberty to take at will one part of the law and leave the other. It must be taken as a whole or left as a whole, for God has so revealed it. I cannot find in any part of God's Word any mitigation of its terms, or any halving of it, so that, according to the views of many divines who have written on the subject, we may be dead to it as a covenant, yet alive to it as a rule. The essential and distinguishing characteristic of the law is that it is a covenant of works, requiring full and perfect obedience, attaching a tremendous curse to the least infringement of its commands. If then I, as a believer, take the law as my rule of life, I take it with its curse; I put myself under its yoke, for in receiving it as my guide,

(and if I do not this it is not my rule,) I take it with all its conditions and subject to all its penalties.... The indispensable connection between a covenant and its rules is clearly shown in Gal. 5:1-6, where the apostle testifies to “every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to the whole law”. It is idle to talk of taking the law for a rule of life, and not for a covenant; for the two things are essentially inseparable; and as he who keeps the whole law and yet offends in one point, is guilty of all (James 2:10), so he who takes but one precept of the law for his rule, (as the Galatians took that of circumcision,) by taking that one, virtually adopts the whole, and by adopting the whole puts himself under the curse which attaches to their infringement.

2 People speak very fluently about the law being a rule of life that think little of the resulting consequences; for amongst them is this, that its written precepts and not its mere spirit, must be the rule. Now, these precepts belong to it only as a covenant, for they were never disjoined by the Authority that gave them, and what God hath joined together let no man put asunder. To show this connection between the precepts and the covenant is the chief drift of the Epistle to the Galatians, who were looking to the law and not the gospel, and having begun in the Spirit, were attempting to be made perfect by the flesh. Read with enlightened eyes, this blessed Epistle would at once decide in favour of the gospel as our guiding rule of Christian conduct and conversation. Observe how Paul chides those who would so act: he calls them “foolish Galatians”, and asks who hath bewitched them that they should not obey the truth (that is, the gospel),”before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth, crucified among them.” He appeals to their own experience and asks them: “receive ye the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?” He draws a line of distinction here between those works which are done in obedience to the law as a guiding rule, and that power of God felt in the heart which attends a preached gospel when heard in faith, and asks them under which of

the two they had received the teaching and testimony of the blessed Spirit. But observe, further, now he bids them “walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16). Now to “walk” is to live and act, and the rule which he here gives for this living and acting is not the law but the Spirit, and he tells them of the blessedness of this divine leading and guiding: “If ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law”: that is, neither as a covenant nor as a rule- that they were free from its curse as a condemning covenant, and from its commands as a galling yoke which neither they nor their fathers could bear (Acts 15:10). But to show them that deliverance from the law did not set them free from a higher and more perfect rule of obedience, he bids them “fulfil the law of Christ”, which is love, a fruit of the Spirit and not produced by the law which worketh wrath and genders to bondage (Rom. 4:15; Gal. 4:24).

3 If we are willing to abide by the inspired Word of Truth we need to go no further than this very Epistle to decide the whole question. For in it we have laid down the rule according to which believers should walk, which is a “new creature” (or a new creation): “For in Christ neither circumcision avails anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be upon them, and on the Israel of God” (Gal. 6:15-16). Is the law or the Spirit’s work upon the heart held out here as the rule of a believers walk? The law is strictly a covenant of works; it knows nothing of mercy, reveals nothing of grace, and does not communicate the blessed Spirit. Why, then, if I am a believer in Christ and have received his grace and truth into my heart, am I to adopt for the rule of life that which does not testify of Jesus either in the Word or in my conscience? If I am to walk as a believer, it must be by a life of faith in the Son of God (Gal 2:20). Is the law my rule here? If it be, where are those rules to be found? “The law is not of faith”. How, then, can it lay down rules for the life of faith? If I wish to walk as becomes a believer with the Church, what help will the law give me there? To walk as such must be by the law of love

as revealed in Christ and made known in my heart by the power of God. If I am to walk in the ordinances of God's house, are these to be found revealed in the law?

We give the law its due honour. It had a glory, as the Apostle argues (2 Cor 3) as the ministration of death and condemnation, but this glory is done away, and why are we to look to it now as our guiding rule? The ministration of the Spirit, of life, and of righteousness "doth much more exceed in glory", and why are we to be condemned if we prefer the Spirit to the letter, life to death, and righteousness to condemnation? A rule must influence as well as guide, or else it be a dead rule. If you chose to be guided by the killing letter which can only minister condemnation and death, and we chose for our rule that which ministers the Spirit, righteousness, and life, which has the better rule? It is much to be feared that those who thus walk and talk have still the veil over their heart, and know nothing of what the Apostle means when he says: "Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. But we all with open face beholding, as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor 3:17-18).

But not only have we these deductions to influence the mind in rejecting the law as a rule for a believers walk, but also we have the express testimony of God as a warrant for so doing. We read, for instance, "I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God" (Rom. 7:4). As a believer in Christ, the law is dead to me, and I am to it. The Apostle has clearly and beautifully opened up this subject. He assumes that a believer in Christ is like a woman is remarried after the death of her first husband; and he declares that "she is bound by the law of her husband as long as he lives, but if the husband be dead she is loosed from the law of her husband (verse 2). Of course the first husband is the law, and the second husband is Christ. Now adopting the figure of Paul's, may we not justly ask: Which is to be the rule of the wife's conduct when re-married, the

regulations of the first or the second husband?

2. What, then, is the believer's rule of life. Is he without rule? A lawless wretch because he abandons the Law of Moses for his rule has no guide to direct his steps? God forbid! For I subscribe heart and soul to the words of the Apostle: Being not without law to God, but under law to Christ "(1 Cor 9:21) (footnote- not under THE law, as our version; there being no article expressed or implied in the original). The believer then has a guiding rule, which we may briefly call -the gospel. This rule we may divide into 2 branches. The gospel as written by the divine finger upon the heart, and the gospel as written by the blessed Spirit in the Word of truth. These do not form two distinct rules, but the one is the counterpart of the other; and they are mutually helpful to and corroborative of each other. One of the promises of the New Covenant (Jer. 31:21-34; Heb. 8:8-12 compared) was: "I will write My law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts." This writing of the law of God in their heart, I need not tell you, is that which distinguishes it from the law of Moses which was written on tables of stone: and becomes an internal rule whereas the law of Moses was but an external rule. This internal rule seems to be pointed out in Romans 8:2 where we find these words: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death." By "the law of the Spirit of life", I understand that guiding rule (for a rule in Scripture is frequently called a law; the word law in Hebrew signifying literally "instruction") which the Spirit of God, as communicating life, is in a believers heart. It is, therefore, the liberating, sanctifying, guiding influence of the Spirit of God, in his soul which, as a law or a rule, delivers him from "the law of sin and death"; by which I understand not so much the law of Moses, as the power and prevalence of his corrupt nature.

If this then be a correct exposition of the text, we have a guiding internal rule distinct from the law of Moses, and a living rule in the heart, which that never was nor could be; for it did not communicate

the Spirit (Gal. 3:2-5) But this internal rule as being “the law of the Spirit of life”, has power to lead all the children of God; for in the same chapter (verse 14) the Apostle declares that “as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” This leading which is peculiar to the children of God and is an evidence of their sonship, delivers them from the law; for if we are led by Spirit we are not under the law” (Gal 5:8) either as a covenant or as a rule, for we have a better covenant and a better rule (Heb. 8:6). What is the main use of a rule but to lead? But who can lead like a living Guide? How can a dead law lead a living soul? The very proof that we are the children of God is that we are led by the Spirit; and this inward leading becomes our guiding rule. And is it not a disparaging of the guidance of the blessed Spirit to set up in opposition to His guiding rule a dead law and to call those Antinomians who prefer a living guide to a dead letter? This living guide is that holy, and blessed Spirit who “guides into all truth” (Jn. 16:13).

Here is the main blessedness of the work and grace upon the heart, that the leading and guiding of the blessed Spirit form a living rule every step of the way; for He not only quickens the soul into spiritual life, but maintains the life which He gave, and performs (or finishes- margin) it until the day of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6). This life is eternal, as the blessed Lord at the well of Samaria declared, that the water that he should give the believer should be in a well of water springing up into everlasting life (Jn. 4:14) It is then this springing well in a believer’s soul which is the guiding rule, for, as producing and maintaining the fear of God, it is “a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death” (Pro.14: 27).

But lest this guiding internal rule be abused, which it might be by enthusiasm, and that they might not be left to substitute delusive fancies for the teaching of the Holy Spirit, the God of all grace has given to His people an external rule in precepts of the gospel as declared by the mouth of the Lord and His apostles, but more particularly as gathered up in the epistles as a standing code of

instruction for the living family of God. Nor do these at all clash with the rule of which I have just spoken, but on the contrary harmonize entirely and thoroughly with it; for, in fact, it is one and the same rule; the only difference between them being that the blessed Spirit had revealed the one in the written Word, and by the application of that Word to the soul makes the other to be a living rule of heart.

Now there is not a single part or particle of our walk and conduct before God or man which is not revealed and unculcated in the precepts of the gospel; for, though we have not minute directions, we have what far excels all such unnecessary minutiae- most blessed principles enforced by every gracious and holy motive, and forming, when rightly seen and believed, a most perfect code of inward and outward conformity to the revealed will of God, and of all holy walk and conduct in our families in the church and in the world.

I would say that a believer has a rule to walk but which is sufficient to guide him in every step of the way; for if he has the eternal quickening's, teachings and leadings of the Spirit to make his conscience tender in the fear of God, and has a law of love written upon the heart by the finger of God; and besides this has the precepts of the gospel as a full and complete code of Christian obedience, what more can he want to make him perfect in every good word and work (Heb. 13:21). Can the law do any of these things for him? Can it give him life, in the first instance, when it is a killing letter? Can it maintain life, if it is not in its power to bestow it?

But it may be asked: Do you then set aside the two great commandments of the law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God" etc. and "thy neighbour as thyself"? No, On the contrary, the gospel as an external and internal rule fulfils them both, for "love is the fulfilling of the law." (Rom. 13:10). So this blessed rule of the gospel not only does not set aside the law as regards its fulfilment, but so to speak absorbs into itself and glorifies and harmonizes its two great

commandments, by yielding to them in obedience of heart, which the law could not give; for the believers serves in the newness of the Spirit, not in the oldness of the letter (Rom 7:6), as Christ's freeman (Jn. 8:32) and not as Moses's bond slave. This is willing obedience not a legal task. This will explain the meaning of the Apostle: "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: for the new man of grace, under the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, delights in the law of God, not only for its holiness, but as inculcating that to do which fills the renewed heart and the inward delight -love to God and His people..

The Christian Relationship To Mosaic Law

By Philip Mauro

We have said that the experience of the "wretched man" of Romans 7 is not the normal experience of a converted Gentile. It is, nevertheless, a sad fact that it may (and often does) become the abnormal experience of converted Gentiles, who, through ignorance of the great gospel truths revealed in Romans, or through the influence of Judaizing teachers and legal systems of theology, fall from their standing in grace, and seek justification, or the gift of the Spirit, through law-works. Hence the solemn warning of Galatians 5:4: "You are deprived of all effect from Christ, whosoever in law are being justified; you are fallen from grace." For as there were in Paul's day, so are there now, many who desire "to be of the law, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm."

So also the struggle of that "wretched man" becomes the experience of many unconverted Gentiles who, totally ignorant of remission of sins through faith in the blood of Christ.... are seeking perpetually (because seeking vainly) for an inclination of the heart to keep the Mosaic Law. The condition of such, if they be earnest and sincere in their desire to keep the law, is indeed "wretched" in

the extreme.

It was needful, therefore, that, in addition to the revelation given in Romans 7 of deliverance for the believing Jew from the yoke of the Law, the Epistle to the Galatians should have been incorporated into the Word of God, in order to instruct and warn Gentile believers against putting themselves under that yoke.

In referring, however, to Galatians our object will be simply to seek the light it throws upon the conflict described in Romans 7. What we find in Galatians affords strong confirmation to the view that the experience described in Romans 7 is that of a conscientious unconverted Israelite, and not at all a “Christian” experience. In fact, the main object of the Apostle in writing to the assemblies of Galatia was to warn them against teachings, which would lead them into such an experience.

Galatians 2

In Galatians 2 Paul relates how he remonstrated with the Apostle Peter for compelling the Gentiles to live as do the Jews (v. 14). We may be sure that the matter in dispute is esteemed by the Spirit of God to be exceedingly important; otherwise it would not be brought to our attention in the form of a rebuke administered by Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, to Peter, the leader of the twelve. In this connection Paul draws the line sharply between Jews and Gentiles, saying: “We, Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified out of the works of the Law, but out of the faithfulness of Christ, even we [Jews] have believed on Christ Jesus that we might be justified out of the faithfulness of Christ, and not out of works of Law” (v. 15-16). And he adds: “For if I build again the things I threw down, I constitute myself a transgressor.” That is to say, if he should set up the Law again as an obligation for himself, he would make himself a law-breaker. “For,” he continues, “I through the Law died to the Law, that I might live to God.” Here Paul again brings himself forward, as a typical

Jew, and repeats in few words the doctrine elaborated in Romans 7. “I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live”; or, as the Greek may be equally well rendered, “I am not any longer living, it is Christ that lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faithfulness of the Son of God.”

It is possible for every believer to reach the place where he can make this saying of Paul his own. It involves death to sin and life to God in Christ, and the abiding presence of the Spirit of Him who raised up Christ from the dead. This verse obviously contains a condensed statement of the truth revealed in Romans 6 and 7 concerning the believer’s death (as to his old nature) with Christ, and his living again in the supernatural life of the risen Christ. That new life is not lived under the Law of Sinai.

“I do not,” says Paul, “make void the grace of God” (as Peter was doing by his dissimulation and by returning to the practice of Judaism) “for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died for nothing” (v. 21).

Galatians 3

Having thus dealt with the case of the believing Jew, who had been delivered from the Law by means of Christ’s death, the Apostle directly addresses the Galatians, who, being Gentiles, never were under Law, but began their relations with God in the Spirit. The Jew began his service of God in the flesh. For him, therefore, there might be found some excuse for continuing after conversion as a man in the flesh under Law, not exercising the liberty wherewith Christ had made him free. But for Gentile believers, who never were under the Law, but had the great advantage of beginning in the Spirit, to put themselves under Law and to attempt to be perfected in the flesh was the “senseless” action of those who had been “bewitched.” “O senseless Galatians, who had bewitched you,” that you should act thus after the truth concerning Christ crucified has been plainly put before you? “Are you so senseless? Having begun in the Spirit, are

you now being perfected in the flesh?” (Gal. 3:1-3). It was indeed “sense- less” in the extreme to undertake the perfecting in the flesh of the work that was begun in the Spirit.

The Apostle then refers to Abraham, whose faith was accounted to him for righteousness, and points out that the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles out of faith, proclaimed that good news to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all nations (Gentiles) be blessed.” (Gal. 3:8).

The Galatians are warned of two serious facts. First, Paul teaches that all who are of the works of Law (in contrast to those that are “of faith”) are under the curse of the Law. Second, he asserts that the curse comes upon every one who continues not in all things, which are written in the book of the Law to do them. From this it follows that no one is being justified with God in virtue of Law: “For the just shall live out of faith; but the man that does those things (required by the Law) shall live in virtue of them” (v. 10-12).

In view of this, it would naturally be asked, How does it come about that the Jews, who were placed under the Law, which none of them has kept, have escaped from the curse of the Law? The answer is, “Christ has redeemed us (Jews) from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us.” This statement manifestly applies solely to Israel, for the curse of the Law was never pronounced against the Gentiles. Hence Paul uses in verse 3:13 the pronoun “us.” The contrast between Jews and Gentiles is again clearly marked by 3:14, which goes on to say that Christ was made a curse for the Jews in order that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles in Christ Jesus. The contrast between the curse of the Law, pronounced upon those who were under the Law, and the blessing of Abraham coming to the Gentile believers in Christ, is very instructive. And an additional result of the endurance by Christ of the curse of the Law is then set forth, namely, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

The promise was made to Abraham and to his seed long before the Law was given. From this it follows that the Law, which was given 430 years after, cannot nullify the promise. If then the Law was not given for the purpose of adding anything to the promise, or of taking anything from it, why was it given? It was added for the sake of transgressions that is in order that the repeated transgressions of the Law by every Israelite might reveal the presence and nature of sin in the flesh, and show the futility of attempting to secure justification out of Law-works. Moreover, it was given, not as a permanent institution, but only “until the Seed should come to whom the promise was made.” (3:19).

This statement shows that the period of the Law was strictly limited in time, as it was limited also in scope to the children of Israel. Its era did not begin until 430 years after God had begun to deal with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their descendants; and it ceased when the promised Seed died under the Law. The curse of the Law was exhausted when Christ was made curse by hanging on a tree (Deut. 21:23). Whatever God’s purposes were with the Law, they were all accomplished when the promised Seed died on the Cross? Since that event even the Jew is no longer a man under Law, for by no amount of law keeping can he now secure the promised blessings of the Promised Land. The old covenant is entirely at an end (2 Cor. 3:7- 11; Heb. 7:13). The words on the Cross-, “It is finished” (in the original it is the single word “accomplished”) included the purpose of the Law, which thereupon came to an end.

The temporary character of the Law as a Divine institution is further set forth, with great clearness, in verses 23-25. “Before faith came,” says the Apostle, “we [Jews] were kept [or guarded] under Law, having been shut up to the faith which was about to be revealed. Wherefore the Law has been our pedagogue [tutor] up to Christ in order that out of faith we might be justified. But faith having come, we are no longer under a tutor.” By noting the tenses of the verbs, as given in the above renderings, the sense will be readily and clearly

apprehended. It is very clear indeed that these statements apply only to Israelites. The Gentiles were not kept under Law, but were left without Law. They were not “shut up” in any way, but allowed to follow the devices of their own hearts. They were not under a pedagogue, or under tutors and governors (4:2), for God had no dealings with them. God has called Israel His “Son” (Hosea 11:1; see Amos 3:2); and of Israel alone, of all the peoples of the earth, can it be said that they were under tutors waiting the time appointed of the Father.

After speaking in the first person of the Jews, the Apostle, addressing the Gentile Galatians, says by way of contrast: “For you are all the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek.” The contrast between the “we” of verses 24,25 and the “you” of verse 26 is very significant.

Some of the statements (in Galatians 4) are broad enough to embrace both Jews and Gentiles, for both were, before conversion, in bondage to the elements of the world; but the special bondage of the Jew - the yoke of the Law and the penalty of its curse - is also specifically mentioned. As the heir is “under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father; even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem those that were under the Law, that we [Jews] might receive the status of sons. But because you [Gentiles] are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, ‘Abba Father.’” (4:2-6) The defective reading of verse 6 in the A.V. “And because you are sons,” instead of “But,” as it is in the original, hides the contrast between the case of the believing Israelite and that of the believing Gentile. The former needed to be redeemed from under the Law before he could receive the status of a son (“adoption of sons”); whereas for the latter there was no such need. The bondage of the Gentiles was a different kind

of bondage. They, not knowing God at all, were in bondage to those who by nature are not gods (4:8); but the point we wish to examine is that they were not under Law at any time, and this point is very clearly presented in the passage we have been examining. (Editor's note: Randall Seiver has presented a better explanation of this passage in his book on Galatians "The Fullness of Time" available from Sound of Grace, Webster N.Y.

The Believer's State Is Not One Of Lawlessness

In emphasizing the important truth that the believer is not under the Law, because, if a Jew he was delivered from the yoke of the Law by the death of Christ, and if a Gentile he was never under the Law at all, must not obscure the important fact that the state of the believer is not one of lawlessness - far from it. What is spoken of in Romans 7, as "the Law" is the Law given to the Israelites through Moses? That Law was by no means a complete statement of God's requirements, though it was quite sufficient for the purpose of revealing the presence of sin in the flesh, for demonstrating the utter corruption of human nature, and for making manifest the exceeding sinfulness of sin. The teachings of Jesus Christ showed that the full requirements of God's holiness and righteousness are far above those of the Law of Moses. "You have heard that it was said by (or to) them of old, you shall not kill...But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother without a cause, etc." (Matt. 5:21-48).

The believer of this dispensation is not living under the Law of Moses. That law was given for the regulation of the conduct of men in the flesh. The believer is "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." (Rom. 8:9). He is not, therefore, in the sphere in which the Law of Moses was effective.

The child of God, though not under the Law of Moses, is "not without Law to God, but in-law to Christ" (ennomous Christou, 1 Cor. 9:21). He owns the risen Christ as His Lord, and judges that his entire life in the body is to be lived no longer unto himself, but

unto Him who died for him and rose again (2 Cor. 5:15). Being in the Spirit he is to be governed by “the law of the Spirit” (Rom. 8:2). Being in Christ he is to “fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2). This is a condition very different from that of the Israelite under the Law of Moses, and on a much higher plane. The life of the child of God is not a life hedged about by constraints and prohibitions, but a life of liberty in which he is free to follow all the leadings of the Spirit, and all the inclinations of the new nature, which the Spirit imparts, to those whom He quickens. It is a life of freedom - not freedom to sin, but freedom not to sin. He who practices sin is the slave of sin; only the free man can refuse obedience to the demands of sin, and yield himself to God as one who is alive from the dead. The Word of God abounds in directions addressed to the children of God, by which their walk, while yet in the body, is to be guided and controlled. These directions are found in the commandments of Christ, and in the Epistles of the Apostle Paul, whom the risen Lord empowered to be the channel for the revelation of His special communications to and concerning the Church. And these directions are illustrated by all the Holy Scriptures, the things which happened to the Israelites having been written, not for our imitation, but for our admonition (1 Cor. 10:11).

The believer has been called into liberty; and he is exhorted to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made him free (Gal. 5:1). Yet he is not to use his liberty so as to furnish occasions for gratifying the desires of his old nature (Gal. 5:13). Having been brought, through the resurrection of Christ, into the sphere of the Spirit, the believer is commanded to remain there; that is, to be occupied with and interested in the things of the Spirit. While so engaged he cannot at the same time be fulfilling the desires of the flesh. “This I say then, walk in [or by] the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the desires of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16). “If you be led of the Spirit you are not under the Law” (Gal. 5:18).

Ephesians, which especially reveals the position of believers as

quicken together with Christ, raised up (i.e.) Together with Him, and seated together in the heavenlies in Christ, abounds in practical directions for the believer's guidance in all his earthly relations. We call attention to them in order to guard against the supposition that, because the believer of this dispensation is not under the Law of Moses, he is therefore in a state of lawlessness.

The main points, then, of the teaching we have been examining are these:

1. That the sufferings of Christ were incurred for the sins of His people, that is to say, the sins of those whom God justifies upon the principle of faith.

2. That the death of Christ delivers the believing sinner, whether Jew or Gentile, from the servitude of sin.

3. That the death of Christ also brought the economy of the Law to an end, and delivered all converted Israelites from the yoke of the Law.

4. That the resurrection of Christ brings all believers into the sphere of a new humanity, where there is a new life, whose Source is the risen Christ, which life is imparted by the Spirit of God to the believer while the latter is yet in the mortal body.

5. That believers, though not under the Law of Moses, are governed by the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and are required to "fulfil the law of Christ."

The Sabbath By Gilbert Beebe January 1, 1855

There is much said at the present day on the subject of a Sabbath day, as being of perpetual obligatory force on all mankind throughout all time. But in what part of the Scriptures they find a precept to that effect we are not informed. They certainly but seldom, if ever,

refer us to the fourth commandment of the Decalogue; and we have supposed their reasons for not doing so were obvious.

1. Because we are expressly informed by Moses himself that, that very covenant, or law, was made exclusively with those Israelites who were all of them then present, and alive on the day that the ten commandments were presented to them from the Mount of God. It was a law which, had not been given even to the patriarchs, (See Deut. 5:1-4).

2. Because the fourth commandment required those unto whom it was given, to observe the seventh, and not the first day of the week, as the Sabbath of their God—because that God had rested from the work of creation on the seventh, and not on the first day of the week.

3. Because the children of Israel were by the fourth commandment required to observe the seventh day altogether differently from the manner in which professed Christians pretend to observe the first day. The children of Israel were to totally abstain from all labour, themselves, their wives, their children, their servants, and even their cattle; no fires were allowed to be kindled, no horses to be harnessed, no meetings to be attended, no Sabbath Schools to be kept, no collections for mission or other purposes, to be taken up on that day.

4. Because the penalty for a transgression of that precept, was altogether different from that inflicted by modern Sabbatarians for a breach of the Sunday laws of our own, or any other lands. That provided in the Jewish law, being death by stoning, and the laws of men only requiring fines and imprisonments.

5. The fourth commandment required those unto whom it was given to labour six days, including the first day, and the Sunday laws of our land forbid our obedience to that part of the fourth commandment which requires us to labour on the first day of the

week.

We know of no partial obligation to keep the law. If the Sinai covenant, which was given exclusively to the children of Israel, is binding on the Gentiles to any extent, it must be binding in its full extent. An inspired apostle has settled this question beyond all reasonable dispute, “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all,” (Jam. 2:10). And Paul to the Galatians, 5:3, shows who are debtors to keep the law. He says, “For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.” But in searching the Scriptures, we can find none who are obligated to obey part of the law, or partly obligated to do the whole law. “Whatsoever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law,” and they are of course bound to go according to the letter of the commandment. The grand question then is, whether the whole Sinai law is binding on all men, and throughout all time? If so, then all are involved in the curse, and the salvation of any of the human family is impossible. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for all have sinned; and consequently by the deeds of the law, no flesh shall be justified in the sight of God.

The doctrine of redemption is very prominently set forth in the gospel; and Christ has not only redeemed his people from the curse, but also from the dominion of the law; and the apostle has made the emphatic proclamation to the saints, “Ye are no more under the law, but under grace.” The inquiry then is reduced to this; How far are we obligated to keep a law that we are not under? When Paul found some of the brethren inclining to the works of the law, he was afraid of them, lest he had bestowed on them labour in vain, for they observed days, and months, and times, and years. In his allegory, (Gal. 4:21-27), Paul sets forth the old Sinai covenant, by the person of Hagar, the bondwoman, who could not be the mother of a free child. For this Agar is Mount Sinai, in Arabia, which answereth to Jerusalem, which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But

Jerusalem, which is above, is free, which Jerusalem he affirms, is the mother of all those saints, who, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. In the second chapter to the Colossians, we are informed that Christ has blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took them out of the way, nailing them to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect to an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. This language would seem to be plain enough for an ordinary Christian, taught of God. These ordinances of the old covenant were a shadow of things, which are realized in the body of Christ, or in the gospel church, which is his body, his flesh and his bones. We trace the shadowy import of the Sinai Sabbath to the body of Christ, or to the gospel church, and there we enter into that rest which was shadowed forth by the legal Sabbaths of the old covenant. The antitypical Sabbath, being found alone in that rest which remaineth for the children of God, and into which all those who, with a true and vital faith, believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, have entered, is clearly set forth in the New Testament, particularly in the third and fourth chapters to the Hebrews. This gospel Sabbath we understand to be the whole gospel dispensation; in distinction from the old covenant dispensation, and it begins severally with each believer in Christ, as soon as they truly believe in our Lord Jesus Christ; and are enabled to rest alone on him for their justification before God. We have neither the time nor the space necessary to show the analogy, which the typical Sabbath of the law bears to the rest, which is enjoyed by the saints in the gospel. A very few particulars must for the present suffice, and,

1. The old covenant Sabbath was given exclusively to the circumcised children of Israel, and to no other people; so the gospel Sabbath, or Rest, is given exclusively to the spiritual Israel, who are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ

Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

2. The children of the old Sinai covenant were often charged with the sin of Sabbath-breaking, and that sin, with them, consisted in their performing on the seventh day, such labour as was only lawful for them to perform in the six days in which they were commanded to do all their labour. So under the gospel dispensation, the saints, by adhering to the abrogated institutions of the old working dispensation, observing days, and months, and times, and years; or by looking for justification before God by anything short of the blood and righteousness of Christ, do violence to the holy Sabbath of the gospel. As in the types, many of the children of Israel could not enter into rest, because of unbelief, so we find that our doubts and unbelief, which often press us down, render it impossible for us to enter into that rest which remaineth for the children of God. Our own experience teaches us that when we doubt the reality of our interest in Christ, or the application of his promises to us, we are like the troubled ocean that cannot rest: we labour, and toil to do something ourselves, to reinstate ourselves in the favour of the Lord. When we feel cold, we are prone to kindle fires of our own, and to comfort ourselves with sparks of our kindling, and endeavour to walk in the light of our fire; but if we are truly the children of God, we shall for all this lie down in sorrow; for this Sabbath-breaking. No fires were to be kindled by the Israelites on that day. Nor will the Lord suffer us to warm or enlighten ourselves by any fires that we can make. Christians are commanded to forsake not the assembling of themselves together for the worship of God, and for their mutual edification. To obey the command, suitable times must be appointed for such meetings; the first, or any other day of the week, may be designated, provided that we attach no special sanctity to the time; and the first day of the week is as suitable as any other day. The apostles met frequently on the first day, and also on all the other days of the week, they were daily in the temple praising God, &c. So we conclude that the Christian church is at liberty to make her

own appointments, as to time—provided that she allows no man, or set of men, to judge her in regard to the time, and when she makes such appointments, each member is in duty bound to attend the appointment, unless providentially detained.

As Christians we have no right to observe any day religiously in obedience to human legislation; either Sabbaths, first days, or thanksgiving days; because God has forbidden that we should allow any man to judge us in these things. We require no human legislation on the subject. The order and decision of the church is more effectual with the saints than all the pains, penalties and fines, ever imposed by the rulers of the darkness of this world. Let us observe the admonition of the apostle, and “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free; and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”

The Sabbath of the Jews required no grace in the heart, no spiritual emotion of the new man, to qualify those to whom it was given, to observe it. Their service was in the oldness of the letter, and theirs was a worldly sanctuary, and carnal ordinances. Any circumcised Jew, whether a believer or an infidel could abstain from labours on the seventh day, and that was all that was required of them. But the anti typical, or gospel Sabbath, requires faith in Christ; for none but believers can enter into that rest which remains, for the people of God. The hour has is come and the true worshipers must worship God in spirit and in truth. Not only the Scriptures of the New Testament declare it, but the testimony is corroborated by every Christian’s experience. Christians know that they cannot believe only as the Lord gives them faith; and equally well do they know that they cannot rest unless they believe.

When faith, which is of the operation of God, is given, the recipient requires neither the thunder of Sinai, nor the arm of secular legislation, to incline him to keep the Christian Sabbath of gospel rest. The starving soul requires no coercion to incline him to eat, nor

does the weary, heavy-laden soul require legal enactments to drive him to his rest. As the Sinai Sabbath required the carnal Israelite to abstain totally from servile labour, so the gospel Sabbath requires the spiritual Israelite to cease from his work, and trust, and rest alone on Christ, for his justification and acceptance with God. As the Sabbath-breaker under the law was to be stoned to death, by all the children of Israel, so the legalist who would attempt to drag the ceremonies of the legal dispensation into the gospel church, or to justify himself before God by the works of the law, is to be stoned, (not with stones literally, but with the smooth stones from the brook of gospel truth), by all his brethren, until his legal spirit yields up the ghost.

Those who have no higher conception of a gospel Sabbath than to suppose it consists in the literal observance of one day out of seven, have yet to learn that “Whom the Son makes free, are free indeed.”
